

2015 East Africa Evidence Summit
East Africa Social Science Translation Collaborative
July 8-11th, 2015 | Nairobi, Kenya
Meeting Summary Report¹



¹ Report prepared by the Global Networks at the Center for Effective Global Action, with inputs from program participants at the EASST Annual Impact Evaluation Summit

Overview

The EASST Collaborative is a multi-institutional research network with a mission to promote rigorous evaluation of social and economic development programs in East Africa. EASST's annual regional summit represents a rare opportunity to bring together local and international researchers to exchange ideas and share new evidence. The EASST summit not only provides a forum for social scientists to learn from the latest research results in the region, but allows researchers to build linkages with development organizations, including local NGOs, civil society organizations, government offices, advocacy groups, and media outlets. In addition to disseminating research results and networking, the annual impact evaluation conference is an important vehicle for building capacity on conducting rigorous impact evaluations in the region.

In July, 2015, EASST hosted the 4th Annual East Africa Evidence Summit at the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) in Nairobi, Kenya. In partnership with APHRC, The World Bank, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), and The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), the event featured a series of evidence dissemination events in Kenya to commemorate twenty years of randomized experiments in the country. The three-day summit showcased rigorous evidence from East Africa, highlighting research presentations by EASST members, a dissemination of policy lessons gleaned from the portfolio of the Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI), a media training workshop for researchers to translate evidence for mainstream audiences, and a discussion on how Kenya can use rigorous evidence to ensure the country reaches its Vision 2030 goals. Drawing over 100 researchers, policymakers, and development practitioners from East Africa, the annual conference was an opportunity to share latest research findings, discuss study synergies and capacity to scale, learn best dissemination practices, and form meaningful collaborations with a wide array of stakeholders working toward a common goal of large-scale, positive impact.

4th Annual EASST Impact Evaluation Workshop

Ted Miguel, Faculty Director at the Center for Effective Global Action, and **Catherine Kyobutungi**, Director of Research and Acting Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center, introduced the summit by emphasizing the importance of facilitating research partnerships and building a critical mass of well-informed African voices. Drawing on the present disconnect between actionable, locally-generated evidence and the needs of policy-makers, they outlined the ways in which synergizing policy engagement, communications, and research capacity strengthening can lead to the generation of robust evidence that has direct policy implications. EASST works to bridge this gap through a three-fold model of fellowship programs, research and seed funding, and matchmaking and training opportunities. By building the leadership of East African researchers, fostering collaboration and research exchange, and promoting the translation of research into action through established media and policymaking relationships, EASST is effectively working to cultivate the next generation of African researchers and facilitate collaboration between international academics, NGOs, and government stakeholders.

Alexandra Orsola-Vidal, Director of the Global Networks at CEGA, and **Margaret Kyakuwa**, Regional EASST coordinator at Makerere University, gave a background of the motivation behind EASST and the ways in which EASST works to institutionalize the use rigorous evaluation throughout East Africa. Governance institutions and systems often have limited capacity to plan, manage, and evaluate interventions. In addition, there is a strong disconnect between academic/research institutions and

policy makers and practitioners. In response to these concerns, EASST is advancing East African leadership in the field of impact evaluation and increasing the use of evidence in the design of social policies and programs by building the capacity of researchers and research institutions in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.

The 4th Annual Impact Evaluation Summit featured original research presentations by EASST and affiliated partner institution researchers. Research presentations were split into three distinct panels: 1) Health Panel 3) Education and Vocational Training Panel 4) Savings, Inequality and Economic Growth Panel, followed by a panel discussion on how to strengthen the EASST network through partnerships. EASST researchers highlighted the latest rigorous research from across the region to an audience of policy-makers, regional stakeholders, NGOs, and government leaders, creating an active dialogue of what development interventions have proven to be effective in the region. Full presentations from the summit are available on the EASST website, found [here](#)².

