

AfricaLics

NEWSLETTER

August / Issue No 9

ABOUT AFRICALICS

The African Network on Learning, Innovation and Competence Building Systems (AfricaLics) is an Africa-wide network focused on developing the field of African Innovation and Development Studies, since its launch in 2012. It is part of Globelics - a global research network established in 2002 ([Globelics Website](#)).

In line with the overarching vision, AfricaLics supports African countries in developing and utilizing high-quality research, conducted by African researchers, to enable more informed policy decisions to be made relating to the use of science, technology, and innovation (STI) for economic and social

development as well as efficient governance. The network works closely with like-minded relevant international and local researchers and research networks to realize this vision.

The AfricaLics Secretariat is based at the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), in Nairobi, Kenya and provides general support to the network and the AfricaLics Scientific Board (ASB). Since its establishment, the network has received substantial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through the research capacity building (RCB) Programme entitled “Enhancing research capacity on Innovation and development (I&D) in Africa”.

In addition, many universities in Africa and abroad have supported the network by housing key events (notably the research conferences, PhD academies and the Visiting Fellowship Programme), providing mentorship for young scholars, reviewing papers and applications for events, and providing lectures free of charge.



AFRICALICS





Newsletter Highlight

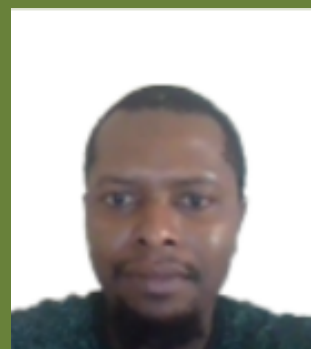
The AfricaLics International Conference 2024, themed "The Africa We Want: Leveraging Innovation and Digital Transformation," will be held from November 13th to 15th at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. For more details, see page 4 of this issue.

6th AfricaLics International Conference

Inside The Issues

- Impact Dashboard
- 10th AfricaLics PhD Academy
- New AfricaLics 2024 Visiting Fellowship Program (VFP) Cohort
- Opinion piece: The Intriguing World of PhD Studies: A Journey Worth Embarking On
- Impact Stories
- Webinar Series Summary
- A Noteworthy Visit from AfricaLics President, Prof. Kitaw

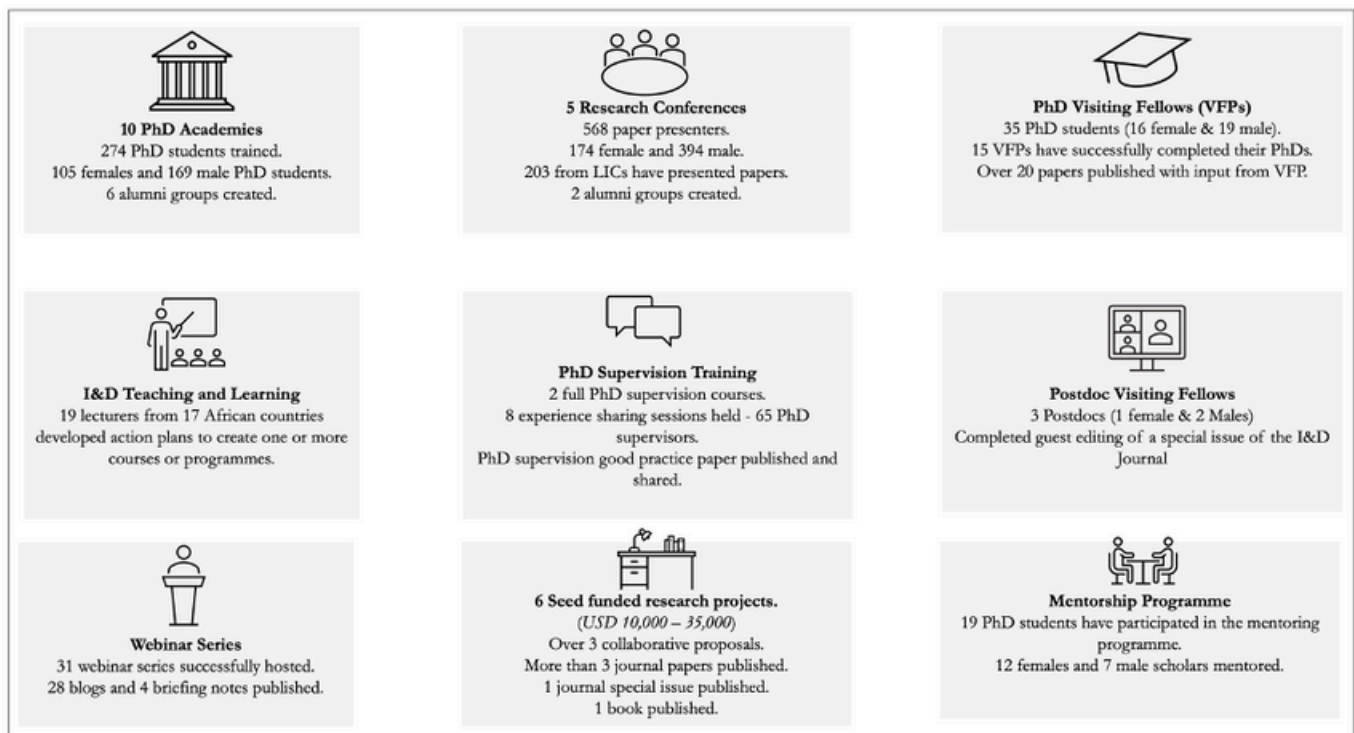
Welcome onboard, VFP 2024!



