

# ACED Strategy to 2030

Knowledge for better jobs,  
gender equality and well-being.



In a rapidly changing and uncertain world, rigid strategic planning is becoming less effective. Recent crises highlight the need for adaptability while preserving an organization's core identity. ACED's new strategic plan focuses on foundational principles and broad guiding parameters, ensuring agility, responsiveness, and sustained impact.



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# Our strategy at a glance

## The problem

Across Africa, a persistent gap exists between the production of knowledge and its use in policymaking and practice, undermining the effectiveness of development efforts. While timely and relevant knowledge has the potential to guide better policies and improve practices, much research produced remains disconnected from decision-making processes. This disconnect creates a knowledge bottleneck that leads to misinformed policies, misallocated resources, and slower progress towards development goals. The root of this inefficiency lies in three key barriers: knowledge frequently fails to align with local needs, reach those who need it, or be applied effectively in decision-making processes.

## Vision

A just and sustainable Africa driven by the power of knowledge.

## Mission

To support African policymakers and practitioners in designing and implementing policies for better jobs, gender equality, and well-being by making development knowledge relevant, accessible, and applied.



## Our work

**Pillar 1:**

Making research relevant and actionable

**Pillar 2:**

Making knowledge accessible to policy stakeholders

**Pillar 3:**

Integrating knowledge into decision-making processes

## Thematic focus areas



Better jobs



Gender equality



Well-being

## Long-term outcomes

- More knowledge-informed policies and practices – Increased integration of knowledge into development interventions.
- Improved decision-making processes – Stronger institutional mechanisms for knowledge use.
- Sustainable impact in key thematic areas – Better jobs, gender equality and well-being benefit from better-informed decisions.

## Our guiding principles

Agility

Sustainability

Impact


Partnership

# ACED's journey so far

The African Center for Equitable Development (ACED) was founded in 2010 in the Republic of Benin as a nonprofit organization by three university students – Olga Abloutan, the late Donald Houessou, and Fréjus Thoto. Initially, ACED's work involved direct field interventions such as supporting youth entrepreneurship in agribusiness and promoting climate adaptation campaigns. Ten years ago, in 2015, ACED began its first comprehensive action research project on inland fisheries, partnering with the Amsterdam Centre for World Food Studies of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin. The research insights led to improved strategies for managing inland fisheries, enhancing community resilience, and clarifying regulations for fishing communities. Since then, numerous other action research projects have been successfully implemented.

ACED adopts a unique, non-linear approach that integrates research, policy, and action across all its interventions. This approach reflects our commitment to addressing a persistent challenge in the development ecosystem: while substantial resources are dedicated to research, findings often fail to reach policymakers and practitioners. Addressing this issue requires intentional efforts to enhance the uptake and application of research results. For instance, identifying the misalignment between research outcomes and policy priorities led us to assist the Government of Benin in developing a national research agenda focused on food and nutrition security, ensuring that future research is more relevant, demand-driven, and aligned with national policy needs.

Our new strategic plan emphasizes initiatives that challenge the current reality, encouraging innovative and