EASST framework and M&E

Jointly administered by the CEGA and Makerere University in Uganda, EASST's current partner institutions include: **Makerere University, African Population and Health Research Center, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopian Economics Association, United States International University, Ethiopian Development Research Institute, University of Rwanda, University of Dar es Salaam, Economic and Policy Research Centre, and Twaweza**. Central to the materialization of EASST's mission are three main activities: 1) Matchmaking Events, which include impact evaluation summits and workshops 2) Capacity Building, in the form of curricula development and visiting fellowship and 3) Research Funding through Research Grant Competitions and Catalyst Grants, all of which are driven by the need to produce actionable, policy-relevant evidence in the region.

Since its conception in 2011, EASST has taken great strides in the direction of promoting rigorous program evaluations to improve the effectiveness of development policies in the region. 4 EASST impact evaluation summits have been attended by over 10 partners and more than 250 participants. Through 4 fellowship competitions, EASST has granted 15 fellowships from a pool of over 300 applicants. EASST's Research Grant Competitions have garnered 64 original design ideas and led to the submission of 18 full proposals, of which 10 were funded. EASST researcher **Constantine Manda's** contribution to a study by **Twaweza** on capitation grants helped lead to the Tanzanian government changing the distribution practices for school funding. To see a compilation of EASST's achievements in numbers, see the Table 1 below:

² All event materials are available at: <http://www.easst-collaborative.org/2015-east-africa-evidence-summit.html>