IMPACTS DASHBOARD



The dashboard below presents selected high-level cumulative data illustrating AfricaLics' activities in the field of innovation and development in Africa since its inception. The dashboard is updated every six months. For information on specific impacts by year, please view our annual reports. For general enquiries, please email: secretariat@africalics.org



Specific achievements and associated impact of our activities has been documented through various pathways like videos with former PhD students that have attended our Visiting Fellowship Programme, PhD academies and conferences. Further evidence is also documented in external evaluations and tracer studies available on AfricaLics website.

The network continues to expand, and therefore three national networks have been established namely the NigeriaLics in Nigeria, FasoLics, in Burkina Faso and EthiopiaLics, in Ethiopia. This is evidence to the relevance of the network and the felt need for joint activities in the field of African Innovation and Development studies.

KEY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Africalics International Conference 2024

13th- 15th November 2024

Theme: *The Africa We Want: Leveraging Innovation and Digital Transformation*

Venue: University of Illorin, Nigeria

AfricaLics has held biennial research conferences since its inception in 2012, with the first conference in Maputo, Mozambique in 2013. Subsequent research conferences took place in Kigali, Rwanda in 2015; Oran, Algeria in 2017; Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania in 2019 and Yaounde, Cameroon in 2022. The research conferences constitute a platform for presentations and discussions of cutting-edge research on innovation and development issues in Africa, targeting not only the academic community but also engaging policymakers, the business sector, and civil society. Each conference brings together leading scholars, typically between 150-200 participants, from Africa and around the world, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange in the field.

The 6th AfricaLics conference will take place in Ilorin, Nigeria and will have a special focus on leveraging innovation and digital transformation. It will serve as a platform for discussion of relevant research and action-oriented initiatives aimed at charting a course for Africa's future growth and prosperity in a sustainable manner. The sub-themes of the conference are:

1. Appropriate policies for innovation and development in the era of Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), 2024, Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.
2. Innovation, the Private Sector, and Sustainable Development – the future of formal and informal economies.
3. Innovation management in key economic sectors for Africa's development (e.g. agriculture, manufacturing, services): prospects and challenges.
4. 4th Industrial Revolution: opportunities and impacts of disruptive technologies on African social and economic structures.
5. Innovation for social inclusion and conflict management.
6. Strategies and technologies to enhance Agricultural Innovation for poverty alleviation, resilience to climate change and its impacts.
7. Innovative and sustainable solutions for quality education and equality for healthy living and well-being.
8. Innovations for reduced inequalities in Africa (gender, income, health, human settlements etc.) and inclusive, productive, and decent job for all.
9. Forging Collaborative Paths: public private sector partnerships for sustainable development and inclusive growth.