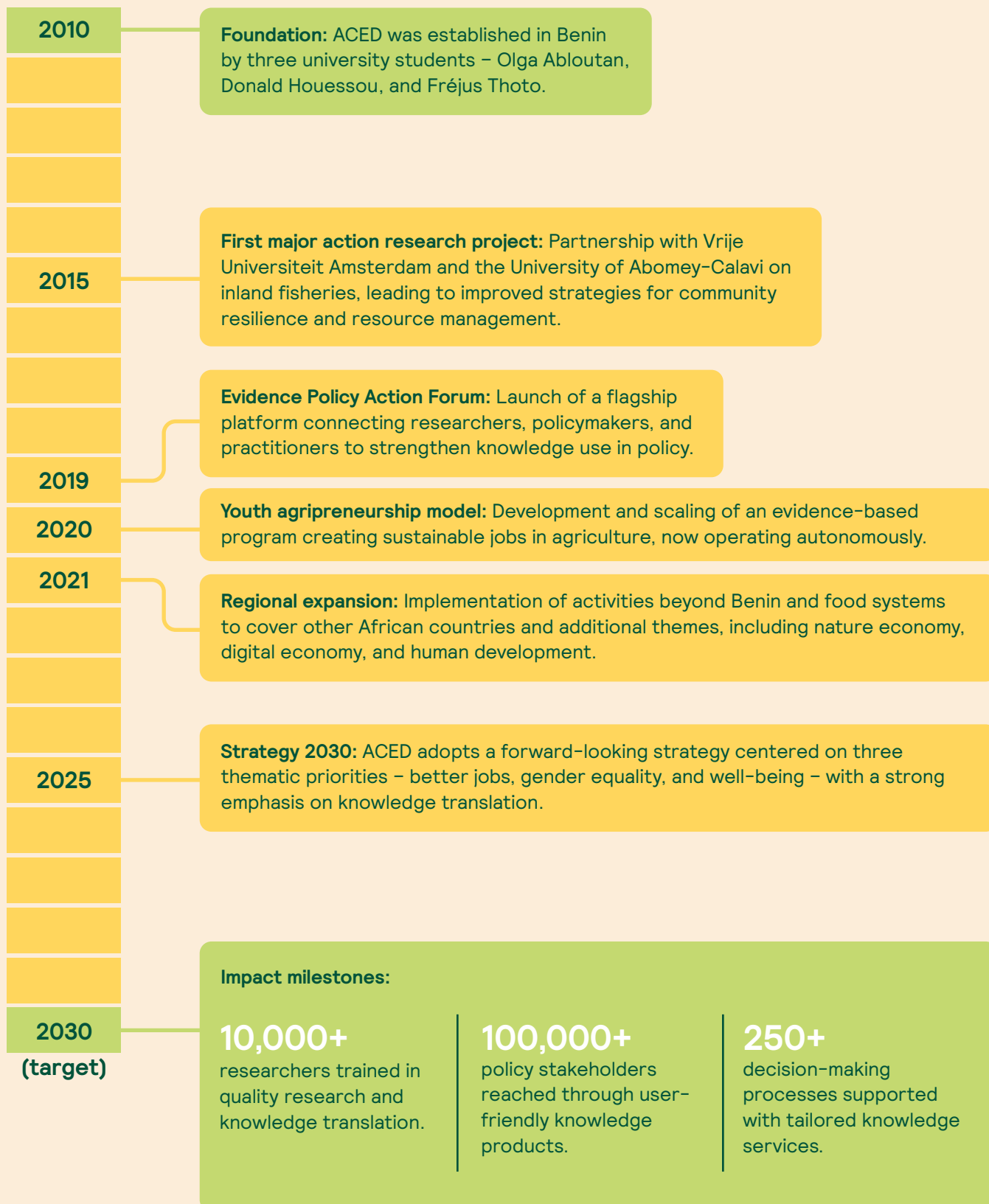
**Our new strategic plan emphasizes initiatives that challenge the current reality, encouraging innovative and direct actions that ensure research findings translate into tangible improvements in development outcomes.**

direct actions that ensure research findings translate into tangible improvements in development outcomes. Recognizing the broader relevance and transformation potential of our approach, we have expanded beyond Benin and food systems to other francophone African countries and additional themes, including issues related to jobs, gender equality and well-being.

Throughout our journey, we have learned crucial lessons that continue to shape our strategy. We have recognized that influencing policy systems is a process that demands sustained and thorough engagement over the long term. Inclusive partnerships have proven essential, helping us develop solutions that are both sustainable and impactful. We have also discovered that effective decision-making relies on diverse forms of knowledge – beyond just scientific evidence, highlighting the importance of embracing various perspectives. Finally, investing in our own organizational development, particularly through securing sustainable funding and retaining talent, has emerged as fundamental to our enduring success and ability to create lasting impact.



## From ideas to impact: ACED through the years



# The problem we address: The knowledge bottleneck

## The unfinished business of human development in Africa


Africa is navigating two major development agendas: the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030) and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Despite notable progress, many targets remain out of reach. Deep-rooted socio-economic and political constraints, coupled with emerging challenges, continue to hinder advancement in areas such as employment, gender equality, and well-being.

Actionable knowledge is one of the most powerful levers to accelerate development. When knowledge is timely, relevant, and used, it can guide better policies, improve practices, and ensure that development efforts are responsive to real needs and changing contexts.

Yet, across the continent, a persistent gap remains between the production of knowledge and its actual use by policymakers and practitioners. Valuable research often fails to inform decisions, resulting in policies that are ineffective, resources that are misallocated, and progress that is slower than it could be.

