



EMERGING AFRICAN SCHOLARS: VIRTUAL PHD WORKSHOP 2020. POST EVENT REPORT



AUGUST 2020

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Executive Summary

On Thursday July 30th, 2020, as part of its Emerging African Scholars program, the Association for Research on Civil Society in Africa (AROCSA) hosted its first ever 'Virtual' PhD Workshop. In the past, physical iterations of the event had been hosted in tandem with AROCSA's annual conference. However, due to the constraints brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual conference was cancelled and the workshop was hosted virtually. This report outlines the event's proceedings and uses feedback from the participants in its analysis.

The Virtual Workshop which was hosted virtually on the Zoom platform ran for approximately 6 hours, spanning several time zones from the USA to Kenya. The GOAL of the workshop was to provide scholarly research support, professional advice and mentoring for doctoral students in the fields of nonprofit management, philanthropy, civil society, social entrepreneurship and voluntary action studies.

In all, a total of 15 doctoral students from a number of universities across Africa attended the event with the largest contingent of students coming from Kenya. Others were from South Africa, Ghana, Cameroun and Nigeria in attendance. The students were supported by a 15 member academic faculty mainly from the USA by virtue of AROCSA's strategic partnership with the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), with whom the faculty hold memberships. The faculty whose participation was purely voluntary, comprised academics from leading universities in the USA and Africa including the University of Nebraska, George Washington University, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, NorthPark University Chicago, the American University of Cairo, Lagos Business School and Strathmore University, Kenya.

In terms of event impact, 88.2% of respondents to the post event survey indicated that they found the event beneficial as a whole, with a further 94.1% saying that the event ran effectively, and another 94.1% saying they would recommend the event to others.

One of the biggest challenges to the successful hosting of the event was setting the time schedule for the day which proved especially difficult due to the varying time zones within which participants; both faculty and scholars, were located.

In terms of lessons learnt, perhaps the biggest was our inability to record the different breakout sessions which could have been provided to students as part of the post-event packet of information for their future reference. This has been duly noted and internally recommendations have already been made to ensure all breakout sessions are recorded in future events.

Nevertheless the post event analysis proves the event was an overall successful. It also provided an avenue to solicit suggestions and recommendations from participants that will aid in even more successful executions of future AROCSA events, both virtual and physical.

It was both a pleasure and honour to have interacted with Africa's future civil society scholars and we look forward to working with existing and new partners in hosting several more of these no doubt very useful PhD workshops.

Your truly,

Shaninomi Eribo

Programs Director

Introduction

The Emerging African Scholars PhD Workshop has previously run in tandem with AROCSA's international conference. However, global travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic mandated some restructuring on our part. This Workshop has – in the past – proven useful to participating scholars. It seemed unfair that a new batch of scholars would miss out on the opportunity to benefit from the event this year. Thus, the decision to run the Workshop virtually, despite the necessary cancellation of the conference.

The Virtual Workshop which took place via the Zoom platform on Thursday, 30th July 2020, lasted just over 5 hours, spanning several time zones from the USA to Kenya. Here in Nigeria where it was hosted, it started at 1 pm and ended at about 6.44 pm. The agenda included opening and closing plenaries, parallel breakout sessions, and a combined professional development workshop.

We hosted 15 scholars with the support of 14 members of faculty during the breakout sessions. Apart from the 29 participants in the breakout sessions, we also had speakers who provided context for our scholars on topics such as contextual issues surrounding PhD research in Africa, publishing as a scholar, and navigating the stakeholders around their scholarly work and research. The total attendance (which varied throughout the event due to clashing commitments, connectivity issues, time zones, et al.) peaked at 36 individuals.

This was AROCSA's first independently run event. Although the event was coordinated by AROCSA's board members and staff, the event would not have been successful without the support of faculty and faculty heads for the breakout sessions and partners from ARNOVA, Strathmore University, University of the Witwatersrand/CAPSI, Community Chest and many more.

Objectives

Objective	Achieved or not?	Comments
1. To provide scholarly research support	Achieved	During the breakout sessions, participating scholars benefited from direct one on one feedback on their research proposals from faculty who had been matched individually with them and pre-read their proposals ahead of the day's event. Further academic resources and other useful information was also shared with scholars during the combined professional development workshop. Furthermore, AROCSA created a resource packet based on conversations and information shared during the event and resources shared with AROCSA by faculty in anticipation of the event. We will also be taking into account the questions asked by scholars during the event that we can provide more insight and clarity on moving forward.
2. To provide professional advice	Achieved	The feedback provided during the breakout sessions were the main method of achieving this goal. However, a number of faculty and scholars engaged with each other before and after the event. This

allowed scholars to get the most out of the workshop. Thanks to insights provided by Bhekinkosi Moyo, Godwin Murunga, Titania Fernandez, Esi Ansah, Lindsey McDougale, Pier Rogers, and Ijeoma Nwagwu, scholars have been given new perspectives regarding scholarly work in the context of the African continent

- | | | |
|---|----------|--|
| 3. To provide mentoring | Achieved | <p>With the help of faculty, many scholars have been able to forge relationships and access mentorship that will last long after this event. AROCSA has aided this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting people • Hosting the event • Initiating the mentorship program |
| 4. To host AROCSAs first independent event. | Achieved | <p>From the inception of the virtual arm of this workshop, AROCSAs independence has been at the forefront of planning. The ways in which this was achieved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using AROCSAs own Zoom account for coordinating the planning and ultimate hosting of the event. • Having AROCSA staff take over the planning and delivery of the event, with the guidance of the board and external partners where necessary. |

Budget

As it was a virtual event, the only real financial cost to hosting was the Zoom subscription and data provision which are already covered as part of AROCSA operating expenses. So in that light, there was no real financial cost associated with hosting the event.

