



**Transforming
Education
Together**

Impact Report 2016-2019

A portrait of Sepiso Dean Mwamelo, a young Black woman with long braids, smiling. She is wearing a white sleeveless top with a blue and black floral pattern and a black beaded necklace. The background is dark.

Sepiso's Story

Sepiso is an intern at ESSA, working on social inclusion within scholarships.

Born and raised in Tanzania, I have witnessed the shortcomings of the education system in Tanzania. While the scarcity of desks, books and teachers in schools hinders the chances for success for the students, the inherent structural shortcomings in the curriculum, syllabus and testing further deteriorate the overall quality of education.

I am lucky enough to have won a scholarship at the African Leadership Academy (ALA) in South Africa to complete my high school education. This changed the trajectory of my life. Sharing these opportunities with the students who need it most will immensely improve the course of their lives. After attending ALA, I started gathering groups of my friends in Dar es

Salaam, Tanzania, to help them apply for scholarships.

I then began working with ESSA to reach out to over 70 institutions, speaking to hundreds of students about scholarship opportunities. The ESSA internship has not only allowed me a space to hone the theoretical skills I learn in class, but I have also gained new skills which will be essential as I start my career after my masters degree.

I cannot envision a bright future where only a few Tanzanian females get the opportunities that I have. My only definition of a bright future is one where women access education, and one where Institutions in sub-Saharan Africa have improved to a point where we do not have to leave the continent to get a good quality of education. This is a vision that I believe ESSA and its stakeholders also share.

"I believe the work ESSA is doing, particularly on scholarships, has the potential to transform people's lives."

Sepiso Dean Mwamelo



Welcome

We are proud to present ESSA's first Impact Report, giving an overview of our contribution towards transforming tertiary education in sub-Saharan Africa.

We have taken important steps to address critical issues, thanks to the calibre and commitment of our partners and funders.

Quality education and work will drive sub-Saharan Africa's future

By 2050, Africa's young population will increase by nearly 50 percent and 450 million workers are projected to join the workforce in the next decade. Access to quality education and job opportunities will be critical in determining whether the world's largest youth population becomes an extraordinary opportunity to lift millions from poverty, or a major crisis for the region and the world.

Focus on tertiary education and its link to the labour-market

Colleges, universities, and vocational courses play an important role in building the skills and knowledge of young people for the world of work.

Our initial three focus areas address complex issues for long-term change:

1. Research on education by researchers in sub-Saharan Africa used to change policy and improve education.
2. The shortfall of academics and staff in tertiary education.
3. The effectiveness and accessibility of scholarships for young people.

Our contribution: join-up, inform and inspire to increase impact

We are inspiring those who work within education and those with the resources to improve it, to work together. More than ever, decisions should be taken based on evidence which can be scaled up to improve the most lives.

We hope you are inspired by our work so far. If you would like to share your ideas, skills or partner more formally with us, please do get in touch.

Olaf Hahn and Patrick Dunne
Chief Executive Officer and Chair, ESSA

“ESSA has developed tremendously over the last three years. The seed-funding provided by us is offering high return on investment. I am excited to see ESSA growing further, to produce high impact for tertiary education in sub-Saharan Africa.

