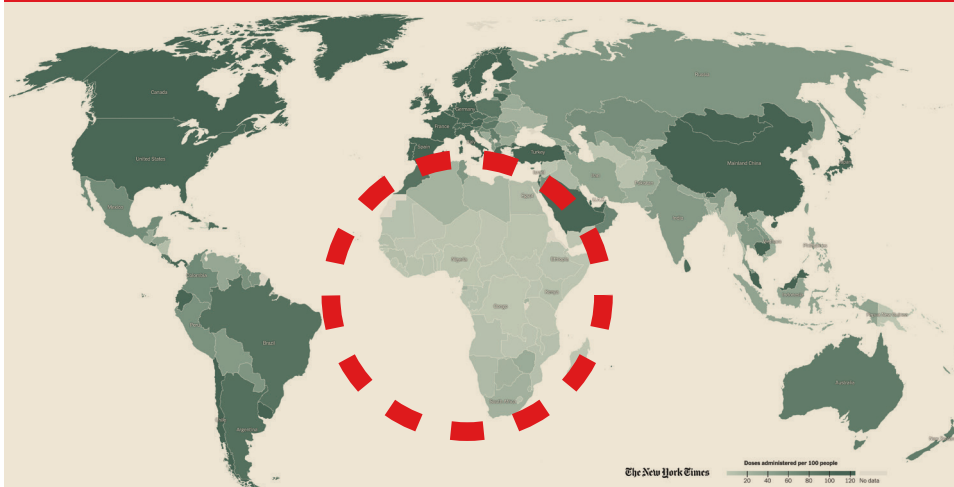


## First/Third World COVID-19 Vaccination Divide

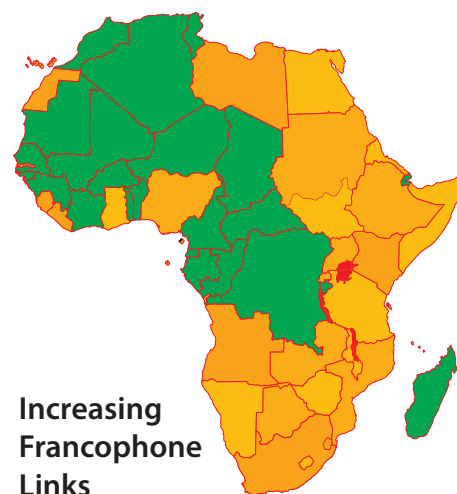


The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to disrupt Open AIR activities. Certain of our research activities have had to be postponed, while others have been able to go ahead. The first/third-world divide has been exacerbated by the lack of vaccines for the developing world, and our fieldwork projects in African countries have been severely affected. However, many of our researchers have continued with their work and several have submitted reports. COVID-19 has also greatly influenced communications and teaching at all of our hubs, and intensified the use of ICTs. We will make use of these learnings to improve communications in our network and consider which tools we should continue to use going forward.

Open AIR continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in a pragmatic, realistic and empathetic manner, and the network has so far exhibited remarkable resilience when taking into account the considerable challenges faced by those living in African countries. This confirms the general strength of our network, but is also in no small degree due to the support of our funders, including the IDRC, and our hosting institutions (many of which are under extreme pressure).

In spite of COVID-19, in all but one theme we have effectively concluded our research, commenced analysis, and are analysing the main results from the individual themes. We have begun work on the cross-thematic report (our major output).

## Building Communities of Practice



### Increasing Francophone Links

We continue to work to increase our presence in Francophone countries and are finding that the QES-AS scholarships are an excellent vehicle for this.



### Career Successes

Although it is impossible with existing resources to follow the careers of all the members of our network, some do let us know of their achievements and we celebrate these through our social media accounts.

## Research

Open AIR's two overarching questions

*How can open collaborative innovation help knowledge-based businesses scale up and seize the new opportunities of a global knowledge economy?*

*Which knowledge governance policies will best ensure that the social and economic benefits of innovation are shared inclusively?*

With particular emphasis on:

- Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls
- African economic integration and international law and trade policy
- Artificial intelligence (AI)
- The maker movement

## Progress

High Tech Hubs



Informal Innovation



Indigenous Entrepreneurs



Laws and Policies



Metrics



## Report



**Overarching  
Cross-thematic  
Research Report**

## New Emerging Researchers Group (NERGs)



### Mentorship

Mentorship among the NERGs takes place when they are working together on a project; spontaneously; and informally during conversations. COVID-19 has had a negative impact on informal mentorship.



### Internal Interaction

This is primarily hub-based with NERGs at one hub interacting through proximity and shared projects.



### Brown-bag Meetings

Efforts to promote interaction amongst NERGs based at different hubs proved a challenge until the current Lead, Esther Ekong, and Deputy, Adel Osama, initiated monthly Brown Bag presentations. This has been gratifyingly effective, with attendance averaging about 25.



### Outputs

Outputs include 26 publications by current NERGs and alumni, as well as regular blogs on our social media outlets.

## Outputs: January–June 2021



### Total output:

3 books;  
6 book chapters;  
16 journal articles;  
2 working papers;  
2 briefing papers,  
34 presentations;  
10 media/blog;  
3 Interviews/podcasts;  
3 invited lectures;  
3 coverage/commentary;  
3 videos; and  
3 'other'.



For the six months reporting period we have on record 26 publications by present and past NERGs. All of the Open AIR blogposts are also written by the current NERGs.

## Our Network



### Mentorship

This is primarily carried out by academics in the hubs who are involved with Open AIR research. COVID-19 has normalised online interaction and the experience gained has made it easier to mentor across countries and continents.



### Outreach

Communication of our work is most effectively accomplished online. We update our website and social media platforms continuously and strive to achieve the sense of excitement that we feel within our network.



### Teaching

Teaching is an integral part of academic identity. We include information gained from our Open AIR research in our curricula thus providing students with immediate and local context.



### Research

Insights gained from our research continue to be published, shared in online conferences, webinars, web-based platforms, etc.