## Knowledge can help, but the system is inefficient

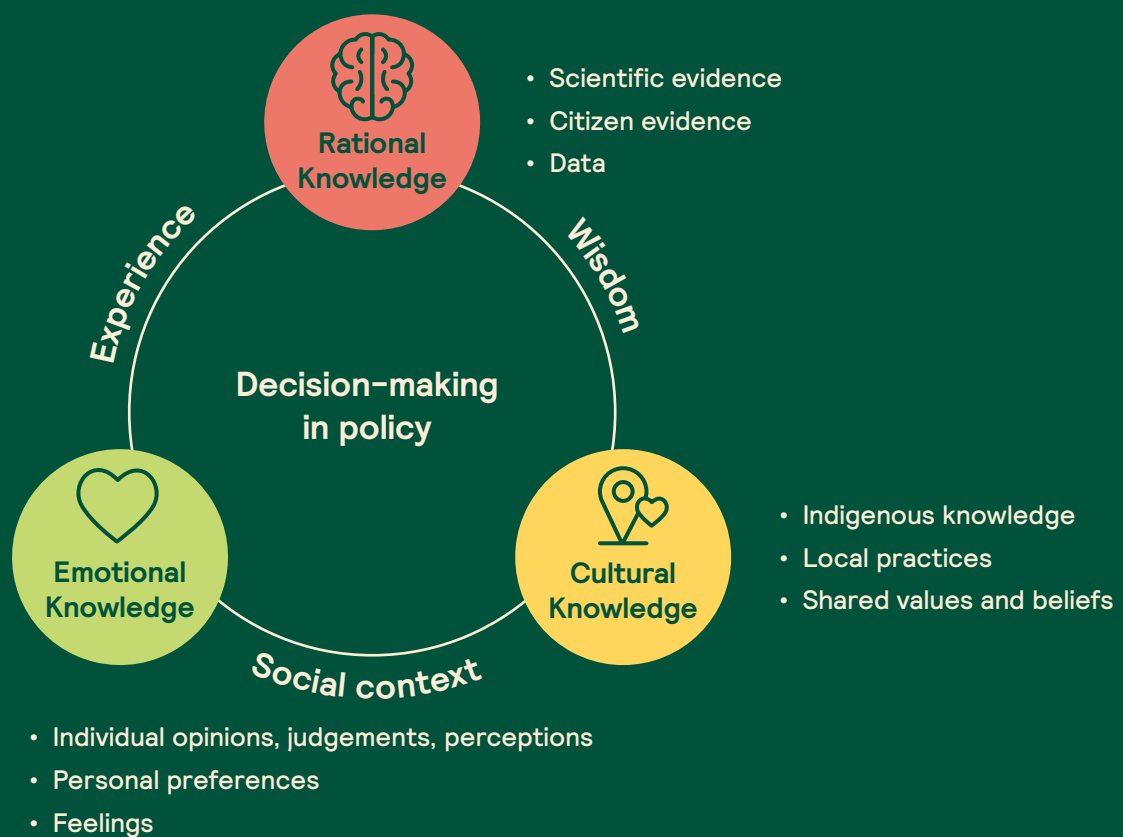
Knowledge refers to the accumulation of facts, information, skills, and understanding acquired through experience, education, reasoning, and interaction with the environment and people. It is valuable for its invisible



**Across the continent, a persistent gap remains between the production of knowledge and its actual use by policymakers and practitioners.**

yet essential contribution to decision-making and organizational processes. In decision-making, three types interact within a dynamic framework: cultural, emotional, and rational knowledge (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. The knowledge dynamics model (Adapted from Bratianu and Bejinaru, 2019)<sup>1</sup>**




Cultural knowledge refers to shared values and practices that serve as a reference system for decision-making within a social context. Emotional knowledge arises from individual feelings, influenced by external stimuli affecting perceptions and incentives.

<sup>1</sup> Bratianu, C., & Bejinaru, R. (2019). The Theory of Knowledge Fields: A Thermodynamics Approach. *Systems*, 7(2), 20. <https://doi.org/10.3390/systems7020020>

Both are forms of tacit knowledge, as they are personal and not easily articulated. In contrast, rational knowledge is explicit, derived from reflection and logical analysis rather than perception or belief.

At ACED, we value all three types of knowledge. We know that bounded rationality – the idea that decision-making is constrained by the information available at a given time – is the dominant logic in policymaking. We acknowledge the important role of cultural and emotional knowledge and their synergetic action with rational knowledge in shaping decision-making, particularly in the African context. Therefore, knowledge, in ACED’s approach, includes rational (i.e. scientific evidence, citizen evidence, data), cultural (i.e. indigenous knowledge, local practices, shared values and beliefs), and emotional knowledge (i.e. insights and judgments, opinions and perceptions, feelings). This broader perspective is intentional. As such, knowledge goes beyond data and evidence by integrating analyzed information with experience, values, incentives, contextual understanding, and practical know-how. In policymaking, relying on knowledge rather than solely on data or evidence allows for more holistic, context-sensitive, and inclusive decision-making, by accounting for the complex realities and human factors that influence how decisions are actually made.

