

Our Sustainability Matrix

Lessons learned in
the past five years

Annual Report 2023



OUR FUNDING PARTNERS



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

PASGR gratefully acknowledges the support of our funders, The Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Carnegie Corporation of New York, Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP), German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Mastercard Foundation (MCF), Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa (OSIEA), University of Manchester (UoM), The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.



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Abbreviations

A4W: Accountability for Water

AEN: Africa Evidence Network

AFD: Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)

AISA: Africa Institute of South Africa

AYAR: Africa Youth Aspirations and Resilience

AYGS: Africa Young Graduates and Scholars

CAD: Canadian dollars

CCNY: Carnegie Corporation of New York

CTLE: Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence

DAAD: German Academic Exchange Service

DPP: Doctoral in Public Policy

EGAP: Evidence in Governance and Politics

ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning

HEP: Higher Education Programme

HSRC: Human Sciences Research Council

IDRC: International Development Research Centre

IGNITE: Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Network for Inclusive and Transformative Education

IRC: International Rescue Committee

JAAS: Joint Annual Academic Seminar

KCAU: KCA University

KICD: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

LMS: Learning Management System

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

MRPP: Master of Research and Public Policy

OUK: Open University of Kenya

PASGR: Partnership for African Social and Governance Research

PDT: Professional Development and Training

Pedal: Pedagogical Leadership in Africa

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

RP: Research and Policy Programme

ToT: Training/Trainer of Trainers

UI: University of Ibadan

UP: University of Pretoria

Our mission, our vision

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 over 26 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
- Coordinate a collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy and Doctoral in Public Policy Programmes with universities in Africa.



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



Our commitment to advancing research excellence for governance and public policy in Africa enabled PASGR to deliver impactful initiatives like the Utafiti Sera programme, significantly influencing Africa's Evidence Informed Decision Making (EIDM) space.

Welcome to our 2023 Annual Report

The year under review brought out some of the best attributes of the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), qualities we will depend on as we cross into 2024.

Our commitment to advancing research excellence for governance and public policy in Africa enabled PASGR to deliver impactful initiatives like the Utafiti Sera programme, significantly influencing Africa's Evidence Informed Decision Making (EIDM) space. Our research projects such as the Mastercard Foundation- funded African Youth Aspiration and Resilience programme helped to shape policies in key areas such as youth employment. They are now part of efforts to reengineer policy research on the continent.

We are heartened by the participation of our students and faculty in the collaborative Doctoral in Public Policy (DPP) programme. It produced its first PhD graduate despite the debilitating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The doctoral graduate and five others set to graduate in 2024 are a credit to the multi-university programme, which was first proposed in the expiring 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.

A number of strategic partners have steadfastly supported us through the years and seen us grow into what we are today. Without their generosity, our contribution to building capacity for evidence-led policy making would not have been possible. We welcomed on board a set of new partners as we embarked on brand new projects that are important for our sustainability.

The successful delivery of our mandate testifies to the dedication of our staff, who gave their all in what could have been a difficult year. Amid a leadership transition under the stewardship of an acting executive director, we remained focused on attaining our vision of "a vibrant social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues".

The year ahead will be a busy one as we embark on crafting a new strategic plan covering the year 2024 to 2028. Spurred by the determination of staff and reliable support of funding partners, we look forward to a prosperous 2024.

Prof Narciso Matos, Chairman

Securing new and old partners to sustain excellent research

We have reason to celebrate the 2023 operational year. We wound up our five-year strategic plan buoyed by signing new grants, retaining most of our funders and wrapping up old projects.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC)-funded Food Systems Transformation — a two-year project to equip policymakers with skills to analyse food systems value chains— was signed early in the year.

Newcomer Agence Française de Développement (AFD) of the government of France is funding Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education project (IGNITE), implemented by a consortium of four organizations led by the International Rescue Committee. Other partners are Urgent Action Fund-Africa and Middle East-based René Mouawad Foundation. Spanning Nigeria, Ethiopia and Cameroon, IGNITE explores the effects of social norms on adolescent girls' education.

AFD's entry underpins our mission of creating and sustaining partnerships at national, regional and international levels. The same applies to the EGAP/Mercury grant for a Covid vaccine uptake study in Malawi, Zimbabwe and parts of Francophone West Africa — a partnership with the University

of California, Berkeley. Zimbabwe's Centre for Sexual Health and HIV AIDS Research, and Malawi's Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, are co-implementing the project.

We are encouraged by Hewlett Foundation's renewed funding for Accountability for Water project Phase 2. Hewlett also renewed support for Utafiti Sera — our evidence-to-policy flagship programme — enabling us to extend the programme to Zambia by implementing the Universal Health Coverage Utafiti Sera House. We closed the Social Protection Utafiti Sera House, hailed as one of our most impactful undertakings, by participating in the taskforce that drafted Kenya's Social Protection Bill, 2023.

The continued support of the Mastercard Foundation enabled us to bring our ambitious seven-country study on Africa Youth Aspirations and Resilience to a successful completion in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

Our long-standing partner, Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) renewed their support to our Doctoral in Public Policy network through scholarships and capacity strengthening. They also renewed support for policy dialogues in Kenya's higher education sector following successful completion of our country study titled: "Strengthening equitable

access to higher education during and post Covid-19 pandemic environment". The renewed project, "Re-imagining university financing", seeks to generate evidence to drive policy dialogues on the efficacy of the new university funding model.

