



Innovation for Research and Training in the Covid-19 era

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PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN SOCIAL
& GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



SPHEIR
Strategic Partnerships
for Higher Education
Innovation and Reform

OUR DONORS

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Abbreviations

A4EA	Action for Empowerment and Accountability
AED	Ag Executive Director
A4W	Accountability for Water
CCNY	Carnegie Corporation of New York
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EOI	Expression of Interest
FCVAS	Fragile, Conflict, Violence-Affected Settings
HEP	Higher Education Programme
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IPIE	Inter-Partnership Impact Enhancement
JAAS	Joint Annual Academic Seminar
LCDA s	Local Council Development Areas
MMR	Multi-Method Research
MRPP	Master of Research and Public Policy
NHIF	National Hospital Insurance Fund
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
PDT	Professional Development and Training
PASGR	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research
PEBL	Partnership for Enhanced and Blended Learning
PedaL	Pedagogical Leadership in Africa
RP	Research Programme
SPHEIR	Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
UK	United Kingdom
UoN	University of Nairobi
USIU	United States International University
VC	Vice-Chancellor



We continue to build on PASGR's vision and the excellent work done by past PASGR Board of Directors, led by my predecessor, Prof Ernest Aryeetey. Our shared vision for a vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues has assumed greater significance as we are challenged to reimagine the future of higher education, training and research in the "new normal"

From the Chair

Welcome to PASGR's Annual Report 2020! With the Covid-19 pandemic ravaging humankind and disrupting work, 2020 was a year like no other. But we surmounted it, thanks to the resilience of our Board, staff and partners within Africa and overseas.

Within the context of the pandemic, PASGR was always ahead of the curve because of its robust digital strategy and drive for innovation. We supported over 5,000 communities of researchers, scholars, policy actors and students to realise the immense potential of digital tools for education, training and research. Our networks broadened and thrived as online engagement around research evidence and capacity building activities peaked — literally turning the tables — on most of the constraints faced, such as, sustaining resource mobilisation in a dynamic donor environment.

It was also a time for transition; our long-serving Executive Director and Secretary of the Board, Prof Tade Aina, exited the organisation. Dr Beatrice Muganda, Director of the Higher Education Programme, provided leadership in an acting capacity.

After an international search process, Dr Anthony Mveyange was appointed PASGR Executive Director. He takes office in the new year. The Board has great expectations and will provide him with unwavering

support to ensure that he leads PASGR to the next level with newer and long lasting partnerships as well as resources for organisational sustainability.

As we march steadfastly into 2021, our aspirations for influencing transformation through our work are emboldened. The board is streamlining the functioning of new governance bodies, establishing new board committees and reviewing PASGR by-laws and board charter.

The board is also prioritising a consolidation and expansion of PASGR flagship programmes, exploring new partnerships, which are responsive to the changing context and right-sizing the organisation while ensuring its sustainability through enhanced fundraising.

We continue to build on PASGR's vision and the excellent work done by past PASGR Board of Directors, led by my predecessor, Prof Ernest Aryeetey. Our shared vision for a vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues has assumed greater significance as we are challenged to reimagine the future of higher education, training and research in the "new normal".

Professor Narciso Matos
Chair, PASGR Board of Directors

A message from Ag Executive Director



The year 2020 was remarkable as PASGR witnessed unprecedented growth against a backdrop of social-economic and health challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. I appreciate the PASGR Board of Directors for transformative leadership that assured business continuity and achievement of 2020 milestones despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. I also wish to congratulate the staff for unrelenting focus on delivering PASGR's mission in unique circumstances. Driven by the core values of excellence, results-orientation, integrity, equity and inclusiveness, and responsiveness the staff embraced each other, their leadership and partners, not only to maintain momentum, but also to innovate in programme delivery.

The Higher Education Programme managed the disruption of university programmes by strengthening collaboration between its partners in the Doctoral in Public Policy (DPP) programme to support the most vulnerable students among the 30 candidates enrolled. The MRPP programme realised a 10 per cent increase in graduates from 174 in 2019 to 194 in 2020. Further, five of the graduates were awarded Carnegie Corporation of New York scholarships for advanced scholarship in the DPP programme. For HEP, it is the training of academics to shift and deliver academic programmes online that took centre stage. Engagement with resources for capacity building online doubled 16 fold from 24,900 before

the pandemic to 395,366 during the pandemic.

The Professional Development and Training (PDT) programme ensured that the PhD in Public Policy network remained strong in the midst of the pandemic by providing opportunities for virtual engagement across the partnership. An online training on research methods was delivered to the PhD fellows while a virtual seminar for supervisors provided a networking opportunity.

The Research programme thrived to generate and engage varied stakeholders with useful demand driven, policy relevant research evidence. Against the vagaries of the pandemic, and in a bid to contribute to new knowledge on how the pandemic spread, the programme designed and delivered a comparative conjoint study to understand the attitudes and decision-making on COVID-19 vaccinations in Nigeria. Similarly, the programme innovatively applied digital and blended techniques to facilitate the activities of Utafiti Sera houses. This was the first time Utafiti Sera, a largely face-to-face intervention was being delivered virtually. The 'innovating-on-our-feet' approach enabled the programme to reach over 3000 policy actors with contextual relevant evidence, thus bridging the gap between researchers and policy actors.

Dr Beatrice Muganda

Ag. Executive Director, PASGR

Our mission, Our Vision



Vision

A vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues.

Mission

Advancing research excellence for governance and public policy in Africa

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is an independent, non-partisan pan-African not-for-profit organisation established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya.

Currently engaged in more than 12 African countries, PASGR works to enhance research excellence in governance and public policy that contributes to the overall wellbeing of citizens. In partnership with individual academics and researchers, higher education institutions, research think tanks, civil society organisations, business and policy communities both in the region and internationally, PASGR supports the production and dissemination of policy, relevant research and designs, and delivers suites of short professional development courses for researchers and policy actors. It also facilitates the development of collaborative higher education

programmes.

Our vision is "a vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues". PASGR's three core programmes bring together the right mix of universities, research institutions, government, policy actors, researchers and academics to:

- Establish and sustain partnerships at national/ regional and international levels for advancing research, higher education and training;
- Facilitate the creation of policy and research communities;
- Enhance the institutionalisation of a research culture in Africa's universities and research organisations.
- Co-ordinate a collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy with universities in Africa.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH



Highs and lows of the year under coronavirus

The year 2020 brought about uncertainties for the Communications and Outreach Unit. Take-off was slow as programme heads adjusted to the Covid-19 pandemic. The main website had 5,398 subscribers, compared to 4,932 in 2019.

Facebook following dipped by 83 from 20,730 in 2019. Google+ usage remained constant while PASGR subscribers grew by 22 per cent from 3,779 to 4,640, according to Communications Assistant Esther Simekha.

Transition to WhatsApp and Twitter was evident with the latter registering seven per cent growth and the former 86 users. "We realised we could tap into social media to complement Moodle, so we introduced WhatsApp use as backup," PDT Programme Manager Pauline Ngimwa notes.

Technical Administrative Assistant Elijah Kabari worked with the Communications Unit to alert the PASGR audience to the call for applications for PDT courses — testimony to Digital PASGR's overarching

role.

Higher Education Programme (HEP) was the greatest beneficiary of PedaL Moodle, registering 668 active users between January and December.

Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn use stagnated as meetings went zoom. The MRPP website registered an increase in viewership about the programme, scholarships and the next intake. The PedaL website also registered impressive numbers 5,649 — 54.2% female and 45.8% male. New users — 3181 — spent about two-and-a-half minutes per visit.

And, while Covid robbed us of opportunities to market our publications, and by extension, our institution, the doctoral programme in public policy and Accountability for Water project brought in new members.

PASGR's new kid on the block, NANGA, was not published in 2020 due to the challenges of keeping pace with online activities.

2020 at a glance

JANUARY

January 20: First — and last — face-to-face meeting of PedaL in the year under review before the onset of Covid-19 held at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

MARCH

March 11: The Research Programme holds an Accountability for Water Governance and Outreach Programme's inaugural Global Advisory Group (GAG) consultation via GoToMeeting to discuss constitution and terms of reference.