Joachim Rogall, President and CEO, Robert Bosch Stiftung

Our Vision

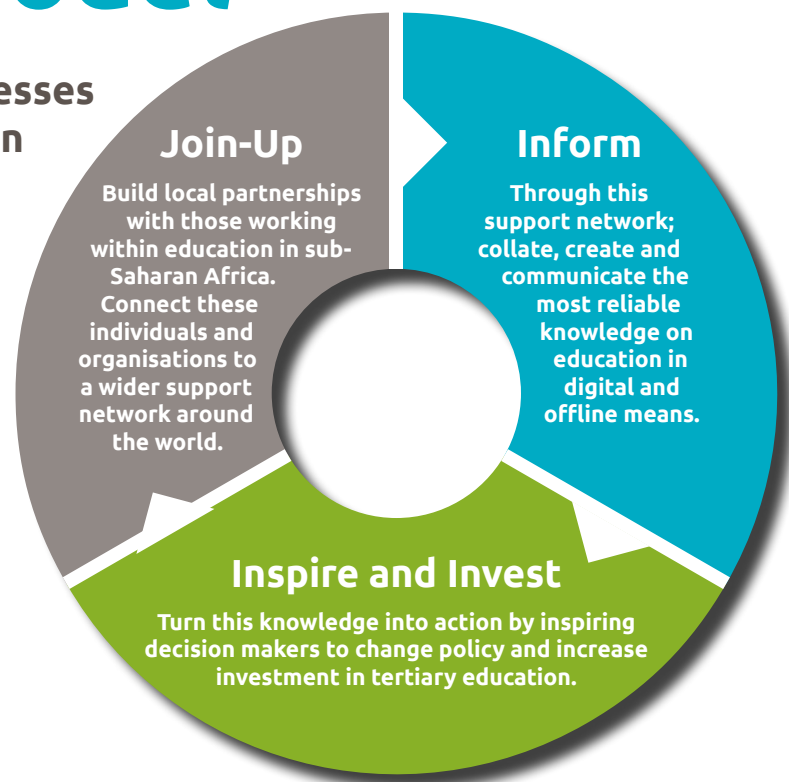
ESSA's vision is to transform education: increasing employment for young people in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our Contribution

ESSA brings together a network of young people, educators and decision makers. Together, they use evidence to improve the tertiary education system, equipping millions of young people in sub-Saharan Africa with the skills for work.

Our Model

Our model addresses complex issues in education for long-term change.



Our Impact

“ESSA has been born out of teaching learners and training teachers in schools like ours. The idea that something so bold has been sparked and shaped by our views and those of the learners is inspiring.”

Magdalene Mtwale, Mafiga Teacher School, Tanzania

We operate a cost-effective approach with a small, driven team working remotely around the world. Since start up, 33 students from across sub-Saharan Africa have worked with ESSA on our paid internship programme.

In our first three years we have worked on three complex areas to prove our model.

1. We have made vital research on education by scholars in sub-Saharan Africa more accessible.

There is a wealth of research on education by researchers in sub-Saharan Africa. But this research is often not sufficiently used nationally, regionally or globally to solve challenges in education.

Our contribution towards solving this issue:

- Our first step has been to join up researchers in sub-Saharan Africa with researchers globally. This includes supporting the Ivorian Association of Researchers in Education to map education research from Côte d'Ivoire and ensure it is used around the world.
- Alongside the Equitable Access and Learning Centre (REAL) at the University of Cambridge, we created

The African Education Research Database (AERD). This is the first online database of education research by scholars in sub-Saharan Africa, profiling over 3,600 pieces of their work.

- This evidence can be used to change policies and solve challenges in education. The database highlights gaps in education research. This is particularly crucial for under-researched areas identified in the database (such as education in conflict).

Our next steps to achieving wider impact:

- This work has uncovered key focus areas for investment in research, such as the need for a more inclusive research community with gender equality at its heart.
- We continue to support the network of researchers to inspire policy change in tertiary education across sub-Saharan Africa.





Professor Goski Alabi's Story

Professor Goski Alabi is a lecturer and academic at the University of Professional Studies in Ghana and co-founder of Laweh University College; the first accredited distance learning university in Ghana. She also took part in our Demographics of Faculty study.

Ghana is realising that technology-mediated education will open up education to new audiences across the continent.

At Laweh University we promote a practical, applied education, ensuring the values of leadership, innovation, flexibility and entrepreneurship are instilled in our students. We equip and empower students to use their educational skills practically in the workplace after graduation.

Secondary education is free in Ghana, but the rapid growth in uptake is putting a strain on the tertiary education system. I feel that government and business should work in partnership to solve some of these issues.

Tertiary education will empower Africa to realise its true voice in global development and economics. For far too long Africa has had all the resources yet we have not been able to use the knowledge to accelerate our development. I believe we can rise to the challenge.

“Education is a very expensive venture...there should be partnership between the state and the private sector to be able to deliver it well.”