In February, we partnered with the African Institute of South Africa (AISA)— a programme of the Human Sciences Research Council — to co-host a workshop ahead of their African Young Graduates and Scholars (AYGS) Conference in Pretoria. What a proud moment as our Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP) student was declared the best presenter!

We continued to disburse DAAD scholarships to MRPP students at Egerton and Maseno universities in Kenya, and Mzumbe University in Tanzania through a grant with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Our Pedal programme — Pedagogical Leadership in Africa — gained traction among the continent's academy with over 130 faculty from Kenya's KCA University trained in 2023.

Our growth from 14 project countries in 2014 to today's 26 testifies to a robust strategic plan, strong partnerships and financial sustainability.

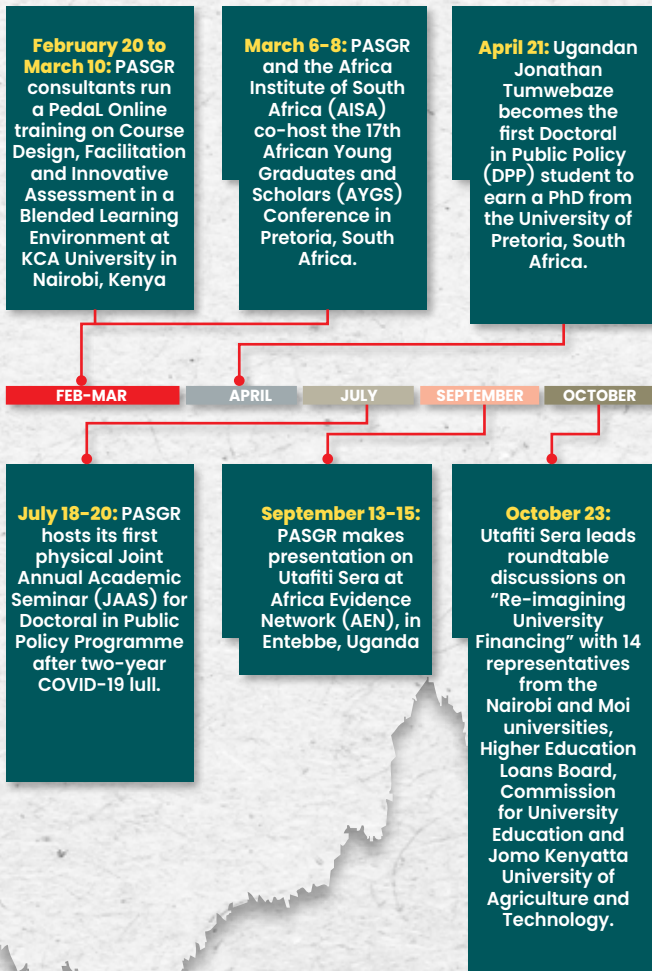
Dr Pauline Ngimwa, Ag Executive Director



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2023

AT A GLANCE



Communications & Outreach

Utafiti Sera leaves footprints at evidence network meeting

We engaged with partners across four continents during the year under review.

The partners were in Africa, North America (notably United States of America), Europe (the United Kingdom) and South America. In Africa, our interaction was mainly with countries involved in ongoing PASGR projects.

Three of our funding partners — specifically the Mastercard Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the Manchester University’s African Cities Research Consortium — visited us at different times during the year besides facilitating our participation in various international events, where we left footprints. A case in point was the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) meeting in Entebbe, Uganda.

At the AEN, which took place from September 13 to 15, Jim Kaketch, our Research and Policy (RP) Programme Officer and Utafiti Sera lead, showcased our unique evidence-driven research approach. Our impactful input featured on PASGR’s, African Cities’

and AEN’s websites, and on social media, making us visible to partners and individuals.

The Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (Pedal) programme also illuminated our profile. It is instructive that almost every consultant involved in developing the Open University of Kenya (OUK) Kenya’s curriculum—probably 96–97 per cent—cited Pedal’s influence on them. OUK got its charter on August 3, 2023.

The Communications and Outreach unit hosted several webinars whose purpose included disseminating research findings, notably for the Youth Aspirations and Resilience (AYAR) project. With the content we produced, we engaged partners virtually and via social media. The webinars helped us to expand our reach beyond physical spaces. We produced several policy briefs for the African Cities, AYAR, and CCNY projects.

Through the AYAR project, we developed our first resource database for all publications for PASGR’s central depository and in partnership with other stakeholders.

The IGNITE project saw us expand our reach. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) leads the consortium that has projects in Africa and the Middle East with PASGR in charge of research.

A number of mini documentaries or SOTS (sounds on tape) were produced to catch stakeholders’ attention ahead of different convenings and to summarise or provide overviews of the projects we executed. Several SOTS were put together about the Utafiti Sera and AYAR project and also for the Doctoral in Public Policy Programme joint seminars.

LinkedIn and X were our most visited social media sites, with LinkedIn receiving 37,501 visitors and X 36,752. On the other hand, X drew more followers at 2,630 compared to LinkedIn’s 2,208.

PASGR Social Media Analytics by platform 2023		
Twitter (Now X)		LinkedIn
11.97	Engagement rate %	11.6
4231	Engagements	–
36752	Impressions	37,501
2,630	Followers	2,208
–	Reactions	1,052
–	Shares	126

Staying the course as we build communities of excellence

At the expiry of PASGR's 2019–2023 Strategic Plan, which was titled "Towards Communities of Excellence for Research and Public Policy," we reflect on the milestones attained in pursuing the organisation's key objectives.