Program and Speakers

Leading up to the event, AROCSA recruited a Programs Director and Programs Associate as part of its transition into becoming an independent and properly structured organization. Responsibility for the planning and coordinating of the event was handed over to the new team upon their resumption. This included communication with scholars, faculty, and speakers for the event. Most of this communication was conducted via email. However, some conversations with faculty were conducted on the Zoom platform as a way of introducing faculty to the new staff members, getting familiar with the platform, and test running the more technical parts of the event.

Call for applications

A detailed call for applications was created and shared as part of the pre-event promotion and communications. Most of the promotion was done via AROCSA's professional networks. However, there was still some online promotion using the call for applications. Although the AROCSA website is currently under construction, the call was posted on the front end landing page with provision for a downloadable pdf version. The call was also shared on AROCSA's social media pages and external sites such as [Opportunities for Africans](#) and [Get In](#).

APPLY FOR
Virtual PhD Workshop
JULY 30, 2020

Emerging African Scholars' Virtual PhD Workshop
The Association for Research On Civil Society In Africa (AROCSA) and the Association For Research On Nonprofit Organizations And Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), in partnership with the Ford Foundation, have established the Emerging African Scholars' (EAS) Program in Africa.

Virtual PhD Workshop
The Virtual PhD Workshop is a full-day virtual professional development and intellectually engaging workshop. The seminar seeks to provide guidance for emerging scholars on the path to a successful career, help sharpen their research skills and address the challenges that African PhD students face.

The goal is to provide scholarly research support, professional advice and mentoring for doctoral students in the field of nonprofit management, philanthropy, civil society, social entrepreneurship and voluntary action studies.

Eligibility
The program is open to doctoral students from Africa whose research focus is on nonprofit management, philanthropy, civil society, social entrepreneurship and voluntary action studies in Africa. Students at the various

under-listed stages in their doctoral program are encouraged to apply:

- Students who have defended a dissertation proposal
- Students who have not yet defended a dissertation proposal
- Students whose dissertation plans are not yet fully formed

Requirements
Applicants are required to apply for the Virtual PhD Workshop through the electronic application on the AROCSA website. Applications must include the following:

- 5-page description of dissertation research or proposed research outline (double space, 12pt font with one inch margins)
- Brief Statement of Purpose, outlining how the student expects to benefit from participation in the Virtual PhD Workshop
- Recommendation from student's dissertation advisor/faculty advisor

**Please compile your 5-page description, your Statement of Purpose and recommendation letter in one PDF document before submitting.*

Selection Criteria
Slots in the workshop are limited. Selection of candidates will be based on the following criteria:

- Potential quality and impact of proposed research
- Centrality of the work to philanthropy, nonprofit management, civil society, social entrepreneurship, and voluntary action studies in Africa.
- Potential for the student to gain from the workshop

IMPORTANT DATES

- APRIL 7, 2020: Submissions Open
- APRIL 26, 2020: Application deadline (all materials must be submitted by this time)
- JUNE 26, 2020: Award Notification
- JULY 30, 2020: Emerging African Scholars' Virtual PhD Workshop

Follow link to submit form
<https://arocsa.org/phd-call-form/>

Logos: AROCSA, ARNOVA, CAPSI, WITS UNIVERSITY, Strathmore UNIVERSITY

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Application deadline (all materials must be submitted by this time) | MAY 29, 2020

Learn more about the virtual PhD Workshop from
<https://arocsa.org/phd-call-2020/>

Logos: AROCSA, ARNOVA, CAPSI, WITS UNIVERSITY, Strathmore UNIVERSITY

Speakers

The main speakers consisted of 4 members of the AROCSA board; Bhekinkosi Moyo, Godwin Murunga, Esi Ansah, and Ijeoma Nwagwu – who provided the closing remarks, together with a representative from Community Chest: Titania Fernandez, and 2 members of faculty: Pier Rogers and Lindsey McDougale.

Chairman of the AROCSA board; **Bhekinkosi Moyo** delivered the opening remarks. It ranked averagely with participants: 88% of the surveyed participants were present for his remarks and 53% of them rated it 3/3 in comparison to other items on the agenda, meaning they were satisfied.

Sessions: Opening Plenary

The workshop began with a speech from Dr. Bhekinkosi Moyo, who introduced the event and gave a vote of thanks to support staff, faculty, and scholars. He was followed by Dr. Godwin Murunga who spoke on the need to situate research about Africa in Africa. Titania Fernandez then spoke about the work that Community Chest had been doing to help homeless people in South Africa. All this was moderated by Esi Ansah who then took the reins as the event transitioned into the breakout sessions.

Godwin Murunga featured in the opening plenary session along with Bhekinkosi Moyo and Titania Fernandez. His talk covered the first 30 minutes of the allocated time, though he spoke for slightly longer than that. 88% of the surveyed participants were present for his remarks and 65% of them rated it 3/3 in comparison to other items on the agenda, meaning they were satisfied.

Furthermore, 88% of the surveyed participants were either very satisfied or satisfied with the talk as a standalone item. Their comments stated that time management, extending the topic to include trends, technology, and research, and tailoring it to relate specifically to the scholars' theses would have been more beneficial.