Professor Goski Alabi

2. We have successfully measured the faculty shortfall in colleges and universities in Ghana, which can be used across the continent.

Colleges and universities in sub-Saharan Africa do not have enough staff to meet the increasing demand for education. As a result, many young people in sub-Saharan Africa will not get a quality education or skills for employment.

Our contribution towards solving this issue:

- Our first step was to gather evidence on current faculty by looking at policies such as student-teacher ratio, faculty gender and faculty subject area. We worked in Ghana initially as enrolment rates in universities and colleges across the country are growing rapidly.
- To do this we joined-up a network of expert partners consisting of the Association of African Universities (AAU), the Ghanaian National Council on Tertiary Education (NCTE), the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), a leading research institution on

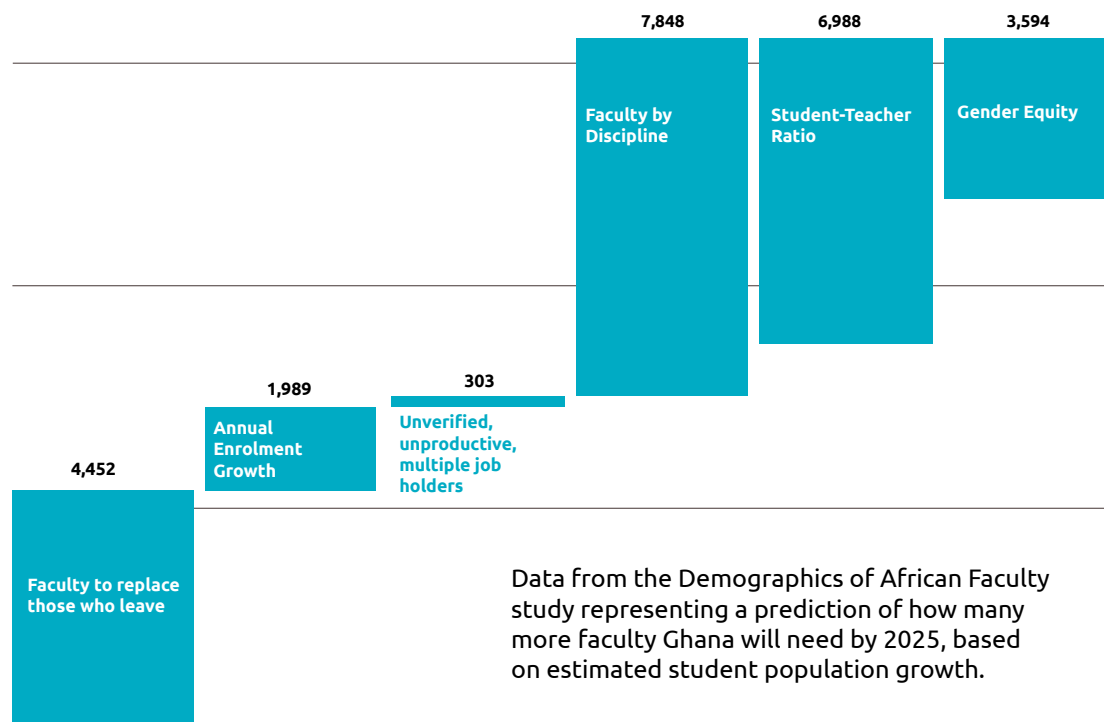
demographics), and with support from the Mastercard Foundation. Together we completed a pilot-study, the 'Demographics of Faculty', which analysed data from 213 universities and colleges in the country.

- The study has informed the Ghanaian government and its education institutions with a detailed analysis of their current faculty situation.

Our next steps to achieving wider impact:

- We will continue to work with our partners, with the addition of our new partner the Inter University Council of East Africa (IUECA), to expand our work to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Together we will strengthen educational institutions and increase investment in tertiary education.
- We are developing tools for colleges, universities and organisations to plan resource allocation for student enrolment. We will initially use these tools in Ghana, then adapt for other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Projection of faculty needed to meet policy goals in Ghana in 2025



3. We mapped the effectiveness and accessibility of scholarships for young people in sub-Saharan Africa.

As demand for education surges in the world's youngest continent, scholarships for students are increasing too. Yet there is limited evidence to know whether scholarships are supporting young people to join the workforce and little tracking of the return on investment of funding.