AUGUST

August 10: Kigali Urban Governance Household project update meeting with PASGR and IPAR-Rwanda as hosts

August 18: PASGR, Center for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (CABE) and the baseline survey data collection team hold a Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) survey training under the Youth Employment Creation (YEC) House via Google Meet

August 24-28: Designing Social Research: Policy-Engaged Inquiries That Work, an online course for PhD students

SEPTEMBER

September 28 — PASGR hosts Supervisors' Virtual Seminar on the Collaborative PhD in Public Policy

NOVEMBER

November 9: PASGR hosts Academic Literacy Seminar 1 for PhD students. Part 2 of the seminar was held on December 9.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Redefining blended and digital learning



January 20 to 25, 2020, saw the Higher Education Programme (HEP) host its last face-to-face university-specific Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (PedaL) training at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM).

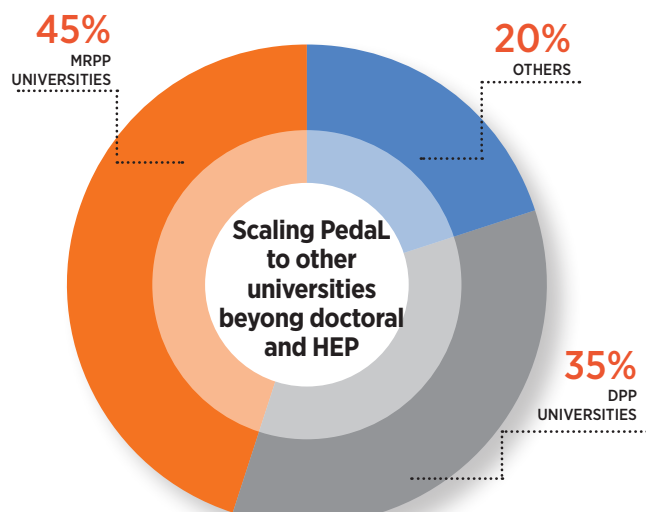
The training targeted academics from UDSM and its constituent institutions, Dar es Salaam University College of Education and Mkwawa University College of Education. Attended by 74 scholars, the workshop

sought to strengthen the talent pool for sustained delivery of PedaL, broadening the scope of exceptional learning moments that bolster learning outcomes and graduate competencies.

As the PedaL wave continued to sweep across African universities, another face-to-face training, and an annual convening of PedaL-trained academics were planned for March at the University of Ibadan. The university's PedaL alumni were to share stories of the seminal programme's execution and

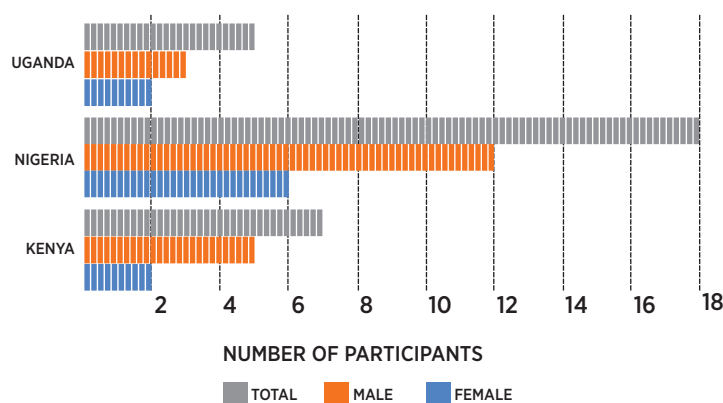
how their students were responding to the novel methods of teaching and learning. The academics were set to harness lessons for fine-tuning their approaches to course delivery.

It was not to be. After travel, accommodation and seminar room bookings had been made, Covid-19 struck. "We cancelled the trip," recalls HEP Programme Officer Edwin Rwigi. "We then started reimagining the training programme for online engagement." Thanks to Beatrice



MRPP - Master of Research and Public Policy | DPP - Doctorate in Public Policy

Doctoral students by country of origin





Muganda's quick thinking, "PedaL Online: Technology for Transformative Pedagogy," simply known as PedaL Online, was born.

Dr Muganda, Director of Higher Education and PedaL team leader, says PedaL Online restored hope among African academics of continuing their studies: "With Covid lockdowns disrupting classes throughout Africa, and despondency setting in, PedaL Online kept university academics focused on reimagining teaching and learning in a new normal." She adds: "Academics embarked on a new journey of self-realisation; they confronted their fears, questioned their teaching methods and embraced technology as a

centrepiece of their work."

Many universities had not invested in online structures; they had basic systems for distance learning, which were inadequate for shifting from face-to-face to blended, or full-fledged, digital learning.

PASGR, however, was well ahead of Covid. It was already delivering blended learning where trainees met face-to-face and also interacted with online content and undertook digital tasks. This eased the transition to full-fledged online learning. A pilot was rolled out between June 6 and 26, which involved intensive engagement with the first trainees.

Participants, who included resource persons, academics and others — some

HEP's training milestones 2020

January 20: PedaL Training University of Dar es Salaam

March 16: Department for International Development (DFID) and Higher Education Programme hold meeting at PASGR

July 20: PedaL Online Planning Meeting

July 24: Welcome to PedaL Online: Technology for Transformative Pedagogy

September 28: Collaborative PhD in Public Policy: Supervisors' Virtual Seminar

November 7: PedaL Online 4.0 Planning Meeting

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

From gate crasher to gentle guide

Dr Ndidi Ofole is a lecturer at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. She belongs to the Department of Counselling and Human Development Studies, Faculty of Education.

Her first encounter with PASGR, she says, was in 2018 when she was invited to Nairobi, Kenya, for the PedaL inception ceremony. Her eureka moment came when the first presenter called the participants' attention to the fact that, what the teacher did in the classroom was driven by his or her beliefs about teaching and learning.

Ndidi's immediate reaction, she says, was that she had been a barrier to her students' learning, having acted as the "Sage on Stage"—the teacher who 'knows it all' while the students

were tabula rasa. That mindset came from training institutions where tutors continuously reminded their students that 'You are the master! Be in charge!'

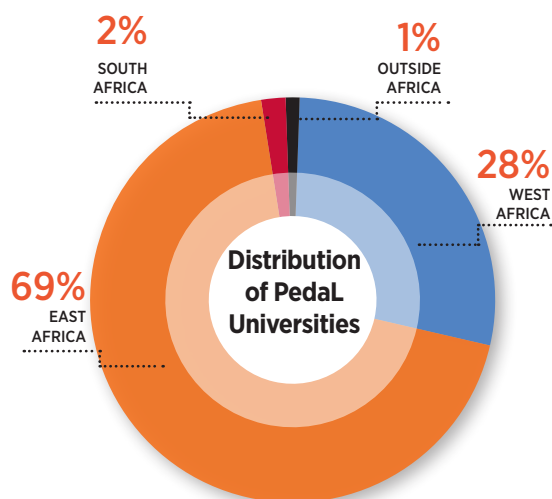
Through PedaL training, the lecturer said, she learnt how to constructively align her course outline. She joked that her previous course outlines were an example of how not to write a course plan. The objectives, learning outcomes, activities and assessment were disjointed and unrelated. She concluded that she had been "crashing the gates of learning" and requested to be enrolled on PedaL.

Because of the training, her students regularly record exceptional 'aha' moments due to the way she uses innovative strategies like role-play, case studies, simulation, flipped classroom and threshold concept to engage and motivate them.

Her excitement with PedaL earned her the moniker 'Mama PedaL University of Ibadan' where, incidentally, she is one of the resource persons. To her, PedaL is a journey of no return.



Dr Ndidi Ofole



from Kenya's Commission for University Education — were mostly drawn from previous face-to-face engagements. In the initial training, PASGR worked with its PedaL partners to establish a critical mass of trainers who were driving innovative pedagogy in online classes. They included the African Research Universities Alliance, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, and Ghana's University of Ibadan, Uganda Martyrs, Egerton of Kenya and University of Dar es Salaam.

PedaL Online has three key modules that build competencies in online course planning and design, creative facilitation and innovative

assessment.