With regard to our goal on partnerships, it's noteworthy that the number of collaborating universities across Africa has increased from the 13 we enlisted in 2019, when we launched the strategic plan to 26, thanks to the Pedal project. From those partnerships arose the first ever collaborative Doctoral in Public Policy (DPP) programme in Africa.

Coincidentally, the DPP programme, which is offered collaboratively by the universities of Ibadan, Nairobi and Pretoria, was also launched that year. Its early fruits came with the first graduate from University of Pretoria, South Africa, in April.

A community of practice that was formed around the Pedal— the Pedagogical Leadership in Africa programme Pedal continues to thrive, even after the project funding came to an end in 2021. Pedal's institutionalisation went into high gear when KCA University hosted a three-week training for its faculty in August.

The second strategic goal

speaks to the heart of our research unit's flagship programme, Utafiti Sera (Swahili phrase for Research Policy), which has lifted the profile of evidence-informed decision making. Seven Utafiti Sera houses (i.e. research communities) exist. They contribute to running projects straddling national and regional borders and have helped speed up knowledge generation and policy uptake. Utafiti Sera is now integrated into all our programtic operations.

The third strategic goal — enhancing and balancing revenue sources to ensure sustainability— found expression in our cultivating new funding streams. The

push for diversification in 2023 resulted in our signing grants with newcomers like Agence Française de Développement (AFD), which is funding IGNITE (Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education).

Two other new projects—Food Systems Transformation funded by the International Development Research Centre and the EGAP/Mercury Health Ambassadors Covid vaccine uptake project in sub-Saharan Africa also testify to our diversification efforts

These new strategic partnerships join our long standing funders who include the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Hewlett Foundation, and MasterCard Foundation. We are heavily indebted by these continued partnerships that have enabled us successfully deliver our 2019–2023 Strategic plan.

The fifth strategic goal was about intensifying strategies that advance PASGR's recognition, identity and sustainability. This is evident in the complementary relationship in our key programmes, Higher Education Programme (HEP), Professional Development and Training (PDT) and Research and Policy (RP) programme. This symbiosis has ensured PASGR's visibility, especially in conferences and workshops we have participated in.

In sum, therefore, this annual report meets the aspirations of Strategic Plan 2019–2023.

Some of the key planks of our strategic objectives



Continuously establish and sustain partnerships at national/regional and international levels for advancing research, higher education and training;



Facilitate and advance the creation of policy and research communities for knowledge generation and policy uptake



Enhance and balance revenue sources to ensure sustainability



Strengthen internal processes for organisational development



Intensify the strategies that advance the recognition, identity and sustainability of the organisation



Promote gender equity and diversity in PASGR and her programmes.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME >>

February 20 to March 10: Three-week Pedal online training on Course Design, Facilitation and Innovative Assessment held at KCA University.

April 21: Jonathan Tumwebaze becomes the first Doctoral in Public Policy (DPP) student to earn a PhD from the University of Pretoria under the PASGR-CCNY fellowship programme.

February 20 to March 10: Three-week Pedal online training on Course Design, Facilitation and Innovative Assessment held at KCA University.

April 21: Jonathan Tumwebaze becomes the first Doctoral in Public Policy (DPP) student to earn a PhD from the University of Pretoria under the PASGR-CCNY fellowship programme.

Participants listen keenly to a presentation during the JAAS in July, 2023.

Our first doctoral graduate as HEP grows steadily

In 2013 when the Higher Education Programme (HEP) was our flagship department, with the Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP) as its coveted offering, discussion arose about introducing a doctoral programme in public policy. This was a logical progression from the popular Masters course.

The Doctoral in Public Policy (DPP) programme later carved a niche for itself, becoming a major deliverable in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, which had the theme “Towards Communities of Excellence for Research and Public Policy.” How auspicious, therefore, that as our five-year activity guidepost expires, the doctoral programme has delivered its first PhD graduate in the

person of Jonathan Tumwebaze, a 29 year-old student from University of Pretoria (UP). Another five students are due to complete their studies.

The DPP programme was launched in 2019, a collaborative programme offered at University of Nairobi, University of Ibadan and University of Pretoria..

The Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) is a major contributor to the doctoral programme’s success story, especially in developing early career faculty, which ensures regenerative capacity at universities. This is through providing scholarships that are managed by the Professional Development and Training Programme of PASGR. It’s noteworthy 33 per cent of the scholarship grantees are MRPP

480

The number of MRPP students who have graduated from **13** partner universities in seven African countries. The DAAD—German Academic Exchange Service—funding has revitalised the collaborative programme in our universities.



A PhD at 29 and sharp at policy development

“It’s possible to get your PhD in two-and-a-half years, at 29, and still be humble and sit on a mat with Mama and Papa for a cup of tea,” says an amiable Dr Jonathan Tumwebaze.

The University of Pretoria (UP) alumnus stole the thunder from 34 others in the first two cohorts of the collaborative Doctoral in Public Policy (DPP) programme. Five more students completed their studies in the year under review and should graduate in April 2024.

Jonathan joined UP’s School of Public Management in March 2020 and graduated on April 21, 2023. He describes PASGR’s “visionary leadership” and its partnership with UP as “phenomenal”.