Knowledge is a powerful energy for development, but the current system prioritizes knowledge production over use. While universities, research centers, and state institutions generate vast amounts of knowledge, essentially rational knowledge, too little of it is translated into practical solutions or effectively used by decision-makers. Each day, researchers publish hundreds of scientific studies on Africa’s development, yet much of this knowledge remains unused.



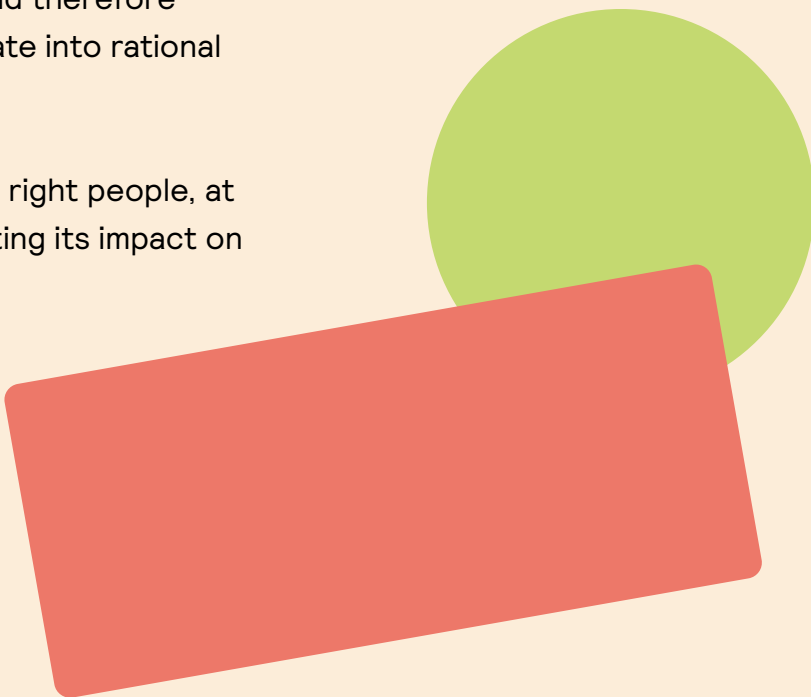
**Knowledge goes beyond data and evidence by integrating analyzed information with experience, values, incentives, contextual understanding, and practical know-how.**

The inefficiency of the knowledge system stems from three major barriers:

### **Knowledge is not relevant**

- Many researchers and knowledge producers operate without direct engagement with policymakers, making it difficult to align their work with real-world needs and policy cycles.
- Some research lacks rigor or reliability, leading to findings that are incomplete, inconsistent, or not credible enough for decision-making.
- Research findings often fail to provide practical recommendations or ignore local contexts, making them difficult to implement.

### **Knowledge is not accessible**

- Many high-quality studies are locked behind paywalls, published in English for francophone audiences, or presented in overly technical jargon, making them inaccessible to policymakers and practitioners.
  - Part of the available body of knowledge (mainly cultural and emotional knowledge) are tacit and therefore hard to capture, formalize, and integrate into rational knowledge to inform decision-making.
  - Knowledge does not always reach the right people, at the right time, in the right format, limiting its impact on decision-making.
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## Knowledge is not used

- Policymakers and practitioners lack incentives, enabling systems, and processes to routinely use research in decision-making.
- Many decision-makers are not equipped with the necessary skills or support to interpret and apply available knowledge effectively.

## The urgent need for a new approach

With the current reality, valuable knowledge will continue to accumulate in research repositories and state institutions instead of shaping policies and practices that improve lives. We exist to bridge this gap by improving the knowledge translation field.



# Our vision and mission

**Vision:** A just and sustainable Africa driven by the power of knowledge.

**Mission:** To support African policymakers and practitioners in designing and implementing policies for better jobs, gender equality, and well-being by making development knowledge relevant, accessible, and applied.



# Our strategic goals and our work

Our work is centered on knowledge translation, which for us involves three key elements: relevance, accessibility, and use. These pillars define our strategic goals and guide our activities, ensuring that knowledge is not only produced, but also aligned with policy needs, made available in usable formats, and effectively integrated into decision-making processes.

## **Strategic goal 1: Enhance the relevance of knowledge for development**

Ensure that research aligns with real-world policy and practitioner needs by shaping research agendas, improving research quality, and translating findings into actionable solutions.

### ***Pillar 1: Making research-based knowledge relevant and actionable***

We work with policy stakeholders to ensure research addresses real-world challenges by aligning it with local priorities and translating it into practical, usable insights.

