



Investing in Locally Led Solutions and the African Researchers Who Drive Them

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Harnessing Education Research for Impact in Africa (HERI Africa)

Africa has the world's youngest population—over **60%** under 25. Yet less than **3%** of global education research is African-led. HERI Africa is working to change this imbalance. This Pan-African initiative puts African researchers in the driver's seat, ensuring education research improves learning, youth opportunities, and community outcomes.

Why HERI Africa Matters

By 2030, Africa will supply about 50% of all new entrants to the global workforce. Education systems face a critical choice: invest in evidence-based, future-ready education, or risk leaving a generation behind.

Currently, most African-led research is underfunded, with over 90% of studies lacking local resources. HERI Africa ensures research is relevant, locally grounded, and translated into actions that directly improve schools, curricula, and youth pathways.

The Journey

In 2021, a bold question emerged among African education thinkers: What if African researchers set the agenda? What if research across the continent was locally grounded, well-funded, and capable of transforming learning, youth opportunities, and community outcomes? By 2023, that momentum had crystallized into the Enhancing Education Research in Africa (EERA) project, led by ESSA and Southern Hemisphere.

Drawing together voices from across the continent, the consultations identified innovative and practical ways to revitalize the African education research agenda, mobilizing local funding, strengthening institutions, and ensuring research informed real-world decisions. Research would no longer sit on shelves; it would shape policy, investment, and opportunity.

In May 2025, Kenya demonstrated what this vision could look like in practice through a first-of-its-kind inaugural workshop held in Limuru, Kenya. Researchers, government, funders, universities, and diverse education partners came together to co-create a Kenyan-led Research Agenda grounded in the eight EERA recommendations, translating ambition into action. Kenya became a proof of concept: a country shaping its educational future using its own evidence. From this momentum, HERI Africa was born.

Ambition and Goals

The ambition of HERI Africa is bold and urgent. HERI Africa will raise the productivity of African education researchers

from **3%** to **30%**
by 2050

The initiative targets **\$100 million** in funding by 2050, deployed progressively to scale and sustain African-led research.



Vision: A transformed African education research ecosystem that is relevant, impactful, and sustainable.



Mission: Strengthen the capacity of university-based early-career and female researchers, promote gender equality, ground research in local realities, and democratise funding through African governments.

How HERI Africa Works

HERI Africa strengthens African education research through:

- ✓ **Setting Priorities:** Governments, universities, and communities define research questions that matter most.
- ✓ **Strengthening Capacity:** Train 100 early-career researchers (50% women, 5% with disabilities) in research methods, grants, and communication.
- ✓ **Research Leadership:** Establish five Research Chairs—senior university positions leading priority studies.
- ✓ **Sharing Findings:** Research is shared in 1,000 accessible formats for policymakers, educators, and communities.
- ✓ **Funding Research:** Mobilise African governments and philanthropy to provide sustainable support.
- ✓ **Inclusion:** Ensure women and underrepresented groups are fully involved.

Our Principles

- ✓ **Africa-led:** Priorities set by Africans, for Africans.
- ✓ **Co-creative:** Solutions designed with governments, researchers, and communities.
- ✓ **Localised:** Grounded in real African experiences.
- ✓ **Long-term:** Built to last.
- ✓ **Inclusive:** Gender- and disability-responsive by design.
- ✓ **Context-aware:** Aligned with social and political realities.

Problems We Are Solving

1. **Relevance:** Most research does not address local priorities; no national research agenda exists.
2. **African perspectives:** Over 90% of research uses Western frameworks, disconnected from African realities.
3. **Communication:** Less than 10% of research outputs reach policymakers or communities in usable formats.
4. **Capacity:** Institutions and researchers often lack advanced skills for rigorous analysis.
5. **Funding:** Up to 90% of African education research is self-funded or supported by foreign donors.

When Will We Achieve Our Goals?

Phase 1

(2025–2029)

Establish research priorities, train researchers, operationalise Research Chairs in Kenya.

Phase 2

(2029–2035)

Expand to at least four other African countries and establish a Pan-African Secretariat.

By 2030, HERI Africa will:

- ✓ Align 50% of studies with a National Education Research Agenda.
- ✓ Strengthen 100 early-career researchers (50% women, 5% with disabilities).
- ✓ Establish 5 Research Chairs (50% female-led) producing 200+ publications used in policy and practice.
- ✓ Share 1,000 research outputs in formats suitable for schools, policymakers, and communities.
- ✓ Institutionalise HERI Africa in government, managing a Research Fund equivalent to 2% of Kenya's education budget, with 25% locally funded.

Impact

HERI Africa will:

- i. **Transform learning:** Millions of African learners will benefit from evidence-led education policies, improved curricula, and strengthened teacher capacity.
- ii. **Expand youth opportunities:** Pathways from education to employment and entrepreneurship will grow, opening doors for the next generation.
- iii. **Drive inclusive prosperity:** Other African countries will adopt HERI Africa research to improve policies and practices across the continent.