The draft summary programme for the conference and other detailed information on the conference will soon be available on the following website: <https://africalics.org/event/6th-research-conference/>

This year the funding available for travel support for paper presenters is very limited and hence we are piloting a new way of fundraising for travel support to young scholars with accepted papers. Contribution from Network members and friends of AfricaLics will be of enormous help in ensuring broad international participation in the conference. Towards this end, the AfricaLics Crowdfunding Initiative is described in more detail [here](#).

Scholars from the AfricaLics network such as Prof. Opeyemi Ayinde and Prof. Mammo Muchie have agreed to spearhead the crowdfunding campaign and contributions to their fundraising efforts can be made through the AfricaLics website. Contributions can also be linked to the AfricaLics Alumni or ASB Emeritus Trust Fund, based on individual or corporate contributor's preference.

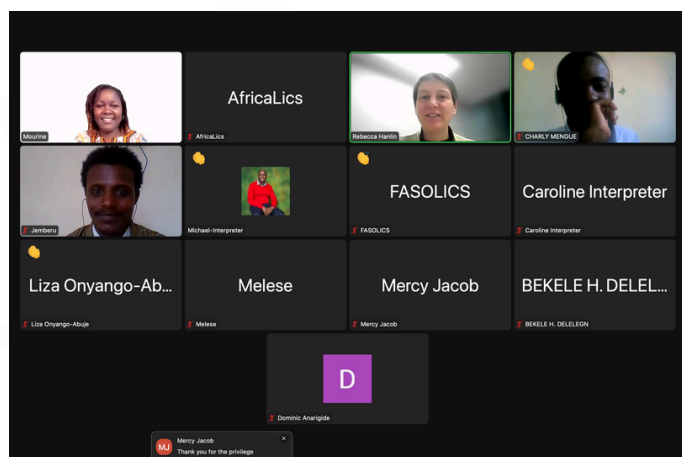
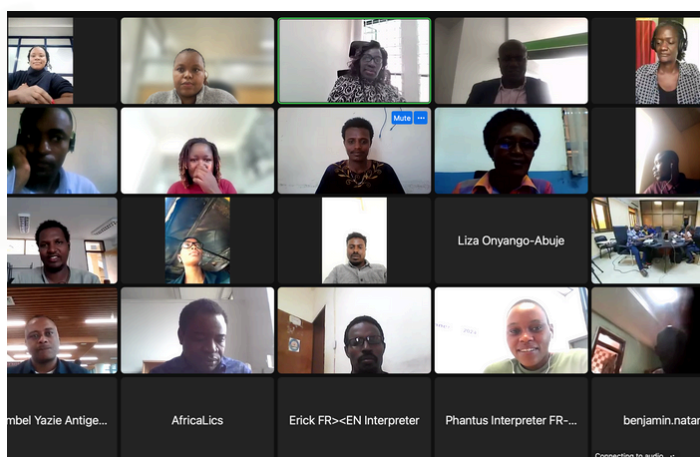