Dr Pauline Ngimwa, PASGR’s Acting Executive Director, who heads the Professional Development and Training programme (PDT) — that manages DPP’s scholarship grant for the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) — says Jonathan’s achievement showed that the programme was “of high quality with positive outcomes”.

CCNY fellowships go to students committed to complete their studies. To achieve this, Ngimwa says, partners streamlined the programme to include a student progress reporting system.

Jonathan credits his fast-paced PhD to stable funding, ever-present academic supervisors, an enabling academic environment, an intellectually stimulating class and the profound formative years of his childhood. The programme has a mobility grant for DPP faculty supervisors within the network, enabling guest lectures to interact with their students and co-supervisors.

The young scholar is now contributing to his country’s research and policy landscape by developing a policy research agenda for the Church of Uganda, and implementing policy research projects like the one on HIV stigma and discrimination among Church of Uganda clergy, using a student seed grant.

Jonathan feels duty-bound “to support others who may not be part of my journey” but admits to being “unsettled by my deep commitment to steward that which has been entrusted with me.”

A top student right from his MRPP (Master of Research and Public Policy), Jonathan’s unassuming nature may explain his child-focused scholarship. His PhD thesis “Child Participation in Child Focused Policy Designs” deviates from researching on children to research with children.

graduates, who are expected to take up academic roles in African universities on attaining their PhDs. Jonathan has made this aspiration become a reality as he has gone back to his university in Uganda as an early career academic.

An important activity of the HEP was a three-week pedagogical online training on Course Design, Facilitation and Innovative Assessment in a Blended Learning Environment, using Pedal content available on the PASGR's Learning Management System. The training was held at KCA University's Center of Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) in Nairobi, Kenya, from June to August 2023, whose climax was the graduation of 110 faculty members on August 25, 2023, attended by Dr Ngimwa, PASGR Ag. Executive Director.

This training followed the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with KCA University as a means of institutionalising the Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (Pedal) programme in universities, a key mandate entrenched in our Strategic Plan for 2019–2023. Pedal training initially targeted lead course instructors through a training of trainers (ToT) process in order to

How training changed lecturer and her students

Milkah Njuguna, a KCA University (KCAU) lecturer, is proud of the teaching skills she acquired from a three-week Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (Pedal) training facilitated by PASGR.

The course, titled "Pedal Online training on Course Design, Facilitation and Innovative Assessment in a Blended Learning Environment" took place from February 20 to March 10. It was transformative for Njuguna and her students.

She singles out Course Design and Innovative Assessment as "the most important" modules of the course.

Tellingly, the lecturer initially joined

bring about change in teaching and learning methods at universities, who are expected to cascade training to their fellow colleagues. Milkah Njuguna, a KCA University (KCAU) lecturer, having initially been trained as a ToT is championing the institutionalization process at her university with excellent results observed in her own career growth and also in her student's learning



as a trainer of trainers (ToT) and was placed on the programme led by Dr Jared Ongaro. At the time she was the departmental chair in KCAU's professional and technical wing.

Njuguna has been spearheading

implementation of the course. She says it has improved her teaching skills and students' success.

"What Pedal training did to KCAU faculty was transformative and its effect on students is overwhelming. Faculty now use a variety of tools for engaging students through our Learning Management System (LMS), such as Rubric, H5P, wikis, and discussion forums," she adds.

"I've also been guiding fellow faculty members in designing courses, which has contributed to an increase in the number of programmes"

Njuguna was nominated as "the most innovative and industry-oriented lecturer of the year 2023"

"You can't use all the online tools in one class or semester, it's a learning journey," she says. "I'm proud to be recognised as a champion in course design, facilitation, and innovative assessment, thanks to PASGR."

outcomes.

Says Dr Ngimwa: "Pedal is a big success. In 2023 we saw the first signs of its institutionalisation. Through it we are trying to create systemic change within our universities."

HEP continued supporting the delivery of the Master of Research and Public Policy programme. To date, over 480 MRPP students have graduated from our 13 partner universities in seven African countries. The DAAD—German Academic Exchange

Service—funding has revitalised the collaborative programme in our universities. For the year 2023, PASGR through DAAD's scholarships was able to financially support a total of 11 students in our East African MRRP network universities. Six students (2 female and 4 male) came from Egerton University, while four students (1 female and 3 male) were from Maseno University. Both universities are in Kenya. The other scholarship grantee was a male student at Mzumbe University in Tanzania.

110

Faculties trained by Riara University after PASGR signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with KCAU and Riara University. Institutionalisation of the Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (Pedal) programme in universities is a key mandate entrenched in our Strategic Plan for 2019–2023.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING >>

PDT in action

March 30–31: Dissemination conference for the Strengthening Equitable Access to HE in Post-pandemic Environment at Whitesands Sarova Hotel, Mombasa

July 18–20: PASGR hosts the first physical Joint Annual Academic Seminar (JAAS) post-Covid at CORAT Africa, Nairobi

October 23: Inception meeting of the Higher Education Research programme in Nairobi under the theme: “Re-imagining University Financing”.

Participants at a Strengthening Equitable Access to University convening in Mombasa.

PDT sustains its role through scholarships, courses

The Professional Development and Training (PDT) programme's 2023 activities advanced the strategic plan's aspirations with a focus on "developing and implementing sustainable fellowships that will support all the three PASGR programmes". Through financial support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, PDT administered scholarships to students in the collaborative Doctoral Programme for Public Policy (DPP).

