



## Press Release

### **African education research gains its rightful prominence** **Launch of first open access database of education research by African-based researchers**

Paris, 15 June 2018: Today sees the launch of the first open access database of education research by researchers based in sub-Saharan Africa at an event hosted by the French Development Agency.

This is the result of a fruitful collaboration between the Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre at the University of Cambridge and the charity Education Sub Saharan Africa (ESSA) to raise the visibility and impact of African education research.

The African Education Research Database (<http://essa-africa.org/aerd>) is a curated collection of over 2,000 studies from 49 countries in the region. It spans the life-course from early childhood to tertiary education, encompassing the full range of educational themes, from literacy to school feeding.

According to the researcher Dr Théodore Goin Bi from Côte d'Ivoire, this is a major breakthrough: "At last there is one place that you can go to see what's available on a topical education issue written by African researchers. It's going to transform the visibility of our work and also highlight where the gaps are in research. I think it will stimulate funding for much needed insights. There is a huge thirst for evidence to make investments in the sector and to get the policies right for future generations."

The launch of the database also marks a key milestone for ESSA which, since its establishment in 2016, has made swift progress in its aim to join up, inspire and inform everyone concerned with education in sub-Saharan Africa.

As its Director Olaf Hahn commented:

"The research database was born to fix a frustration and open up an opportunity. It can be incredibly hard to find the best research from Africa on education in the region. African researchers face many challenges in gaining visibility for their work. We wanted to change that. The database, which rightly puts Africans at the heart of knowledge production on the region, is just the first step. It's exciting to imagine where we can go from here. "

Professor Pauline Rose, Director of the REAL Centre commented that: "education research from Africa is too often overlooked in global and national policy debates. There's a tendency for policy actors to overlook local knowledge and expertise in favour of researchers from outside of the region. The database provides an opportunity to redress this imbalance."

Rohen D'Aiglepiere from AFD commented that "Mapping Education Research production in sub-Saharan Africa is a very important way to support the development of an original African research and its connection with public policy decisions."

The next phase of this project, funded by Jacobs Foundation, will involve synthesising findings from across the research evidence base, and identifying gaps, priorities and partners for future research.

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**About REAL Centre:**

The Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre at the University of Cambridge pioneers research into overcoming barriers to education, such as poverty, gender, ethnicity, language and disability, and promotes education as an engine for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Working in partnership with organisations in the region and around the world, it provides a robust evidence base to inform policy and practice in Sub-Saharan Africa.

<https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/real>

**About ESSA:**

ESSA was founded in 2016 as a charity registered in the UK. Its vision is to see transformed educational outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa. Its purpose is to join up, inspire, focus, inform and increase impact for everyone investing in education in sub-Saharan Africa. Our early emphasis is on tertiary education, with four key initial areas: Faculty, African research on education, Scholarships for Africa, Education data and statistics. Funders of ESSA include the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the MasterCard Foundation and the Jacobs Foundation.

<https://www.essa-africa.org>