



UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF AFRICAN ECONOMIES

ANNUAL SUMMARY 2026



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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Welcome to the CSAE Annual Summary 2026. This summary reflects on the Centre's work over the past year, highlighting key research achievements, publications, major initiatives, and events.

I would like to begin by noting that 2026 marks the Centre's 40th anniversary. It is remarkable to see how the Centre has evolved from its early days as an ESRC-funded research project on African economics into the global development economics research centre it is today. I joined the Centre in 1992 as a postdoctoral researcher, and it has been a privilege to witness its growth and development, culminating in my appointment as Director. While this report focuses on our current work, we will be hosting a celebratory event in June 2026 to focus on the Centre's journey from 1986 to 2026.

The Centre started from the vision of some at Oxford that the analysis of African economic challenges requires the same rigorous research as one would do for any economy. This may now be taken for granted, but it was not then. Today, development economics has come a long way, leading methodological advances in micro- and macro-development alike. Just as at the time of its foundation, faculty and students at CSAE can rightly claim to be at the research frontier, publishing in top journals, as well as contributing to policy making at the highest levels.

“ I joined the Centre in 1992 as a postdoctoral researcher, and it has been a privilege to witness its growth and development, culminating in my appointment as Director.

CSAE has been highly resilient during the last 40 years, including managing periods when research funding opportunities were more limited. During the last decade, funding has been relatively generously available for development research. It is unlikely that this will continue given how all governments have been cutting development aid. CSAE will no doubt manage: adjusting how we work to circumstances always has been at the core of our resilience, cautiously managing our resources so that we never had to compromise on our core principle of pursuing rigorous research as the basis of our work. And as long as excellence is competitively rewarded, CSAE should not be concerned.

In September 2025 we welcomed [Stefano Caria](#) back to the CSAE as our Academic Director, and I'm delighted to have him in this key leadership role. Our research portfolio continues to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the Centre's work. This summary showcases [Niccolò F. Meriggi's](#) programme on tax reform in Sierra Leone, for which he was awarded the [Talent Programme Veni Scheme grant](#). The project works closely with city councils and local authorities to test practical and politically feasible approaches to reforming property tax systems and strengthen local revenue collection (p.10). This booklet also highlights research conducted in Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic

of the Congo, examining whether improving access to off-farm employment for farmers affected by conservation efforts can enhance labour market outcomes and reduce pressure on agricultural land (p.14).

The [Centre for Macro-Experimental Development](#), run by [Dennis Egger](#), recipient of the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship, has also continued to make strong progress. This work evaluates the Scaling Transfers to End Poverty (STEP) programme, implemented by the non-government organisation Give Directly in partnership with the governments of Malawi and Rwanda. Data collection for the Malawi phase of the project began in February 2025, and the team has since been collecting data on a monthly basis. (p.18)

We are also delighted that [Aarushi Kalra](#) has been awarded a 2025 [Global Empowerment Meeting \(GEM\) Incubation Fund grant](#) by the Harvard Center for International Development (CID) for her research on how criminals adapt to AI-based fraud detection technologies. This work aims to inform the design of more effective and equitable AI tools for crime prevention, particularly in under-regulated digital environments.

This has been an exciting year for our policy engagement initiatives. The [Economic Policy Network's](#) portfolio continues to expand, and

we are now working with teams in twenty countries in Africa and Asia. Over the past year, we have strengthened our advisory capacity to support the Network's mission of partnering with local experts and global collaborators to assist policymakers to deliver on their economic and development priorities (p.22).

The [Open Political Economy Analysis programme \(Open PEA\)](#), the new partner programme to the EPN, is making great progress. An excellent core team is now in place, and together they are experimenting with ways to deliver practical advice for turning Gambling on Development's core thesis into action. From social protection in Malawi and civil service reform in Nepal to public health finance and educational reform in Nigeria. (p.24).

This year's [CSAE Economic Development in Africa Workshop](#), hosted by Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, was a great success. We were pleased to be able to fund forty places for African scholars to attend both this event and the CSAE Conference 2026. I would like to thank the CSAE and Addis Ababa University teams for their outstanding work in delivering a programme that included research presentations, feedback sessions, and trainings for attendees, as well as staff and students at the host institution. Alongside our annual conference in Oxford each March, this workshop plays a vital role in

building institutional partnerships, fostering knowledge exchange and debate, and strengthening the work of early career researchers in Africa (p.42 and p.44).

I look ahead to the coming year with great enthusiasm as we celebrate the Centre's achievements over the last four decades and we continue working towards our objective of contributing meaningfully to the transformation of the economic performance of developing countries.



[Stefan Dercon](#)
CSAE Director and
Professor of Economic Policy
at the Blavatnik School of
Government and the
Department of Economics,
University of Oxford



RESEARCH

Virunga National Park,
Democratic Republic of
the Congo

RESEARCHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

At the CSAE, we have been researching economic and social development in Africa since 1986. These days, our large team of development economists research not only countries in Africa, but also in other areas of the world. Researchers at the CSAE explore questions across a range of themes, including labour, agriculture, social institutions, firms, welfare and behaviour.

RESEARCH AND POLICY INITIATIVES

[Centre for Macro-Experimental Development](#)

Studying the regional and nationwide impacts of large cash transfers in Rwanda and Malawi

[Economic Policy Network](#)

Helping local partners build and sustain growth coalitions.

[Economic Research on Identity, Norms, and Narratives](#)

Bringing social context to the forefront of economic analysis

[Mind and Behaviour Research Group](#)

Investigating the psychological impact of living in poverty to improve policy programmes

[Open Political Economy Analysis Programme](#)

Delivering accessible and actionable political economy analysis

[Oxford Digital Public Infrastructure Research Lab](#)

Investigating the impacts of DPI in LMICs

[Oxford Initiative on Peace and Recovery in Ethiopia](#)

Exploring the background of Ethiopia's internal conflicts to propose policy options

[Oxford Martin Programme on African Governance](#)

Examining the current governance challenges in sub-Saharan Africa

[Oxford Martin Programme on Systemic Resilience](#)

Advancing practical solutions to manage shocks causing major and prolonged economic disruption

[Poverty Reduction, Social Protection and Employment Research Programme](#)

Tackling barriers to employment in LMICs

RESEARCH IN NUMBERS

30

Research Projects
Ongoing

57

Researchers

70

DPhil Students

55

Publications By Our
Researchers

+40

Countries We're
Working In

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A list of ongoing research projects with the principal investigators noted in brackets.

