



## The Africa Fellows in Education Program 2026/2027 Call for Applications

Submit your application for the Africa Fellows in Education Program ([AFEP](#)) 2026/2027.

The application submission deadline is **June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (23:59 GMT)**.

### Background

A skilled population is an indispensable element of successful long-term economic development. However, the major problem in many developing countries, particularly in Africa, is the low quality of education. For example, most children in these countries complete primary school without acquiring functional literacy and numeracy skills, reflecting educational systems that struggle to prepare large numbers of students.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous factors contribute to this challenge, and a wide array of potential solutions have been proposed to tackle it. Perhaps the most critical initial step toward improving school performance is obtaining transparent and analytically useful data from student assessments. When properly constructed, this data identifies possible performance levels and encourages analyses that can improve low-performing school systems.

However, there is a lack of national testing and participation in regional or international assessments due to several factors, including costs, lack of capacity to conduct assessments, and aversion to possible embarrassment from the results. Notably, some of these issues are being addressed by broad-based efforts of regional and international organizations to support the expansion of comparable student assessments.

Still, a closely related issue still needs to be addressed: the lack of local capacity to effectively use student outcome data to improve policy and schools. While it might initially be possible to swap external people for trained local researchers, this is neither sustainable nor conducive to developing sound and well-informed decision-making in schools.

The Africa Fellows in Education Program (AFEP) aims to address this local capacity gap and improve education decision-making across Sub-Saharan Africa. AFEP will support a network of local policy fellows with enhanced skills in evaluating existing educational research, developing and using performance data to make better decisions, and introducing rigorous evidence into the decision-making process. Having a network of highly competent

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<sup>1</sup> Gust, S., Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2022). *Global universal basic skills: Current deficits and implications for world development* (No. w30566). National Bureau of Economic Research; World Bank. (2017). *World development report 2018: Learning to realize education's promise*. The World Bank.

researchers across the region reinforces the value of using systematic evidence in decision-making and supports broad policy improvement. Local expert researchers will also form a constituency for expanding and improving the assessment structures in each country. The Fellows will be able to identify and produce high-quality research utilized in educational decision-making. They will also become active in outreach to policymakers and civil society actors and advocate for sound, analytically based local policies.

In sum, the objective of the AFEP is to build a group of Africa-based leaders capable of developing evidence and shaping educational policies relevant to their countries. These leaders would be part of a global network of such people and could help build local networks of strong advocates for improving schools.

## **The Call for Applications**

The [Global Education Analytics Institute \(GEAI\)](#), in collaboration with PEP, invites young African researchers who are motivated to improve education and could benefit from additional support to submit an expression of interest in AFEP.

AFEP enables the fellows to participate in a two-year research and policy development fellowship that introduces them to relevant research and analytical experiences and international networks of researchers and policy advisers. See "[Application process](#)" further below.

GEAI and AFEP are supported by the [Yidan Prize](#).

## **Details on the structure of the AFEP**

The proposed program is organized around a combination of in-country activities and network/training opportunities regionally and abroad. Under the two out-of-country segments, it is expected that the successful fellows will have the opportunity to attend two of the most prominent international conferences on the economics of education – the CESifo Economics of Education conference and the Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) conference. (The exact conference and travel schedule is subject to change based on the prevailing circumstances.) In addition to these conferences, the fellows will participate in a series of short courses designed to be most suitable to their needs, covering topics such as evaluation methods, communications, incentive structures, and other related areas while also allowing fellows to foster international connections. Further, they will have a series of lectures on testing and performance measurement. This introduction will enable fellows to understand the use of large-scale testing data from various international and regional assessments. It will also sensitize them to general issues around the use of standardized testing. The first two weeks of training will be between September and November 2025, and the other two will be held in March 2026.

While in their home countries, the fellows will develop a research/evaluation project to be carried out (mainly) in the second year under program supervision and with local scientific mentors. The initiative will engage a part-time local mentor to monitor each fellow's progress and reinforce new skills. This approach will lead fellows to explore the existing state of local assessments and evaluation of educational issues. Both during the fellowship period and afterwards, a team of advisors from Stanford University and other organizations in Africa and internationally will provide direct support and supervision. Fellows are expected to complete the project in two years, organize in-country policy outreach workshops to disseminate the research findings, and present the final report at the GEAI-PEP-organized conference in June 2027.

See also [Africa Fellows for Education - Terms of Reference](#).