Plans are underway to renew the scholarship programme for another two-year period. Some 36 students have benefited from the programme so far and are at different stages of finalising their doctoral studies.

The first physical Joint Annual Academic Seminar (JAAS)—a four-day event led by PDT—was held in July after a two-year lull, thanks to COVID-19 ravages. The 2020 and 2021 editions during the pandemic were delivered online. A session on intergenerational dialogue around the link between academia and public policy deserves special mention. It was delivered by Prof. Adigun Agbaje, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC), University of Ibadan and a renowned political scientist.

The year also saw PDT implement the first faculty mobility grant. A total of 11 faculty made 'exchange' visits to the DPP network universities to meet students they supervise and give guest lectures between October and November 2023.

"We encourage co-supervision where faculty supervise students in another university within the network" Dr Pauline Ngimwa, commented.

The year saw PDT fulfil its mandate of providing



A PhD student presenting his research during JAAS.

Justice for small farmers inspired young scholar's winning paper

Ms Flora Awino Ouma, an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, is a legal and policy consultant. She first encountered the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) in 2022 when she joined the University of Nairobi for a Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP). The course — one of PASGR's most popular programmes — is offered at 13 universities across Africa.

The highpoint of Flora's interactions with PASGR was when she presented a paper titled, *Climate Finance for Smallholder Farmers in Africa*. "I was one of the participants in the African Young Graduates and Scholars (AYGS) conference at the University of Pretoria, South Africa from March 6 to 8. It was my first conference with doctors and professors."

Flora regards PASGR's Acting Executive Director, Dr Pauline Ngimwa, as her mentor. "She boosted my confidence, enabled me to be ranked top presenter at the conference," Flora says. She credits her rating to her engagement with the audience and the fact that 'climate' is a development buzzword. Her paper cited climate change problems and proposed solutions to them.

"My interest in climate change is for smallholder farmers," says the farmers' daughter. "Africans suffer the most from climate change effects and yet they're the least emitters. We need to get justice for these farmers as they struggle to make ends meet."

Lawyer Flora is shifting towards public policy. "Policy is impact-based and MRPP gives me a chance to look at the positive impact I can make in the lives of people around me, including



communities, Africans, and ultimately globally. It helps us to look into remote causes of problems so that if we get to drafting and enacting legislation, we're basing it on research, a key component of the MRPP."

"high-quality professional development courses for different audiences in the African research, academic, civil society and policy communities in line with the strategic plan.

PDT co-hosted the African Young Graduate and Scholars (AYGS) conference in Pretoria, South Africa from October 2 to 5. This was in conjunction with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), whose African Institute of South Africa (AISA) programme supports young graduated and scholars.

During this event, PDT facilitated a pre-conference research-policy engagement workshop for early career researchers, who learned how to engage with policies. Our young career researchers, including Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP) students, participated.

It was a proud moment for PASGR as our MRPP students from University of Nairobi, Flora Okonji, emerged the top presenter for her paper "*Climate Finance for Small Holder Farmers in Africa*".

The year under review saw PDT conclude a project on policy dialogues based on research around equitable access to higher education in Kenya during the pandemic period and after. This culminated in a dissemination and policy engagement conference held from March 30 to 31.

One of the key policy recommendations was to reimagine university funding models because of limited higher education finance. Similarly, a task force on education reforms in Kenya recommended a new funding model based on the level of a student's need and program cost.

From it sprung a two-year PASGR research project titled *Re-imagining the university funding model*, which was launched in October 2023, and is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

RESEARCH & POLICY PROGRAMME >>

RP in action

January 23–24: 61 attend Accountability for Water project meeting, Mombasa, Kenya

February 20–22: 34 participants attend Utafiti Sera interhouse conference in Kisumu, Kenya

April 24–27: Writing/training workshop for young researchers, Accra, Ghana

August 23–24: 29 delegates attend Social Protection final convening, Nakuru, Kenya

September 13–15: Africa Evidence Network (AEN) Conference, Entebbe, Uganda. PASGR presents paper presented on Utafiti Sera.

November 22–24: Food Systems Transformation meeting, Maanzoni, Kenya

November 29: AYAR Research validation workshop, Ibadan, Nigeria. Similar workshops held in Uganda, Senegal, Rwanda, Kenya and Ethiopia between April 22 and Dec 5.

December 5–6: PASGR delegate presents paper on AYAR at inaugural Employment Research Forum in Geneva, Switzerland.



Participants engage during the February, 2023, Utafiti Sera Inter-House Convening in Kisumu.

Breaking new ground as brand PASGR attracts partners across globe

The entry of a significant new donor to our network of research partners ushered in an enterprising project which is giving PASGR global visibility. While our research has traditionally been focused on Africa, IGNITE—Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education—saw us work alongside an international consortium. Funded by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) of the government of France, IGNITE is a feminist project that has the International Rescue Committee (IRC) as lead partner. Other partners are Urgent Action Fund—Africa and Middle East-based René Mouawad Foundation. The project explores the effects of social norms on adolescent girls' education. PASGR is leading the

research component in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Cameroon.

"It is about everything that will hinder adolescent girls' transition to higher educational levels, including social norms. It may be the dropout rates; why would they drop out at primary level? Or in high school? Is it menses or female genital cutting that forces them into early marriage? What about those who don't go beyond university," poses Susan Gichuna, IGNITE's Project Officer. She adds: "The project is specifically about adolescent girls' education which starts at the primary school level. It focuses on anything that will affect the girls' impact on their transition, all the social norms."