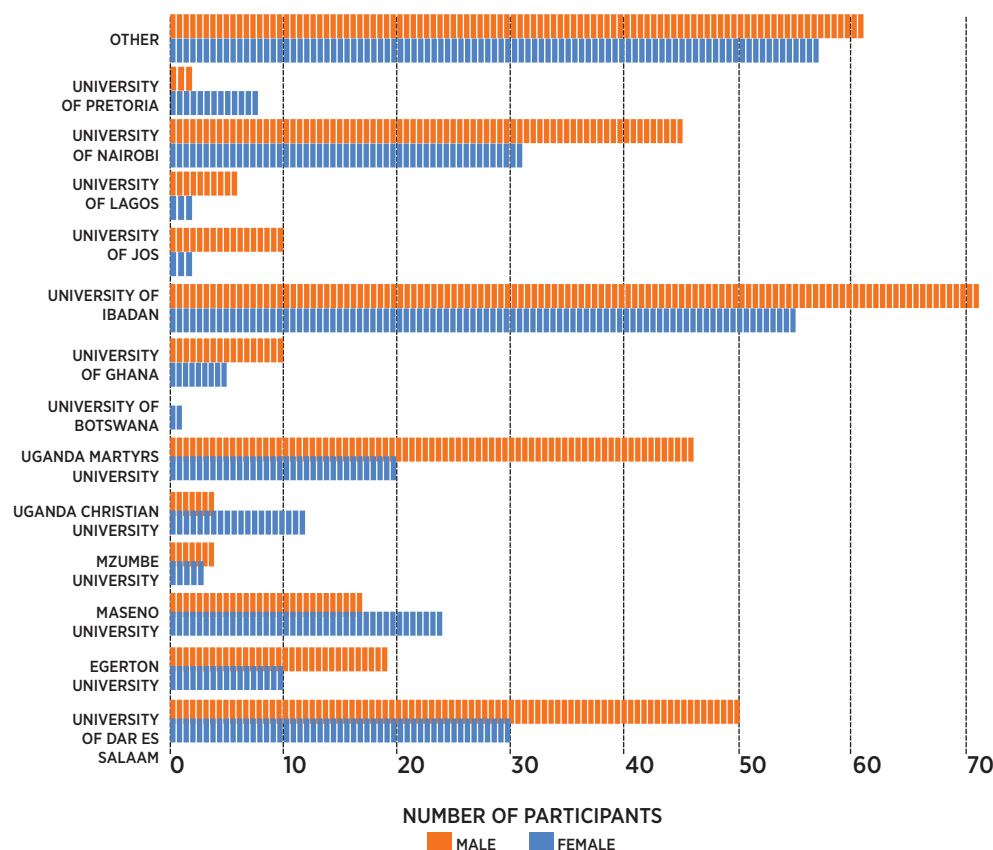
The pilot was followed by online training of 181 active participants — 100 male and 81 female — from partner universities in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, which took place between July 24 and August 16.

There was much interest, with some participants based out of Africa fully enrolling on the programme. Because of savings on transport, accommodation and catering, it was possible to train more lecturers than would have been possible.

"The greatest attribute of PedaL is its Africanness", observes Muganda. "African academics are excited about

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Participation in PedaL by University



a programme that was developed by Africans for Africans with a global perspective. They relate to the case studies and scenarios that speak to their experiences in the classroom.”

PedaL is disrupting the traditional approach to online teaching and

423,036

Online engagement hits on PedaL Online in December 2020

learning, which some had mistaken for only Zoom or Skype sessions, or posting notes on digital platforms. It is enhancing lecturers’ capacities to create interactive online courses, enriched with assets such as case studies, pictures, video and simulations to implement robust online pedagogies.

The popularity of PedaL Online has roped in new partners, notably the University of Nairobi (UoN), which was already working with PASGR through the MRPP and PhD programmes.

Welcoming PedaL to UoN, the Vice-Chancellor (VC), Prof Stephen Kiama, reaffirmed his commitment to support PedaL Online as a driver for

transformative pedagogy and quality education.

The Riara University VC, Prof Robert Gateru, said PedaL Online strategically aligned with Riara’s vision of becoming ‘a university of the future’. He suggested that PedaL’s innovations in online and blended learning could spearhead education tourism in Africa.

By December, the PedaL network had grown to include 1,426 academics (844 male, 542 female) from 73 universities and in other institutions of higher learning in 10 African countries as well as in the UK, Canada and the Netherlands.

Says Muganda: “The growing community of academics with enhanced capacity, confidence, values and attitudes to adapt innovative pedagogy online and in blended mode started reaping immediate benefits for students in the uncanny context of the pandemic.”

Newest initiative

HEP also delivered a course on the unique area of online grading under the Inter-Partnership Impact Enhancement (IPIE) — a collaboration between PASGR and the Partnership for Enhanced and Blended Learning (PEBL) led by the Association of Commonwealth Universities. This took place between September 5 and 19.

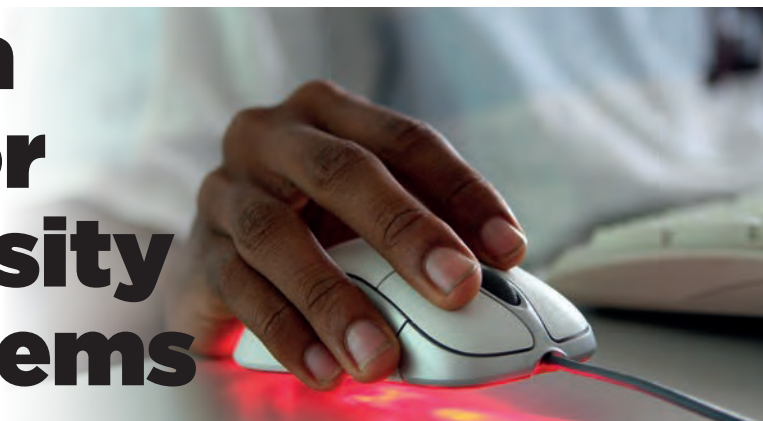
HEP’s newest initiative, the PhD programme, continued uninterrupted at the University of Nairobi and the University of Pretoria, although Ibadan was closed for most of 2020 because of a lecturers’ strike and the pandemic. Pretoria mitigated this by opening its doors to Ibadan students.

“The collegiality and goodwill between the three universities paid off,” says, Rwigi.

Within the doom and gloom of the pandemic, PASGR and HEP remained resilient, with plenty to celebrate as its partnerships thrived around innovative ideas, and benefits multiplied across disciplines, programmes and countries.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

PedaL online, a prescription for Africa's university education systems



He may have found greener pastures in Paris, France, but for Simon Wanda, PASGR remains home.

As Higher Education Programme Officer, Wanda was part of the team that designed the Pedagogical

Leadership in Africa (PedaL), which seeks to catalyse systemic change in teaching and learning in African universities through intervention in pedagogical approaches.

Wanda believes that PedaL's philosophy and approach has a role

in addressing the capacity gap in the higher education landscape globally and in Africa. He likens PedaL to 'an African philosophy of learning', which is pragmatic and experiential.

"You learn by doing," he asserts. The principles PedaL is promoting have been part of international debates on the form and content of education for decades.