## Funding Information

The funding includes a \$25K research (cash) grant. The program will also directly cover up to \$25K in expenses for mentorship, study visits, conference travel, and in-country workshops to share research findings and training.

## Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for this call, applicants must:

- Be a national of a Sub-Saharan African country;
- Hold a Master's or PhD degree in *Economics, Education Policy, Social or Public Policy, Development Studies, International Development, Statistics, Demography, or Sociology* — with a strong quantitative and education focus. While a PhD is not mandatory, GEAI and PEP particularly welcome recent PhD graduates and advanced doctoral candidates (within one year of completion) who stand to benefit from structured mentorship and training as they develop into independent researchers.
- Demonstrated experience with quantitative data analysis; proficiency in at least one statistical software (R, Stata, Python, or equivalent) is an asset.
- Not be older than 35 years old;
- Demonstrate interest in education policy research and analysis;
- Work for the government or have an affiliation at either a research or higher education institution in a Sub-Saharan African country and intend to do so for the foreseeable future;
- Be proficient in English; all application materials and program activities are conducted in English.
- Qualified females are strongly encouraged to apply.

*GEAI and PEP aim to achieve geographic balance across Sub-Saharan Africa. Applications from underrepresented countries, including Francophone and Lusophone Africa, are especially welcome.*

## Application Process

The Africa Fellows application process is managed by GEAI in collaboration with PEP. The applications will be assessed based on several factors, including prior preparation and the quality of an essay (see below). The expression of interest by the applicants should include:

1. A two-page statement of interest;
2. A two-page essay. The essay must be prepared in English. In this essay, the applicant must think and write about a specific educational problem in their home country and how it could be scientifically evaluated using quantitative methods.
3. A detailed and updated CV with at least two (2) referees that the selection committee can contact.

**Applications must be submitted via the PEP intranet system (see detailed procedures below) before the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2026 (23:59 GMT).**

### The steps to submit your application:

1. STEP 1: Register on the PEP website: Click **Register** (see also the top right corner of the PEP website, next to "Login") and fill out all required information.
  - o Your profile will be activated within 24 hours. Your username is the email address that you use to register.
2. STEP 2: Access your PEP account. Once your profile has been activated, you can access your PEP account by clicking the **Login** button (also in the top right corner above).
3. STEP 3: Complete your "profile": Click your name (top-right corner of your PEP account page).
  - o **Include all information relevant to this application** - birthday, highest diploma, institution, position, etc. (see eligibility criteria) - and **upload your updated CV**.
  - o We also strongly encourage you to include a photo and a short professional bio.
  - o When finished, **click on SUBMIT** at the bottom of your profile page.
4. STEP 4: Go to the menu under "My workspace" (top left corner) and click on "Submit a proposal".
  - o Follow the instructions and **upload your statement of interest and essay as one/combined document**.
5. Once you've finished, return to your PEP account and click on "My Projects" (under "My workspace") to ensure that the submission was successful. Select the project and go to "Documents" to find or replace/update your document.

**Up to 10 awards will be announced in August 2026.**

## Africa Fellows in Education - Terms of Reference

The objective of the AFEP is to build a group of Africa-based leaders capable of developing evidence and shaping relevant educational policies for their countries. These leaders would be part of a global network of such people and could also help build local networks of strong advocates for improving schools.

The program enables the fellows to participate in two-year research and policy development fellowships that introduce them to relevant research and analytical experiences and international networks of researchers and policy advisers.

### The Fellow's Key responsibilities

During the two years of the program, each fellow will be expected to achieve the following milestones:

1. By the end of the first year, having consulted with relevant policymakers and stakeholders, prepare a concept research proposal focusing on a specific education problem in their home country or any other Sub-Saharan African country. Motivate the selected (educational) research issues and objectives, outline the data sources and proposed methodology, and present a clear plan for completing the project by July 2028.
2. Attend all short-term training courses arranged by GEAI in collaboration with PEP.
3. Over the two years, work closely with local and international scientific mentors to develop and complete the research project.
4. Present the project's work-in-progress and final reports at local and international conferences organized by GEAI and its partners.
5. Complete the project within two years and present the final report at the conference organised by GEAI-PEP in July 2028. The final report must be sufficiently rigorous to meet current research and evaluation standards.
6. Write a policy brief based on the final technical research report.
7. Write a policy blog.
8. Organize in-country policy outreach workshops to disseminate the research findings.