



IPORA

is an international transdisciplinary research network, created to study the major challenges facing the African continent and to find concrete solutions



Interdisciplinary
Policy-Oriented
Research on Africa



Newsletter #1

January 2026

CONTENTS

Editorial

News from the field

Events

Courses

Publications

PHD News

EDITORIAL

At the start of this new year, we wish all members and partners of the IPORA network a year of fruitful collaboration, shared achievements and renewed scientific dialogue.

We are pleased to share this first IPORA newsletter, launched alongside the redesign of our website and intended to become a monthly communication tool starting in January. Its purpose is to give greater regularity to our internal exchanges and to reinforce the links between the teams and partners who bring the network to life.

The past months have marked an important milestone for IPORA. After four years of intensive, structuring and deeply collective work, our network was reviewed by an international commission mandated to assess our achievements. The renewal of our funding for 2026–2029 is a clear signal: the platform we are building responds to genuine scientific, institutional and societal needs.

Since 2022, IPORA has demonstrated its ability to bring people together, foster innovation and open new interdisciplinary pathways to address issues related to health, equity and social transformations in Africa. The involvement of 55 partner teams, the launch of pilot

projects, the network's capacity to attract substantial external funding, and the strengthened links with decision-makers all illustrate the relevance of our approach.

Phase 2 now calls us to an even greater ambition: to become an open, sustainable and autonomous platform, capable of welcoming new partners, developing robust economic models and supporting interdisciplinarity over the long term. Together, let us continue to make IPORA a space where new ways of collaborating, generating meaningful knowledge and building balanced partnerships can flourish.

The IPORA Editorial Team



NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Last Mile Extension and Market Access: Impact Evaluation of OCP School Lab and Village Input Fairs in Côte d'Ivoire ***Northern Cote d'Ivoire - December 1st, 2025***

The UJALA funded project associating BSE, CAPEC and Northwestern University launched its baseline survey in the department of Poro, Côte d'Ivoire. The survey will cover 2400 households in 120 villages. It will serve as the baseline for a cluster randomized control trial related to information on soil quality and input market access, which will be implemented in spring and followed by an endline next year. The survey further incorporates questionnaire modules related to mental well-being and climate change-related anxiety, contributing novel data for Hugo Malo's starting PhD thesis.



EVENTS

Past Events

Seminar

Keynote on a side event at the African Food System Forum Senegal - Aug31-Sep05

This was an annual African Food System Forum, the largest gathering in the continent with about 5k participants

Breaking silos
Implementing the CAADP Kampala Strategy
1 Sept 2025 | 17.30 – 19.30 | Press conference room

Africa Food Systems Forum 2025
Africa's Youth-Led Collaboration, Innovation and Resilience for Agricultural Systems Transformation

 Moderator Francine Picard-Mukazi Shamba Centre for Food Systems	 Kaleab Baye Center for Food Science & Nutrition	 Hon Sahr Hemore Dep Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Sierra Leone	 Namukolo Covic ILRI DG Representative CGIAR Ethiopia Country Convenor
 Agnes Kisaka Meena PS Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania	 Michelle Kagari Global Director Gov't Relations & Policy One Acre Fund	 Hon Jeremy Lissouba MP Congo-Brazzaville Sec-Gen African Food Systems Parliamentary Network	

Partnership

A recent memorandum of understanding to strengthen academic and research collaboration between the University of Bordeaux France and the University of Zambia University of Zambia - September 12, 2025

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been established between the University of Bordeaux (UBx), Bordeaux, France, and the

University of Zambia (UNZA), Lusaka, Zambia. Based on nearly 10 years of collaborative research projects, this MOU ratified on 12 September 2025 further aims to strengthen the academic and research collaboration between the two institutions. Following the conference on Strengthening Africa-Europe academic partnership (SAEAP) for improving intersectoral governance organised in Bordeaux early 2025, attended by C. Chabala and P. Hangoma, UNZA expressed strong interest in strengthening and expanding research partnerships with UBx. UNZA received IPORA support for a PhD seed project and a post-doctoral contract. Through this opportunity, UNZA will be involved actively in the IPORA research axis on Global Health inequities and Poverty Related Diseases. Further research on Food System and malnutrition is expected to emerge within this project.