- **Designing research agendas:** We co-develop current and future research priorities with policy stakeholders to address the potential knowledge needs.
- **Strengthening research quality:** We support research excellence by building capacity in research, promoting transdisciplinary approaches, integrating local knowledge, and adapting research to diverse contexts.

- **Developing solution briefs:** We create actionable outputs, such as solution briefs, that translate research findings into practical recommendations, ensuring they are applicable and context-specific.

### **By 2030:**

- Inclusive research agenda-setting processes – engaging policymakers, civil society, and communities – will be institutionalized and routinely shape national research priorities in at least five countries.
- ACED will have supported over 10,000 researchers across West Africa to enhance research quality through training in research, transdisciplinary methods, and knowledge translation.
- ACED will have facilitated at least 50 strategic partnerships between research institutions and government bodies, resulting in policy-relevant research outputs such as solution briefs.

## **Strategic goal 2: Increase accessibility to knowledge**

Break down barriers to knowledge by simplifying research outputs, leveraging innovative dissemination strategies, and ensuring inclusivity across languages and formats.

### ***Pillar 2: Making knowledge accessible to policy stakeholders***

We break down barriers to knowledge by simplifying outputs and delivering them to the right people, in the right formats, at the right time.

- **Integrating tacit knowledge:** We identify, document and help integrate the lived experience, practical know-how, values, and contextual understanding of policy stakeholders into the current research-to-policy system.
- **Simplifying knowledge outputs:** We transform complex research into clear, actionable formats, such as briefs, infographics, videos, Q&A, podcasts, and other user-friendly materials, ensuring inclusivity across languages and audiences.
- **Expanding knowledge reach:** We leverage innovative dissemination channels, from digital platforms to targeted engagements, to deliver knowledge to the right audiences, at the right place, and at the right time.

### By 2030:

- ACED will have established a system that identifies and translates at least 50% of relevant research within its thematic and geographic focus into user-friendly knowledge products tailored to policy stakeholders across West Africa.
- ACED's knowledge products will reach at least 100,000 policy stakeholders across its priority countries through a robust, multi-channel dissemination system.

### **Strategic goal 3: Strengthen the use of knowledge in decision-making**

Support policymakers and practitioners in integrating knowledge into policies and practices through tailored knowledge services, capacity building, and system strengthening.

#### ***Pillar 3: Integrating knowledge into decision-making***

We actively create incentives, capacities, enabling systems, and processes to support the integration of knowledge into decisions and actions.

- **Providing on-demand knowledge services:** We analyze where policy actors are in the policy cycle and deliver timely, tailored knowledge to meet their specific needs and challenges.
- **Embedding knowledge in systems:** We collaborate with institutions to establish systems and routines, create incentives, build capacities, and develop processes that institutionalize knowledge use in decision-making.
- **Demonstrating impact:** We study and showcase how the application of knowledge leads to measurable improvements.

**By 2030:**

- ACED will have established a standing technical assistance mechanism to meet growing demand for knowledge – supporting at least 250 policy processes through rapid, high-quality knowledge synthesis and advisory services.
- At least 15 government institutions across ACED’s priority countries will have formally integrated knowledge-use mechanisms into their decision-making processes.



# Our theory of change

If we make knowledge relevant, accessible, and applicable by decision-makers, more effective and equitable development solutions will be implemented across Africa – improving the lives and opportunities for all citizens.