AI and Crime: Scammer Responses to AI-enabled Fraud Detection (Aarushi Kalra)

Anticipatory Education Support During Climate Crises: An Evaluation of Cash and Remote Learning Interventions in Kenya (Stefan Dercon and Rocco Zizzamia)

Complementarities of AI-Enabled and Human Support to Jobseekers: Experimental Evidence from Kenya (Jasmin Baier)

Connecting Unseen Workers to Formal Employment Opportunities (Brynde Kreft)

Convening Research and Evidence on Ethiopia's Digital Public Infrastructure Rollout (Fayda Lab) (Christian Meyer, Stefan Dercon)

Creating your Own Opportunities: Evaluation of an Entrepreneurship Programme for Refugees in Kenya (Antonia Delius)

Developing a Scalable Model for Personalised Adaptive Learning in Indian Public Schools Through A/B Testing (Noam Angrist)

Developing Innovative Interventions that Reduce Poverty and Unemployment Among Young South Africans (Kate Orkin)

Electrifying Growth: Exploring the Development Impacts of Rural Electrification in Africa (Niccolò F. Meriggi)

Equity-Like Financing for Women-Led Microenterprises: Experimental Evidence from India (Muhammad Meki)

[Female Rickshaw Driver Training in Pakistan \(Muhammad Meki\)](#)

[Financing Virtual Migration: Freelancing and Income Sharing in Bangladesh \(Muhammad Meki\)](#)

[Getting Online for Jobs: Reducing Information Frictions through Digital Technology in Public Employment Services \(Christian Meyer\)](#)

Health Services and Small and Middle-Sized Enterprises in Rural Sierra Leone (Niccolò F. Meriggi)

[Improving Refugee Integration Through Public Works: Experimental Evidence At-Scale from Ethiopia \(Dennis Egger\)](#)

Is Destination Safety a Non-Monetary Friction to Women's Rural-Urban Migration? (Alice Cahill)

Limits to Quality Upgrading in Ugandan Carpentry: Demand and Supply Side Constraints (Christopher Woodruff)

[Local Government Revenue Initiative for Rapid Urbanisation Programme \(Niccolò F. Meriggi\)](#)

Matching on Additionality (Stefano Caria)

National Scale Online Labour Market Interventions for Disadvantaged, Majority-Female Jobseekers in South Africa (Kate Orkin)

Occupational Segregation and Gender Gaps in Nairobi (Kate Orkin)

Promoting Job Creation to Save Wildlife: An Experience in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Stefan Dercon, Ashley Pople)

Reducing Maternal and Child Mortality in Five Low- and Middle-Income Countries (Niccolò F. Meriggi)

Research Initiatives on Poverty and Prosperity in Africa (Stefan Dercon)

Returns to International Labour Migration in Ethiopia (Christian Meyer)

[Shifting Management for Performance in the Ethiopian Civil Service \(Stefan Dercon\)](#)

[Tackling Psychological Barriers to Job Search and Employment in Kenya \(Kate Orkin\)](#)

[The Welfare and Incentive Effects of Job Displacement Insurance \(Stefano Caria\)](#)

Understanding the Benefits of the Digital Sector to Improve Matching between Firms and Jobseekers (Kate Orkin)

Below: Kenema City, Sierra Leone



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



LOCAL REVENUE MOBILISATION FOR RAPID URBANISATION IN SIERRA LEONE

State weakness remains a major barrier to economic development and political stability in sub-Saharan Africa. Weak tax systems both reflect and reinforce this problem: limited capacity constrains revenue collection, while low revenues restrict investment in stronger institutions. How can governments break this cycle?

This programme brings together research projects with city councils in Sierra Leone to test practical, politically feasible ways to reform property tax systems and strengthen local revenue collection.

Kevin Grieco
(LoGRI)

Abou Bakarr Kamara
(International Growth Centre)
Pablo Moises Guzman Lizardo
(Stanford University)

COLLABORATORS

Julian Michel
(Hong Kong Baptist University)
Wilson Prichard
(University of Toronto)

LOCATION

Sierra Leone



CSAE RESEARCHER

Niccolò F. Meriggi
(Economics)



ASSOCIATIONS

LoGRI Local Government
Revenue Initiative

IGC
International
Growth Centre

UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project 1: Participation, Legitimacy, and Tax Compliance: Studying the Impacts of Property Tax Reform in Freetown

In collaboration with Freetown City Council, this project examined whether citizen participation in decision-making can strengthen perceptions of government legitimacy and, in turn, improve tax compliance.

The research team implemented a large-scale participatory budgeting initiative involving more than 3,600 property owners. Participants were invited to join Digital Town Halls (DTHs) – interactive WhatsApp forums where residents discussed local priorities, proposed development projects, and voted on how public funds should be allocated. The projects that received the most votes were implemented in their neighbourhoods.

The intervention had three components:

- Digital Town Halls (DTHs)
- Delivery of selected public services
- Follow-up notification calls informing residents about completed services

This design allowed researchers to assess how participation, service delivery, and communication shape legitimacy and compliance.

Project 2: Tax Enforcement and Tax Culture: A Field Experiment on Property Tax Compliance in Kenema

In Kenema, property tax compliance is low, limiting local government revenue and constraining service provision. Existing enforcement efforts are often ineffective and unsystematic, while rapid urbanisation increases pressure on public services.

To evaluate enforcement strategies, researchers implemented a randomised saturation design. The proportion of property owners targeted for enforcement varied across neighbourhood clusters. This approach made it possible to measure both direct effects on households receiving enforcement and indirect spillover effects on untreated households within the same social networks.



RESULTS

Project 1: Freetown

The findings show that participatory approaches can help governments overcome legitimacy constraints. Participants viewed the Digital Town Halls as safe and constructive spaces for engaging with officials and fellow residents. Overall, participatory budgeting increased perceptions of government legitimacy across both supporters and opponents of the mayor.

However, while legitimacy gains were broad and sustained, improvements in tax compliance were shaped by political affiliation. Partisanship significantly moderated behavioural responses, suggesting that legitimacy alone does not automatically translate into higher compliance.

A simple enforcement process increased compliance by

53.4%

Project 2: Kenema

The results demonstrate that enforcement is highly effective when backed by credible administrative action. Governments often overestimate the political costs of enforcement, leading them to underuse a powerful tool. In practice, routine and even-handed enforcement substantially increased compliance.

Across the programme, a simple enforcement process increased compliance by 53.4 percentage points – sixteen times larger than the average effect found in existing studies. Religious leader visits increased compliance by 4.9 percentage points. Both interventions generated positive spillovers to neighbouring households. Survey data from over 6,000 property owners also shows improved perceptions of enforcement credibility, peer compliance, willingness to pay, and government legitimacy.

IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Partnering with local institutions, including traditional authorities and special courts, can substantially increase tax revenues.
- 2 When enforcement is carried out through trusted local actors, higher revenue collection does not trigger political backlash, making tax reform politically acceptable across party lines.
- 3 Credible, consistent enforcement, combined with community engagement, is central to strengthening both fiscal capacity and public trust.

Right: Residents discussing local projects



READ THE PAPER

[Participation, Legitimacy and Fiscal Capacity in Weak States: Evidence from Participatory Budgeting](#)

Authors: Niccolò F. Meriggi, Kevin Grieco, Abou Bakarr Kamara, Julien Michel, Wilson Prichard

CSAE Working Paper, May 2025, WPS/2025-05

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



PROMOTING JOB CREATION TO SAVE WILDLIFE: AN EXPERIMENT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Virunga National Park (VNP) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the oldest park in Africa, and one of the most biodiverse parks in the world. A UNESCO world heritage site in danger, it is home to endangered Mountain Gorillas and carbon rich forests.

Five million people live in its direct vicinity and many farm illegally within the park – the biggest threat to its survival. Young farmers aspire for careers outside of agriculture, but jobs tend to be in urban centres far from the park. Little is known about the effect of providing access to non-agricultural jobs away from the park on conservation efforts.

ASSOCIATIONS



COLLABORATORS

Sébastien Desbureaux
(INRAE, Centre for Environmental Economics)
Richard-Gilbert Nikiema
(INRAE, Centre for Environmental Economics)
Gracieux Mutaka Shashi
(Virunga Foundation)

LOCATION

Democratic Republic of the Congo



CSAE RESEARCHERS

[Stefan Dercon](#)
(Economics and BSG)



[Ashley Pople](#)
(Economics and World Bank)



This research project aims to fill this gap by testing whether improving access to off-farm employment for farmers affected by conservation efforts around Virunga National Park can improve their job market outcomes and reduce demand for agricultural land.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Building on a large-scale pilot in 2021-2022, the research team conducted a randomised controlled trial between 2023 and 2025 with more than 1,300 young people in villages surrounding Virunga National Park. Selected villages were characterised by high levels of agricultural encroachment, proximity to ecologically sensitive areas, and relatively stable security conditions.