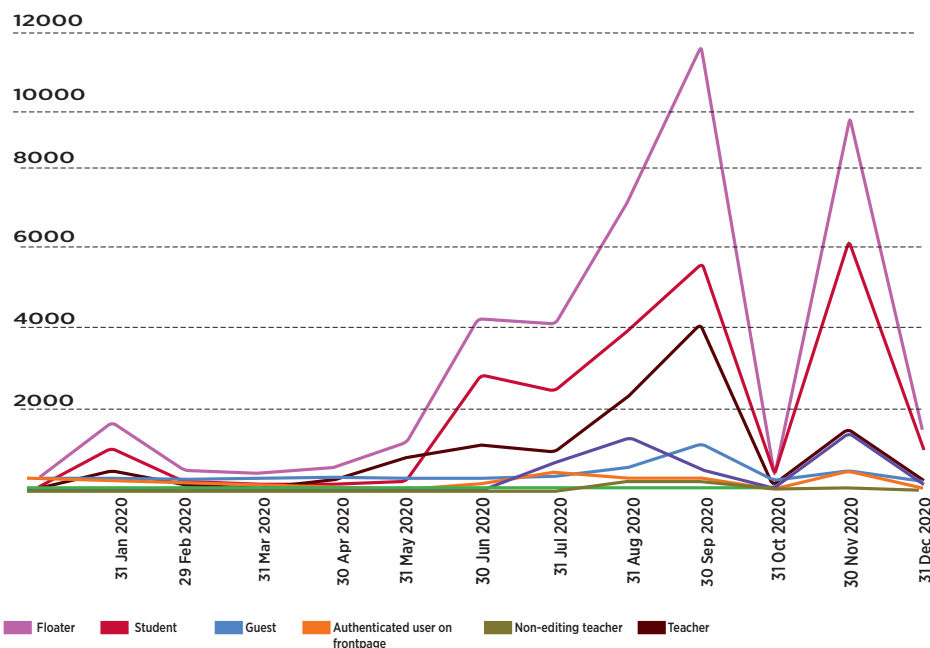
When Covid-19 broke out, PedaL easily adapted its approach to deliver the required outcomes, unlike other projects which were negatively affected.

"We looked at several possible scenarios, such as university closures due to strikes. At the time, no one ever thought that a global pandemic such as Covid-19 would happen", Wanda says.

PedaL's Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) strategy was already core in the PedaL training when it was being offered face to face. The training was initially offered through a blended approach, with participants engaging in online activities before and after the face-to-face sessions. "When Covid-19 struck and lecturers had to go online, PedaL was not groping in the dark, it already had a roadmap and therefore transitioning online was not difficult".

Due to Covid-19, lecturers were required to teach online with little or no preparation. There was an immediate capacity need, which PedaL quickly

Online engagement September 2020



HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

responded to by designing three modules addressing the fundamental questions being asked by university lecturers: How do I move my course online? How do I facilitate online? How do I assess online?

The response to the PedaL Online course was immediate, and the numbers started growing exponentially.

Wanda sees the pandemic as a reality check for university teaching systems that had buried their heads in the sand regarding the importance of online teaching, exposing the vulnerability of higher education systems. A disconnect existed between infrastructural preparedness and staff capability to offer online training. PedaL not only imparted online teaching skills to staff, but also how they might use the different teaching tools already available to them.

Collaborative efforts

Wanda considers what PASGR is doing as critical in three ways. The first is that PedaL is African-led in contrast to initiatives led from the Global North. Secondly, the benefits of collaborative efforts, such as the MRPP — PASGR's collaborative master's programme, which is being offered in 14 universities with a common curriculum — a first for Africa. Third is use of innovative teaching methods, and in this, PedaL stands out.

The PedaL partnership is led by PASGR and comprises eight institutions: University of Ghana, University of Ibadan, Egerton University, University of Dar es Salaam, Uganda Martyrs University; one international partner, IDS, University of Sussex and the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA). The partnership has expanded to involve over 30 universities in Africa and beyond.

The project is funded by the UK Government's Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform.

PedaL Online, an 'engaging and hands-on' experience

Although he first interacted with PASGR in 2011, Dr Jeketule Soko only benefited substantively from it last year when Tangaza University College sent him to a PedaL Online training. The course he joined in June turned out to be "so engaging and hands-on", he recalls.

Covid-19 had landed in Kenya in March, leading to a lockdown. Like most learning institutions, Tangaza was conducting classes online. The college then organised staff training on online teaching but the focus was more on synchronous learning basics. "Little did I know that there was more to PedaL, especially pedagogy," he says.

Having missed out on formal pedagogy before he started teaching — "My teaching was based on observation and rudimentary knowledge," he confesses — he had content in his management field but "I lacked formal pedagogical skills especially for facilitating online learning."

The training taught Jeketule how to develop course outlines that are constructively aligned, where learning outcomes, activities and innovative assessments are seamless." The asynchronous tools PedaL introduced, especially the Learning Management System (LMS), keep learners engaged. He learned how to make PowerPoint more interactive as well as ways of engaging students through discussion forums and wikis. Focus was on how to enhance learners' mastery of skills and knowledge.

Even as Jeketule wishes there were LMSs that ensure inclusion of people with disability, he is upbeat in his conclusion: "The training was like a pedagogical laboratory for educators to effectively facilitate learning."

My teaching was based on observation and rudimentary knowledge. "I lacked formal pedagogical skills especially for facilitating online learning."



Dr Jeketule Soko

RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Reimagining approaches: Silver linings in the Covid-19 cloud

PASGR's research arm secured its place in the institution's acronym when it defied the coronavirus to raise its biggest grant ever in the year under review.

The £32 million grant from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and

Development Office — obtained through a partnership led by the University of Manchester — was a salute to PASGR's innovative work under the Utafiti Sera project.

Says Dr Martin Atela, the Research Programme (RP) Manager: "In a situation where most grants cover three years, the six-year grant is something we've been struggling to achieve [and] it's going to give us a huge breathing space."

The grant — of which £2.2 million goes to PASGR — is for the African Cities Research project, for which the organisation had been tasked, together with other partners across Africa, to lead an uptake programme across 13 African cities. Between October and December, Atela led the crafting of an uptake strategy for the multiple stakeholder initiative.

When Covid-19 struck, the Research Programme's biggest challenge was navigating physical contact restrictions. That meant innovating, safeguarding and reinventing to be Covid-smart, a tall order for an institution whose existence revolves around face-to-face social interaction. According to Atela, partners needed to feel both safe and secure about the continuity of their work with PASGR and still excel.

Then there is the Accountability for Water (A4W) project, for which PASGR won \$1.5 million grant. Its main funder sees it as an example of how to build partnerships that bring together the

2,000

Households in a computer-assisted telephone interview in a Nigerian research on gendered impacts on Covid-19



Not even corona would stop our research

Dr Damilola Taiye Agbalajobi traces back her first contact with PASGR to November 2014. The lecturer and researcher at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ife-Ife city, southwestern Nigeria, says of PASGR's Multi-Method Research (MMR) training: "It made me what I am today and defined where I'm going."

She describes the course conducted by PASGR's Professional Development and Training (PDT) team as "a wonderful experience, happening when I was having methodology challenges with my PhD." The skills and experience she gained in the training and in later courses, proved invaluable, enabling Damilola to complete her PhD in 2017 and to confront the Covid-19 challenge in 2020.

"We had ongoing research with PASGR but the pandemic could not stop us. That's because we diverted Phase Two of our A4EA (Action

RESEARCH PROGRAMME



Dr Damilola Taiye Agbalajobi

for Empowerment and Accountability) on Gendered Contentions in FCVAS to examine gendered impacts of Covid-19. (FCVAS stands for Fragile, Conflict, Violence Affected Settings). We met regularly via Zoom to initiate procedures for the research on gender and Covid-19, which brought us in contact with partners in abusive situations that they were not used to before the Covid-induced lockdowns,” Damilola says.

The Gendered Contentions in FCVAS Research Programme is an international study that explores the conditions under which women’s social and political actions contribute to the strengthening of their empowerment and lead to accountability outcomes, which promote gender equity.

Coronavirus restrictions meant moving away from face-to-face to online meetings, notably Zoom. “Despite the psychological trauma brought about by Covid-19, we maintained interactions with our partners, specifically PASGR and the Pakistan team. In our gender and Covid-19 study, we had 2,000 household interviews from 1,000 households across Lagos State. Data collection started November 5 and spilled over into 2021.”



Policy relevant research delivered

Political Economy Analyses	6	Policy Briefs	6
Synthesis Papers	9	Blogs	6
Journal Articles/ Working Papers	4	Presentations at international conferences	3
Technical Reports	10	Newspaper Articles	3
Conference Papers	3	Videos	5

global south and the global north. When the award was signed off in February 2020 “it was a proud moment for us — a ‘best-case’ study of thriving during a pandemic,” Atela says.

