



November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Re: AEA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Diversity and Inclusion

Since we launched in 2008, the Center for Effective Global Action ([CEGA](#))—a hub for research, training, and innovation in international economic development headquartered at UC Berkeley—has made diversity and inclusion core to our organizational strategy. By training scholars from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and other underrepresented groups in rigorous impact evaluation methods, and prioritizing diversity and inclusion across our internal processes and structures, we have helped to dismantle unequal power structures that have long plagued the economics profession. CEGA’s diversity and inclusion work is led by an Associate Director of Inclusion with support from a dedicated working group, and is guided by a detailed framework and strategy that includes a theory of change, goals, milestones, activities, and indicators of progress.

### ***About CEGA***

CEGA generates economic research insights that leaders around the world use to improve policies, programs, and people’s lives. Our academic network includes more than 160 faculty, 69 scholars from LMICs, and hundreds of graduate students—mainly from economics but also from other related academic disciplines—who produce rigorous evidence about what works to expand education, health, and economic opportunities for people living in poverty. CEGA is an independent research unit, although we are closely affiliated with the Department of Economics and the Department of Agricultural and Research Economics at UC Berkeley, and our faculty network spans 20 campuses along the West Coast of North America. The Center was founded by Faculty Director Edward Miguel, who is highly regarded for his mentorship of international graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and African researchers visiting Berkeley.

CEGA’s investments in diversity and inclusion include the following core activities, which align with the AEA’s “Best Practices for Economists Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Productive Profession”:

#### **Activity 1: Visiting Scholar Training Programs**

*AEA Best Practices: Organize conferences, seminars, and visitor programs that are inclusive; Share research opportunities broadly; Use outreach to counter stereotypes about economics and close other information gaps*

The American economics profession [suffers from a staggering lack of diversity](#), both in terms of including [underrepresented groups within the US](#) and scholars from LMICs. African scholars, in particular, face significant structural barriers to generating research outputs: Currently, only [two percent of the world’s research output](#) is produced by Africans, and less than eight percent of publications on Africa in top economics journals include an African co-author. CEGA’s first program, the East Africa Social Science Translation Collaborative ([EASST](#)), has offered capacity-strengthening fellowships, research funding, and networking opportunities to promising early-career international development scholars from East Africa for the past twelve years. EASST’s goal is to shift global knowledge production in development economics toward LMIC scholars who are most affected by the studied issues. Absent their voices, even the most rigorous

research can lose relevance and fail to translate into policy action, inhibiting international development goals. We have also partnered with the Inter-American Development Bank, the NGO BRAC, and the Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration to host capacity-strengthening programs for scholars from Latin America, Bangladesh, and West Africa, respectively. These programs collectively form CEGA's [Global Networks](#) initiative.

To date, CEGA has provided the opportunity for over 69 scholars from ten LMICs to visit the UC Berkeley campus for a semester, audit economics courses, present their work in seminars, apply to competitive funding opportunities, receive faculty and peer mentorship, and network with faculty and students across the CEGA network. These scholars have been awarded nearly \$2 million in grant funding for 79 funded [research studies](#) to promote their independent research activities and entry into the mainstream of the economics profession. CEGA has provided catalyst training grants of about \$7,500 per scholar, which enable the scholars to go on to train nearly 1,500 other researchers in their home countries. With seed investments from CEGA, scholars from the EASST program have formed a new organization, the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa ([NIERA](#)), with which the Center regularly collaborates.

These scholars have played an important role in introducing new voices in economics at UC Berkeley. Scholars are integrated into development economics seminars on campus. They attend graduate-level econometrics, health economics, and microeconomics courses. And, scholars have formed [long-term partnerships with PhD students](#) and faculty at Berkeley. Many have gone on to long-term collaborations with their Berkeley-based counterparts, applying for research grants together and co-authoring in top journals. For example, [Constantine Manda](#), a Tanzanian visiting fellow from 2013, authored a [publication](#) in the Quarterly Journal of Economics together with his CEGA faculty mentor, Prof. Karthik Muralidharan of UCSD, and is now in a tenure track [position](#) at the University of California, Irvine. Bringing African scholars to visit the U.S. requires significant effort to obtain visas, provide academic and social support, and fund all room and board costs. CEGA provides these financial and time resources, recognizing the immense returns to the Berkeley community and the economics profession as a whole, in addition to the impacts on the career trajectories of individual economics researchers.

While CEGA has room to grow in gender diversity of its visiting scholars (currently the network is 34% women), since 2015, we have more than doubled the proportion of female applicants to its Fellowship from 12% to 29%. CEGA responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by offering a non-resident model for its fellowships, enabling scholars to complete the program remotely from their country of residence. This has allowed for a greater number of women scholars to pursue the fellowship, given that women often have child-care responsibilities that preclude them from being able to leave home for four months. To date, we have hosted 10 non-resident fellows, and early results from an annual survey of all fellows show that they achieve similar outcomes to resident fellows, including developing strong relationships with their mentors.