Eligible farmers aged 18 to 32 years were invited to apply for the programme and then randomly assigned to one of three groups.

Groups

- Treatment 1: A three-month fixed-term job guarantee (“internship”) in small and medium-sized enterprises in nearby towns and cities.
- Treatment 2: Short-term casual employment offered by Virunga National Park within participants’ home village (the existing employment model currently offered by the Park).
- Control group: No employment intervention.

Below: Participants take part in casual employment in Virunga National Park



This design allows researchers to compare the effects of urban, skills-building employment opportunities with short-term local jobs and with no intervention.

The project is funded by the Darwin Initiative, a UK government grants programme that supports biodiversity conservation and locally-led poverty reduction initiatives worldwide.

RESULTS

Despite a challenging and unpredictable security environment, the programme achieved strong participation: approximately two-thirds of selected participants took up the internship opportunity, with more than 50% of all participants completing the programme.

Relative to both the casual work intervention and no intervention groups, the internship yielded positive short-term impacts, boosting migration to cities and increasing nonfarm employment immediately after completion. Young farmers offered internships spent less time in agriculture in the short term; however, this did not reduce household demand for agricultural land. Except for migration, these effects dissipated six months after the end of the programme.

[Find out more about the project on the CSAE website.](#)

IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The option to move to urban jobs is popular**
Offering young farmers a guaranteed three-month urban job increased migration to cities, boosted nonfarm employment, and reduced time spent farming in the immediate term.
- 2 Limited job availability affects long-term movement out of agriculture**
While young farmers offered the internship were more likely to remain in cities and preferred to work in stable urban employment, the employment gains faded within six months. This points to limited job availability, rather than skills or motivation, as the binding constraint.
- 3 Sustained livelihood transitions are key to lasting conservation outcomes.**
The short-term work placements and increased income did not trigger a “negative rebound” of intensified farming, but without sustained transitions out of agriculture, they are unlikely to materially improve conservation outcomes.

Right: A participant taking part in an internship



RESEARCH IN PROGRESS SNAPSHOTS



CENTRE FOR MACRO-EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Directed by Dennis Egger (Economics), who was awarded a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship, the Centre for Macro-Experimental Development (CMED) studies the regional and nationwide impacts of large unconditional cash transfers in Rwanda and Malawi.



ABOUT CMED

CMED evaluates the Scaling Transfers to End Poverty (STEP) programme run by the non-government organisation Give Directly and the governments of Malawi and Rwanda.

STEP gives large, almost universal cash transfers amounting to about one year of income at scale to people living in extreme poverty. Transfers are unconditional, putting the dignity of recipients first: they know best what they need. STEP will be the largest cash transfer experiment to date aiming to reach nationwide coverage over the next decade.

CMED will support STEP in designing and implementing a rigorous evaluation of the programme, developing the methodological tools to combine experimentation at-scale and structural economic modelling and building a robust research-to-

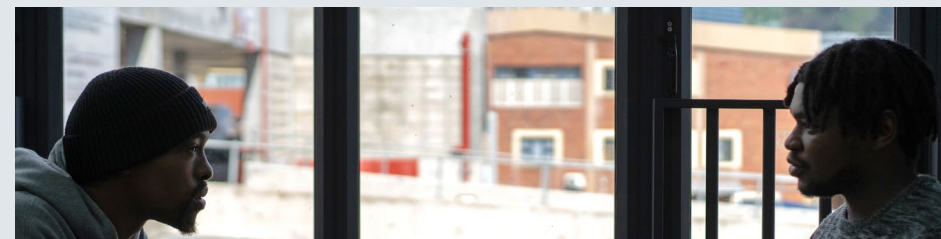
implementation pipeline where research findings can improve the programme in real time.

MALAWI PROJECT

Data collection began in February 2025 for the Malawi phase of the project. Following the STEP programme's cash transfer experiment giving a one-off cash transfer of approx. 550 USD to households in the rural communities of Chiradzulu. The team continues to collect monthly high frequency data.

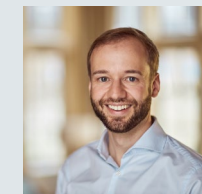
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does the programme affect the lives of the recipients at a household level?
- How does the programme affect local enterprises?
- What are the spillover effects of the programme on non-recipients, and the overall economy-wide impact on local economic aggregates?



SKILLS-BASED HIRING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Christian Meyer (Oxford Martin School), Brynde Kreft (Blavatnik School of Government), and Yacine Ouahioune (Blavatnik School of Government), together with Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator and Tabiya, are running a large-scale evaluation of skills-based hiring on SAYouth.mobi, South Africa's national youth employment platform. The platform connects over 4.3 million young people to job opportunities. The project examines whether recognising skills gained through informal and "unseen" work improves employment opportunities for young people.



CONTEXT

South Africa faces one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world. Nearly 60 percent of young South Africans aged 15–24 are unemployed.

Hiring practices remain heavily focused on formal qualifications and prior work experience, which can exclude young people whose skills were developed through informal work, unpaid care, volunteering, or running a small business. Yet, these skills are real and valuable, and they are rarely captured in a traditional CV.

The project introduces an expanded skills framework on SAYouth.mobi that makes these "unseen" skills visible to employers, and tests

whether doing so leads to better hiring outcomes, particularly for women and young people without formal qualifications.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Does making non-traditional skills visible to employers increase interview rates and job matches?
- Do job postings that describe skills rather than credentials lead to better matches?
- Does skills-based hiring open up new pathways for women and young people without post-secondary education?

Photocredit:
Barry Christianson for Tabiya

MAKING AN IMPACT



FROM RESEARCH TO REAL WORLD IMPACT

At the CSAE, we are committed to providing impartial, evidence-based advice to policymakers and their advisers in developing countries, helping to shape effective and sustainable economic strategies. Our work spans national and international engagement—challenging existing approaches, supporting better-informed decision-making, and building strong, collaborative networks.

We also place great importance on fostering long-term partnerships with academic institutions in developing countries. These collaborations create pathways for knowledge exchange and capacity-building, while our funding initiatives ensure that African scholars have meaningful opportunities to engage with CSAE research and events.

We're proud to support the next generation of African scholars through our [scholarships](#) for students applying to the MPhil in Economics at the University of Oxford (p.32). We also continue to support African researchers through our [Visiting Fellowships](#) (p.30) and CSAE Conference Funding schemes (p.27).



ENGAGING WITH POLICYMAKERS

ECONOMIC POLICY NETWORK (EPN)

The EPN helps local leaders build and sustain growth coalitions across politics, business, the civil service, and the public. The team consists of a small group of independent or university-affiliated specialists with deep practical economic, political, and policymaking experience.

Since its launch in 2023, the EPN has worked with high level officials and professionals in 20 countries across Africa and Asia

HELPING LOCAL PARTNERS BUILD AND SUSTAIN ECONOMIC GROWTH COALITIONS

We specialise in helping economies address global and local challenges, including:

- the debt and macroeconomic crisis;
- challenges of economic reform, growth, and structural transformation;
- the impact of climate change and the required energy transition;
- effective social protection, health, and education systems;
- the need for more effective government to overcome the governance and implementation deficit in a world of scarcer resources.