The other new projects are the Food Systems Transformation, which is funded

\$1.5m

The amount at which Phase 2 of the Accountability for Water project was renewed. It had been running since 2020 and was renewed in September. The Hewlett Foundation also provided an organisational grant of US\$45,000 for the project's end-term evaluation.



How Diallo got a breakthrough in publishing

Mamadou Abdulaye Diallo's first contact with PASGR in 2022 was at an online meeting of the Africa Youth Aspirations and Resilience (AYAR) project.

He later participated in our quantitative and qualitative data collection between January and February, 2023, and in the compilation of the survey report. Diallo, 33, recalls the Senegal country report being sent to PASGR. "We got our first

feedback and when we sent out any message, they responded promptly, professionally and in a friendly manner."

Diallo participated in a week-long writers' workshop in Accra, Ghana, and as a result has since produced two publications—a blog and a review. The latter is still in the pipeline. Diallo also participated in the Africa Evidence Network in Entebbe, Uganda.

When we sent out any message, they responded promptly, professionally and in a friendly manner."

by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Health Ambassadors project funded by EGAP/Mercury to explore Covid-19 vaccine uptake in Malawi, Zimbabwe and parts of Francophone West Africa Project. These new projects add to our ongoing assignments, which include the high-profile, multi-country Youth Aspirations and Resilience (AYAR) research uptake project, the Utafiti Sera project and the Accountability for Water project. Funded by the Mastercard Foundation, the AYAR project seeks to understand the aspirations of young people in Africa, their motivations and resilience amidst challenges in the face of unemployment and despair in a post-COVID-19 world. It covers Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda.

An important output of the study was the much-cited synthesis report on young people's perspectives on dignified and fulfilling work.

The design of the project enabled research capacity strengthening of 15 early career research associates who were intentionally paired with the project's principal investigators in each of the research countries, for training and mentorship. The aim of the study was to generate an Africa-centric perspective of young people on dignified and fulfilling work, which Programme Officer Joel Otieno, regards as "the most important aspect of the research". It is being conducted along the Utafiti Sera model and seeks to scale up job opportunities for youth through enabling policies. An important

outcome of the study is the publication of an overall synthesis report with an Africa-centric perspective. To this end, a four-day writing and training workshop for young researchers from all the project countries was held in Accra, Ghana, in April. Mamadou Abdulaye Diallo a research associate from Senegal who benefitted from this workshop has since started publishing the research findings.

We also hosted a webinar for youth on dignified and fulfilling work, addressing youth engagement in development and creation of employment. We took advantage of events close to our work—like the first Youth Employment Research Forum in Geneva, Switzerland. The three-day forum that was organised by the International Labour Organization spoke to AYAR's objectives. Besides presenting a paper, we used the forum to network. An important output of the study was the much-cited synthesis report on young people's perspectives on dignified and fulfilling work. Titled 'From waithood to hustling: The Quest for Dignified and Fulfilling Work against all odds', it resulted in six technical briefs, which are at different stages of publication.

The Accountability for Water (AFW), a 3-year research funding for a project designed to facilitate co-creation and co-production of knowledge while maximising opportunities for sharing of lessons and best practices to enhance accountability for water came to an end. The programme

Countries where AYAR has activities



15

Social science researchers who have been trained by PASGR during the year. AYAR has activities in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda.



Prof Ruth Oniang'o giving Keynote speech during Food System Transformation Utafiti Sera.

being implemented as a consortium led by PASGR in partnership with Water Witness International (WWI), Water Witness Ethiopia (WWE), Shahidi wa Maji (SwM) and the Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (KEWASNET) had been working with partners, including governments in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and regionally to infuse evidence-informed recommendations and strategies towards mainstreaming WASH delivery and access in the continent.

To mark the end of the first phase of our work, the AfW consortium organised a 2-day water sector stakeholder convening targeting about 60 participants from the AfW

project team, governments, policy makers, donors, and civil society partners. The convening was held in January 2023, in Mombasa- Kenya and it cemented the AfW project's legacy objective. The consortium research and practice teams shared key research findings and use the evidence to engage varied sector specialists and policy actors to ensure a solid analysis of implications for different stakeholders leading to uptake, action, and impact. Based on its rich output and continuation of its legacy, the funding for the

PASGR is leading the research component in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Cameroon.

project was renewed in September to a tune of US\$1.5 million by Hewlett Foundation which also granted PASGR an organisational grant of US\$45,000 for the project's end-term evaluation.

The year also saw us conclude Phase III of the Hewlett-funded Utafiti Sera project and progress to Phase IV. To finalize our work on phase III, we organized an Utafiti Sera Inter-House leadership and learning convening titled 'From lessons to best fit approaches in evidence-informed decision making', which was held in Kisumu, Kenya from February 20 – 22, 2023, and

brought together 32 participants to reflect on how we have been working and what we have been seeing coming out of our evidence-informed decision making (EIDM work). A summary of findings of policy cultures study that was examining common practices and trends that characterize policy making practices in Africa with case studies from Kenya, Nigeria and Rwanda also was shared with the house members.