10th AfricaLics Ph.D. Academy

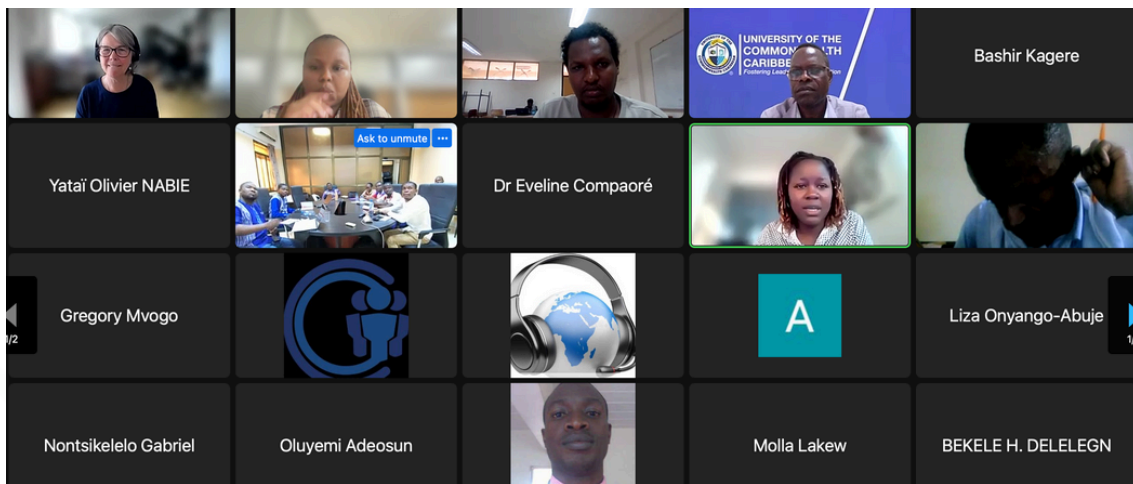
10th - 14th June 2024

The 10th AfricaLics Ph.D. Academy was hosted virtually by the University of Johannesburg (UJ), South Africa, and University of Thomas SANKARA, Burkina Faso, with support from the AfricaLics Secretariat. The event was supported financially by UJ and members of the AfricaLics network. The Academy provided PhD students enrolled in African universities, who are working in the field of innovation and development studies, an opportunity to expand their knowledge in this emerging field, connect with leading academics, and receive feedback on their PhD research.

The Academy's program featured various interactive sessions aimed at fostering both academic and professional growth. The participating students were in their second year of study. They submitted and presented original papers reflecting their PhD research aligned with the thematic areas of the AfricaLics network.



Screenshots from the 10th AfricaLics PHD Academy



The call for applications to the Academy was advertised in April 2024. A total of 31 applications were received. Following a rigorous review and shortlisting process, 17 students (13 Male & 4 female) were selected to participate in the Academy. The selected participants represented a diverse group from across Africa, including students from Ethiopia, Ghana, Cameroon, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Uganda.

The event featured notable key speakers such as Prof. John Mugabe a Professor of Science and Innovation Policy at the Graduate School of Technology Management (GSTM), University of Pretoria, and a Senior Associate Fellow at the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex, UK. Dr Mafini Dosso, an Economist of Innovation and certified Project Management Professional PMP, in Spain and Africa. Prof. Natewinde Sawadogo from the University of Thomas Sankara, Prof. Florent Song-Naba from SEG Business Management & entrepreneurship at the University of Thomas Sankara, and Dr. Sandeep Kaur from the Central University of Punjab, India. These experts provided invaluable insights and fostered an enriching academic environment for all attendees

The Academy Structure

The AfricaLics PhD 2024 was a fully on-line event which included paper presentations by students, keynote speeches from experts in Innovation and Development (I&D) and policy in Africa, and lectures by senior researchers covering a range of topics from research methodologies to the latest theories and empirical research in innovation, innovation management, and science policy.

A dedicated day was set aside for training on Systematic Literature Review, encompassing both theoretical basics and practical applications. Additionally, a session featured real innovators sharing their journey from inception to breaking even, along with the challenges and opportunities they faced.

These sessions facilitated interaction between students, practitioners, and policymakers on innovation and development issues. The virtual format provided participants the opportunity to connect with experts and peers in the field of innovation and development studies without having to travel long distances.

In essence, the Academy, though virtual, successfully contributed to training and onboarding a new group of African PhD students to the field of 'African Innovation and Development Studies to the expanding Network.

NEW AFRICALICS 2024 VISITING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (VFP) COHORT

The aim of this one-year programme and the scholarships is to help African PhD students working in the field of innovation and development to strengthen their academic/research qualifications, improve the quality of their dissertations and prepare for a career in innovation and development either within academia or outside (e.g. in the private sector or in government/policy making).

The programme does this by increasing the level of exposure of the PhD students to international knowledge in the field of innovation and development. The exposure takes place both online and through face-to-face interactions during a three month's study visit to University of Johannesburg (UJ). It forms part of the efforts by AfricaLics to contribute to the development of a vibrant research community in Africa in this emerging and highly multidisciplinary field.

The initial cohorts (2015 – 2022) all had the opportunity to visit Aalborg University, Denmark as part of the programme. However, from 2022, the VFP fellows have been hosted by African universities (Jaramoga Odinga Oginga University of Science and Technology, Kenya and University of Johannesburg, South Africa).

The 2024 cohort has got Four PhD students - one female and three male – who have been onboarded to take part in the programme. The successful candidates were selected from a pool of 84 applicants by a distinguished committee comprising of members of the AfricaLics Scientific Board and the Secretariat. The four students come from Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya and represent a diverse range of universities.