Above: The Blavatnik School of Government building.

EPN TEAM

[Stefan Dercon](#)
Academic Director



[Pascal Mensah](#)
Managing Director



[Christian Lippitsch](#)
Senior Research Officer



[Md Abir Hasan](#)
Expert on Industrial Policy



[Nick Lea](#)
Senior Adviser



OXFORD DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE RESEARCH GROUP (OxDPI)

Directed by Stefan Dercon and Christian Meyer, OxDPI examines how Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)—foundational digital systems such as digital identity systems, payment platforms, and data exchange mechanisms—affects social inclusion and economic well-being in low- and middle-income countries. Since its launch in late 2024, OxDPI has focused on the implementation and impacts of Ethiopia’s national digital ID system ‘Fayda’, through a dedicated research platform called Fayda.Lab, established in collaboration with the World Bank’s Identification for Development (ID4D) and Development Impact group and the Ethiopian National ID Program.

BUILDING EVIDENCE FOR ETHIOPIA’S DIGITAL ID

OxDPI brings together technical teams, policymakers, and researchers to generate high-quality, policy-relevant evidence that informs the scale-up of Fayda while contributing to the global body of knowledge on digital public infrastructure for development.

OxDPI supports the design and implementation of rigorous studies to evaluate Fayda’s impacts across sectors, populations, and societal outcomes, including financial access, social protection, service access and delivery, and refugee integration.

Using experimental and quasi-experimental methods, OxDPI will produce systematic evidence on who is enrolled, how the ID is being used to access services, and the mechanisms through which digital IDs impact inclusion and well-being. This evidence will directly inform the Ethiopian government’s

implementation strategy for the ongoing rollout of Fayda, and support peer learning among countries in the region pursuing their own digital ID initiatives.

A core focus of this work is to understand distributional effects and implementation challenges, and to identify design features and safeguards that support equitable and trusted digital ID implementation.

OXDPI TEAM

[Stefan Dercon](#)
(Economics and BSG)



[Christian Meyer](#)
(Oxford Martin School)



[Antonia Delius](#)
(Economics)



[Moges Endalamaw Yigermal](#)
(OxDPI)



Find out more about [EPN](#) and [OxDPI](#) on the CSAE website.



OPEN POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS PROGRAMME

The Open Political Economy Analysis Programme (Open PEA) works to deliver accessible and actionable political economy analysis on pressing issues in growth and development. Our USP is ‘openness’ – most political economy analysis exists as private advice, not a mainstream public good. A joint initiative of CSAE and the Blavatnik School of Government, Open PEA has seed funding from two philanthropic foundations until late 2027.

Open PEA spent its first year strengthening its capacity, conducting market research, and commissioning its initial products. Much of 2025 was taken up with getting the core team into place. Two job listings yielded an exceptional field of candidates, and the hiring committee prioritised quality over speed during the process.

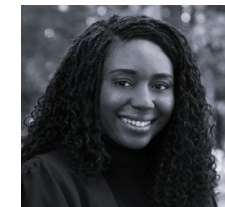
NEW MEMBERS

Open PEA’s political economy specialist and programme manager began on 01 October. Both bring ten years’ experience to the roles.



Cameron Thibos is a professional journalist and editor with a DPhil in international development from the University of Oxford. He was co-founder and managing editor of the award-winning Beyond Trafficking and Slavery project on openDemocracy from 2014-2025, an open access, political economy analysis project similar to Open PEA in many respects.

Kene Nwagbo specialises in the politics of basic education reform. She has coordinated large-scale, systems-strengthening reform in north-eastern Nigeria, led international research collaborations, and contributed to evaluations of girls’ education programmes in Nepal, Kenya, Ghana, and Tanzania.



The team is now pushing hard to produce its first wave of products. Open PEA, as originally conceived, was primarily going to aggregate and summarise the work of others. It is now clear that Open PEA is breaking more ground than initially assumed – very little relevant and quality PEA exists in the public domain. To address this deficit, it is now commissioning original products from external political economy experts while also starting work on fully in-house ‘flagship’ products.

- Three reports are near finalised, on
1. the politics of cash vs. non-cash delivery of social protection in Malawi;
 2. civil service reform in Nepal following the revolution;
 3. and health financing in Nigeria.

Also underway are a package of products on the politics of education in Nigeria, and a product on fuel subsidy reforms in Nigeria. Open PEA is furthermore collaborating with outside partners to develop a workstream on the removal of lead (Pb, the metal) from national economies.

Above Left: Photograph of the Blavatnik School of Government building.



All of these products will be peer reviewed by both in-country and international experts prior to being released open-access on Open PEA’s website.

OPEN PEA TEAM

[Stefan Dercon](#)
Academic Director



[Peter J. Evans](#)
Programme Director



[Kenechukwu Nwagbo](#)
Political Economy Specialist



[Cameron Thibos](#)
Programme Manager





CSAE CONFERENCE FUNDING

As part of the annual CSAE Conference: Economic Development in Africa, we fund 30+ African scholars, living and working in Africa, to join us in Oxford to present their research. Since 2019, the funded participants of the Conference have also been sponsored to join the CSAE Economic Development in Africa Workshop, hosted by a different academic institution in Africa each year.

FUNDED PARTICIPANTS IN 2025/26

For the CSAE Conference 2026 we have funded forty African scholars to present their work in Oxford, and at the [CSAE Economic Development in Africa Workshop 2025](#), hosted by Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia.

The Workshop gave funded participants the opportunity to present their papers to faculty from institutions from across the continent as well as professors from Addis Ababa University and the University of Oxford. They received feedback on their work to help them improve ahead of the CSAE Conference.

You can find out more about the CSAE Workshop 2025 on page 44.



Participating in the CSAE Workshop reminded me why academic communities matter. I left the Pre-Conference Workshop feeling motivated, intellectually challenged, and clearer about the next steps in my research journey.

Salma Emmanuel
PhD candidate at Makerere University Business School and funded participant in 2025/26

Left: funded participants socialise at the Conference.

740

applications for funding for the Conference

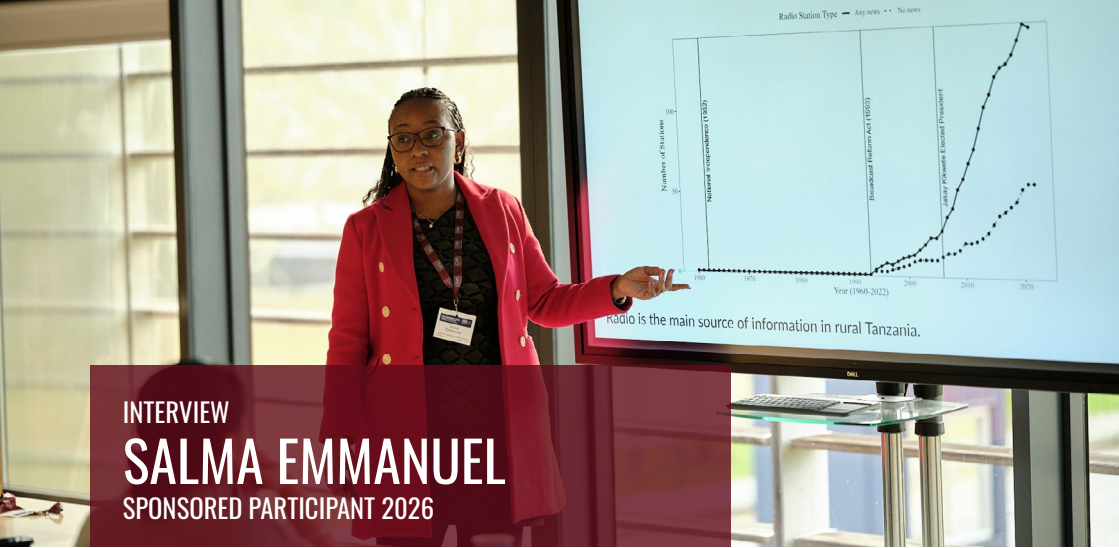
40

African speakers sponsored

speakers from

20

African countries



INTERVIEW
SALMA EMMANUEL
 SPONSORED PARTICIPANT 2026

Tell us about yourself.