Our contribution towards solving this issue:

- We carried our leading work by researching over 350 providers who offer scholarships to scholars in sub-Saharan Africa, learning best practice from them.

The main challenges we found were:

- Accessibility of scholarships for the most marginalised.
- A lack of tracking the impact of scholarships on wider society.
- Low completion rates.

- Engagement between scholarship providers, universities and students.
- Linking scholarship graduates with decent work.
- Based on these challenges we developed a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) for social inclusion within scholarship programming, providing guidance to providers and funders.

Our next steps to achieving wider impact:

- This work has fed directly into UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report on Education & Inclusion, launching in April 2020. Our findings will be publicly shared within this report in section 4.b.
- Our focus is to continue to join-up a community of experts with a shared vision for increasing the quality and impact of scholarships for students from sub-Saharan Africa.
- In addition, we are launching a web platform matching students in sub-Saharan Africa with scholarship opportunities.





Samuel's Story

Samuel K. Boafo, Head of Human Resource (HR) in Cal Bank, Accra, Ghana, provides training programmes for young people in Ghana to learn skills for work.

On an annual basis at Cal Bank over 170 young people complete their Ghanaian National Service, which is a paid government scheme providing new graduates with experience in the workplace. Afterwards each graduate is assessed to determine if they have acquired the competency skills needed.

Collaborations like these are what prepare young people and make them successful, if these routes are followed students can be prepared for the job market once they graduate.

I have worked with elementary schools to give career guidance, shape understanding and offer practical experience. The earlier

young people have access to business via internships or placements the better.

When industry engages with students at all levels in these ways, it benefits both industry and the students. Africa needs more commitment from industry to offer internships and placement, and academia needs to seek them out.

New university rules requiring academics to have a PhD before being able to teach prevents champions of industry with decades of experience from teaching students. I believe it might be preferable to industry if more students gained specific job-related certifications rather than degrees. Especially as certification is more often taught by industry practitioners, such as myself, rather than academics.

“Businesses are often not forthcoming with internships and placements, which needs to be rectified. These placements often lead to job offers once students leave education, and benefit businesses with fresh talent.”

Samuel K. Boafo

Year Ahead

We're looking at an exciting 2020.

In order to create real change, we will increase our emphasis on building networks and establishing strong links with policymakers.

We continue to expand on our current areas of work, taking the next steps to achieve impact in sub-Saharan Africa.

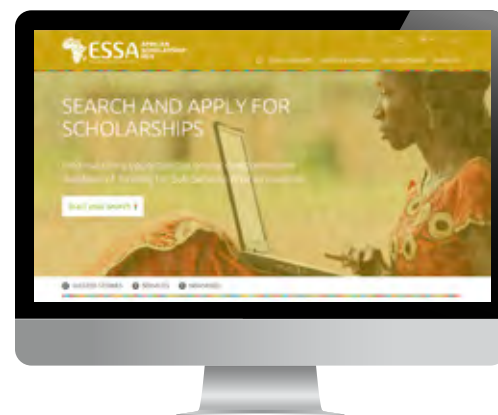
In addition, with significant support from Dubai Cares, we are starting to work on new focus areas in 2020:

- Leadership in education with an emphasis on female leadership.
- The impact of business engagement and internships for young people to access the world of work.
- Establishing a monitoring and evaluation approach for the organisation to track impact.

To do this, we will build capabilities within the organisation and through new partnerships. If you would like to help us with this, please get in touch.

HE Dr. Tariq Al Gurg, Chief Executive Officer from Dubai Cares said: "We believe this first ever intervention in tertiary education by Dubai Cares will help connect students and graduates to employment opportunities and will be central to developing successful and sustainable economies and societies.

This programme, which is in partnership with ESSA, presents an exciting opportunity for Dubai Cares to play a leading international role in contributing to the academic success of millions of students, boost employment in the long-term, and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa".



We would like to thank our partners, funders and private donors for their continued support.





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