## **Activity 2: Organizing conferences in LMICs**

*AEA Best Practices: Organize conferences, seminars, and visitor programs that are inclusive; Ensure that the conferences and seminar discussions you host are constructive; Meet your colleagues where they are.*

CEGA organizes conferences to disseminate locally-generated research, connect scholars with policymakers and practitioners, and hosts events for LMIC scholars to deliver and receive feedback on working papers. These include the yearly [Africa Evidence Summit](#), the Working

Group on African Political Economy ([WGAP](#)) Annual Meeting, and the Development Impact West Africa (DIWA) [training and matchmaking workshop](#). To date, the Africa Evidence Summit has drawn over 2,000 attendees across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Ethiopia, many of whom are aspiring economics students and researchers. Attending conferences enables scholars to understand current paradigms in their areas of research and create important networks, but scholars from LMICs [often face obstacles](#) to attending and presenting at these events (which are often held in Europe and North America). Hosting dedicated conferences in Sub-Saharan Africa helps reduce these barriers to allow for greater participation, and knits together researchers and civil society organizations to strengthen the research ecosystem in host countries. We have established a [code of conduct](#) at all CEGA events to make sure participants are treated respectfully.

### **Activity 3: Disseminating our model to other organizations**

*AEA Best Practices: Share research opportunities broadly; Use outreach to counter stereotypes about economics and close other information gaps*

CEGA takes an active role in shaping more inclusive research practices. In 2021, with NIERA we established the Collaboration for Inclusive Development Research (CIDR) to investigate barriers to African international development research along various stages of the research-to-policy pipeline: higher education, training and mentorship, publication and co-authorship, and policy translation. We are also examining the role of funding agencies in shaping local research agendas, and will suggest investments that can move the needle on inclusive research. CIDR is piloting a large-scale online survey that will capture the perceptions of U.S. and African students and faculty, NGOs, funding agencies, and journal editors to gather initial data on the problem. We will then conduct focus group discussions and targeted interviews to better understand the best ways for funders, non-profits, and universities to work towards a more inclusive ecosystem.

CEGA has also advised many other institutions that have set up their own visiting fellowship programs similar to our tried and tested model. In particular, the Global Poverty Research Lab (GPRL) at Northwestern University, Evidence on Governance and Politics (EGAP), the Penn Development Research Institute (PDRI), and Partnerships for Economic Policy (PEP) have all set up related initiatives in [close partnership with CEGA](#), training seven scholars to date. These new fellowship programs represent significant progress toward an improved evidence ecosystem in development economics that elevates the insights of LMIC researchers.

### **Activity 4: Creating structures and processes to support inclusive research**

*AEA Best Practices: Discuss and enforce a code of conduct; Read and cite diversely; Think inclusively.*

CEGA is a major re-granting institution and we have developed policies and trained staff to ensure that research funding is distributed equitably within our network and beyond. For example, the vast majority of CEGA research funds are allocated through competitive requests for proposals (RFPs), in which the application of fair, transparent, and objective criteria ensures that all eligible research teams have equitable opportunities to succeed. Further, when evaluating research proposals, we often include criteria that move beyond quantitative scores for research rigor and assess the diversity of the research team and of the portfolio as a whole (which includes gender, racial, and geographic diversity). We have also developed a “co-authorship statement”

we include with our grant awards, that outline how researchers should be credited for their contributions.

CEGA is also committed to developing standards that researchers can use to 1) effectively crowdsource input from communities about problems and potential solutions; 2) collect data in a way that minimizes risk or harm; 3) return results to study respondents for feedback at the conclusion of a study. To this end, we were recently awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation on “The Ethics of Sharing Results with Research Participants: Establishing Best Practices for Development Economics.”

### **Activity 5: Creating structures and processes to recruit and retain diverse staff and faculty affiliates**

*AEA Best Practices: Create an inclusive, constructive culture and deal firmly with instances of exclusion, harassment, discrimination, and disrespectful treatment; Implement a structured and fair recruiting process; Structure your meetings and workplaces to be inclusive.*

CEGA creates internal processes and structures that promote diversity and inclusion across our organization. We have audited our staff and faculty affiliate recruitment strategies, our staff compensation framework, and our staff culture to align with these values and have set up clear metrics for accountability. Since 2020, we have instituted an annual survey of staff that measures demographics, perceptions of diversity and inclusion, and captures ideas for improvement. Over time, the survey has revealed meaningful increases in diversity as well as staff perceptions of diversity: in 2022, 9% of staff were from underrepresented backgrounds (Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Pacific Islanders) compared to 27% today. The diversity of our affiliate network has been improved through implementing new processes for equitable nomination (such as adding a criterion for how the candidate would further CEGA’s Diversity and Inclusion Goals) however, this remains a goal for us going forward. CEGA has also instituted a pay transparency framework that ensures staff of all backgrounds are compensated fairly and equitably. Finally, we have launched a seminar series called the “History of Development Economics” that provides a forum for CEGA staff and researchers to discuss the evolution of the field through assigned readings and discussion.

### ***Publicly Available Writings on D&I at CEGA***

Please see the following pages for more information:

- [Applying to the EASST Fellowship](#)
- [A fellow returns to CEGA: Reflections, learning and growth four years later](#)
- [It takes a village to raise a researcher: Key takeaways from the Africa Evidence Summit’s CIDR panel](#)
- [Supporting an inclusive evidence ecosystem: Insights from the 2023 Africa Evidence Summit](#)
- [A new approach to compensation](#)
- [Twenty Years of WGAPE: Interview with Daniel Posner and Edward Miguel](#)
- [From One Semester to Seven Years: Fostering Collaboration with PhD Students](#)
- [Shaping the Future of Inclusion in Global Development Research](#)
- [DIWA’s Steps towards Evidence-Informed Policy in Ghana](#)
- [Moving Towards Scale: CEGA’s Fellowships Go Virtual](#)
- [“EASST Opened Countless Doors:” How CEGA Supported A Fellow’s Career](#)
- [Driving Inclusivity and Productivity in Global Development Research](#)