Seminar **Workshop on Climate Negotiations** **UIR, Maroc - October 27 to 29, 2025**

The workshop “Climate Negotiations: A Skill-Building Program for African CSOs”, organized by IPORA in collaboration with the African Union ECOSOCC and hosted on the campus of the International University of Rabat, brought together young professionals, experts, and civil society representatives from across Africa. Over several days, participants explored the core dynamics of international climate negotiations, including COP processes, diplomatic strategies, and climate justice challenges, through high-level discussions and practical simulations. The workshop strengthened key capacities, fostered connections among African stakeholders, and reaffirmed a shared conviction: Africa is not merely observing the climate transition, but is fully prepared to play a leading and influential role on the global stage.





Conference **Kick-off: Innov'Agri (SPIA Morocco)** **UIR, Rabat - November 27, 2025**

Kick-off of the Innov'Agri project (full day) at the UIR, in the presence of representatives from ministries, research centers, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society.



Seminar **Rewarding the social benefits of small-scale farming** **UM6P, Rabat - November 28, 2025**

Research seminar open to researchers and masters/PhD students by Tanguy Bernard entitled "Rewarding the societal benefits of smallholder farmers"



Seminar

Study day: "Judges and Fundamental Labour Rights in West Africa" **Université de Bordeaux - December 4, 2025**

The conference "Fundamental Rights in West Africa" examined the role and place of judges in the protection of fundamental labour rights. Through the analysis of landmark court decisions, the discussions highlighted the legal and institutional dynamics shaping the protection of these rights in the West African region.

Seminar

2nd Stakeholder meeting of the Add-in Ethiopia project **Addis Ababa University - December 12, 2025**

The workshop brought together representatives of ministries, research, private sector, international agencies and civil society that took part in the Kick-off workshop 8 months ago. Several lines of research and results were presented for feedback and interactions, along with workplan for the coming 6 months which will be then presented in a follow-up workshop.

Coming Events

IPORA General Assembly 2026 **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

March 30 - April 3, 2026



COURSES

Past Courses

Course

Sahel Summer School **Morocco UIR - June 30 - July 11, 2025**

The Sahel Summer School was a unique opportunity for learning, discovery, and building meaningful human connections. Bringing together participants from diverse backgrounds, the program fostered an interdisciplinary approach, encouraging collaboration across different fields and perspectives. It was a space where knowledge, creativity, and dialogue came together to inspire both personal growth and collective innovation.



PUBLICATIONS

Does mobile network coverage increase the performance of informal firms? Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa

Damien Girollet

November 2025

This paper examines how mobile network coverage influences the performance of informal firms in Africa. Instrumenting network coverage with historical lightning strike exposure, we find that mobile connectivity significantly increases firms' sales and profits. The effect is strongest among firms that actively use mobile technologies, underscoring the importance of purposeful adoption. Despite rapid expansion of mobile infrastructure and mobile phone ownership, substantial inequalities in digital usage persist, pointing to the need for policies that enhance affordable and skill-inclusive access for informal businesses.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoecopol.2025.101150>

Buyers' response to third-party quality certification: Theory and evidence from Ethiopian wheat traders

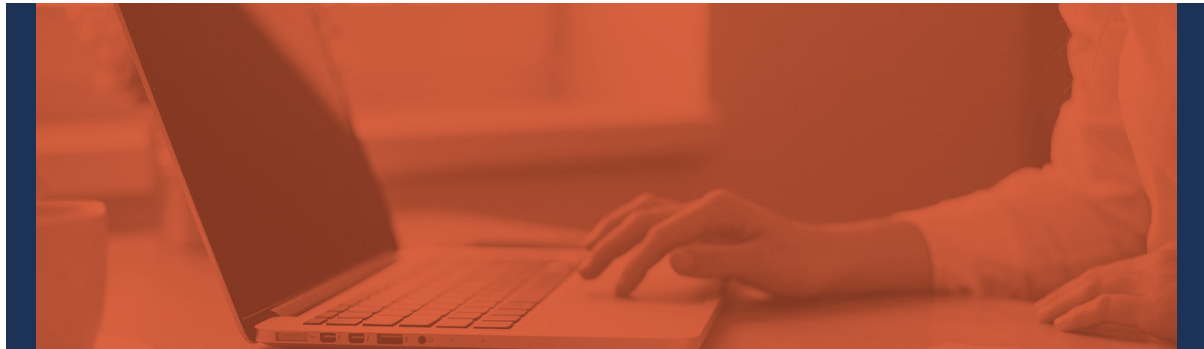
Gashaw T. Abate (IFPRI), Tanguy Bernard (UB), Erwin Bulte (U.Wageningen), J  r  my Do Nascimento Miguel (UB), Elisabeth Sadoulet (U. Berkeley)

