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News release

Afrobarometer trains emerging political science researchers at Wits University in data analysis and use

New postgraduate students gained hands-on exposure to real-world evidence-based policy analysis in an Afrobarometer capacity-building workshop last week at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

The free two-day workshop, designed as a component of the university's political science research methods course, presented Afrobarometer's data sets and analytical tools to newly registered postgraduate students in the Department of Political Science, who are in the initial stages of writing their research proposals.

By engaging with Afrobarometer data at the start of their academic journey, students gained foundational exposure to quantitative research and avenues for exploring mixed-methods approaches, and will be better prepared to construct empirical studies that address the multifaceted questions affecting governance and policy across Africa.

According to Kamal Yakubu, Afrobarometer capacity building consultant, the hands-on experience provided by the workshop enables students to make substantive contributions to scholarly debates and policy formulation, with Afrobarometer's resources supporting their academic and professional development.

"This collaboration with Wits University offers a unique platform to integrate Afrobarometer data into the research training of postgraduate students," he said. "It strengthens their capacity to apply empirical methods to African governance and development questions, and reinforces the role of evidence-based analysis in shaping scholarly and policy debates."

Julian Brown, head of the Department of Political Science, said that while the department's teaching focuses on qualitative research and theory, the workshop has effectively equipped students to integrate data in their academic research.

"We were very excited by this workshop because we don't want the Afrobarometer data to be just something that our students see on the Internet and maybe dabble in here and there," Brown said. "Instead, we wanted them to have a proper introduction to it so that they are able to begin to understand some of the most exciting work that is being done in South Africa, and in fact in sub-Saharan Africa, that uses statistics, large-scale surveys, and quantitative analysis to begin to understand patterns within contemporary African sociology and politics."

Honours student Karabo Sibiyi was delighted about the prospect of incorporating Afrobarometer data into her research project and other coursework.

"The workshop has taught me that, as a humanities student, I do not have to fear incorporating data into my qualitative research, as it often helps to strengthen my argument and emphasise my points even further," she said.

"I'm glad Afrobarometer provides a tool in the form of the online data analysis instrument that makes it easier to generate current and relevant data while also providing historical data to see if there are emerging trends in social behaviour or in citizens' priorities. This tool will definitely be beneficial in the writing of my thesis and also in my other modules throughout this year."

About Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer (AB) is a trusted source of high-quality data and analysis on what Africans are thinking. With an unmatched track record of 400,000+ interviews in 42 countries, representing the views of more than 75% of the African population, AB is leading the charge to bridge the continent's data gap. AB data inform many global indices, such as the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer, and the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators. The data are also used for country risk analyses and by credit rating and forecasting agencies such as the Economist Intelligence Unit. All AB data sets are publicly available on the [website](#) and may be analysed free of charge using AB's [online data analysis tool](#).

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