The 2024 cohort will get the opportunity to participate in a one-year fellowship programme combining online pre- and post-activities with a study period of 3 months at UJ, South Africa. Mentoring will be provided by a range of African and international scholars in innovation and development studies who are research active in AfricaLics and Globelics.

The Swedish International Development Agency, Sida (Stockholm), has so far provided funding for the visiting scholarships as part of the Enhancing Research Capacity on Innovation and Development in Africa project. The AfricaLics secretariat (hosted by ACTS) is responsible for the project with the AfricaLics Scientific

The 4 students are :

MOLLA TADESSE

From Haramaya University, Ethiopia

Research Title: The Role of Indigenous Informal Local institutions in enhancing Social Capital for Adoption of Agricultural innovation: A special emphasis in Ethiopia



BASHIR KAGERE

From Makerere University, Uganda

Research Title: Firm Innovation Behaviour and Performance

BEKELE HUNDESSA

From Adama Science and Technology University, Ethiopia

Research Title: Research and Development(R&D), Innovation and Performance of Enterprises in the Case of Resource-rich Developing Country: Evidence from Ethiopia



LIZA AWINO ONYANGO-ABUJE

From Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Kenya

Research Tittle: Galvanizing System Change Through Youth-Led Digital Innovation: The Case Of Kenya

IMPACT STORIES

In Their Words: A select group of Testimonials and Reflections of both Students and ASB members on their experience with AfricaLics and how it has impacted them in different ways.

STELLA KICONCO

During my PhD journey, I faced supervision issues, leading to a change in my supervisor. Prof. Suresh Babu Chandra began supervising me when I joined the AfricaLics Visiting PhD Fellowship 2022 at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Nairobi campus, with Dr. Justinah Andwoa Onumah of CSIR Ghana as my mentor.

This fellowship significantly contributed to my PhD progress by facilitating a five-day in-person meeting with my new supervisor and mentors, which was otherwise impossible. This meeting allowed us to strategize effectively, accelerating my PhD progress.

I graduated from the University of Pretoria on May 2, 2024. During the fellowship, I also attended a PhD Academy in Nairobi, where I deepened my understanding and interest in innovation studies.

Currently, I am a research fellow at the University of Johannesburg under the project "Future Rural Africa: Future Making and Social-Ecological Transformation," focusing on local agricultural production and innovation systems in Tanzania and Namibia.



ABDI YUYA

AfricaLics support has been pivotal for my career. Admission to the AfricaLics VFP not only revitalized my Ph.D. journey but also facilitated a joint degree arrangement between my university and Aalborg University, easing administrative hurdles.

This collaboration culminated in the successful completion of my Ph.D. as a joint degree between Aalborg University and ASTU. As a result, I've authored numerous journal articles and secured grants such as the World Bank's CIIP and the EIB-GDN fellowship. Engaging in over five international and six national projects has allowed me to contribute significantly to developmental solutions.



ABIODUN EGBETOKUN

I took part in the first AfricaLics PhD Academy in 2012. Without my participation at the AfricaLics PhD academy, I wouldn't have published our special issue in 2016 which was eventually converted into a book by Routledge titled "Firm Level Innovation in Africa: Overcoming Limits & Constraints."

I personally think that without my participation at this academy, that is something that couldn't have happened. I have done several other special issues and other publications after that, but this particular one was the starting point for me. It was the very first special issue that I did.

I got to meet the people we collaborated with on the special issue at the Academy, including senior scholars from the Globelics and Africalics network.



JUSTINA ONUMAH

My PhD thesis was inspired by Africalics and my participation in different activities, ranging from conferences to the AfricaLics VFP. With support from senior mentors on the programme such as Prof. Ned Lorenz, I have been fortunate to have three journal articles published based on my dissertation.

Two articles were prepared with support from my AfricaLics VFP mentor during the fellowship period. The third article was produced with support from a senior Globelics scholar allocated to me through the dedicated AfricaLics mentorship programme for journal publications.

Based on the strong intellectual support the Network afforded me, I am privileged to give back to the network as a Board member and Mentor for the Visiting Fellowship Programme.