PASGR’s Strategic Objective 2 under Research commits us “to grow networks, partnerships and platforms, for young and emerging social science researchers, especially, women”, meaning, RP’s fundraising efforts went a long way towards realising this objective. (See also sidebar: “Not even corona would stop our research”).

Equally exciting was when Carnegie Corporation of New York, in recognition of Utafiti Sera work, invited PASGR to design a \$200,000 Utafiti Sera programme for higher education in the Covid era. Managed by the Professional Development and Training Programme (PDT), the

project is an excellent example of the synergy between PASGR’s three main programmes — the Research Programme, the Higher Education



RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Research's training milestones 2020

March 11: Accountability for Water Governance and Outreach Programme holds inaugural Global Advisory Group (GAG) consultation via GoToMeeting to discuss constitution and terms of reference

May 6-Jun 26: Gendered Contentions Workstream meetings in Nigeria, Pakistan and IDS UK

May 27: PASGR and Pamoja Trust Programme teams co-host an Urban Governance House Project Update meeting via Skype

July 1: Utafiti Sera Urban Governance House members Strategic Planning Thematic Group Meeting

July 2: Action for Empowerment and Accountability (A4EA) holds a webinar titled: Understanding Empowerment and how to know it when we see it

July 29: PASGR hosts hybrid (face-to-face and virtual) meeting for the inception of the Nairobi Urban Governance House

August 10: Kigali Urban Governance House hold project update meeting with PASGR and IPAR-Rwanda as hosts

August 19: Utafiti Sera Urban Governance House, including members hold a hybrid meeting at Bliss Resort Hotel Mombasa on Teaching Urban Discourse in the Academy Thematic Group

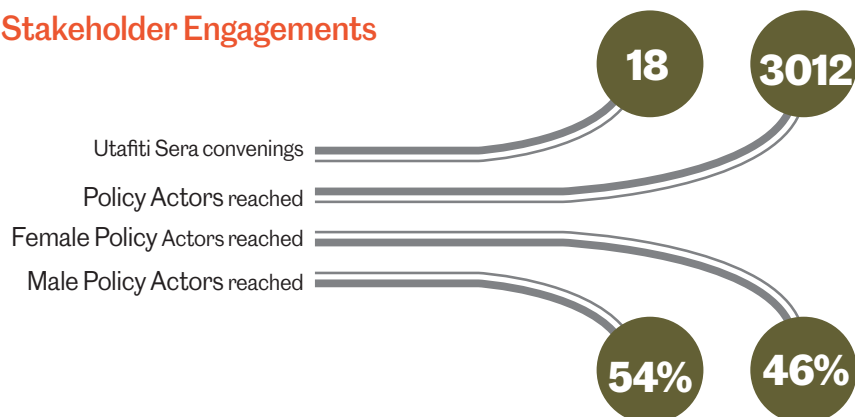
August 18: PASGR, CABE and the baseline survey data collection team hold a micro small and medium enterprises (MSME) survey training under the Youth Employment Creation (YEC) House via Google Meet

Programme and PDT.

Meanwhile, RP continued offering articles for publication in international journals and presenting papers at global conferences.

In this regard, four articles were published in journals and as working papers in line with PASGR's Strategic

Stakeholder Engagements



Objective One. Under the same Strategic Objective, RP managed to produce 10 technical reports.

Investing in ICT software was part of RP's continuity strategy. In Lagos, for instance, the programme scored a major first when it conducted a survey involving over 1,000 households and 2,000 people using online tools: mobile phones and secure servers without exposing research assistants. The same applied to Kenya where the programme undertook a cloud-based survey on youth employment opportunities in the mango and potato value chains, which covered Makueni, Machakos and West Pokot counties.

Being Covid-smart meant reconfiguring programmes, work plans and delivery methods. Adjustments factored value for money, while still "ensuring staff and colleagues are protected, and, importantly, that funder and development partner needs are met," says Atela. Five major projects were reconfigured to be Covid-smart: African Cities, Social Protection, A4EA, Utafiti Sera, and A4W.

The Research Programme also reconfigured its A4EA project to factor in questions on vaccine uptake vis-à-vis global efforts to develop vaccines. "While we were not even sure that there would be vaccines, we thought this

would be the next frontier of thinking in health governance," he says.

Working with partners globally, RP developed Covid-19 vaccine uptake research, which examined factors that influence individual decisions to be vaccinated or not. The study was innovative, firstly because it provided governments with hands-on real-time evidence about what they should consider regarding vaccine rollout and, secondly, it would add to efforts in understanding vaccine uptake — a major global debate pitting the pro-vaccines against anti-vaxxers.

Amid all this was the innovative shift to technology for undertaking research, which resulted in significant cost-cutting — probably 40 per cent — turning would-be doom and gloom of the Covid-19 crisis into an operational blessing.

This was a contrast from 2019 when Atela hardly spent a month in Kenya. "It was one meeting after another, one country after another, one donor engagement after another", he says, until Covid-19 brought travel to a screeching halt. The pandemic also "prompted staff to redefine themselves and spend more time with their families" with significant benefits for employee performance and family wellbeing.

An evidently "rejuvenated" Atela

RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Nurturing a culture of evidence-backed policy



Dr Jean Baptiste Nsengiyumva

Dr Jean Baptiste Nsengiyumva first encountered PASGR in 2018 after he joined the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR-Rwanda) as Senior Research Fellow. The two institutions are implementing a joint research project under Utafiti Sera, titled Addressing Urban Governance Issues: The Case of Secondary Cities, with Nsengiyumva as project leader.

IPAR-Rwanda is a not-for-profit think tank with local and international linkages, created in 2008 to research on policymaking, hence a perfect partner for PASGR.

In 2020, Nsengiyumva says, Covid-19 hampered their work. "Initially we were to conduct physical meetings with stakeholders." However, even a scheduled training in Nairobi on governance failed to happen due to government-imposed Covid measures. "Instead, we 'met' via Zoom, Webex and other online platforms. Covid affected all our logistics plans with PASGR and other partners," he says.

The researcher views PASGR as a regional umbrella organisation-cum-platform for evidence-based policy research. "In PASGR, I see capacity building in regard to evidence-based

policy making. I see a regional hub for researchers, academics, and experts getting together to brainstorm, exchange ideas, publish, read, and make synthesis of evidences, so that our decision makers – our policymakers – nurture a culture of evidence-backed policy. I see publications promoting evidence-based policy – a coordinator of evidence-based policy, not only for Kenya but for the entire region.

"My background is not policymaking, but since I met PASGR, I've learnt a lot. Now I know what a policy brief is. I know how research recommendations can be packaged for policy and decision-makers," says Nsengiyumva, who is familiar with politicians' resistance to being challenged. PASGR taught him how to translate research into clear messages without putting off policymakers.

PASGR, he says, can work with IPAR-Rwanda and like-minded partners to write joint proposals. That will not only underscore PASGR's niche in evidence-based research for policymaking, but will also enhance partners' skills.

His last word: Can PASGR produce a peer-reviewed journal to seal its place in evidence-based policy research and showcase partners' work?

says Covid-19 enabled the PASGR team to discover that it was possible to do without physical interactions with long-term benefits and engaging partners PASGR had never worked with before.

The Covid-driven changes was especially important for Utafiti Sera, which, Atela says, initially only reached House members, each of which consists of about 40 multiple stakeholders.

"But with [pandemic-driven] technology, we reached a phenomenal 3,012, who included academics, government partners, community members, CSOs and private sector

actors."

PASGR's Strategic Plan commits RP to expand and institutionalise research policy communities (Utafiti Sera) to facilitate uptake of research evidence. In the year under review, RP not only held a record 18 Utafiti Sera convenings, but also reached out to a phenomenal 3,012 policy actors, 46 per cent of them women.

But adjusting to Covid-19 restrictions had its downsides as well. The Zoom meetings, for instance, caused intrusion into private lives because many homes were not designed for office work.

A programme officer's departure in December was a major blow to the Research Programme, where work was piling up because of Covid-19-related operational difficulties.