The phase IV kicked off in September 2024. The greatest milestone for this phase is the expansion of our footprints to include the Southern African region by establishing a new Utafiti Sera house on universal health coverage in Zambia. The new house is hosted by the Centre for Reproductive Health and Education (CRHE). This was after a comprehensive stakeholder mapping analysis guided a political economy analysis theoretical framework. The new house organised an inception workshop brought together 48 key stakeholders from including government ministries & agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, private sector, media, and development partners.

Our Utafiti Sera work has garnered traction and found its way directly to influencing policymaking in various African countries. Due to

our Utafiti Sera work in Africa, we were invited to show case our work during the Africa Evidence Network Conference from 13 to 15 September 2023 in Entebbe, Uganda. The theme of the conference was coming together to build a knowledge base for evidence-informed decision-making practice. During the conference, our own Programme Officer, Jim Kaketch who leads our Utafiti Sera projects, was one of the panellists during Session 12: African approaches to fostering connections and collaborations. The conference also benefited from the participation of youth from the AYAR project.

Similarly, our mini Utafiti Sera house on social protection project organised a National social protection convening on Inclusive and Just Social protection in Kenya titled ‘Strengthening Kenya’s Social Protection Agenda Through

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Active Stakeholder Engagement and Knowledge Sharing’. The convening was held in the month of August 2023, in collaboration with the State Department for Social Protection through the National Social Protection Secretariat (NSPS). As we drew towards the end of the year, PASGR was invited by the State Department for Social Protection through the NSPS to join the taskforce tasked with the development of the National Social Protection Bill 2023.

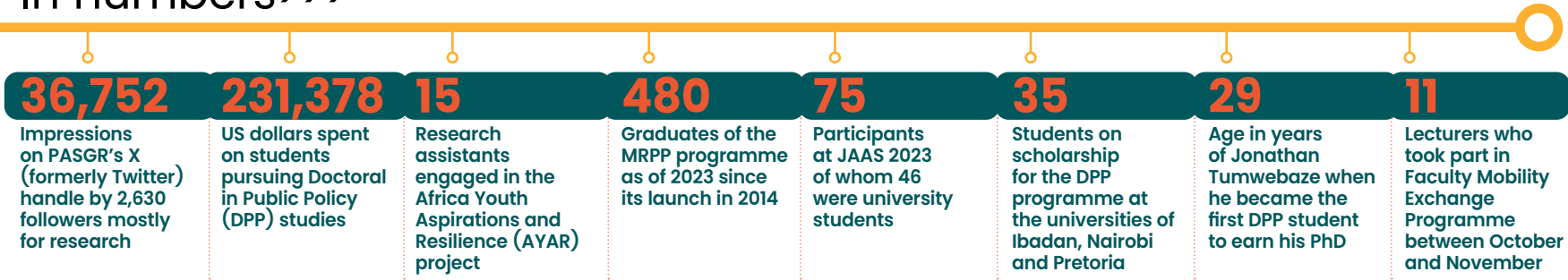
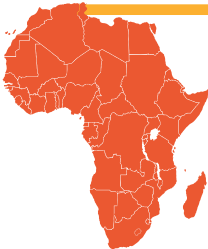
Finally, we launched a new project on Food Systems Transformation (FST) in August.

anchored on the Utafiti Sera approach. This is a 30-month evidence dissemination and uptake project funded by the International Development Research Centre, that seeks to foster research uptake into policies and practices towards strengthening of equitable, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable food systems in Kenya. PASGR convened identified stakeholders during the launch of the project (inception workshop) and established a community of practice (Utafiti Sera House on Sustainable Food Systems Transformation). Prof. Ruth Oniang’o (a distinguished scholar

known for her expertise in nutrition, academia, and development) gave the keynote address during the convening and emphasized the need for collaborative efforts in achieving transformative change.

A sequel to the launch was Capacity Sharing workshop at Maanzoni Lodge, Machakos, November 22 – 24, 2023. This provided a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on key policy issues around Kenya’s food systems and assess stakeholders’ capacity to access and use research evidence for policy and practice. It brought together 40 key stakeholders including representatives of government agencies and departments, research institutes, I/NGOs, civil society organisations, farmers unions, development partners and the private sector.

In numbers>>>



New funders and a revamped IT system drive PASGR's success

The year 2023 could be described as a good one. It saw us bounce back post the COVID 19 pandemic by signing new streams of funding from three new donors.

To start us off was a three-year grant signed in February with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to deliver the Food Systems Transformation in Kenya: Translating evidence to policy action project. Another two-year grant, dubbed the EGAP-PASGR-CERAP Mercury Project in Sub-Saharan Africa came the same month through the UC Berkeley Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP). PASGR made its entry into Malawi and Zimbabwe, while partnership with Kamuzu University and the Centre for Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Research (CeSHHAR) respectively widened our South Africa footprints.

The Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education (IGNITE), funded by Agence

Française de Développement (AFD) with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) as the principal recipient, came in March 2023.

These grants from first-time financial partners saw us diversify our funding base even as we appreciate our long-term partners and donors through whom we got renewals for continuing projects. This included the Hewlett Foundation, that has been with us since 2016 through their signature project, the Utafiti Sera program, to connect researchers and policy actors in East Africa. Renewal of the project has given us partnership in the southern part of Africa. For the first time, through the Universal Health Coverage House, we have broadened our African coverage to Zambia through our strategic partnership with the Centre for Reproductive Health and Education (CRHE),

an affiliate organisation of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

The long-running Accountability for Water (A4W) project implemented in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, through funding from the Hewlett Foundation was also renewed for a further three years after a successful evaluation of the phase one project.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), a long time funding partner, renewed the Higher Education research project to fund research on the new higher education financing model, as well as a two-year renewal to fund the collaborative Doctoral Programme in Public Policy (DPP).