AFRICALICS ENGAGEMENT AND WEBINARS ON INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The following are a few selected webinars that AfricaLics organized/co-organized in the first half of 2024

AfricaLics working group
AFRICA FOCUSED INNOVATION MEASUREMENT

AfricaLics webinar:
Are we using the right metrics? Towards a research and theoretical agenda for innovation measurement in Africa
Chair: Lukovi Seke, AUDA-NEPAD

16:00-16:10	Welcome	Lukovi Seke, AUDA-NEPAD
EAT	Introduction to the thematic chair	Dr David Adeyeye, NACETEM, Nigeria
16:10-16:40	Presentation: <i>Are we using the right metrics? Towards a research and theoretical agenda for innovation measurement in Africa</i>	Dr Maruf Sanni, NACETEM, Nigeria Dr Il-haam Petersen, CeSTII, HSRC, South Africa Dr Glenda Kruss, CeSTII, HSRC, South Africa
16:40-16:45	Comments, insights from Latin America	Prof Isabel Bortagaray, University of the Republic
16:45-17:00	Discussants	Dr Bitrina Diyamett, STIPRO, Tanzania Prof Diran Soumouni, WITS University, South Africa
17:00-17:30	Discussion & closing comments	Open discussion

Are we using the right metrics? Towards a research and theoretical agenda for innovation measurement in Africa webinar held on 14th March 2024

Are we using the right metrics? Towards a research and theoretical agenda for innovation measurement in Africa

Date: 14th March 2024
Speakers:Chair: Lukovi Seke, Programme Officer: Science and Technology & ASTII Project Lead (2021-2025).Programme Innovation and Planning Directorate (PIPD), AUDA-NEPAD

Presenter:Glenda Kruss, Executive Head, Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa

Critical response:Anneline Morgan, Senior Programme Officer, Science, Technology and Innovation Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade (IDT), Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The webinar took point of departure in the fact that African States increasingly want to use science, technology and innovation (STI) indicators for assessing progress towards the SDGs and the STI Strategy for Africa (STISA) targets, as well as for monitoring STI policy achievements at a national level. Existing STI measurements are, however, heavily reliant on concepts and theories transposed from the literature on high-income countries, begging the question of relevance in the African context.

Few of the alternative perspectives on innovation and new critical approaches to indicator development emerging from the - global South come from or are based on research in Africa. Drawing on a systematic review of the literature, including a bibliometric analysis, the AfricaLics Thematic Chair on STI measurements presented a paper which lays the foundation for future research on STI measurement in Africa with the aim of creating context-relevant STI indicators.

The main question that the review addressed is: How does the available literature on STI measurement in Africa provide an empirical and conceptual research base to inform shifting policy and measurement objectives? The review points to key and emerging analytical trends, and potential research gaps.

Also highlighted are trends showing who is playing a role in shaping the agenda and the need to build a research community of practice on the African continent. Based on this review, an elaborate research agenda for developing conceptual and empirical frameworks to measure innovation and development policy in African country contexts was debated.

Please use this [link](#) to access the blog about the webinar.

Developing Technology Policy in Africa



Prof. Norman Clark
Professor of Innovation Systems &
Development
Open University, UK

Date: 23rd May 2024
Time: 4:00PM - 5:30 PM EAT

Webinar Series: *Developing Technology Policy in Africa*

Date: 23rd May 2024

Speakers: *Prof. Norman Clark, expert in innovation systems and development and Emeritus Professor at The Open University and the University of Strathclyde, UK.*

In this webinar Prof. Clark proposed a revised perspective for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy in Africa, which focuses more on the direct facilitation of economic production at domestic levels.

The new perspective suggests the creation of institutional frameworks designed to embed new knowledge directly into economic production itself. This argument supports the growth of the small-scale and informal sectors, which requires a wider engagement by local and national governments, and other development partners.

The seminar was intended to stimulate a conversation towards a scenario in which the gross financial inequalities that have beset Africa for so long will begin to be modified to the ultimate benefit of all.

It also included a brief introduction to an upcoming opportunity to publish policy and practice-oriented perspectives and case study articles on Africa through the international journal of technology development and sustainable development (IJTMSD).