There were also significant implementation delays. Three projects meant to start in October failed to take off, with negative implications for staff salaries. For, while funders agreed to adjust project timeframes, they could not give additional funding to meet salaries.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Beating the odds to innovate, thrive under Covid-19

Year 2020 saw the Professional Development and Training Programme (PDT) team innovate in ways they had never thought of before in order to circumvent challenges that were presented by the sudden emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The PDT programme had set aside the Joint Annual Academic Seminar (JAAS), a major PhD in Public Policy network event as a means of achieving two main strategic objectives i.e. Strategic Objective 1: Develop experiential professional development that builds skills and competencies for policy actors, researchers and academic leaders;

and Strategic Objective 2: Forge partnerships to co-deliver quality capacity building.

This PhD network brings together a partnership of three universities to deliver the PhD programme and help strengthen the partnership's research capacities. The maiden edition of the JAAS was scheduled to be held in Nairobi later in the year during the long holidays, around September and October. The JAAS was meant for the 15 PhD students under the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) sponsorship to receive research methods training jointly delivered with the partner universities in the PhD programme. The students were expected to be at the stage of preparing to design their research in readiness for fieldwork, having completed their theoretical coursework and seminars.

Additionally, the JAAS was to provide space for cohort networking across the partner universities, where they would get to know each other and their research interests.

The JAAS had also envisaged bringing together all the supervisors across the partnership to get to know each other and for capacity strengthening. In PASGR's collaborative style, it had been planned to have these supervisors co-identify where

they needed strengthening and co-create solutions towards meeting those capacity gaps. Then the coronavirus arrival scuttled the plans.

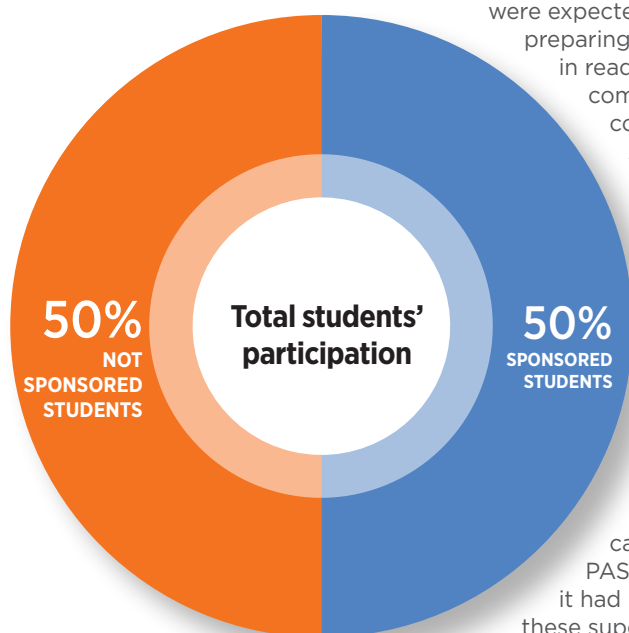
Covid-19 containment measures, which African governments instituted in March, with South Africa going into total lockdown and Kenya and Nigeria executing partial lockdown disrupted delivery of the PhD programme and the JAAS activities. PDT had to quickly innovate a creative solution to still achieve its strategic objectives. To this end, the planned training was redesigned for online delivery. In hindsight, PDT was already prepared for the unfolding scenario in that it had started customising modules for blended online and face-to-face delivery in 2019. "We had prepared our instructors and module developers through training and hands-on experience" affirms Dr Pauline Ngimwa, PDT's Programme Manager.

Smooth transition

The PDT programme had another advantage in that, a sister project on innovative pedagogy, the PedaL project, had already introduced lecturers to online delivery. The programme also invested in appropriate e-learning authoring applications and strengthened the e-learning delivery platform, the Moodle, making for smooth transition from face-to-face to online delivery. This enabled the planned JAAS activities to be moved online.

By reconfiguring the JAAS for virtual delivery and engagement, PDT was able to successfully achieve the two strategic objectives despite the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. More students than originally intended were trained. The plan was to bring to Nairobi the 15 sponsored PhD students. Happily, online training's affordability opened space for more students beyond the sponsored students and all the enrolled 30 students (11 female, 19 male) received the training.

It was also necessary to make



Pursuing a dream in 'a year like never before'

Maureen Sylvia Kusiima, a PhD candidate at the University of Pretoria (UP), in South Africa, first met PASGR in 2015 when she was pursuing an MRPP degree at Uganda Christian University (UCU). In July 2019, she got an alert from PASGR on an opportunity to pursue a PhD in Public Policy at the UP.

Putting in an application was challenging, especially in regard to securing reference letters since she had only a few days to apply.

She describes 2020 as "a year like never before... being in a foreign country, isolated from family and friends, trying to catch up with the hectic PhD schedule and studying online." However, professors used to call in for 'zoom cup of tea sessions', making it easier to cope. In addition, PASGR's Dr Pauline Ngimwa often checked on them through zoom calls, encouraging them to press on.

"Amid all the ruckus and dying economies due to the pandemic, we never lacked because our stipends were always sent on time," she says.

PASGR also supported students through online conferences and seminars, besides providing e-learning resources. Maureen considers PASGR an organisation that equips higher institution academics and scholars with



Maureen Sylvia Kusiima

research skills geared towards promoting public policy and good governance in Africa.

Maureen has benefited twice from PASGR-mediated scholarships—a German DAAD scholarship that saw her attain her MRPP degree and the current Carnegie Corporation of New York scholarship that is financing her PhD programme. PASGR "has and is facilitating me to achieve my dream".

follow-ups with students to find out how they were coping with the pandemic challenges: "We had regular check-ins with the students to ensure they were getting on well during the Covid-19 lockdowns," Ngimwa states.

PDT also organised a virtual

seminar for 25 supervisors from across the partnership to network and co-identify areas requiring supervision capacity strengthening to inform design of a supervision course for these supervisors. A spinoff from this seminar was that through networking,

PDT's training milestones 2020

August 24-28: Designing Social Research: Policy-Engaged Inquiries That Work online course for PhD students

September 14-15: Research Ethics online course for PhD students

September 28: Virtual Joint Supervisors seminar

November 9: Academic Literacy Seminar 1 for PhD students

December 9: Academic Literacy Seminar 2 for PhD students

supervisors identified students' projects where they could co-supervise across the partnership. This commenced immediately through online engagements.

However, there were also challenges. Training take-off for students at the University of Ibadan was delayed because it coincided with pandemic-induced government-instituted closures. This drawback was, however, mitigated by the course's inbuilt online delivery options available in other partner universities. Therefore, the affected students joined online classes at the University of Pretoria, albeit in the second semester. The students' participation was supported with internet bundles.

Another challenge encountered was that students started experiencing Zoom or virtual fatigue as they had to participate in the online training alongside their other programme activities. The original plan envisaged bringing all the PhD students to Nairobi for a week of undivided attention. However, the revised training format ended up stretching from September to December, mainly because of a clash in the three universities' calendars. This allowed fitting in the training within the different calendars, but it meant students had to juggle between the training and other programme activities. Ngimwa further explains that a student is more likely to prioritise preparing for

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING



Prof Emmanuel Remi Aiyede

Transforming pedagogy and research across the continent

Professor Emmanuel Remi Aiyede describes 2020 as an activity-packed “eventful” year in which he was involved in online training both as a trainee and as a trainer. He singles out the Training on PhD Supervision in Africa at the Stellenbosch University, South Africa (July 20–November 30) as most rewarding. He was also “very active in research”, some of which was published online.

Remi has associated with PASGR since 2013, when he attended a curriculum development workshop on the Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP). What stands out for the Professor of Political Institutions, Governance and Public Policy when PASGR is mentioned is positive transformation of pedagogy and research in universities across Africa. The Head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Ibadan says he has been involved in virtually all units and activities of PASGR.

In the Higher Education Programme (HEP) for instance, Remi has been part of curriculum development up to the PhD in Public Policy.

In a year that saw Covid-19 put brakes on in-person learning, Remi co-moderated an online PhD supervisors’ seminar on September 28 with Prof Fred Jonyo of the University of Nairobi (UoN). A survey to complement the seminar output

followed mid-October. Both events identified supervision and digital research capacity gaps, and suggested ideas for interventions to achieve an improved supervision and assessment framework.

