



AFRICAN ECONOMIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

SECOND CALL FOR FACULTY RESEARCH PROPOSALS ON HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN SUB- SAHARAN AFRICA

Background

Established in 1988, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is a premier capacity building institution in the advancement of research and graduate training that inform economic policies in Africa. The principal mission is to strengthen local individual and institutional capacity to conduct independent, rigorous inquiry into problems pertinent to the management of Sub-Saharan African economies through synergistic programmes combining economic research with postgraduate training in economics.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) signed a grant agreement with AERC to support rigorous research on human capital development in selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa, viz *Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Madagascar* with guidelines as specified here below.

The Context

Recent surveys of policymakers and public policy dialogues on policy and financing strategies on the World Bank's launch of the Human Capital Index (HCI) in 2018 show that human capital (both health and education) has risen significantly as a priority in developing countries due to its link to inclusive growth and human capital development. Many African countries have equally signaled the aspiration to improve the quality of human capital formation in their countries and improve their scores on the HCI. They particularly aspire to strengthen and adopt policy and financing strategies to deliver better health and education outcomes. The human capital gains won over time are, however, at risk of being eroded by pandemics such as COVID-19.

Human capital—people's education, skills, and health—will play a pivotal role in the transformation of African economies. Sub-Saharan Africa scores the lowest of all the world's regions on the World Bank's Human Capital Index, a measurement of how well countries invest in the next generation of workers (World Bank). The score is explained by high mortality and stunting rates in the region, as well as inadequate student learning outcomes – all of which have a direct effect on economic productivity. Structurally, the index, therefore, considers child survival, school enrollment, quality of learning, healthy growth, and adult survival. Africa's low human capital can be explained by three interlinked factors:

1. Survival: Will children born today survive to school age?
2. School: How much school will children complete and how much will they learn?
3. Health: Will they leave school in good health, ready for further learning and/or work?



Developing human capital in Africa requires a massive and coordinated effort to strengthen the quantity, efficiency, and impact of investments in people. To prioritize development of human capital for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in Africa, there's need to support regional as well as country-owned policy reforms, action plans and cross-country learning in four key areas, such as:

- ✓ Expanding effective government investment in social services.
- ✓ Introducing reforms and innovation to improve service delivery.
- ✓ Committing to equity and inclusiveness.
- ✓ Addressing fertility and gender issues to harness a demographic dividend.

Against this backdrop, this AERC faculty research component seeks to better understand human capital development in Africa, to improve the generation and management of knowledge on Africa's human capital and address key constraints on human capital accumulation, such as weak public financial management (PFM) and service delivery systems. In addition, this research seeks to provide policy reforms that would enable Africa's young people to grow up with optimal health and equipped with the right skills to compete in the global economy.

Call for Research Proposals

This call is for research proposals from faculty members to undertake studies to inform policy makers and development practitioners on Human Capital Development. Under this delivery mechanism, AERC will commission up to 10 studies that will help build greater policy support for human capital at the country level as well as influence human capital policies.

Research Themes and Geographic Scope

The project prioritizes studies in the following seven (7) sub-Saharan African countries: *Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Madagascar*. To that end, proposals should identify and briefly describe the datasets to be used, focusing on the following themes:

I. Human Capital Formation and its Determinants (i.e., fertility, education and skills, health).

- Understanding human capital formation and its determinants.
- Measuring and interpreting inequality both within and across countries.
- Family economics and human capital in the family.
- Health of human capital and economic growth in Africa.

II. Human Capital Drivers and Consequences (Population, Skills Acquisition, Migration, and Impacts).

- Measuring and assessing skills.
- Human capital flight: Stratification, globalization, and the challenges to tertiary education in Africa.
- The human resource crisis and health services in Africa.



- Labor market implications of migrations.

III. *Human Capital Depletion (Health and longevity, Investment/Financing quantum)*

- Health and schooling investments in Africa.
- Financing human capital investment.
- Macroeconomic stability, policy and regulatory consistency, sector reforms, and human capital development.
- Climate change, disease, and gender gaps in human capital investment.
- Human capital formation and foreign direct investment.
- The cost of HIV/AIDS and disease on human capital investment in Africa.

IV. *COVID 19 and Human Capital Development*

- Covid 19 impacts on human capital development (macro, micro, gendered).
- Vulnerability of African economies to COVID-19 and human capital development.
- Human capital development within COVID-19 economic recovery.

The Content

Introduction and Objectives: A well-motivated introduction clearly stating the specific objectives of the study and country(ies) of focus. We require proposals with original and innovative ideas, with relevance to contemporary African conditions. They should be of policy relevance and add value to the existing global knowledge by bringing the depth and complexity of contextual knowledge of country conditions.

Methodology and Data: In addition to the usual statement detailing how the research objectives are to be achieved, researchers must demonstrate availability and access to data required for the study. We are interested in applications proposing innovative use of quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods if they can demonstrate practical potential to address programmatic and development needs.

Deliverables and Reporting Requirements

The faculty researchers will be required to:

- a) Present research findings to AERC biannual research conferences and any other dissemination forums as may be organized by AERC.
- b) Provide high quality research paper(s) that are publishable in refereed journals.
- c) A policy brief of no more than 5 pages should also be produced.

Duration of the Research

In line with AERC research window number 2, the selected researchers will be required to dedicate a calendar year to gather data, analyze and develop publishable research papers.



The Budget

Estimated expenditure by major line items, e.g., research assistance; travel; computer time; secretarial support; honorarium etc. should not exceed US\$15,000.

Selection Criteria

The faculty researchers should meet the following requirements:

- a) PhD in Agricultural Economics, Economics, Development Economics, or related field.
- b) A faculty member of the AERC network university.
- c) A sound research proposal meeting all the requirements of this call.

Application Process

Applications clearly indicated "*Faculty Research- Human Capital Development*" on the subject line can be sent to the following address on or before **16th September 2022**.

The Director of Training
African Economic Research Consortium
P.O. Box 62882 – 00200
Nairobi Kenya,

Or by email to the following address: cmaae@aercafrica.org

Please attach an updated curriculum vitae clearly indicating: -

- i. Key academic qualifications.
- ii. Professional training and certificates obtained.
- iii. Employment record clearly stating the name of employer, period of employment, position held and brief description of main responsibilities.
- iv. Names and addresses of 2 references who can provide a reference on your work.
- v. Personal declaration signed on your CV as follows: -

"I hereby certify that the details provided in my CV are at the best of my knowledge true, complete, and accurate. I acknowledge that an inaccurate statement or omission in a personal declaration or other document might result in rejection of my application or termination of my contract. The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) may verify any statements which I make in my application".