Our why	Our work		Our impact		
The problem	People we serve	Key programs	Outputs	Short-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Africa faces enormous <b>human development challenges</b> in various areas including jobs, gender, and well-being.</li> <li>• Policymakers and practitioners in Africa need <b>knowledge</b> to design and implement effective and equitable solutions.</li> <li>• Although knowledge is widely produced, its application to change policy and practice is <b>still low</b>.</li> <li>• This situation is persistent because the knowledge produced is often                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>not relevant</b> (misaligned with policy needs and not actionable),</li> <li>- <b>not accessible</b> (hidden behind paywalls, in technical jargon, or the wrong language), and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>not used</b> (with decision-makers lacking the necessary incentives, capacities, and systems to apply it).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Decision-makers:</b> Policymakers and development practitioners who rely on knowledge to design policies, programs, and interventions.</li> <li>• <b>Knowledge producers:</b> Researchers, think tanks, universities, data institutions, and local communities that generate insights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enhancing research relevance:</b> Shaping research agendas, supporting research excellence, and developing solution briefs.</li> <li>• <b>Making knowledge accessible:</b> Simplifying knowledge outputs and expanding knowledge reach.</li> <li>• <b>Supporting knowledge use:</b> Providing on-demand knowledge services, embedding knowledge in systems, and demonstrating impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research agendas tailored to the needs of the policymakers and practitioners.</li> <li>• User-friendly knowledge products disseminated through multiple channels for wider reach and accessibility.</li> <li>• Tailored knowledge briefs, policy notes, and advisory support delivered to policymakers and practitioners.</li> <li>• Institutional mechanisms that promote knowledge-informed decision-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased relevance of research:</b> More studies address policy and practitioner needs.</li> <li>• <b>Improved knowledge accessibility:</b> More decision-makers engage with user-friendly research outputs.</li> <li>• <b>Higher knowledge uptake:</b> More policymakers and practitioners use evidence in their work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More knowledge-informed policies and programs:</b> Increased integration of knowledge into development strategies.</li> <li>• <b>Improved decision-making processes:</b> Stronger institutional mechanisms for knowledge use.</li> <li>• <b>Sustainable impact in key thematic areas:</b> Better jobs, gender equality and well-being benefit from better-informed decisions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Current reality.</b></p> <p>Inefficient knowledge systems that hinder development outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Mission.</b></p> <p>Support African policymakers and practitioners in designing and implementing policies for better jobs, gender equality, and well-being by making development knowledge relevant, accessible, and applied.</p>		<p><b>Vision.</b></p> <p>A just and sustainable Africa driven by the power of knowledge.</p>		

# Thematic focus areas

At ACED, we focus on three interlinked priority areas that are essential to human development: better jobs, gender equality, and well-being. These areas are not only urgent development needs but also powerful levers for transformative change.

Our work primarily targets countries in francophone Africa, where addressing these priorities can generate meaningful and lasting impact.

## Better jobs

Under this priority, we work to create decent and sustainable employment opportunities by focusing on key sectors such as agriculture. We also address education systems and policies as critical enablers for employment. We aim to support evidence-informed decisions that expand access to jobs and strengthen economic inclusion, especially for youth and women.

### Example 1. Creating jobs in agriculture through evidence and partnerships

ACED developed and tested an evidence-based youth agripreneurship model that has been running autonomously since 2020, creating sustainable jobs in agriculture. Piloted through urban farming initiatives in Benin's major cities, and designed with local authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture, and research partners, the model showed how agriculture can offer real employment opportunities when guided by evidence and policy engagement. Building on this success, ACED partnered with the Mastercard Foundation to create 16,000 jobs for young people in rice value chains across Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Togo by 2030 – turning agricultural potential into livelihood opportunities.

## Gender equality

We aim to advance gender equality by ensuring that public policies and development systems are responsive to the specific needs and priorities of women and girls. We work to mainstream gender across policymaking processes while also supporting targeted efforts that promote women's economic empowerment and address structural inequalities. By translating knowledge into action, we help create more inclusive systems that foster equal opportunities for all.

### **Example 2. Our interventions in supporting women economic empowerment**

In Benin and Togo, ACED has supported the economic empowerment of informal women workers through a collaborative initiative focused on developing childcare policies and social protection mechanisms tailored to their needs. This work was carried out in close partnership with the ministries in charge of social affairs, researchers, and organizations representing women in the informal economy. From the outset, policy stakeholders were embedded into the process – not only as recipients of research outputs but as co-designers. They contributed to formulating the questions, shaping the research design, and participating in implementation. This inclusive approach enabled the integration of diverse forms of knowledge, from institutional perspectives to lived experiences of women working in the informal sector. ACED provided targeted technical assistance to support the translation of the knowledge generated into actionable policy inputs. As a result, they will inform reforms in social protection systems and childcare policies, ensuring they are more inclusive and responsive to the realities of informal women workers.

## Well-being

ACED promotes human well-being by supporting policies and practices that advance environmental sustainability, and food and nutrition security. We work on the nature economy to foster nature-positive solutions and urban biodiversity, recognizing the vital link between a healthy environment and public well-being. In parallel, we support sustainable agriculture and equitable food systems to improve food security and livelihoods. In both areas, we ensure that relevant knowledge is produced, accessed, and used to inform inclusive and sustainable policymaking.

### **Example 3. Our intervention in integrating nature in urban planning and management**

Since 2021, ACED has been leading a regional program on Nature in Cities, which aims to identify and restore green infrastructure, enhance urban green and forest spaces, promote biodiversity, achieve zero net soil artificialization, reduce urban heat islands, improve air quality, and increase access to nature for city dwellers – ultimately contributing to urban climate resilience.