In our early conversations with Dr. Murunga, he did state that the initial 15 minute time slot allocated to him would not suffice. However, we were only able to extend time allocated to him to 30 minutes in order to accommodate other planned activities on the agenda.

Titania Fernandez featured in the opening plenary along with Godwin Murunga. While there were some technical difficulties during her talk, we were able to share her resources with the scholars as part of the post-event resource packet.

Esi Ansah did not only speak during the combined professional development workshop and coordinate the mentorship program, she also moderated the entire event and acted as a member of faculty during a breakout session.

Combined Professional Development Workshop

The combined professional development workshop and mentorship program rated averagely in comparison to other items on the agenda. 88% of the surveyed participants were present during her remarks and 53% of them rated the combined professional development workshop 3/3 in comparison to the other items on the agenda, meaning the majority were satisfied. Comparatively, 77% of the surveyed participants were present during the mentorship section and 47% of them rated it 2/3, meaning the majority found it average. The combined professional development workshop ranked above average as a standalone event with 88% of the surveyed participants being satisfied and very satisfied. The event in its entirety was a success.

Esi is listed on the agenda as giving the closing remarks but this role was taken over by Ijeoma Nwagwu on the day due to the number of things she was already doing.

Pier Rogers spoke during the combined professional development workshop. She spoke on being a *pracademic* and how that can affect career options for our scholars in the sector.

She was also a member of faculty for Cohort A, the social entrepreneurship and philanthropy breakout session. All of the surveyed participants were present for the breakout sessions and 77% of them rated it 3/3, meaning they were satisfied.

Lindsey McDougale spoke during the combined professional development workshop.


Her part of the workshop was the most interactive as her talk about publishing and journals piqued the interest of the participants and generated many questions.

She was also a member of faculty for Cohort A, the social entrepreneurship and philanthropy breakout session.

Ijeoma Nwagwu delivered the closing remarks. The closing remarks ranked highly in comparison to other items on the agenda. 83% of the surveyed participants were present for her remarks and 77% of them rated it 3/3 in comparison to other items on the agenda, meaning they were satisfied.

Agenda

The items on the agenda for the 5-hour event were as follows:

 PROGRAM OVERVIEW 30 July 2020				
Location: ZOOM				
US (EDT)	Nigeria/WAT GMT+1	Kenya/EAT GMT+3	ITEM	Personnel
08h00 – 08h15	13h00 – 13h15	15h00 – 15h15	Opening and welcome (Context setting)	Bhekinkosol Moyo
08h15 – 09h00	13h15 – 14h00	15h15 – 16h00	Opening Plenary for all students – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contextual issues surrounding PhD research on the continent. (30 mins) Experiences from the field. (15 mins) 	Godwin Murunga Titania Fernandez
09h00 – 09h05	14h00 – 14h05	16h00 – 16h05	Pull students & faculty into breakaway sessions	Host
09h05 – 11h00	14h05 – 16h00	16h05 – 18h00	PhD student presentations within 4 parallel breakout sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Separate Civil Society breakout sessions 1 combined Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy breakout session 	See breakdown on page 3
11h00 – 11h10	16h00 – 16h10	18h00 – 18h10	Coffee Break I	Host
11h10 – 11h55	16h10 – 16h55	18h10 – 18h55	Combined Professional Development Workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Stakeholders during the research process (15 mins) Resources for African research students (15 mins) Career options in the non-profit/NGO/social sector (15 mins) 	Esi Ansah Lindsey McDougale Pler Rogers
11h55 – 12h00	16h55 – 17h00	18h55 – 19h00	Coffee Break II	Host
12h00 – 12h15	17h00 – 17h15	19h00 – 19h15	Way forward and mentorship program (15 mins)	Esi Ansah
12h15 – 12h45	17h15 – 17h45	19h15 – 19h45	Q and A with students (30 mins)	Host
12h45 – 13h00	17h45 – 18h00	19h45 – 20h00	Closing Remarks	Esi Ansah

The structure was perfected and finalized in the run up to the event, taking into consideration the virtual nature of this year's proceedings, the amount of information we wanted to share with our scholars, and the span of time zones amongst participants. Outside of the platform of choice, the items on the agenda that rated the highest were the parallel breakout sessions, the Q and A moderated by Esi Ansah, and the closing remarks delivered by Ijeoma Nwagwu.

For the most part, the agenda ran smoothly. The biggest issue was time management. Some of the suggestions from participants to this end included making the event shorter by eliminating sections of the itinerary that did not have specific applications to the scholars' current needs or keeping the duration of the event while removing these sections so that the time could be better utilized for the remaining items on the agenda.

Despite the two hours allocated to it, a lot of the feedback from the participants suggested that more time could have been allocated to the breakout sessions. The cohorts were already as small as we could manage considering the number of faculty members. Furthermore, technical difficulties encountered by scholars on the day meant that the time couldn't always be fully and optimally utilized. These difficulties included an inability to share their presentation (perhaps due to a lack of familiarity with the Zoom platform) and internet connectivity. Extending the timeframe for these parallel sessions is an ideal solution. Concurrently, we could consider running a test run session with scholars before the event to familiarize them with the platform and help reduce technical difficulties.