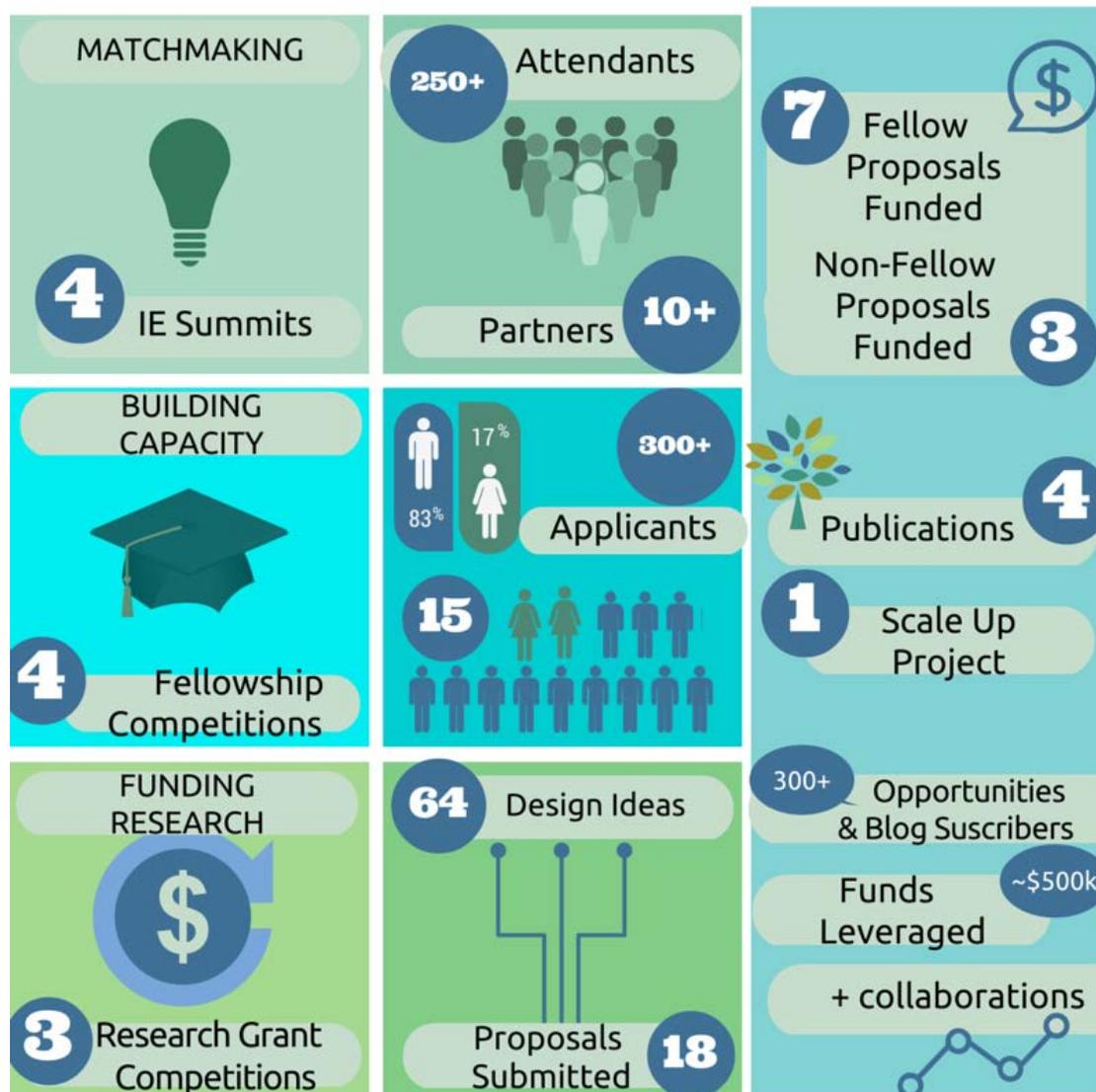


Table 1: Measurement and Evaluation Indicators of the East Africa Social Science Translation Collaborative

20 Years of Research: From Busia to EASST

Ted Miguel provided a history of randomized experiments and emphasized the importance of harnessing research for African development through research communities. Despite the fact that Africa’s economic clout and population are growing rapidly, its research output and the evidence base for African economic development lag far behind. Limited African-generated research on key development challenges stems from too few full-time researchers and average funding levels that lag far behind other regions. Research communities with critical mass are needed for rapid scientific improvement, as research is a cumulative social process.

The Busia Research Network was launched 20 years ago by Professor Michael Kremer in 1995 in partnership with International Child Support, the Government of Kenya, and the World Bank, and

marked the beginning of a movement towards rigorous social and economic development program evaluation in the region. Innovative field experiment methods have attracted many Kenyan and international scholars to collaborate in Busia for over 20 years, and by collaborating together through this network, researchers working in the region have been able to share data methods, survey instruments, and experiences. By learning, brainstorming, and critiquing each other's ideas, the network has helped the adoption of experimental research methods as a key part of development and social science. Dozens of reports, articles, and doctoral dissertations have come out of the research network and lead to policy changes in Kenya and beyond that have benefited millions, including national school deworming in Kenya and India, the introduction of over thousands of chlorine dispensers in Kenya, Malawi, and elsewhere, and great strides towards agricultural technology adoption.

Just as the Busia Research Network was able to catalyze the use of rigorous evaluation methods in development, EASST is a research network informed around the methodological innovation of randomized evaluation that aims to invest in the next generation of high-impact global leaders in African development research. Being part of a network is important, and has led to research having a direct policy impact as a result of the tight-knit relationships researchers have had with policymakers from the outset.

Transparency and Reproducibility of Impact Evaluation

Anthony Mveyange and **Guillaume Kroll** presented on the importance of transparency and reproducibility of impact evaluation research. Over the last 15 years, there has been a significant increase in the use of rigorous evaluation, particularly in development economics, to inform the selection, design, and implementation of projects and policies. Given that the results of this research can be used to positively, or negatively, affect the lives of millions, open, reproducible research practices are essential to ensure the reliability of the scientific evidence generated by economists and other development scholars. To address this issue, the Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS) was established (within CEGA) in 2012 to improve the standards of openness and integrity in economics, political science, psychology, and related disciplines. BITSS does this through building a network of academics, practitioners, and policy-makers who advocate and practice transparency in the social sciences, delivering training through the BITSS Summer Institute and other course curriculum, disseminating existing resources and developing resources like the Manual of Best Practices for Transparency in Social Sciences, and through provision of funding opportunities, such as the SSMART Research Grants³ and Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes⁴. In partnership with BITSS, EASST aims to help facilitate the adoption of best methods, tools, and practices in research transparency by East African researchers and within institutions in the region.