November 2025

When quality attributes of a product are not directly observable, third-party certification (TPC) enables buyers to distinguish between quality levels and reward sellers accordingly. We study the adoption of TPC by traders in smallholder-based agricultural value chains in low-income countries, where traders aggregate products from many small-scale producers before selling in bulk to downstream processors. In this context, the introduction of TPC services has oftentimes failed. We develop a theoretical model identifying how different market conditions affect traders' choice to purchase certified output from farmers. Next, using a novel lab-in-the-field experiment with Ethiopian wheat traders, we examine the model's predictions. Traders' willingness to specialize in certified output increases with the share of certified wheat in the market, and this effect is stronger in larger markets. However, we find that traders do not optimally respond to variation in the quality of uncertified wheat in the market. We also

analyze conditions where traders deviate from optimal behavior and discuss implications for research and policy making to promote TPC in smallholder-based value-chains.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajae.70015>



PHD NEWS

Defense **Mathilde Col**

Doctoral student at Université de Bordeaux / Bordeaux School of Economics

Local and European Languages in African Education Systems Since Independence

Supervisors: Tanguy Bernard (BSE) and Denis Cogneau (PSE)



This dissertation explores different barriers to effective learning in primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), with a focus on the language of instruction officially used in educational curricula. It aims to provide new findings on how to improve teaching quality in the region. This thesis is organized into three chapters. The first chapter details the determinants and aggregate effects of bilingual education policies at the continental level by exploiting new data on the topic. The second chapter focuses on Mali and provides insights into the impact of introducing local languages in education, using a difference-in-differences method. Finally, the last chapter explores another promising education intervention, digital technology for

teachers, in the context of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) in the remote Kedougou region of Senegal.

Defense **Auriane PAJOT**

Doctoral student at Université de Bordeaux / Bordeaux School of Economics / GHIGS

An interdisciplinary approach to respiratory health in African children exposed to urban indoor and outdoor air pollution

Supervisors: Dr Olivier MARCY (UB, IRD, GHIGS) & Prof. Véronique YOBOUE (Félix Houphouët-Boigny University)

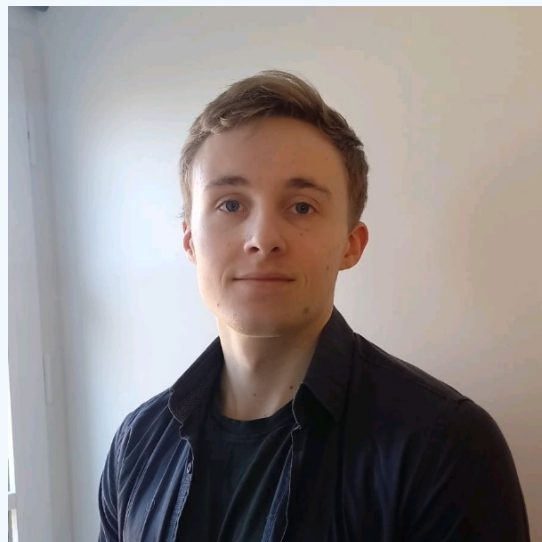


Start **Hugo Malo**

Doctoral student at Université de Bordeaux / Bordeaux School of Economics / GHIGS

Mental health and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa : an interdisciplinary approach

Supervisors: Charlotte Bernard (UB, GHIGS) and Tanguy Bernard (BSE)



PhD grant obtained from the Africa GP interdisciplinary PhD grant



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and how to share your information, please write to:
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