Sustainable Agrifood Systems Transformation in Africa – A Mission Orientated Agricultural Innovation System Perspective



Guest Speaker

Dr. Catherine Kilelu

Webinar Series - *Sustainable Agrifood Systems Transformation in Africa – A Mission Orientated Agricultural Innovation System Perspective*

Date: 6th June 2024

Speakers: *Dr. Catherine Kilelu, Director, Communication, Outreach and Partnerships at the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS). PhD in Social Sciences from Wageningen University focused on the role of innovation support for inclusive smallholder commercialization. Previously worked at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and as a consultant.*

In this webinar, Dr. Kilelu argued that smallholder-dominated agrifood systems in sub-Saharan Africa, like in other developing regions, are at a transformative crossroad shaped by multiple, interacting social, environmental, and economic challenges. These include persisting food and nutrition insecurity coupled with food waste and loss, effects of climate change-induced extreme weather, biodiversity loss, global threats like conflict, and economic crises that have exposed the vulnerability of these food systems.

To support agrifood system transformation to simultaneously address these challenges, technological, social, and institutional dimensions must be coupled. While the agricultural innovation systems lens has been applied to interrogate and guide food systems innovation, persistent and emerging challenges calls for a rethink. Considering the urgency to transform food systems, Dr. Kilelu reflected on how a mission orientation perspective (Mazzucato, 2018, Klerkx and Begemann, 2020) offers new insights to shape innovation processes. This approach is now being applied to the problem of food loss and waste in the Kenyan context, anchoring it on the ongoing initiative under the African Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Cooling (ACES). This is a system based innovate sustainable cooling and cold chain for smallholder farming systems in a warming world.

Africalics Scientific Board (ASB) Corner Selected Highlights

A Noteworthy Visit: Prof. Kitaw from Addis Ababa University at AfricaLics Secretariat

The AfricaLics Secretariat hosted the AfricaLics President, Prof. Kitaw from Addis Ababa University, at ACTS, in Nairobi in June 2024.

Prof. Kitaw's visit was more than just a meeting; it was a catalyst for future growth and collaboration. The meeting also focused on discussing future steps to strengthen the financial foundation for the continuation of AfricaLics activities.



President of AfricaLics, Prof Daniel Kitaw with AfricaLics secretariat

To support this endeavour, AfricaLics has launched a crowdfunding initiative. We are inviting all, including emerging and early career scholars, Network members and friends to contribute to these efforts by clicking on the donate button on the AfricaLics website. This support is crucial for the sustainability and growth of the AfricaLics programs.

Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities from AfricaLics and be ready to make your mark.

OPINION

THE INTRIGUING WORLD OF PHD STUDIES: A JOURNEY WORTH EMBARKING ON

Embarking on a PhD journey is a monumental decision, filled with countless opportunities, challenges, and rewards. For those considering this path, it's crucial to understand what makes it so intriguing and worthwhile

Cutting-Edge Research

PhD students often engage in pioneering research that pushes the boundaries of existing knowledge. This is not just about adding a new line to an existing theory but about challenging norms and discovering new realms of understanding. The thrill of contributing original ideas to the academic world is unparalleled.