Due to the nature of research in many PhD programs, a number of scholars had deepened their research greatly between submission and the event itself. Therefore the versions of the research that faculty read beforehand varied significantly from what the scholars presented during the parallel breakout sessions, and some of the issues raised by faculty in their initial feedback had already been addressed or were no longer relevant during the event. There are a couple of ways this discrepancy could be addressed and managed:

- Shortening the time between submission and the event by taking on the feedback from this inaugural virtual event and planning ahead of time. This way, the scholars' theses will not have evolved too much before the event as there will be less time between submission and the event itself.
- Putting scholars and faculty in touch with each other once they are assigned. This pre-event communication might allow faculty familiarize themselves with the journey the scholars have been on.

Program Outputs

Speakers and members of faculty shared a lot of knowledge during the event. Some members of faculty sent resources ahead of time that could be shared with scholars after the event. Other such resources, such as links, were collated during the event. All of these resources were collated in a resource packet to be sent to scholars after the event.

As these resources were created and/or provided by speakers and faculty, AROCSA will not be incurring any additional cost in the creation or dissemination of the information.

Key Recommendations.

Although we adjusted to fit the scenario during the event, time management and time allocation were a big issue. However, the quality of information and resources shared during and after the event have gone a long way to offset participants' dissatisfaction with our time management. Our timing can be fine-tuned and improved. The nature and quality of resources can be built upon.

Location and Venue

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, this year marked the first time the PhD Workshop was held virtually. The event was hosted on the Zoom platform from AROCSA's legal home in Nigeria. The platform itself was the highest ranked part of the agenda with 88% of the surveyed participants rating it 3/3, meaning they were satisfied.

Time zones

Participants joined the virtual event from different time zones, some of which were listed in the agenda that AROCSA distributed via email before the event:

- US (EDT) 08h00 – 13h00
- Ghana (GMT) 12h00 – 17h00
- Nigeria and Cameroon (WAT/GMT+1) 13h00 – 18h00
- Kenya (EAT/GMT+3) 15h00 – 20h00
- SAST and Egypt (EEST/GMT+2) 14h00 – 19h00

Platform

Zoom has grown in popularity in the face of the pandemic and is one of the most cited online meeting rooms currently being used for one off and recurring events around the world. Its popularity means a greater number of people are familiar with it. It is also easy to navigate and can be accessed with or without a private account, making it easy for participants to access the event. The platform is constantly improving to accommodate the many needs of its international users.

Zoom invitations were sent out to all participants before the event, with a calendar attachment to act as a reminder. We also sent out reminder emails to scholars one hour before the event and to faculty 30 minutes before the event. There was no waiting room function in the Zoom event to make accessibility easy for participants. Although this has been a source of concern for Zoom users due to hackers and security breaches, we were confident that – this being an invitation only event – no uninvited guests would sit in. Although the lack of travel greatly reduced the financial costs, all participants still had to bear the individual cost of connecting to the platform online.

Key recommendations

Financially, there is no underestimating the benefit of hosting an international event virtually. It is also greatly beneficial considering the pandemic. That being said, many parts of the physical events were missed, chief amongst them being the opportunity to host a full day event as opposed to a half day event.

We can consider hosting events that are geographically localized so it will be easier to accommodate participants for a longer period of time. This can be made possible by the fact that some of the faculty are on the continent. However, participants will miss out on the contextual insight provided by international participants.

Experiences gleaned from this event will also help us familiarize ourselves with and take greater advantage of the Zoom platform.

Marketing, Media, and Promotion

Calls for applications to attend the event was mainly promoted through AROCSA's academic networks including at the University of Strathmore in Kenya, and Wits Business School in South Africa via the Centre for African Philanthropy and Social Investment.

It was additionally circulated via the personal networks of both the board and staff of AROCSA, as well as to AROCSA's database of contacts who previously attended AROCSA events, and on key social media platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.

Challenges

The problems we encountered during this event can be broken down into three categories:

- Transitioning to independence.

As AROCSA begins the process of standing on its own, there are still procedural things with which we must familiarize ourselves. To ensure that this transition is as seamless as possible, we solicited the help of organizations we have worked with and partnered with, and who are more established in this space. They have been a great source of knowledge and perspective, especially during the planning and execution of the Virtual Workshop. Nevertheless, there is still a lot to learn, understand, and implement and we are learning as we go.

- Technical problems

The majority of the issues we encountered were technical. These included:

- Scheduling during a time and for a duration that worked for as many participants as possible
- Familiarizing ourselves with the Zoom platform and fully taking advantage of all its benefits
- Technical difficulties such as internet connection which, though beyond our control, affected not just us but some of our participants

- Time management

The intent was to finish at 6 pm. A few items on the agenda overran from the beginning. Nonetheless, we adapted quite well to this and adjusted parts of the agenda to accommodate participant interest as well as manage the time so we did not run too late. Furthermore, we gave faculty and speakers the option of leaving early once their assigned obligations had been met. This was specifically offered to faculty as the entirety of the event was aimed at being beneficial to scholars. Despite the offer, many members of faculty chose to stay on through the entirety of the event.

Lessons Learned

1. **Organizing virtual events:** the pandemic resulted in a lot of abrupt changes to the proceedings of organizations and countries across the world. As this had originally been planned as a physical event, a lot of changes had to be made for the event to proceed in a way that accommodated all participants. Nevertheless, the feedback received as well as the experience of hosting this event will inform the planning process for AROCSA's future virtual events
2. **Recording breakout sessions on Zoom:** On future events, adequate arrangements need to be made to ensure breakout sessions are recorded so that Scholars can have the opportunity to further review feedback provided by scholars on their research proposals post the event. One suggestion would be to discuss having faculty heads record proceedings within their sessions with permission granted them beforehand to enable this functionality. The breakout session recordings would then form part of the resources distributed to students post the event.
3. **Familiarizing participants with the platform:** although most people had no difficulties acclimatizing to the Zoom platform, it would be a far more seamless event if everyone was comfortable with the platform. We could do this by running short sessions in small groups ahead of the event.