³ Information on SSMART Research Grants available through the Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences at CEGA can be found here: <http://www.bitss.org/ssmart/>

⁴ Information on the Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes available through the Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences at CEGA can be found here: <http://www.bitss.org/prizes/leamer-rosenthal-prizes/>

Strengthening EASST Partnerships

To strengthen the network and further these collaborations, the EASST Network is working with IPA, the World Bank's Africa Region and the Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund. Discussions that took place during the Summit among these partners concluded with four key priorities for the collaborative going forward:

- **Leverage local researchers.** Some of the most rigorous, well thought-out evaluations have been a product of partnerships between international experts and local researchers. It is important to leverage local expertise to address the existing demand for strong evaluations. EASST is working towards identifying and empowering local talent to ensure this need is satisfied.
- **Build capacity at the local and institutional level.** Given the absence or limited availability of local capacity, EASST has developed a capacity building program to ensure local researchers can take a leading role conducting rigorous impact evaluations. This involves the continued provision of trainings drawing upon the expertise of international and local partners, strengthening partnerships and platforms for collaboration with experienced faculty, and affording opportunities for networking and idea exchange.
- **Develop and disseminate curriculum and results.** Educational materials available through international organizations such as CEGA, IPA and the World Bank need to be available for East African institutions. The multilateral development of a rigorous evaluation curriculum can lead to a positive trickle down effect, whereby the next generation of researchers and policymakers will be equipped to evaluate programs.
- **Strengthen collaboration through a shared vision and streamlined resources.** Partnerships and forums that enable researchers to connect with policymakers have led to the implementation of effective, evidence-based policies on the ground. EASST will continue efforts to sustain partnerships with interested stakeholders on the ground and maintain dialogues across disciplines to ensure research and policy continue to complement one another.

EASST Media Training Workshop

To equip social scientists with the communication skills needed to translate research into public action, EASST partnered with **Internews** to deliver a hands-on media training workshop. Conducted by Internews staff, EASST researchers and local journalists **Violet Otindo** and **John Muchangi** discussed the ways to effectively communicate research outcomes in a way that is tangible to policy makers and able to touch the heart of the public. The workshop focused on how to make rigorous research approachable to a wide audience by taking EASST research publications and framing them in ways that are tangible for a wide array of stakeholders. Communicating research, disputing common wisdom, and presenting cases of what development interventions work can all be considered newsworthy and present a public effect that results in action from policy-makers. Increased communication capacity helps to enable academic units and research centers to convene meetings, press conferences, and outreach with policy-makers and journalists, responding to controversial or complex policy issues with solid evidence.

EASST has helped to engage relationships between evidence and a broader audience by providing dissemination channels for work conducted by EASST institutions and researchers. Through the creation of the EASST blog, researchers within the network have been able to create and disseminate weekly op-ed pieces that can lead to more prolonged and fruitful interactions with the media. Since the blog's launch in October 2014, several fellows have been contacted through the blog by organizations who wanted more information on their research and expertise.

EASST Strategy Session

The EASST strategy session provided the opportunity for EASST affiliated researchers to have an open dialogue on the accomplishments and trajectory of the program. The session reviewed EASST activities, progress, accomplishments, and areas for improvement. Participants were asked to brainstorm and share actionable next steps, and to hold the network accountable to accomplishing set goals.

Building on strategic suggestions from last year's summit, in the last year EASST has implemented the following changes to the network:

- **EASST Funding and Research Opportunities Listserv:** In order to promote collaboration and help members of the EASST network obtain funding, EASST compiles a list of funding and research opportunities available to eligible East African researchers and research institution. Opportunities are sent on a monthly basis to key contacts at each EASST partner institution in addition to 300 independent subscribers.
- **EASST Website:** Launched in October 2014, the EASST website provides a space where EASST activities, research projects, events, and researchers are available transparently to the public. The site includes profiles of all visiting fellows in the network, projects that have been funded through EASST, events and workshops hosted by EASST, opportunities available to East African researchers, and a blog featuring latest ideas from East Africa.
- **EASST Blog:** The EASST blog has served as an effective means for EASST activities and research to connect a broader audience. The blog features the latest on East Africa generated evidence, with original posts and op-eds by EASST fellows on recent publications, conferences attended, and ways in which evidence has resulted in direct action. It was requested that each EASST member contribute an original blog post two times per year.
- **Communication Strategy with EASST Institutions:** In order to strengthen connections between researchers throughout the EASST network, EASST is working with key stakeholders and has generated a list of "IT contacts" to better disseminate and promote EASST relevant events, opportunities, and accomplishments. This includes ensuring that EASST opportunities such as the Evaluation Design Contest, Research Grant Competition, and Visiting Fellowship Application reach as wide an audience as possible.
- **Sponsored Matchmaking Lunches for Visiting Fellows:** To promote collaboration between the EASST network other stakeholders on the UC Berkeley campus working in East Africa, EASST now provides sponsored lunch funding for EASST visiting fellows to meet with PhDs and other researchers working in relevant fields.
- **Institutional MOUs:** In order to better formalize the EASST network, Memorandums of Understanding commitments are being established between UC Berkeley and each institution within the EASST network. The MOU can provide support in items such as hosting seminars, providing administrative facilitation, expanding the network and individuals within it, hosting PhDs in-country, and offering space for visiting researchers.
- **Co-authorship statement:** Policymakers and decision-makers often lack the relevant, locally generated evidence needed to improve development outcomes. To help further foster collaboration between CEGA affiliates and local researchers, EASST produced a co-authorship statement that describes the general expectations that the Center for Effective Global Action at UC Berkeley has of affiliates and visiting fellows receiving a grant through EASST Research Grant Competitions, to reinforce a trend towards greater transparency and help researchers fulfill

their responsibilities as grantees, researchers, and authors. The statement will be provided to all EASST award recipients.

- **Leveraging EASST Researchers:** Through partnerships with other development organizations and unilateral agencies, EASST has been able to further leverage EASST scholar's expertise in rigorous evaluations. EASST visiting fellow alumni have been hired as independent impact evaluation consultants, invited to economics conferences around the world, and granted additional funding to continue collaborative research partnerships with CEGA faculty. Visiting Fellows at UC Berkeley have also been able to travel to other CEGA partner institutions such as UC Santa Cruz and UC San Diego to present their research in development seminars and network with additional CEGA faculty.

In addition to discussions on how to strengthen the EASST network through partnership building, additional insight and action steps for the coming year were proposed by EASST researchers:

- **Regional Workshops and Partnership Development:** EASST has made great progress in building relationships between East African researchers, research institutions, CEGA faculty, and international multilaterals, but additional emphasis should be placed on further strengthening relationships between researchers within the network. Additional regional workshops, mentorship programs, and annual meetings are all ways in which EASST researchers may be able to connect with one another to further collaborative relationships.
- **Catalyst Grants and Curriculum Development:** Following the visiting fellowship, EASST scholars are given the opportunity to receive seed funding to promote impact evaluation at their home institution in East Africa. Already, EASST scholars have been able to provide impact evaluations at their home institutions and elsewhere, and are working with CEGA-EASST to develop and implement impact evaluation curricula in the classroom. Moving forward, EASST is working to formalize the process for applying to, receiving, and reporting on catalyst grants, in addition to seeking ways to expedite fund disbursement. EASST will assist in the development of course curriculum, provide teaching materials (which can include presentations on impact evaluation, impact evaluation texts, access to the online edX course on data analysis), and disseminate and communicate information regarding any workshops.
- **Online Learning Opportunities:** The Global Networks Team at CEGA has developed a web-based learning module focused on essential IE skills. The online module provides training in statistical modeling, power calculations, data management, and data analysis. EASST aims to transform this current SPOC (small private online course) into a MOOC (massive open online course), making it available to EASST researchers and partner institutions.
- **EASST Working Paper Series:** As a way of synthesizing the rigorous evidence produced by researchers within the EASST network, EASST aims to generate a working paper series in which results from the latest rigorous research from EASST researchers can be disseminated throughout the CEGA network.
- **Expansion of the EASST Network:** Instead of expanding to include additional institutions, EASST seeks to focus on institutionalizing current partnerships. EASST is working with its partner institutions to establish memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that outline the parameters of being a member of the EASST network, expectations, and available support. Increased communication and dissemination efforts between all EASST stakeholders helps to also further formalize the EASST network. By continuing to leverage partnerships with organizations such as IPA, the World Bank, and BREAD, EASST is helping to establish its members as recognized experts of impact evaluation in the region.