My name is Salma Emmanuel. I am a PhD candidate in Energy Economics and Governance at Makerere University Business School. I am also affiliated with the University of Dar es Salaam, where I serve as an Assistant Lecturer.

What are your research interests?

My research interests lie at the intersection of environment, climate change, energy, and development economics in developing countries, with a methodological focus on field experiments. Currently, I'm working on a project exploring how environment-related news framing

influences climate change awareness, attitudes, behaviour and willingness to adopt clean energy technologies in Tanzania. Through this work, I'm particularly interested in understanding how information and media shape household decision-making and whether better-designed messaging can support more sustainable outcomes.

What inspired you to apply for funding for the CSAE events?

Securing funding to attend international conferences is often one of the biggest hurdles for early-career researchers based in Africa. I applied for this support because I knew the

CSAE workshop and 2026 conference would provide an opportunity to receive high-quality feedback on my work and engage with leading scholars in development economics. The fact that CSAE funding covers both the workshop and the main conference in Oxford made it even more meaningful. Without this funding, participation would have been financially very difficult. For me, this is not just about attending the conference but being part of a global academic conversation and positioning my research within that space.

What aspects of the workshop did you find the most valuable?

Four aspects of the workshop were particularly valuable to me. First, it provided a meaningful opportunity to receive detailed feedback on my research, which helped me prepare more confidently for the main conference at the University of Oxford.

Second, I had a one-on-one feedback session with Professor Dennis Egger, during which I received insightful comments on both my presentation and the paper itself, as well as ideas on how I could expand the project in the future.

Third, the workshop allowed me to engage directly with scholars from across Africa and Oxford faculty, leading to meaningful conversations about future research collaboration.

Fourth, the training sessions on Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) and proposals offered practical guidance that I can

apply in shaping future projects.



The workshop created space for genuine academic exchange, and that level of constructive feedback is something many African early-career researchers rarely have access to.

How will you integrate the insights you gained from the workshop in your future work?

I plan to use the knowledge gained from the workshop to strengthen both the design and direction of my research. I will apply the lessons from the RCT sessions to ensure my experimental work is carefully planned and grounded in policy relevance. I will also draw on the guidance on writing stronger research proposals to improve future funding applications. In addition, I will build on the discussions with peers to explore potential areas for collaboration and joint research.

What advice would you offer to someone preparing to attend a CSAE workshop?

I would also advise early-career researchers, especially those based in Africa, to apply for the CSAE funding without hesitation. Opportunities like this can significantly accelerate your academic growth. Engage actively, ask questions, and follow up with people you meet at the CSAE workshop. The relationships you build can last well beyond the workshop.

Participating in the CSAE workshop reminded me why academic communities matter. I left the pre-conference workshop feeling motivated, intellectually challenged, and clearer about the next steps in my research journey. Beyond financial support, CSAE plays a vital role in fostering collaboration between local and international scholars, and continued support for such platforms is essential to strengthening the growth and visibility of African researchers.



FELLOWSHIPS

The CSAE Visiting Fellowship scheme supports African scholars to join the CSAE community in Oxford to work on their research and attend events during term. The scheme is open to African scholars with a doctorate in economics who are currently pursuing a career in economics and living anywhere in the world.

MEET THE 2026 FELLOWS

We welcomed three fellows to the CSAE in 2026. We were also delighted to invite them to join us for the CSAE Economic Development in Africa Workshop 2025 held at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia.



ABIODUN ADETOKUNBO
Senior Lecturer,
Augustine University
Nigeria

Abiodun Adetokunbo is an economist and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Economics at Augustine University, Lagos, Nigeria. He is a development and applied macro-economist with a regional focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

His research spans macroeconomics, international trade, energy and environmental economics, and development, with complementary interests in technology adoption

and the dynamics of informality in low-income countries.

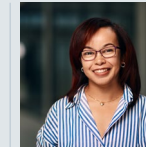
His work applies empirical and econometric methods to examine structural transformation, climate vulnerability, and firm- and sector-level responses to economic and environmental shocks. His research has addressed issues including renewable energy adoption and manufacturing performance, climate vulnerability and investment decisions, mineral processing and industrial linkages, trade and institutional quality, and the role of uncertainty in financial and commodity markets.



DAMBALA GELO KUTELA
Associate Professor of
Economics,
University of Witwatersrand
South Africa

Dambala is an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Pretoria and an MSc in Economics from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Dambala is a member of the Econometric Society, the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE), and Economic Society of South Africa (ESSA).

Dambala's research sits at the intersection of behavioral economics, institutional analysis, and development microeconomics, combining theory and empirical evidence to explain how bounded rationality, institutional incentives, and organizational constraints shape economic behavior, development and environmental outcomes in developing and middle-income countries.



SAROBIDY RAKOTONARIVO
Senior Research Fellow
University of Antananarivo
Madagascar

Sarobidy Rakotonarivo is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Antananarivo and founder of Mitsilo, a lab advancing social-science-led, interdisciplinary research in Madagascar. She holds a joint PhD in environmental socio-economics from Bangor University and the University of Copenhagen, and a double MSc in Sustainable Tropical Forestry.

Her work examines how conservation and climate initiatives can better support both people and biodiversity, drawing on economics, political ecology, and conservation science. She has authored 50+ peer-reviewed publications and received awards including the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science (Sub-Saharan Africa) Award. She currently leads internationally funded projects on climate-smart farming, rural livelihoods, equitable protected-area management, climate-related migration, and forest restoration, while mentoring emerging scholars and working with policymakers to ensure nature-climate solutions deliver tangible benefits for both people and nature.

[Find out more about the CSAE Visiting Fellowships Scheme on the CSAE website](#)



SCHOLARSHIPS

We're delighted to be able to offer scholarships to support African post-graduate students focusing on development economics at the University of Oxford. This year we supported Great Nnamani (Queen's College Cyril and Philis Long Scholarship in partnership with the CSAE) to study on the MPhil in Economics programme.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was born and raised in Nigeria, so I spent a little over two decades there. During this time, I earned a bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Nigeria, after which I joined a leading think tank as a researcher. I spent two years working on projects that spanned macro-economics, education

INTERVIEW WITH GREAT NNAMANI

technology, and public procurement. Sequel to this experience, I forged on to earn a master's degree in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge through the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship. It was an awesome time of broadening my horizons on global development and building strong research skills. But I am happy to return to my first academic love, Economics.

What are your research interests?

I am interested in

Development Macroeconomics (Macro-Development) which connotes examining how aggregate economic policies interact with the structural challenges of developing nations to promote long-term growth and poverty reduction.

Why Economics at Oxford?