Twenty-eight participants from the three PhD partner universities of Ibadan, Nairobi and Pretoria plus PASGR staff attended the seminar. They discussed culture, timeframe, attrition/completion rates, infrastructure and the social environment of research, human and infrastructure capacity gaps and how to address the gaps. Covid-19-related issues also featured.

Of significance for Remi was the varying situations across universities and the mutual support they can derive from collaboration. Staffing, research infrastructure and the level of readiness for online delivery varied from one university to another. While Pretoria’s leverage point was its library resources and online programme delivery, it lacked capacity to supervise all the students it might wish to enrol. Ibadan, on the other hand, lagged behind its peers because of a prolonged lecturers’ strike. As such, the proposal to improve supervision in the PhD programmes, including training more supervisors were apt, and “should take the form of reflective practice workshops or seminars”, says Remi.

an exam than for a group online class. Lessons learnt from students’ experience with Zoom fatigue will be invaluable in designing future online engagements.

Covid-19 also saw PASGR staff put in more working hours, often well into the night. Although they took it in stride — as “the nature of Covid” — the pandemic invaded physical space and time in a manner that intruded on families. (See also p.14, Research Programme)

All in all, however, the Covid-19 pandemic, has strengthened the partnership between the project universities as it enhances collaboration. It’s exciting to see students from universities across the continent participate in the same lessons, a tradition that will solidify to maturity in the coming years.

Meanwhile, PDT got involved in developing project proposals aimed at creating communities of practice to respond to Covid-19 beyond 2020. This activity was aimed at supporting the Programmes Strategic Objective 3, achieve long-term sustainability and Strategic Objective 4 and develop an active community of practice for excellence in social science research. One of the project proposals looks at education, policy research and gender that responds to the education sector challenges. The other looks at the sudden shift to online delivery in Kenyan universities with a view to coming up with action plans for digital learning. The third is a Research Policy (Utafiti Sera) project aimed at strengthening access to higher education in a pandemic setting.

TADE BOWS OUT

Our boss, mentor and colleague

The kudoboard, a gift from PASGR staff to Prof Tade Aina, conveys the essence of an astute leader. Heart-warming messages on the board are addressed to “Our Boss, Mentor and Colleague” Professor Omotade Akin Aina — simply known as Tade to family, friends and colleagues.

The messages capture the impact of a personality who has made PASGR a top institution in social and governance policy research in Africa.

On September 30, 2020, Tade moved on after leading PASGR through more than half a decade of relentless growth. His arrival in 2014 had marked the organisation’s transition into a fully independent African organisation — it had started as a project of the British Council on *Building Capacity for Better Governance Research*.

Tade left behind an exemplary outfit. PASGR gained the best from his leadership, whose hallmark combined integrity, professionalism and a passion for excellence.

A man of ideas, Tade’s academic and professional journey is dotted with many firsts. As former deputy executive secretary of the Dakar-based Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa and a former professor of Sociology at the University of Lagos, Tade was like just “what the doctor ordered” for PASGR.

He obtained his doctorate from the University of Sussex, crowning earlier degrees in sociology from the University of Lagos and another one from the London School of Economics.

Tade served the Ford Foundation for 10 years, based at its Nairobi office, where he was also Regional Representative for East Africa. The Carnegie Corporation of New York, the American foundation, was Tade’s springboard to PASGR, where he brought innovative leadership buttressed by an exceptional understanding of the global donor community, knowledge systems and networks.



Prof Tade Aina

Tade didn’t come empty-handed: he entered PASGR with a diversified funding portfolio which included the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, MasterCard, Hewlett Foundation besides funding from DFID (now Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, UK). Their support found expression in different projects and partnerships, among them the Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform as well as linkages with University of Manchester and the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Sussex, UK.

Understandably, Tade’s exit was tinged with sadness and joy — sadness because PASGR lost an invaluable asset and joy for the rich legacy his leadership had built.

Dr Beatrice Muganda, the Higher Education Programme Director and Acting Executive Director, says: “Today, the many MRPP graduates, DPhil Public Policy students and the phenomenal Pedal bear witness not only to your (Tade’s) faith in innovation, and in the talent that waits to be unearthed on this continent, but also to what can be achieved with modest means hinged in African values.”

Both the kudoboard and earlier conversations testify to the esteem in which staff held Tade. He was a boss, a mentor and a colleague, said Dr Martin Atela, the Research Programme Manager.

“He invested in institutional sustainability, not just by fundraising, but also in terms of building capacity of people and mentoring young people to take up their roles.”

Dr Pauline Ngimwa, Professional Development and Training Programme Manager, describes Tade’s tenure as a period of “tremendous growth personally and institutionally... PDT produced Professors.”

Tade’s feedback on issues was always “honest and constructive,” she says.

“Bosses are supposed to be impersonal and private, but you... demonstrated that true leadership is about compassion and care.”

Jane Muema, the Executive Director’s personal assistant, concurs with Ngimwa, underlining Tade’s compassion, wisdom, professionalism, and patience.

Ms Esther Simekha, the communications assistant, extols Tade’s guidance and mentorship. She learned to be “a good human being and to give nothing but the best.”

Technical Administrative Assistant Elijah Kabari sees in Tade “a father-figure with unmatched quest [for] social justice”, who formed them through hard work.

Finance and Administration Head Constance Mwachunga hails Tade’s unique leadership style, character and rare competencies in finance and administration.

Senior Finance Officer Charles Nyaga described Tade as “the captain of PASGR” — a “leader during smooth sailing and during turbulent times.”

Edwin Rwigy, HEP assistant, praises Tade’s “great leadership” and “an enviable but rare mix of scholarly excellence and international development experience.”

Board of Directors



Prof Narciso Matos
Former Executive Director, Foundation for Community Development, Mozambique (Chair)

PASGR is governed by a Board of Directors. The current Board Chair is Prof Narciso Matos, former executive director of the Foundation for Community Development, Mozambique. Prof Matos took over from the long-serving Prof Ernest Aryeetey, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Legon. Board members are eminent personalities reflecting African global leadership as well as regional and international credibility in African policy-making, research and higher education. The Board is responsible for providing high-level strategic guidance during the initial implementation of PASGR programmes, approving programme and organisational design, and reviewing work programmes and budgets. PASGR also has a PhD Steering committee, which is an integral part of its governance and management.



Prof Gerald Ouma
Founding Director of Institutional Planning, University of Pretoria, South Africa



Prof Lise Rakner
Professor of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen, Norway



Ms Helen Ombima
Director Legal Services & Company Secretary, USIU-Africa



Prof Karuti Kanyinga
Director of the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi



Prof Ama de-Graft Aikins
British Academy Global Professor, Institute of Advanced Studies, University College, London



Dr Beatrice Muganda
Ag. Executive Director/Director, Higher Education Programme, PASGR (Secretary and ex-officio member)

PASGR Secretariat

Beatrice Muganda

Ag. Executive Director/
Director, Higher Education

Jane Muema

Executive Assistant

Elijah Kabari

Information Technology

Pauline Ngimwa

Programme Manager,
Professional Development
& Training

Edwin Rwigi

Programme Officer,
Higher Education

Mercy Limiri

Programme Assistant,
Higher Education

Kennedy Kibukho

Monitoring, Evaluation
and Learning Officer,
Higher Education

Constance Mwhunga

Head, Finance &
Administration

Charles Nyaga

Senior Finance Officer

Colleta Njeri

Finance Assistant

Martin Atela

Programme Manager,
Research

Lauren Wesonga

Programme Officer,
Research

Esther Simekha

Communications Assistant

Quality control for PhD and MRPP

PASGR relies on two organs — the PhD and MRPP Steering Committees — to ensure its two degree programmes are of the highest standard.