Recommendations for Future Events

88% of surveyed participants said they would participate in the Virtual Workshop again and 94% said they would recommend the event. As such, the event was an overall success based on the feedback.

Nevertheless, the feedback and the above analysis have also highlighted areas we could improve on in future events:

- Improve our time management and the general structure of our events.
- Increased and consistent pre-event faculty engagement with scholars to mitigate confusion, resolve any complications before the event, and ensure that the time spent during the event is well utilized.
- Test runs with participants to mitigate technical issues.
- Increased independence in the running of our events by taking lessons learned from this event and the experiences garnered from the support of ARNOVA and CAPSI staff members.

Staffing & Support Team

AROCSA Team

Shaninomi Eribo – Programs Director

Amina T. Banu – Programs Associate

ARNOVA Support

Natalia Rivera

Anastasia Okaomee

CAPSI Support

Keratiloe Mogotsi

Academic Faculty

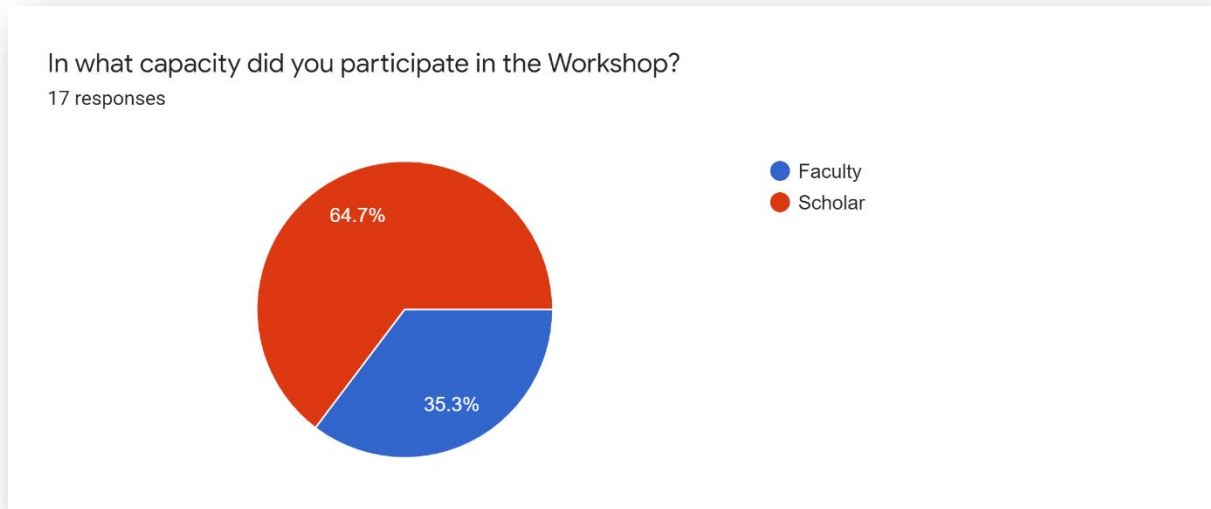
Lindsey McDougale
Angela Eikenberry
Pier Rogers
Joseph Onyango
Khaldoun AbouAssi
John Osae-Kwapong
Jasmine McGinnis Johnson
Maureen Syallow
Brenda Bushouse
Kareman Shoair
Janet Mangera
Mary Kay Gugerty
Esi Ansah
Kelly Krawczyk
Ijeoma Nwagwu

Rutgers University
University of Nebraska
North Park University
Strathmore University
American University
Research Methods Made Easy Inc.
The George Washington University
Strathmore University
University of Massachusetts
The American University of Cairo
Multimedia University of Kenya
University of Washington
Ashesi University
Auburn University
Lagos Business School

Appendix A: Analysis of Event Feedback Survey

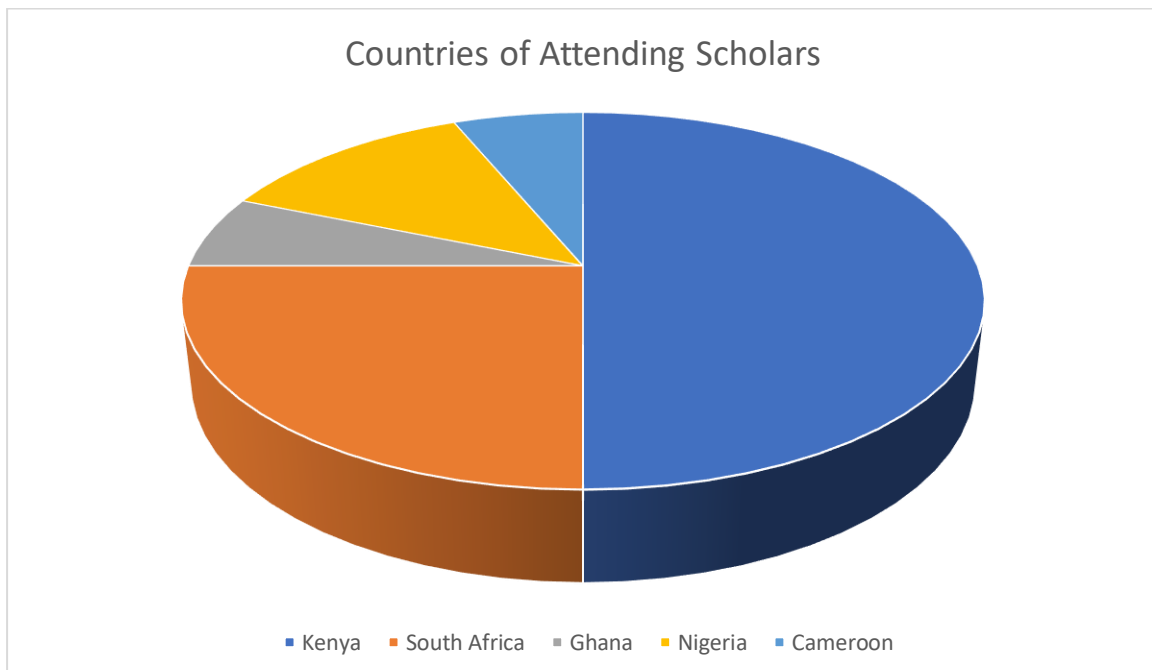
To assess the success of the Virtual Workshop, we created a feedback questionnaire using [Google forms](#).