To ensure these initiatives inform and inspire policy and practice, we collaborate closely with municipal authorities, the Ministry in charge of the Living Environment, researchers, and urban planners in Benin to generate actionable knowledge. This includes data on prevailing ecosystem services and disservices, canopy cover, tree gaps, and the state of urban biodiversity.


Additional studies and field experiments are underway to evaluate management models for urban green spaces, such as public goods or club goods, and to identify and characterize different approaches to integrating nature into cities. The resulting body of knowledge co-created in different formats with policy stakeholders helps support evidence-informed urban planning and environmental governance.

# Implementation approach

***We do all this with a multi-stakeholder approach.*** We always start with the socio-economic policy or practice challenge we want to tackle, demonstrating the need and urgency for action. Then, we identify and bring together all the relevant policy stakeholders and groups of interests affected by the challenge and likely to be affected by the policy solution. We harness existing knowledge from various sources to spark discussions and co-create new knowledge that drive actionable solutions to the socio-economic policy challenge.

***We think and do.*** We won't rely solely on a four-week survey among entrepreneurs to generate policy recommendations. Instead, we run real entrepreneurship programs to collect practical, real-life data. We are not just observers and researchers – we get involved in the experience and learn by doing. We design and implement concrete development programs to achieve two goals: create tangible improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable, and conduct implementation research to generate the knowledge needed to design and scale effective solutions.

***We focus primarily on knowledge translation rather than producing new research.*** Our goal is to bridge the gap between knowledge and action by synthesizing, contextualizing, and repackaging existing evidence so it becomes understandable, relevant, and useful for policymakers and practitioners. By doing so, we ensure that valuable research does not remain underutilized but instead informs real-world decisions and drives impactful change.



**We recognize that, to be effective, we must grasp the cultural, emotional, and institutional contexts in which policymakers and practitioners work.**

***We are close to policymakers and practitioners.*** We invest time and resources in cultivating relationships with policy stakeholders to understand their priorities and challenges, and identify how best we can support them. We recognize that, to be effective, we must grasp the cultural, emotional, and institutional contexts in which they work. By aligning with their objectives and opportunity windows, we aim to offer timely, relevant tools and resources that support informed and impactful action.

***We develop capacities:*** We strengthen the skills of knowledge producers, brokers, and end-users to enhance evidence-informed decision-making. We identify specific capacity challenges and develop different forms of tailored capacity development approaches and tools to solve them. This may include online courses, in-person, short trainings, experiential learning, mentoring, or more structured capacity development programs.

***We also promote co-learning and knowledge sharing within the policy ecosystem.*** We actively document our learning, and those of our partners, and host events to promote knowledge sharing among stakeholders in the ecosystems. Our Evidence Policy Action Forum, that we have been organizing since 2019, is a good example of such a platform, where stakeholders can exchange ideas, create connections, and build momentum about how to make knowledge more relevant, accessible, and applicable to solve African development challenges.

# Measuring our impact: How will we know we are successful?

We recognize that measuring the tangible impact of knowledge-related work on development outcomes is inherently complex. As such, our monitoring and evaluation system goes beyond tracking outputs like the number of knowledge brief requests or resource downloads. It places greater emphasis on capturing meaningful changes in processes, including shifts in attitudes, practices, and institutional behaviors.

We have also defined a number of questions and signals that indicate if we are on track to contribute positively to policy processes and outcomes. Below are some examples of questions we ask ourselves and our partners:

## Research agenda design and uptake

- How many requests for research agenda design have we received, and from which types of stakeholders or institutions?
- How many research agendas have been co-developed or facilitated?
- To what extent are knowledge producers aligning their research efforts with the priorities identified in these agendas?
- Are policy stakeholders allocating budgets or resources to support research activities aligned with these agendas?

## Demand and use of policy inputs

- Is there a growing demand among policy stakeholders for knowledge products such as knowledge briefs, solutions briefs, or evidence summaries?
- In what contexts and for what purposes have these policy inputs been used?
- Can we trace specific examples where these inputs informed policy formulation, implementation, or evaluation?

## Knowledge translation and innovation

- How receptive are policy stakeholders to our innovative knowledge translation strategies?
- Are researchers in the field adopting or piloting innovative translation methods beyond traditional dissemination?
- What support or conditions enable the uptake of innovative knowledge translation methods?