Appendix



2015 East Africa Evidence Summit
APHRC, Nairobi, Kenya
July 8-10, 2015

Wednesday, July 8 2015 (AM) - EASST Annual Impact Evaluation Summit
----- 20 Years of Research: From Busia to the EASST Network -----

8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:15	Welcome and Opening Remarks <i>Ted Miguel, UC Berkeley, CEGA Faculty Director</i> <i>Catherine Kyobutungi, Director of Research and Acting Executive Director, APHRC</i>
9:15-9:45	Overview of EASST <i>Margaret Kyakuwa, Makerere University, EASST</i> <i>Alexandra Orsola-Vidal, Global Networks Director, CEGA</i>
9:45-10:15	20 Years of Research: From Busia to EASST <i>Ted Miguel, UC Berkeley, CEGA Faculty Director</i>
10:15-10:30	<i>Tea Break</i>
10:30-11:00	Improving Transparency and Reproducibility of Impact Evaluations <i>Guillaume Kroll, CEGA, Transparency Initiative Manager</i> <i>Anthony Mveyange, EASST Fellow</i>
11:00-12:15	Health Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Dave Evans, The World Bank – Health Impacts of Community-Based Conditional Cash Transfers in Tanzania</i>• <i>Jeanine Condo, University of Rwanda and EASST Fellow – TBD</i>• <i>Sam Oti, APHRC and EASST Fellow – Community-Based Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in an Urban Slum in Kenya</i>• <i>Zachary Wagner, UC Berkeley – Financial Incentives on the Efficacy of Uganda’s Village Health Teams</i>



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Wednesday, July 8 2015 (PM) - continued

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|------------|---|
| 12:15-1:45 | <i>Lunch Break and Poster Session</i> |
| 1:45-3:00 | Education and Vocational Training Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Joan Hamory Hicks, University of California, Berkeley</i> – Vocational Training Vouchers and Cash Grants for Youth in Kenya• <i>Moses Ngware, APHRC</i> – Pre-primary pupils readiness to join primary school: An Impact Evaluation of the <i>Tayari</i> Preschool Programme in Kenya• <i>Constantine Manda, Twaweza and EASST Fellow</i> – What Works in Education- Capitation Grants Scale-up in Tanzania• <i>Maurice Mutisya, APHRC</i> - Effect of early childhood stunting on schooling among poor urban households in Nairobi, Kenya |
| 3:00-3:15 | <i>Tea Break</i> |
| 3:15-4:30 | Savings, Inequality and Economic Growth Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Joost de Laat, The World Bank</i> - Joint Liability, Asset Collateralization, and Credit Access: Evidence from Rainwater Harvesting Tanks in Kenya.• <i>Amos Njuguna, United States International University and EASST Fellow</i> – Impact of SMS Reminders on Pension Savings• <i>Annet Adong, Economic Policy Research Center and EASST Fellow</i> – Mobile Money and Household Savings in Uganda• <i>Anthony Mveyange, EASST Fellow</i> – Inequality and Mineral Wealth in Tanzania |
| 4:30-5:15 | Panel Discussion: Strengthening the EASST Network through Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Suleiman Asman, Kenya Country Director, IPA</i>• <i>Dave Evans, The World Bank, Senior Economist</i>• <i>Joost de Laat, The World Bank, SIEF Manager</i> |
| 5:15-5:30 | Closing Remarks |

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Thursday, July 9 2015 (PM) - EASST Media Training Workshop

--- Translating Evidence for the Mainstream by Internews ---

2:00-3:00	Scientists gripes with the Media/Media gripes with Scientist <i>Moderator: Dorothy Otieno</i>
3:00-4:15	What the media can do for you (scientists) <i>Session Guide: Ernest Waititu</i>
4:15-4:30	<i>Tea Break</i>
4:30-6:00	How to engage the media <i>Moderator: Dorothy Otieno / Ernest Waititu</i>