17 participants gave their feedback. The following analysis is based on that information.



Most of the responses came from scholars. It is helpful that majority of the feedback comes from the demographic that the event was created to service.

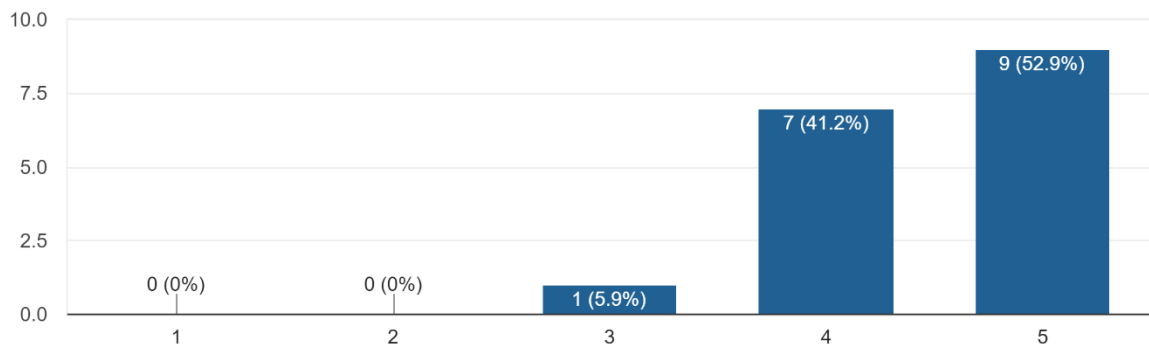
The scholars attended the event from all around Africa.



Most of the participants were Kenyan.

How would you rate the pre-event communication? How prepared for the event did you feel?

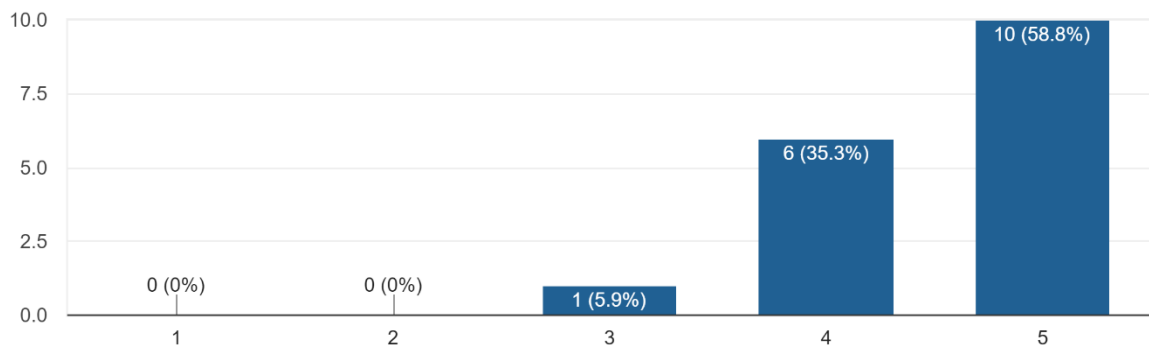
17 responses



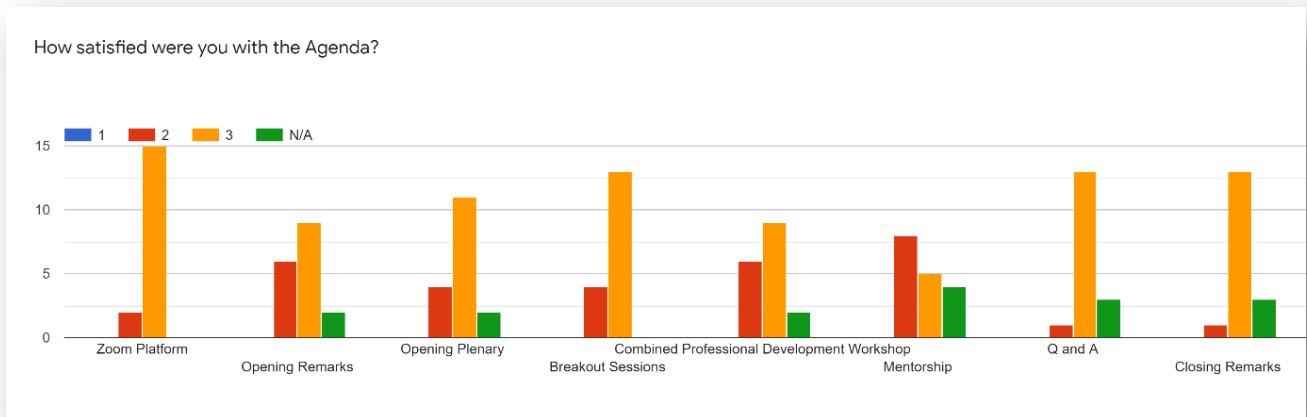
94% of the surveyed participants felt that our pre-event communication left them feeling prepared meaning that pre-event communications with students was effective.

