

# Decoupling Scientific Research from Development Aid: Insights from the Africa Charter.

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## **What is the problem?**

The global development agenda dictates academic research in, on and about Africa:

- Africa as a 'site of deficiency'
- White saviourism

## **Why is it a problem?**

- Because Africa is studied for what it is not than for what it is.
- The GN is presented as a source of solution for the 'African problems'
- Normalising hierarchies among knowledges, knowers and institutions

## **How is the problem manifested?**

- **Unidirectional gaze:** "rare return, even rarer reversal of the gaze"
- **Agenda setting:** limits the areas of academic partnership to the development frame, foreclosing the opportunities of other subjects, approaches

## **Examples of the manifestations**

B/n 2017 and 2018, the percentage of scientific publications in cross-cutting, strategic technology and engineering-related areas:

- EU28 – 44.3% , North Africa – 50 %
- Southern Africa – 19.8 %, Central & Eastern Africa – 17.9%, Western Africa – 13.6%
- Less than 10% in Congo, DRC, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Seychelles, The Gambia and Uganda

## **So what? Decoupling!**

Decoupling Africa-focused international research partnerships from development aid means funding scientific projects for their scholarly relevance rather than for the fulfilment of the often imposed development agenda.

## **Decoupling Why?**

- To prioritise and genuinely contribute to Africa's scientific research across all relevant fields
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## **Decoupling How?**

- Intentionally encourage a return or, at best, a reversal of the gaze
- 'de-centre' the deficit model
- Foreground Africa-centred epistemic orientations