Intellectual Growth

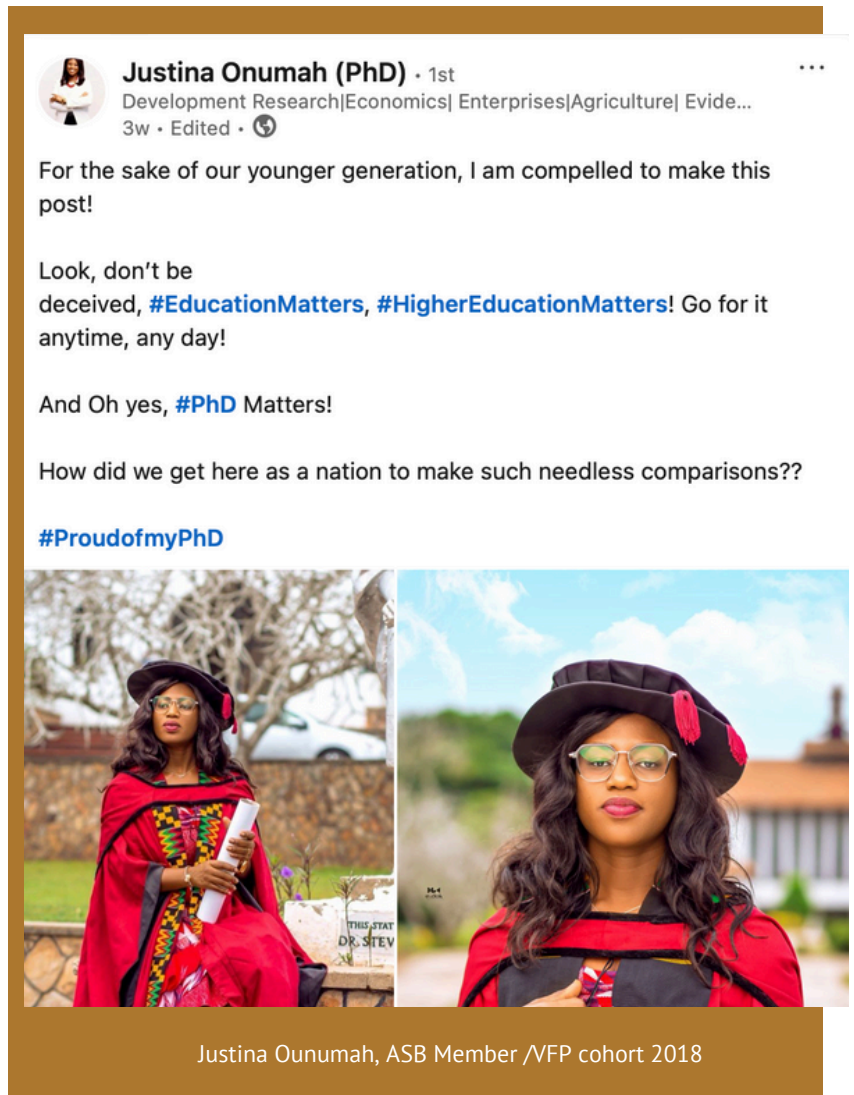
The rigorous process of obtaining a PhD significantly sharpens one's critical thinking and analytical skills. It demands a deep dive into complex problems, fostering a mindset geared towards problem-solving and innovation. This intellectual growth is one of the most rewarding aspects of the PhD journey.

Professional Networking

PhD students have the opportunity to collaborate with renowned experts and peers from around the globe. These connections can lead to fruitful collaborations, job opportunities, and lifelong friendships. Attending conferences, seminars, and workshops further enhances this professional network.

Career Advancement

A PhD opens doors to advanced career opportunities in academia, industry, and beyond. Whether one aims to become a professor, a researcher, or a leader in their field, the skills and knowledge acquired during a PhD are invaluable. As Justina Ounumah, one of the AfricaLics PhD VFP alumni, and currently serving as a member of ASB once said: "Look, don't be deceived, [#EducationMatters](#), [#HigherEducationMatters](#)! Go for it anytime, any day!"



Justina Onumah (PhD) · 1st
Development Research|Economics| Enterprises|Agriculture| Evide...
3w · Edited · 🌐

For the sake of our younger generation, I am compelled to make this post!

Look, don't be deceived, [#EducationMatters](#), [#HigherEducationMatters](#)! Go for it anytime, any day!

And Oh yes, [#PhD](#) Matters!

How did we get here as a nation to make such needless comparisons??

[#ProudoofmyPhD](#)

Justina Ounumah, ASB Member /VFP cohort 2018

Personal Fulfillment

Beyond professional achievements, pursuing a PhD is a journey of personal fulfillment. It's a testament to one's dedication, perseverance, and passion for their field of study. The sense of accomplishment upon completing a PhD is profound and lasting.

Global Impact

PhD research often addresses critical global challenges, from climate change to healthcare innovations. Students have the chance to make a significant impact on society, contributing to solutions that benefit humanity as a whole.

In conclusion, the journey of a PhD student is marked by intellectual curiosity, personal growth, and the potential to effect positive change. For those passionate about their field and eager to contribute to the world's knowledge, a PhD is an adventure worth pursuing.

BLOGS

[Please visit the AfricaLics blog page.](#) Here are some of the most recent blogs that have been posted:






- [Are we using the right metrics? Towards a research and theoretical agenda for innovation measurement in Africa](#) - Yvonne Gitu

Editorial Team

Moses Owidhi - m.owidhi@acts-net.org

Yvonne Gitu - y.gitu@acts-net.org

Please follow us on our Social Media Pages

-  Instagram
-  Facebook
-  LinkedIn
-  Youtube
-  Twitter