The Department of Economics at Oxford is globally renowned as a breeding ground for some of the world's leading economists. It has birthed both old

and new generations of scholars whose work continues to shape economic thought and policy. The programmes, particularly the MPhil which I am currently enrolled in, are beautifully structured to refine you and prepare you to solve global issues. I have always admired the quality of the faculty and the solid research groups where presentations and discussions on novel economic ideas are unravelled. I knew I needed to be in such an environment that will stretch me academically and hence bring the best out of me. Now that I am here, I can tell that I made the right choice.

How has this scholarship impacted you and your studies?

This scholarship has been nothing short of transformative. Besides the fact that I get to learn from seasoned experts in the field, I cherish and deeply appreciate being able to do so comfortably, without any form of financial anxiety. I had withdrawn an Oxford

admission a year earlier because I could not secure funding, so receiving this studentship has been particularly meaningful. Alongside my studies, I run the African Economic Scholars Program (AESP), which seeks to groom the next generation of economists and policy-makers in Africa. This studentship has given me the stability and space to pursue both my academic goals and my commitment to youth development with a higher level of clarity and purpose. I cannot be more thankful to CSAE and The Queen's College for turning my dream into reality.

What has been the most rewarding part of being a member of the CSAE?

The people! I find it very rewarding that I have access to a very talented and dedicated team that has committed time and resources to solving economic and social issues in developing countries. I am equally excited about the opportunities that the CSAE

Conference offers, especially, given its scale and intellectual depth. The Conference often brings together leading researchers and practitioners, and volunteering with the organising team implies that I get to expose myself to cutting-edge research, while also connecting with very diverse vanguard scholars across the globe.

If you had the chance to share one takeaway from your experience so far, what would it be?

Always ask for help. It sounds simple, but we live in a world circled by expectations and so much pressure, which can make it difficult sometimes for people to admit vulnerability or ask for support. In the past few months, I have had to lean on the shoulders of senior colleagues and classmates at Oxford, and I am grateful for their wise counsel and how tremendously supportive they have been to me.

[Find out more about scholarships on the CSAE website.](#)

PUBLICATIONS

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN ECONOMIES

The [Journal of African Economies \(JAE\)](#) is a vehicle to carry rigorous economic analysis, focused entirely on Africa, for Africans and anyone interested in the continent - be they consultants, policymakers, academics, traders, financiers, development agents or aid workers.

The JAE is published by Oxford University Press (OUP), managed at the CSAE, and has an international network of Managing and Associate Editors and referees.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF: JOHN HODDINOTT



2025 saw a record number of submissions to JAE, 647 in total with 26 papers being published. The journal is grateful for the support and assistance received from the many individuals who volunteered their time to referee these submissions. These papers now appear in the online version of JAE; in keeping with current trends in

publishing – and like many other development economics journals – JAE decided to discontinue the print version of the journal.

A continuing strength of the journal is the breadth of country coverage, topics, and methods, that are found in JAE's published papers.

In addition to several cross-country studies, 2025 saw papers written using data from 18 different countries and from all parts of the continent. Analyses used randomized controlled trials but also event study analysis, instrumental variables, and difference-in-difference methods using

cross-country datasets.

Our published papers similarly covered a wide range of topics – everything from the impacts of coal mining in Mozambique, to risk and time preferences in Ethiopia, to how reducing wait times could boost African trade, the effects of Antenatal Care utilisation on infant birthweights in Ghana, the impact of unconditional cash transfers on schooling outcomes in South Africa, and the distributional impacts of currency devaluation in Egypt.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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Murray Leibbrandt
(University of Cape Town)

Bob Rijkers
(World Bank)

JOURNAL IN NUMBERS

647

articles submitted

26

articles published

7

issues published

67

authors

Find out more about the JAE on the CSAE website

TOP FIVE DOWNLOADED ARTICLES IN 2025

[Education in Africa: What are We Learning?](#)

David K Evans and Amina Mendez Acosta
Volume 30, Issue 01, January 2021

[Increasing Tax Collection in African Countries: The Role of Information Technology](#)

Oyebola Okunogbe and Fabrizio Santoro
Volume 32, Issue 01, March 2023

[The Political Economy of Economic Policy Advice](#)

Stefan Dercon
Volume 33, Issue Supplement 01, December 2024

[Effect of Foreign Direct Investment on Industrialisation: The Case of China in Africa](#)

Ding Chen, Aliyu Buhari Isah, and Umar Muhammad Gummi
Volume 34, Issue 01, January 2024

[Debt Distress and Climate-Resilient Development in sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Kevin P Gallagher, Luma Ramos, PhD, Anzetse Were, and Marina Zucker-Marques
Volume 33, Issue Supplement 02, December 2024

CSAE WORKING PAPERS [PUBLISHED IN 2025](#)

[Frontier Rule and Conflict](#)

Malik M, Mirza RA, Rehman FU, February 2025

[Weathering Conflict: The Effect of Resource Shocks on Livestock Raids](#)

Jensen ND, Lopez-Rivas JD, Morsink K, Rikken EE, March 2025

[Extreme Weather Events and the Support for Democracy](#)

Cerkez N, March 2025

[Charitable Giving in Wartime: Evidence from Ukraine's War Fundraising](#)

Klymak M, Kosenko A, Korenok O, Mykhailyshyna D, Vasilaky K, April 2025

[Participation, Legitimacy and Fiscal Capacity in Weak States: Evidence from Participatory Budgeting](#)

Meriggi NF, Grieco K, Kamara AB, Michel J, Prichard W, May 2025

[Ignorance is Bliss? Rejection and Discouragement in On-The-Job Search](#)

Zizzamia R, May 2025

[Pathway to Productivity and Leadership: Evolution of Female Garment Workers in Bangladesh](#)

Khan M, Rabbani A, Woodruff C, June 2025

[The Welfare and Market Effects of Delays in Humanitarian Assistance](#)

Bruni V, Sterck O, July 2025

[Information, Skills, and Job Search](#)

Kreft B, August 2025

[Can Cash Transfers Save Lives? Evidence from a Large-Scale Experiment in Kenya](#)

Grady K, Miguel E, Shankar N, Egger D, Walker M, August 2025

[Political Representation and Judicial Outcomes: Evidence from India](#)

Datta T, October 2025

[The Governance of Macroprudential Policy](#)

Aron J, Farrell G, Muellbauer J, November 2025

[New Models for South African Consumption, House Prices, and Mortgage and Non-Mortgage Debt](#)

Aron J, Muellbauer J, November 2025

[The Rise of Viet Nam's Solar Panel Industry: Inputs, FDI, and Spillovers](#)

Ngov MY, Vézina P-L, Tran TT, Nayyar G, December 2025

PUBLICATION SPOTLIGHTS

A selection of publications by CSAE researchers in 2025 and 2026.