How efficiently did the event run?

17 responses



94.1% of the surveyed participants felt that the event ran efficiently. Dissatisfied participants stated internet connectivity and power supply as their reasons. Although this is out of our control, it is worth taking into consideration as we embark on more virtual events.

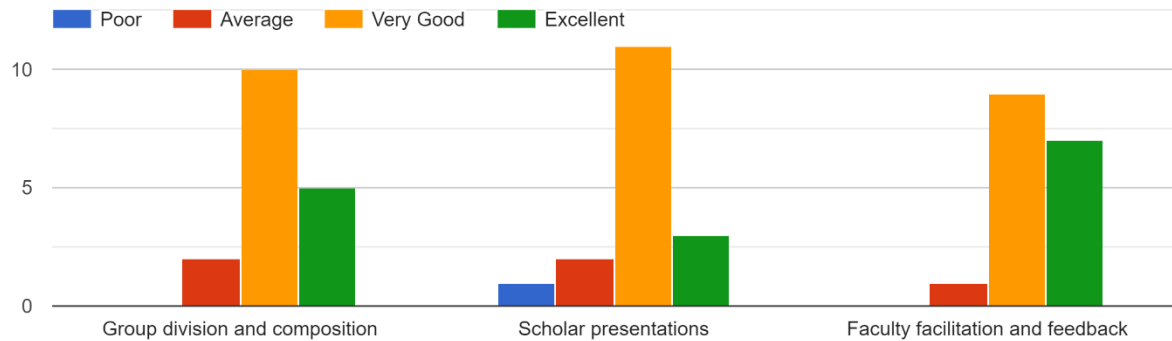


The most successful part of the event was the choice to use the Zoom platform. Therefore, we can continue utilizing this in the future.

The parallel breakout sessions, the Q and A session, and the closing remarks were also very popular. This gives us confidence in the choices we made during the event: to allocate as much time as possible to the Q and A by eliminating the second coffee break and asking Ijeoma Nwagwu deliver the closing remarks instead of Esi Ansah who was already wearing multiple hats.

These items were followed closely by the opening plenary, the combined professional network platform, and the opening remarks in terms of popularity. It appears that there might be more work to be done in the mentorship section for the future. It was only just being introduced and was received enthusiastically on the day, especially by scholars. As it becomes grounded and available, it is sure to become more popular.

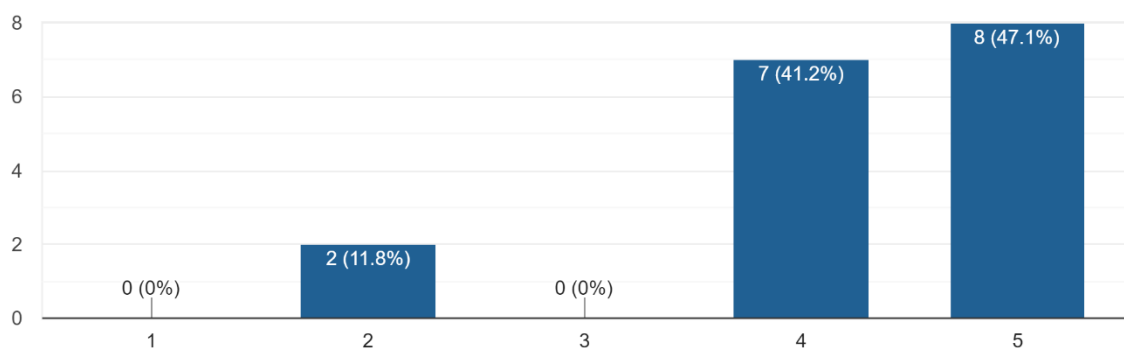
How satisfied were you with the breakout session?



For the most part, participants seemed satisfied with the breakout sessions. We could benefit from paying more attention to the faculty facilitation and feedback. Perhaps, we could find faculty that are more tailored to the topics of the scholars. This can be achieved by initiating faculty-scholar communication before the event. Scholar presentations was the only section to receive a poor rating. As such we should try to work with our scholars in future, to fine tune their presentations and help them with the best way to organize and display their theses for faculty.

How satisfied were you with the opening plenary?