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) funding for graduate scholarship came in hand for our collaborative Master

of Research in Public Policy (MRPP) programme with a second round of scholarship offers.

The year also saw the transition of the Programme Manager and Head of the Research and Policy programme, Dr. Martin Atela, after seven years of service. To ensure continuous project implementation, our longstanding partner, the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, gave us Prof. Emmanuel Remi Aiyede on secondment from July 2023 until we signed in a substantive Programme Manager.

As we close 2023, the Professional Development and Training (PDT) Programme Head and Manager, Dr. Pauline Ngimwa, remains PASGR's acting Executive Director, overseeing all PASGR operations even as the Board starts the recruitment of a substantive Executive Director. As a long-serving and experienced researcher in social policy and an expert in higher education, Dr. Ngimwa provides much-needed leadership through her unique ability to bring diverse teams together towards meeting PASGR's overall goals.

\$2.4m

The year 2023 could be described as a good one for PASGR. We had crossed into it with deferred income in excess of US\$2.4 million. We bounced back post-COVID by signing new streams of funding from three new donors.



One-stop-shop office manager saves time, money and more

The expiring Strategic Plan 2019–2023 commits us to strengthen our internal processes for organisational development.

In the closing year, the Hewlett Foundation funded the acquisition of an enterprise resource planner (ERP) system, Dynamics 365 Business Central, which is serving our Finance and Administration department and the Communications and Outreach unit. It combines modules for finance, human resources and payroll management and also has grant management and procurement capabilities.

Says Charles Nyaga, Senior Finance Officer: “You have a one-stop shop. When you log in, you can make a purchase order request, approve payments, and fill in your sick leave or annual leave. All these functions are in one basket. This has made our work easy.”

Since it is web based, the system enables an authorised PASGR officer to approve payments remotely. It is also multi-currency and can generate reports from different currencies.

“There’s increased efficiency, productivity, and accuracy of the generated information. Above all, there is reduced operational costs and overheads, arising from the fact that it’s web-based.

Versatile IT systems, a big up for PASGR value for money operations

As PASGR has expanded its operations, upgrading our systems into an integrated whole has become necessary to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. In the year under review PASGR revamped the organisation IT systems, processes and policies.

This included a financial management system upgrade from Microsoft Dynamics Navision 2017 to the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Microsoft Dynamics NAV 365 Business Central, which delivers a comprehensive business management functionality. The implementation of Microsoft Dynamics NAV 365 Business Central offers us a unique combination of business intelligence, collaboration and communication tools that connect the many moving parts of our operations to a complete ERP solution. This came with new features and enhancements designed for

effectiveness and efficiency across the organisation.

The ERP has introduced a single solution and made our operations simpler, resulting in “increased efficiency, productivity and accuracy of generated information,” as confirmed by Charles Nyaga, Senior Finance Officer. An important feature of the ERP is that it can be accessed through a web browser and Mobile App, which means that financial transactions can be completed remotely.

The upgrading of the IT systems, processes and policies has enhanced support for different facets of PASGR’s

The upgrading of the IT systems, processes and policies has enhanced support for different facets of PASGR’s work. It has also provided improved guidelines on change management to minimise disruption and unauthorised alterations.

work. It has also provided improved guidelines on change management to minimise disruption and unauthorised alterations.

Specifically, the Windows Server Replacement has provided more processing power which can handle an increased workload. It has also improved critical services and strengthened security for hardware and software while addressing compatibility for cross-platforms.

A comprehensive IT audit and policy revision was undertaken to align PASGR’s IT guidelines, procedures, processes and standards with the ISO framework. This ensures compliance and promotes best practices for controls and eliminating operational inefficiencies and wastage.

The office365 Tenant-to-tenant migration was also completed, resulting in significant cost reduction and extended access to web.

Board of directors



Prof Narciso Matos, PASGR Board Chair, Vice Chancellor of Polytechnic University, Mozambique



Dr Pauline Ngimwa, Acting Executive Director/Board Secretary (Ex-Officio Member)



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



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



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



Ms Helen Ombima, Legal and Governance Specialist



Prof Gerald Ouma, Senior Director, Institutional Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, University of Pretoria, South Africa

PASGR is governed by a Board of Directors, which is currently chaired by Prof Narciso Matos. 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 Secretariat

Pauline Ngimwa, Ag. Executive Director/Programme Manager, Professional Development and Training

Martha Ng'aru, Executive Assistant

Elijah Kabari, IT Officer

Martin Atela, Programme Manager, Research and Policy

Constance Mwachunga, Head, Finance and Administration

Charles Nyaga, Senior Finance Officer

Stephen Kiruki, Senior Finance Officer

Edwin Rwigi, Programme Officer, Higher Education

Mercy Limiri, Programme Assistant, Research and Policy

Jim Kaketch, Programme Officer, Research and Policy

Joslyn Nzau, Programme Officer/Post Doc, Research and Policy

Joel Otieno, Programme Officer, Research and Policy

Rosebella Apollo, Programme Officer, Research Uptake

Emmanuel Remi Aiyede, Lead, Research and Policy



DPP students and their supervisors during JAAS.



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