



# WORKING GROUP IN AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

THE CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE GLOBAL ACTION



PHOTO BY BRAC

**WGAPE** The Working Group in African Political Economy (WGAPE) brings together top-tier faculty and advanced graduate students in Economics and Political Science who combine field research in Africa with training in political economy methods to advance ongoing research and contribute to evidence-based policymaking in the field.



The Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) designs and tests solutions for the problems of poverty, generating actionable evidence for policy-makers in less developed countries. Using rigorous field trials, behavioral experiments, and tools from data science, we measure and maximize the impacts of economic development programs throughout the world.

## WORKSHOPS STRENGTHEN RESEARCH

WGAPE’s goal is to understand the core issues in the political economy of African development, including ethnic politics, civil conflict and violence, decentralization, democratization, corruption, and local governance.

Regional and national meetings are built around in-depth discussions of working papers, with an emphasis on extensive discussion rather than presentation. This provides opportunities for critical feedback on work in progress, and graduate students are a central pillar to the network and its sustained success. A special effort is made to invite advanced students to submit and present, and each meeting offers an opportunity for them to build their professional networks, receive constructive feedback from leading faculty, and collaborate on new projects.

WGAPE encourages diversity: 35% of executive committee members are female, and the network supports African scholars in submitting and presenting at meetings.

## WGAPE BY THE NUMBERS

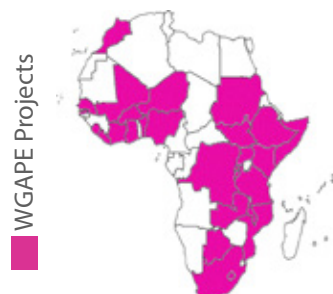
The work of over 1,000 graduate students, faculty, and researchers has been presented



by 233 unique scholars since 2002



on studies with fieldwork conducted in 27 African countries



WGAPE Projects



PHOTO BY ELISA CASCARDI

## SCHOLARLY GROWTH | RESEARCH ADVANCEMENT | POLICY IMPACT

WGAPE fora continue to stand as the leading venue for scholars of African development and political economy to share new findings, collaborate on new research, and advance research in the field.

Research presented has been published in journals in Political Science and Economics, including the *Journal of Political Economy*, the *American Political Science Review*, the *Journal of African Economies*, and *World Politics*, among others. Former participants have become faculty at top 10 institutions nationally, as well as conduct research at leading think-tanks and policy institutions.

WGAPE research has impacts beyond academia; findings have been integrated to policy decisions, and formation, notably through the following engagements by our network of researchers:

- Large scale-ups of chlorine dispensers for safe water to improve public goods provisions and health outcomes for 840,000,000 in Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and Haiti<sup>1</sup>;
- Policy consultation on Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project (NUSAF) cash-grants program to reduce unemployment, reduce weakened social bonds, increase civic engagement, and lower the risk of instability<sup>2</sup>;
- Program creation with prominent East African NGO, Twaweza, to increase citizen engagement with evidence from educational information interventions in Kenya<sup>3</sup>.

### CEGA'S WORK



PUBLIC SERVICE  
DELIVERY

CEGA's work is organized into a series of initiatives that each address a specific challenge. Our initiatives fund coordinated portfolios of projects, with the resulting lessons synthesized into bodies of policy-relevant evidence for decision-makers. Portfolios are organized into topical sectors or cross-cutting themes.

<sup>1</sup> Miguel, Edward "Spring Cleaning: Results from a Randomized Evaluation of Source Water Quality Improvement." Working Group in African Political Economy, 2006.  
<sup>2</sup> Christopher Blattman "The Economic and Social Returns to Cash Transfers: Evidence from a Ugandan Aid Program." Working Group in African Political Economy, 2013.  
<sup>3</sup> Lieberman, Evan and Posner, Daniel N. and Tsai, Lily, Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship? Evidence from an Education Intervention in Rural Kenya (March 5, 2013). MIT Political Science Department Research Paper No. 2013-2.