[Preschool Quality and Child Development](#)

Authors: Andrew A, Attanasio O, Bernal R, Cardona Sosa L, Krutikova S, Rubio-Codina
Journal of Political Economy, Volume 132, Issue 7, 2025

[How To Improve Education Outcomes Most Efficiently? A Review Of The Evidence Using A Unified Metric](#)

Authors: Angrist N, Evans DK, Filmer D, Glennerster R, Rogers H, Sabarwal S
Journal of Development Economics, Volume 172, January 2025

[The Allocation of Incentives in Multi-Layered Organisations: Evidence from a Community Health Programme in Sierra Leone](#)

Authors: Caria S, Deserranno E, Kastrau P, León-Ciliotta G,
Journal of Political Economy, Forthcoming

[Matching Frictions and Distorted Beliefs: Evidence from a Job Fair Experiment](#)

Authors: Caria S, Fafchamps M, Falco P, Franklin S, Quinn S, Shilpi F,
The Economic Journal, Forthcoming

[Village Social Structure and Labour Market Performance: Evidence from the Philippines](#)

Authors: Caria S, Labonne J,
Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organisation, Forthcoming

[Aspiring to a Better Future: Can a Simple Psychological Intervention Reduce Poverty?](#)

Authors: Dercon S, Orkin K, Garlick R, Mahmud M, Sedlmayr R, Haushofer J,
Review of Economic Studies, Forthcoming

[Adolescent Schooling And Adult Labor Supply: Evidence From COVID-19 School Closures And Reopenings In Kenya](#)

Authors: Egger, D, Biscaye P, Pape U
World Bank Economic Review, Forthcoming

[Taking Stock Of Africa's Economic Transformation: Rethinking Sources Of Productivity Growth](#)

Authors: Gollin D, McMillan M, Mensah E, Ndubuisi G, Owusu S,
World Bank Research Observer, Forthcoming

[Structural Change And Macro Development: Beyond The One-Sector Growth Model](#)

Authors: Gollin D, Rogerson R,
Oxford Review of Economic Policy, Volume 41, September 2025

[Designing And Implementing Experiments Within Local Bureaucratic Systems: A Cautionary Tale From An Educator Incentive Program](#)

Authors: Leaver, C, Asad S, Habib M, Karachiwalla N, Kosec K, ur Rehman A,
Review Education Finance and Policy, Volume 20, Issue 03, July 2025

[Artificial Intelligence, Biodiversity & Energy: From A Resource-Intensive To A Symbiotic Tech](#)

Author: Lebdioui A, Melguizo A, Munoz V,
Technology and Industrialisation for Development Centre (TIDE), January 2025

[Agricultural Development In The Poorest Countries: Insights From The Poultry Sector In Sierra Leone](#)

Author: Meriggi NF, Bulte E, Rozelle M, Voors M
Routledge, 2025

[Global Income Poverty Measurement With Preference Heterogeneity: Theory And Application](#)

Author: Quinn NN, Decerf B, Ferrando M
Journal of Development Economics, Volume 177, October 2025

[Psychology and Cash Transfers. In The Handbook of Social Protection: Evidence and New Directions for Low-and Middle-Income Countries](#)

Authors: Orkin K, Ridley M,
MIT Press, 2026

[The Future in Mind: Aspirations and Long-Term Outcomes in Rural Ethiopia](#)

Authors: Orkin K, Bernard T, Dercon S, Schinaia G, Seyoun Taffesse A,
The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Forthcoming

[When You Can't Afford To Wait For A Job: The Role Of Time Discounting For Own-Account Workers In Developing Countries](#)

Authors: Scarelli T, Margolis D,
Economic Development and Cultural Change, Volume 73, Issue 4, 2025

[The Impact Of Climate Change On Work: Lessons For Developing Countries](#)

Authors: Serneels P, Feriga M, Lozano Gracia N,
World Bank Research Observer, Volume 40, Issue 1, 2025

[Appointments: A More Effective Commitment Device For Health Behaviors](#)

Authors: Sterck O, Derksen L, Kerwin JT, Ordaz Reynoso N,
The Economic Journal, Forthcoming

[Why It's A Bad Idea To Triage Refugee Food Aid When Everyone's Hungry](#)

Authors: Sterck O
The New Humanitarian, November 2025



EVENTS

WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS IN OXFORD

We run a programme of academic seminars and workshops at the Centre throughout the academic year.

CSAE RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

The CSAE Research Workshops are an opportunity for our DPhil students and junior academics to present their work to receive useful feedback to improve their paper and presentation.

CSAE LUNCHTIME SEMINARS

Open to everyone, the CSAE Lunchtime Seminars series runs once a week during term time and features renowned development economists from institutions around the world. The series is sponsored by the Journal of African Economies.

In 2025 we had

15
CSAE Lunchtime Seminars

19
CSAE Research Workshops

OXFORD DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS WORKSHOP

Organised in partnership with the Department of Economics at the University of Oxford, the Oxford Development Economics Workshop is an annual invitation only event for job market candidates in development economics to present their work ahead of the job market and receive useful feedback from faculty from institutions across Europe. The OxDEV Workshop 2025 included twelve presentations across seven sessions and a final feedback sessions where speakers could get one-to-one feedback on their papers from faculty.

GOVERNORS' ROUNDTABLE FOR AFRICAN CENTRAL BANKERS 2025

Every year the CSAE hosts central bank governors from across Africa for a roundtable discussion in Oxford. In this event Oxford professors join the governors to discuss pertinent economic issues faced across the continent.

Left: delegates ask questions in the lecture theatre at the CSAE Conference 2025

CSAE CONFERENCE 2025: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The CSAE Conference is an annual three-day event hosted in Oxford, UK, bringing together researchers from across the global development economics community to engage with cutting-edge research focused on Africa. With keynote addresses, panels, and over 70 parallel sessions, the conference offers a dynamic platform for presenting new work, receiving constructive feedback, and fostering collaboration.

CSAE CONFERENCE 2025

The CSAE Conference took place from 23 to 25 March 2025 at St Catherine's College, Oxford, UK.

This year marked a record-breaking number of submissions—1,280 papers were submitted for consideration, with the final number of 263 presented at the event.

The keynote speech '[Wealth in People](#)' was delivered by Nobel Prize

winning economist James Robinson (University of Chicago) who challenged conventional narratives arguing that "Africa is not underdeveloped, it is differently developed".

This year's opening panel, '[Entrepreneurship in Africa](#)', placed a spotlight on

private-sector development. Tommaso Porzio (Columbia Business School) presented his research on Startups in Africa, followed by a lively discussion featuring Alexandra Fraser (Viridian), Eghosa Omoigui (EchoVC), and Fadilah Tchoumba (ABAN).

The conference closed with the panel '[Evidence-Based Policy: Towards an Improved Research-Policy](#)

263
papers presented

442
registrations

1280
paper
submissions

722
applications for
funding

34
funded
participants

83
sessions and
panels

Equilibrium in Africa", chaired by VoxDev's Oliver Hanney. The panel brought together key voices in policy and practice, including Ranil Dissanayake (FCDO), Miriam Laker (GiveDirectly), Justice Tei Mensah (World Bank), and Nompumelelo Nyathi-Mohohlwane (National Department of Basic Education, South Africa).

In addition to 78 parallel sessions covering ten core conference themes, the programme featured several special sessions, including:

- Strategic Plan and Policy Challenges for Africa: A Roadmap to 2025-2035 (AERC)
- SA-TIED: Unlocking Data for Economic Research and Policy Impact
- [Publishing Research on African Economics in Academic Journals: Pitfalls and Opportunities Session](#)

Find out more about the CSAE Conference, watch recordings on the CSAE website.

FUNDED SPEAKERS

The CSAE offers financial support for a group of African conference speakers to attend both the CSAE Conference in Oxford, UK, and the CSAE Economic Development in Africa Workshop hosted in a different country in Africa each year.

For the 2025 Conference, we received 722 applications for funding and were able to sponsor 34 speakers to attend.

Below: James Robinson answering questions during the keynote



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA WORKSHOP 2025

Each year, as part of the annual CSAE Conference, we support early-career researchers from across Africa to participate in the Economic Development in Africa Workshop. Hosted by a different African university each year, the Workshop provides a unique opportunity for African scholars to receive feedback on their research, access training, and build lasting academic networks. Staff and students from the host institution are also invited to attend both the Workshop and the CSAE Conference in the UK.