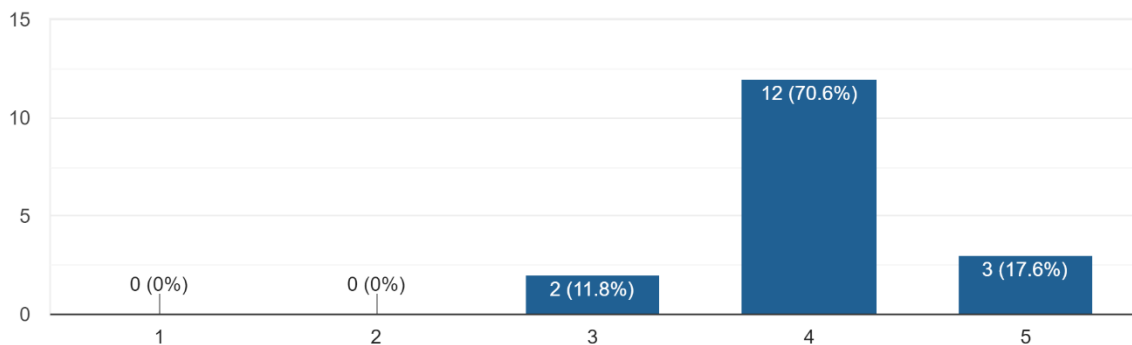
17 responses



The opening plenary was largely successful. Nevertheless, questions of relevance and time management were posited by participants. There were also suggestions made on providing information about trends in the areas discussed and the role of technology in research.

How satisfied were you with the combined professional development workshop?

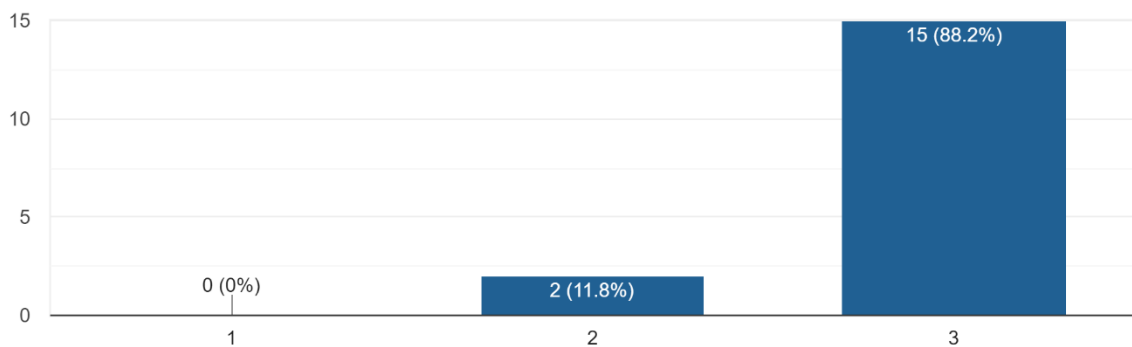
17 responses



The combined professional development workshop was largely successful. The participants seemed to respond strongly to Lindsey McDougale's talk. They found the Workshop helpful in a general sense but felt that it would be more beneficial if the talks had been specific to the needs, topics, and geography of the scholars.

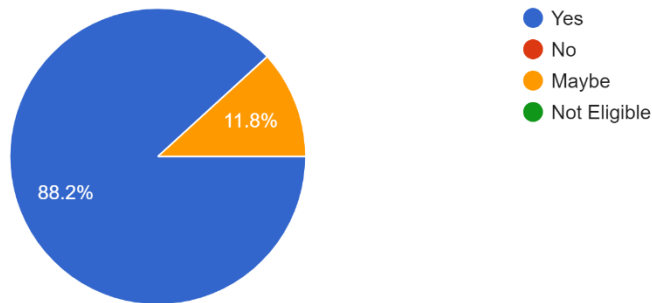
How beneficial was this event to you as a whole?

17 responses



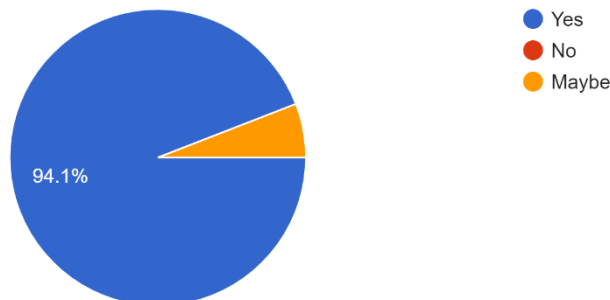
Would you participate in the EAS Workshop in future?

17 responses



Would you recommend the EAS Workshop?

17 responses



As a whole, the event was successful as participants found it beneficial. They also indicated future interest and willingness to recommend the event to others. Participants did however suggest that the event could be shorter in future, and that perhaps we could reduce the number of topics so as to give the selected topics befitting time allocations. They suggested certificates of participation to legitimize the event and their participation in it. They also requested links to research grants as well as contacts of participants for possible collaborations.

We have since complied with the request for certificates. Access to research grants and other participants are already part of AROCSA's considerations and will be accessible through membership to AROCSA and the mentorship program that AROCSA is planning to inaugurate. Time management has been highlighted throughout this report and will be a key consideration for future events.

Other suggestions from participant feedback include:

- Including discussions about COVID-19 responses and transformation in Africa. This was already being planned by the AROCSA team.
- Collating and sharing the common feedback points from the parallel breakout sessions. This will be made easier by having faculty record breakout sessions.
- Providing relevant resources to scholars during feedback such as links to authors, journals, and books. This is separate from the general resources shared in the resource packet with scholars.
- Sharing written feedback from faculty with scholars.
- Tailoring breakout sessions so scholars with similar disciplines are grouped together.

Conclusions

From the statistics derived from the feedback outlined in the above, it is clear that event was considered an overall success by most of the participants. This includes the pre event communication phase where we interacted with participants and provided them advice and information in the run up to the event itself. Dissatisfied participants cited factors that are not exclusively within our control such as internet connectivity and power supply. Participants' interest in future AROCSA events further solidifies the success of the proceedings. We have taken into account all complaints and will be sure to implement them to improve future virtual and physical events.