The first Steering Committee (SC) guides all aspects of development and implementation of the collaborative PhD in Public Policy programme. The six-member committee has four representatives from the three partner universities and two programme heads from the PASGR Secretariat. The membership comprises senior representatives designated by the Vice-Chancellors of each participating university, PASGR's Director of Higher Education and the Programme Manager of the Professional Development and Training Programme, who also manages the Carnegie Corporation of New York scholarship. The committee is currently chaired by Prof Natasja Holtzhausen, University of Pretoria. The members are Dr Beatrice Muganda, PASGR, Prof Jonathan Babalola, University of Ibadan, Prof Fred Jonyo, University of Nairobi, Prof Catherine Chovwen, University of Ibadan and Dr Pauline Ngimwa, PASGR.

The Steering Committee was involved in course design and its mandate covers course development, upgrading and ensuring that the PhD maintains the high standards that are its hallmark. The Committee's input is crucial to Programme launches and in the post-launch monitoring and evaluation. Two online Steering Committee Meetings — the first ever such on



Prof Natasja Holtzhausen,
Chairperson

account of the Covid-19 pandemic — were held in the year under review to provide strategic guidance towards programme launch and implementation. In addition to providing day-to-day leadership for programme implementation in their respective universities, the Steering Committee members have helped to strengthen and expand the PhD network.

A 14-member Steering Committee governs the Master of Research and Public Policy programme. This advisory body is composed of representatives appointed by the Vice-Chancellors of each participating university and PASGR's Director of Higher Education. The

committee provides leadership and guidance in the implementation of the MRPP programme. The committee further plays a quality assurance role by providing oversight and advice on programme architecture, curriculum design, and delivery. Its members are Dr Respecius Damian Shumbusho, University of Dar es Salaam; Dr Patricia Wambugu, Egerton University; Prof Catherine Chovwen, University of Ibadan; Dr Antoinette Tsiboe-Darko, University of Ghana; Prof Maximiano Ngabirano, Uganda Martyrs University; Dr Denis Kamugisha, Mzumbe University; Dr Bashi Mothusi, University of Botswana;

Prof Erick Nyambetha, Maseno University; Prof Kukunda Elizabeth Bacwayo, Uganda Christian University; Prof Bonaventure Haruna, University of Jos; Dr Emmanuel Onah, University of Lagos; Prof Fred Jonyo, University of Nairobi and Dr Hindowa Momoh, University of Sierra Leone.

The Research and Programmes Committee



Prof Karuti Kanyinga, Chair

The Research and Programmes Committee (RPC) provides strategic advice and guidance to PASGR research and programmes interventions and activities. It reviews programme reports and makes recommendations to the board for approval of broad programme intervention issues. In this sense, the RPC is a key quality assurance organ of the institution, working closely

with the secretariat to set and ensure adherence to high-quality standards for research, research capacity strengthening and pedagogical training. In addition, the RPC advises the secretariat on current opportunities, trends and practices in research, capacity building and education that add value to PASGR programmes. Prof Karuti Kanyinga from the University Nairobi is the current RPC chairperson.

MEMBERS Prof Lise Rakner, Member | Prof Ama de-Graft Aikins, Member | Dr Martin Atela, Secretary

PASGR in numbers

3000

Number of stakeholders reached for research through pandemic-driven technology

423,036

Online engagement hits on PedaL Online in December 2020

5,134

NANGA subscribers in the year under review

1.5

Amount of grant in million dollars secured for the Accountability for Water project (A4W).

601

Total number of academics adopting PedaL Online by December 2020

1000

Households surveyed in a Nigerian study using online research tools, including mobile phones and secure servers

99.9

Percentage of financial transactions at PASGR that were conducted online compared with 80 per cent in 2019

1.99

Amount in millions of US dollars that PASGR spent in 2020 compared with US\$3.8 million the organisation spent in the previous year



FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Pandemic slows inflow of funds and delays projects

As 2020 came to an end, almost all of the institution's payment transactions were online. The almost 100 per cent shift (from approximately 80% in 2019) was driven by Covid-19, whose emergence in Kenya in March led PASGR to adopt a work-from-home policy.

Only payments to NHIF, NITA and NSSF required written cheques.

Finance and Administration Head Constance Mwahunga attributes the smooth adoption of online transacting to co-operation between programme staff, the finance team and the account signatories.

"With Covid-19 protocols requiring reduction of physical contact, we had to start sharing support documents online. Whereas the review and approvals were done online, the process was not entirely paperless as payment vouchers would later be printed for filing," she said.

PASGR's work-from-home policy posed logistical challenges. "We had to provide staff with laptops and data for online engagement. We allowed those in need of office desks to take one home. For work that required physical presence in the office, PASGR provided private transport to shield staff from the coronavirus. We also provided masks and sanitisers and periodically fumigated the office. Ultimately, we secured the occupational safety and health certificate," Mwahunga added.

Curtailed physical movement affected fundraising. Many donors restructured their budgets to address Covid-related matters that needed urgent response. The few Expressions of Interest from donors mostly targeted Covid-19.

With pre-Covid negotiations literally suspended, some donors withheld grants they had already approved, opting to wait and see.

To attune the organisation to Covid-19, programme implementation demanded innovative thinking. With the donors' approval, PASGR customised most of its activities to virtual platforms. The virtual approach necessitated good trade-offs in realising economy, efficiency and effectiveness. With value-for-money principles in PASGR'S implementation model, cost of meetings reduced from an average of US\$1,250 per person for physical meetings to US\$715 per person for virtual meetings, representing a 40% drop in unit cost.

The restricted implementation backed by virtual engagement had a significant impact on expenditure. Compared to 2019, PASGR spent only 50 per cent of the annual budget to close at US\$1,995,804 against US\$3,836,018 spent in 2019. Notwithstanding the pandemic challenges, PASGR managed to close the financial year with a strong liquidity at US\$1,637,322 with no grant cuts.

PASGR showed resilience upon Executive Director Tade Akin Aina's departure in September, after six years at the helm (see p.21). HEP director Beatrice Muganda took over in an acting capacity. Prof Aina's departure proved providential in that, Mastercard Foundation, the organisation he joined, is now a PASGR donor.

Reduced spending under Covid-19

2019
\$3,836,018
2020
\$1,995,804


FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER, 2020

		2020	2019
	Notes	USD	USD
INCOME			
Grant Income	5	1,673,082	3,836,018
Other Income	5	105,210	493,961
Total Income		1,778,292	4,329,979
EXPENDITURE			
Research Programme		490,796	551,278
Professional Development & Training programme		190,164	663,967
Higher Education Programme		920,290	2,249,552
Core Administration		394,554	371,221
Total Expenses		1,995,804	3,836,018
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		(217,512)*	493,961

*During the September 15, 2020, Board meeting, based on the FY 2020 updated budget projection presented, the Board approved an allocation of US\$ 336,076 from reserves to fund the deficit.

PASGR's Corporate Strategy

Unit	Corporate Strategic Plans	Specific Annual Objectives
Professional	Tooling and re-tooling African researchers, policy makers, practitioners and other actors to strengthen research and leadership capacity and advance excellence in public policy and governance in Africa.	Design and deliver experiential professional development that builds skills and competencies for policy actors, researchers and academic leaders
		Forge partnerships to co-deliver high quality professional development and capacity building courses
		Achieve long-term sustainability
		Develop an active community of practice for excellence in social science research
Higher Education Programme	Strengthen graduate-level teaching and practice of social science research, public policy and governance in Africa.	Design, launch and catalyze delivery of a Doctoral programme
		Develop active communities of practice around Pedal, the MRPP and PhD programmes
		Advance the visibility of the three HEP initiatives (MRPP, PhD and Pedal) and institutional sustainability
		Diversify funding, revenue sources and partners for sustainability
Research & Policy	Provide quality social science research that will inform their public policy and governance actions.	High quality and policy relevant research delivered to varied audiences
		Grow networks, partnerships and platforms for young and emerging social science researchers' in Africa, especially women
		Expand and institutionalize research-policy communities (Utafiti Sera) to facilitate uptake of research evidence



pasgr.org
PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN SOCIAL
& GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

Partnership for African Social and Governance Research

6th Floor I&M Bank House, 2nd Ngong Avenue, Upper Hill
P.O. Box 76418-00508 Nairobi, Kenya Email: info@pasgr.org
Tel: +254 (0)20 2985000; +254 (0)729 111031 or
+254 (0)731 000065 www.pasgr.org