Leadership

Programme Director: Dr. Hezron Mogaka (hezron.mogaka@heriafrica.org)

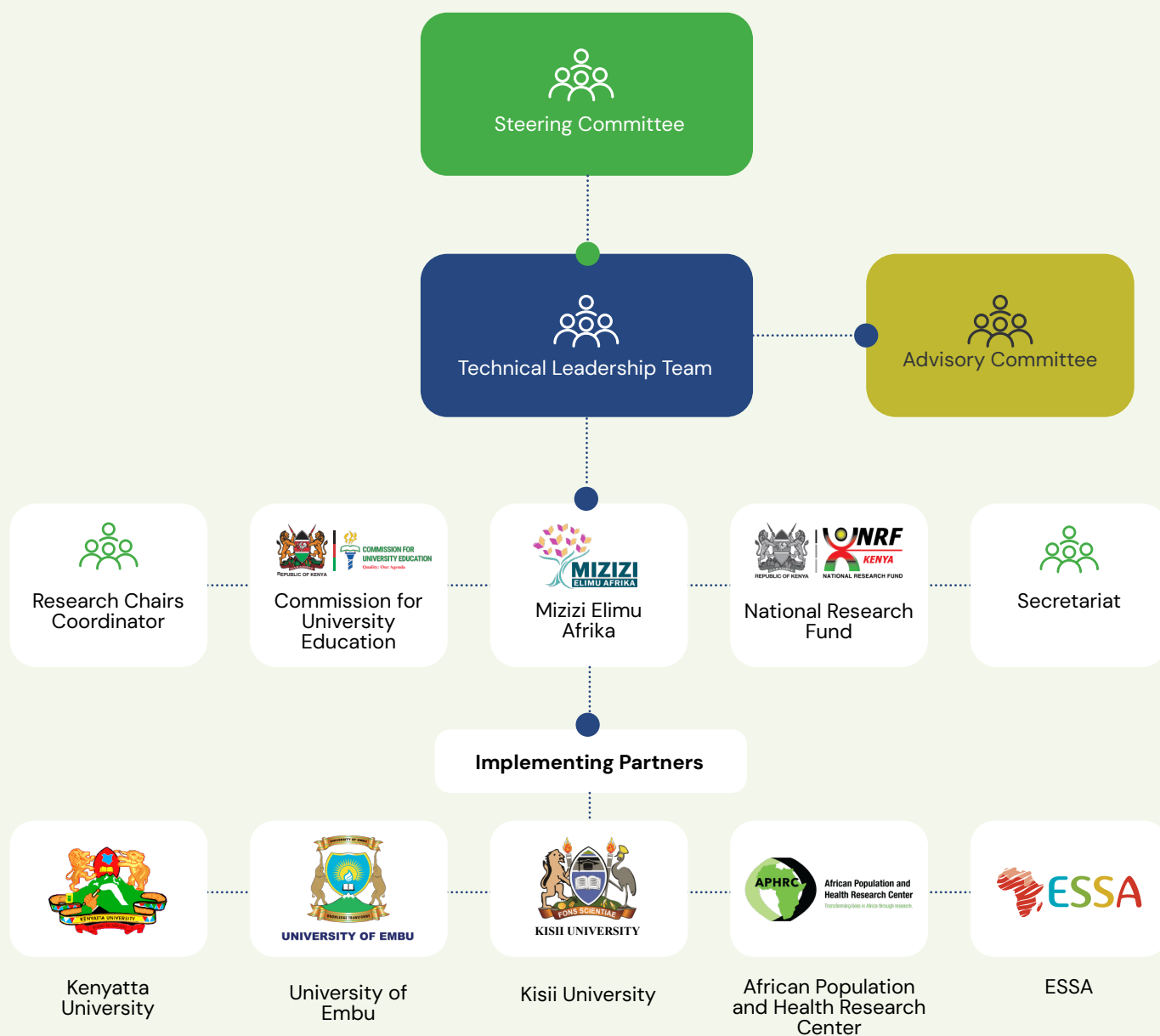
Co-Directors: Prof. Mike Kuria (Mkuria@cue.or.ke) and Dr. John Mugo (jmugo@mizizielimu.org).

Partners include:

- Ministry of Education
- Commission for University Education
- National Research Fund
- Kenyatta University
- University of Embu
- Kisii University
- Mizizi Elimu Afrika
- African Population and Health Research Center
- ESSA
- Echidna Giving
- Imaginable Futures

See the full leadership structure in the annex.

Annex: HERI Africa: Kenya Chapter Structure



Join  **HERI**
AFRICA

Learn, collaborate, and contribute to making African-led research strong, sustainable, and impactful.

Together, we are revitalising Kenya's education research.

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