WHAT HAPPENED THIS YEAR?

This year's [CSAE Economic Development in Africa Workshop in December 2025](#) brought CSAE's annual conference community to the University of Addis Ababa in the year of their 75th anniversary. The workshop was held at the Institute for Ethiopian Studies, home for research, libraries and the display of Ethiopia's cultural heritage in the middle of Ethiopia's oldest university. Like the main CSAE Conference

in March, for five days researchers from all over Africa, from the University of Oxford, and the world, came together to present and discuss the latest economic research on Africa.

Each day covered one or more focus topics with plenty of room for debate amidst Ethiopia's world-famous coffee.

Below: delegates at the Workshop in Addis Ababa in 2025



This year, the CSAE funded forty African researchers to attend the event and invited faculty from Makerere University, the University of Pretoria, and Lagos Business School to join professors from Addis Ababa University and the University of Oxford in providing feedback throughout the event.

Each funded participant presented their research in thematic sessions and received constructive feedback from peers and faculty. Dedicated one-to-one mentoring sessions allowed for in-depth discussion of ongoing work and research proposals.

The programme included a public lecture by CSAE Director Stefan Dercon on how to support economic reform and progress from the outside, as well as a panel discussion on the future of higher education in Africa.

The final day of the programme featured training sessions designed to strengthen participants' research capacity. These included sessions on randomised controlled trials by Dennis Egger and Niccolò F. Meriggi (University of Oxford), and on structural transformation and growth by Joe Kaboski (University of Notre Dame).

[Find out more about previous CSAE Workshops on the CSAE website.](#)



WORKSHOP IN NUMBERS

+80
participants

13
presentation
sessions

5
training
sessions

40
papers
presented



FACULTY

Christopher Adam
Professor of Development
Economics (ODID)

Dahab Aglan
Postdoctoral Researcher
(Economics)

**Patricia Mawuledey
Agyapong**
Postdoctoral Researcher
(Economics)

Alison Andrew
Associate Professor in
Economics (Economics)

Noam Angrist
Academic Director, What
Works Hub for Global
Education, and Senior
Fellow (BSG)

Janine Aron
Senior Research Fellow
(OMS)

Stefano Caria
Professor of Economics
and CSAE Academic
Director (Economics)

Nicolas Cerkez
Departmental Lecturer
(ODID)

**Daniel Crisostomo
Wainstock**
Career Development
Fellowship in Economics
(Queen's College)

Banu Demir Pakel
Associate Professor in
Economics (Economics)

Stefan Dercon
Professor of Economic
Policy and CSAE Director
(BSG, Economics)

Dennis Egger
Associate Professor in
Economics (Economics)

Peter J. Evans
Programme Director Open
PEA and Fellow of Practice
(BSG)

Douglas Gollin
Senior Research Fellow
(Economics)

Donna Harris
Director of Studies in
Political Economy
(Department of Continuing
Education)

Md Abir Hasan
Expert on Industrial
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Senior Fellow in
Economics (Economics)

Aarushi Kalra
Postdoctoral Prize
Research Fellow
(Economics)

Pramila Krishnan
Professor of Development
Economics (ODID)

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Economics and Public
Policy (BSG)

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EPN (BSG)

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Vice Dean for Academic
Affairs and Professor of
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Associate Professor of
Political Economy of
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Senior Research and
Policy Officer (BSG)

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Professor of Behavioural
Economics and Public
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Fellow (Economics)

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Specialist (BSG)

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Rahman**
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**Moges Endalamaw
Yigermal**
Research and Policy
Officer (OxDPI)

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Kanika Phogat
(Economics)

Dylan Reich
(BSG)

Daksh Walia
(Economics)

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(World Bank)

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(DPhil, University of
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and Research)

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Teferi Mergo
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University of Life
Sciences)

Verena Wiedemann
(International Finance
Corporation)



My research interests centre on labour, migration, and firms in developing countries. In my doctoral research, I explore two significant challenges to structural transformation: the low productivity of firms in the manufacturing sector, and the limited mobility of workers despite substantial inter-regional wage disparities.

In my first paper, I examine whether hiring a mix of migrant and local workers mitigates the costs of turnover and absenteeism for a textile firm in South India. In my second paper, I study how peer effects shape the productivity and tenure of female migrant workers in a garment factory.

For these studies, I collected proprietary data from Indian firms, interviewed managers, and estimated a structural model. My final paper employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the barriers to migration in India. I used quasi-experimental methods to measure the welfare impacts of migration, and interviewed a comparable sub-sample of respondents in rural Andhra Pradesh to uncover the underlying mechanisms.

Alongside my doctoral studies, I have consulted with the World Bank on projects examining the well-being of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and rural income growth in Zimbabwe, and I am currently collaborating

SPOTLIGHT

ANVITA RAMACHANDRAN

**DPhil Candidate,
Oxford Department
of International
Development,
University of Oxford**

with the Asian Development Bank on the impact of artificial intelligence on the Philippines labour market.

Previously, I worked as a research assistant at the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, the Young Lives study, and the Centre for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago. I obtained an MPhil in Development Studies (with distinction) at the University of Oxford, and a BA in Economics and a BSc in Statistics (magna cum laude) from the University of Chicago.

Find out more about students on the CSAE website

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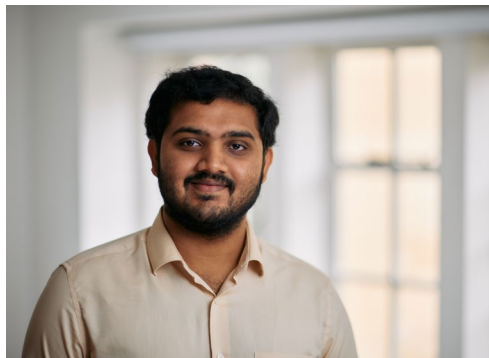
Below: CSAE students sit together in the Manor Road Building



SPOTLIGHT

KARTHIK ABHIRAMAPURAM SRIDHAR

**DPhil Candidate, Department of
Economics, University of Oxford**



Before joining the Department of Economics at the University of Oxford, I completed my undergraduate education in Economics and Economic History at the London School of Economics. I subsequently pursued an MPhil in Economics at Oxford, and am presently a doctoral student in the department. During my doctoral studies, I have also undertaken a research visit to the Reserve Bank of India through its CAFRAL Research Department.

My research interests are primarily in macroeconomics and monetary economics, with a particular focus on developing countries. A central theme of my work is measurement: how do we identify the causal effects of

monetary policy, and what factors shape monetary policy transmission in emerging market economies?

In my research, I use high-frequency financial market data, granular household-level survey data and detailed administrative data to answer these questions. I am especially interested in understanding how the process of formal financial inclusion in developing countries affects the strength of monetary policy transmission to households' income and consumption decisions.

I am also very interested in the role of finance in shaping economic development. Alongside my academic research in macroeconomics, I have worked

as a short-term consultant with the World Bank, contributing to the World Development Report 2024 and projects on digital financial inclusion in India. In addition, I have been involved in a randomized controlled trial studying flexible repayment loan contracts for small enterprises in developing countries.

At Oxford, I have taught macroeconomic theory and development economics at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. My broader academic ambition is to contribute to a deeper understanding of monetary and financial systems in developing economies, combining institutional detail with careful empirical analysis.



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www.csae.ox.ac.uk

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