



KOBE-DUKE SYMPOSIUM ON AFRICAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Informality and Dynamism of African Economies

July 20, 2023
3pm-6pm (JST)

Hybrid Symposium

In-person Roundtable Discussion
Open Invitation to all interested
via Online Participation



Duke
UNIVERSITY

AFRICA
Initiative

Venue

Meeting Room (Annex Bldg)
RIEB, Kobe University
Online by ZOOM

Registration

To attend the symposium, please complete the
registration form before July 16, 2023.
<https://forms.gle/HttFTTSr9swArTQ36>



Organizers

Kobe University Research Institute
for Economics and
Business Administration

Duke University Africa Initiative

Research Platform on Manufacturing
in Africa and Asia / Japan Society
for International Development

SPEAKERS

Andrew Dabalen, Chief Economist for
Africa Region, World Bank

Yemi Dipeolu, Former Special Advisor to
the President on Economic Matters,
Nigeria

Misa Hirano, Professor, Division of
African Area Studies, Graduate School of
Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto
University

Murray Leibbrandt, Professor and
Director, Southern Africa Labour and
Development Research Unit (SALDRU),
University of Cape Town

Aika Matsumoto, Ph.D. Student,
Graduate School of Asian and African
Area Studies, Kyoto University

Yoichi Mine, Executive Director, JICA
Ogata Sadako Research Institute for
Peace and Development

Diana Nyachieo, Ph.D. Student, School
of Economics, University of Cape Town

Sayaka Ogawa, Professor, Graduate
School of Core Ethics and Frontier
Sciences, Ritsumeikan University

Motoki Takahashi, Professor, Division of
African Area Studies, Graduate School of
Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto
University

Abdoul-Karim Soubeiga, Graduate
Student, Graduate School of
International Cooperation Studies, Kobe
University

ORGANIZERS

Nobuaki Hamaguchi, Professor, RIEB,
Kobe University

Hiroyuki Hino, Visiting Research Scholar,
Office of Global Affairs, Duke University

Charles Piot, Professor, Department of
Cultural Anthropology, Duke University

"INFORMALITY AND DYNAMISM OF AFRICAN ECONOMIES"

PROGRAM

Moderator

Nobuaki Hamaguchi

Session I

Informality of African micro entrepreneurs – an appraisal

Presentations (15 mins each):

1. "Rethinking the Informal Economy in Africa: Theoretical Perspectives, First Principles"
Charles Piot
2. "Formation of Informal Network for Technology Transfer: Insights from History"
Yoichi Mine

Discussants (7-8 mins each)

Misa Hirano
Andrew Dabalen

Open Discussion (15 mins)

with Online Participation

Session II

Dynamism of African informal entrepreneurs: empirical evidence

Presentations (15 mins each):

1. "What Drives dynamism of African Micro Entrepreneurs? Econometric Analysis of Their Social and Institutional Attributes"
Nobuaki Hamaguchi
2. "Inclusiveness and Exclusiveness of Sharing of Technologies by East African Entrepreneurs: Empirical Studies of Small and Medium Manufacturing Enterprises"
Motoki Takahashi

Discussants (7-8 mins each)

Aika Matsumoto
Diana Nyachieo

Open Discussion (15 mins)

with Online Participation

Session III : Panel Discussion

Informality as a cornerstone of rapid and equitable development in Africa (45 mins)

Moderator

Hiroiyuki Hino

Panelists

Yemi Dipeolu
Sayaka Ogawa
Murray Leibbrandt
Abdoul-Karim Soubeiga

Summing-up (10mins)

Hiroiyuki Hino



Jointly Supported by RIEB Seminar / Kanematsu Seminar /
Kobe University Strategic International Collaborative Research
Grant (Type C Creating Joint Research)

Background and Program Overview

For the last two decades, there has been a consensus among policy makers, development practitioners and scholars alike that the aim of development policy in sub-Saharan Africa should be to achieve “inclusive growth”, not just a high economic growth. People of all walks of life, poor and rich, should equally enjoy fruits of economic growth of a country where they live.

Yet, over the last decade, economic growth faltered in much of the continent and perhaps even more importantly, the number of Africans who live in extreme poverty has continued to increase. Inequalities – both vertical and horizontal - appear to have risen. Moreover, political, social and economic fragility has heightened. We are witnessing the reemergence of coup d'états, increased incidents of conflicts and greater economic volatility.

This Symposium contends that some of the fundamental premises of the development strategy that has contributed to the above outcomes should be challenged. Specifically, we challenge the premise that informal enterprises are minuscule, unproductive and in many ways inferior and, hence, governments and development agencies should promote growth in modern, formal sectors and uplift those in the bottom two-thirds of the pyramid, i.e., the informal economy.

Thus, in this Symposium (Session I), we contrast the negative conceptualization of informal enterprises above, a conventional view in development economics, with a more optimistic view of many anthropologists and some policy scholars. The latter sees the informal economy as a set of enterprises that are dynamic, innovative and entrepreneurial and thus ought to be a strength and positive resource for the continent. Mutually supportive or even opposing perspectives are presented and debated.

In Session II, we probe if empirical evidence supports the hypothesis that informal entrepreneurs are dynamic, innovative and resilient. Substantive findings will be presented on behavioral characteristics of informal entrepreneurs/enterprises by two presenters – one on Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya and the other on East Africa. Two discussants will follow with findings of their own research. We will see if a common thread could be found from those findings.

Finally, a panel discussion will be held to explore how informal entrepreneurs can be supported more effectively than in the past and if African countries can achieve inclusive growth by embracing the informal economy as a pillar of development strategy. Panelists will offer diverse perspectives, based on rich experience in economic policy (Nigeria), research findings on labor market and inequalities (South Africa), extensive ethnographic interviews (Tanzania), and views from grassroots (Burkina Faso).