## Influence on policy and decision-making

- Is our knowledge work meaningfully shaping policies, strategies, or interventions?
- At which stages of the policy cycle (agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, evaluation) are our contributions having the most influence?
- Under what conditions (e.g., timing, stakeholder engagement, political climate) do these changes tend to occur



# The organization that will deliver

ACED is building a robust, future-ready organization capable of delivering on its mission to make knowledge relevant, accessible, and applied for Africa's sustainable development. Our approach is built on the following key drivers:

**Mobilizing diverse human resources:** High-quality human resources are essential to delivering effectively, optimally and timely. To align with our renewed ambition, ACED must strengthen and restructure its team. This involves building a diverse, high-performing and transdisciplinary group of experts – including researchers, policy analysts, data scientists, and science-policy communicators – capable of driving innovation, ensuring rigor, and supporting the successful implementation of our strategic priorities.

**Developing strategic partnerships:** Collaboration with relevant stakeholders is at the core of our work. Until now, our efforts have primarily focused on policy stakeholders, with less emphasis on supporting and enabling organizations. Moving forward, we will maintain our focus on key policy stakeholders, particularly those who play an active and decisive role in the policy cycle, including policymakers at both local and central levels of government, practitioners, and academic institutions.

In addition to policy stakeholders, we also recognize and value the important roles that supporting and enabling organizations such as development agencies, private sector actors, and think tanks play throughout the policy process. ACED is committed to proactively identifying and partnering with these actors for joint initiatives.

**Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence:** AI holds transformative potential to enhance how we generate and translate knowledge into policy and practice. To date, our use of AI has been limited and ad hoc. Moving forward, ACED is committed to integrating AI ethically and strategically across its programs and operations. We aim to use it to strengthen data collection and analysis, anticipate development trends, tailor policy recommendations, and facilitate more responsive and efficient decision-making – always ensuring it complements, rather than replaces, human expertise.

**Investing in organizational development:** To sustain and enhance our impact, we continuously improve our internal systems and processes. This includes strengthening governance, optimizing knowledge management, improving monitoring, evaluation and learning, and leveraging technology to enhance efficiency and transparency. By fostering a culture of learning and innovation, we ensure that ACED remains agile and adaptable in a rapidly evolving landscape.

**Reinforcing financial resilience and autonomy:** Operating effectively within the policy ecosystem demands responsiveness, adaptability, and independence – all of which hinge on financial resilience. In an increasingly constrained funding environment, ACED is committed to strengthening its financial autonomy by diversifying funding sources, cultivating strategic partnerships, and expanding revenue-generating activities. Through proactive and sustainable financial planning, we aim to reduce dependency on single funding streams, enhance our agility, and ensure the freedom to pursue our mission with integrity and long-term impact.



# Our guiding principles

**Agility.** We embrace agility in our work, ensuring that we have the resources and contextual awareness to adapt to the evolving needs of our stakeholders. Our approach remains flexible and responsive to real-world challenges.

**Sustainability.** ACED's interventions are designed for long-term impact, equipping stakeholders with the capacity and resources to sustain initiatives beyond our direct involvement. We prioritize solutions that endure and grow without continued external support.

**Impact.** Impact is at the core of everything we do. We continuously seek ways to maximize the long-term effects of our work and measure it, ensuring that our interventions lead to meaningful, lasting, and optimal policy solutions, as well as measurable impacts.

**Partnership.** Addressing complex development challenges requires strong collaboration. We actively foster inclusive partnerships, creating conditions and incentives for all stakeholders to contribute effectively to policy processes.

# About ACED

The African Center for Equitable Development (ACED) is a nonprofit think-and-do tank working across Francophone Africa to ensure that knowledge translates into action for inclusive and sustainable development. While knowledge is widely produced, it often fails to contribute to effective decision-making because it is not relevant to policy needs, is inaccessible, or decision-makers lack the systems to apply it. This gap leads to sub-optimal policies, misallocated resources, and slowed progress towards a more just and sustainable future. ACED strengthens the relevance, accessibility, and use of knowledge to improve public policies and practices, with a focus on better jobs, gender equality, and well-being.

Our interventions are structured around three core pillars:

- **Strengthening knowledge relevance** by co-creating research agendas and solution briefs aligned with real-world policy needs, and generating actionable insights through implementation-based research.
- **Enhancing knowledge accessibility** by simplifying complex research findings and disseminating them in clear, inclusive, and audience-tailored formats.
- **Promoting knowledge use** by embedding evidence into policymaking processes through tailored advice, institutional support, and systemic reform efforts.

Through strategic partnerships and deep engagement with policy ecosystems, ACED helps turn evidence into practical solutions that improve lives across the region.

To learn more about us and our work, visit [www.acedafrica.org](http://www.acedafrica.org) or email us at [contact@acedafrica.org](mailto:contact@acedafrica.org).



 **ACED**



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