



# Navigating the Endogenous Knowledge Production Landscape

*A Policy Analysis of African Studies in Sierra Leone,*

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## ABSTRACT

The production of endogenous knowledge within African Studies is a critical yet under-examined pillar of sustainable development. In Sierra Leone, the field's institutional and policy landscape remains fragmented, constraining its potential to inform locally relevant solutions. This policy analysis aims to critically assess the institutional frameworks, funding mechanisms, and epistemic challenges shaping African Studies research conducted within the country. It seeks to identify systemic barriers and opportunities for strengthening a locally anchored knowledge ecosystem. The analysis employs a qualitative document review of national policy texts, institutional strategies, and funding criteria, triangulated with insights from key informant interviews with policymakers, university deans, and senior researchers. A dominant theme is the misalignment between national research priorities and the conditionalities of external funding, which perpetuates epistemic dependency. Specifically, over two-thirds of reviewed policy documents lacked a coherent mechanism for integrating community-based knowledge systems into formal research agendas. The development of a robust, endogenous African Studies discipline in Sierra Leone is currently hindered by a policy environment that inadequately prioritises and resources locally led epistemological frameworks. Policymakers should establish a national research fund with explicit criteria privileging locally formulated questions. Universities must create promotion pathways that value community-engaged scholarship. A national dialogue is required to develop a coherent policy framework for the humanities and social sciences. endogenous knowledge, research policy,

epistemic justice, higher education, Sierra Leone, African Studies This article provides a novel analysis of the specific policy mechanisms that disconnect national research governance from the praxis of endogenous knowledge production, offering a new framework for decolonising research systems.

**Keywords:** *Endogenous knowledge production, African Studies, Sierra Leone, Research policy, Decolonisation of knowledge, Higher education governance*

**Article Highlights**

- Policy analysis reveals fragmented institutional frameworks for African Studies in Sierra Leone.
- Over two-thirds of policy documents lack mechanisms to integrate community-based knowledge.
- Misalignment between national priorities and external funding perpetuates epistemic dependency.
- Calls for a national research fund with criteria privileging locally formulated questions.

**Core Policy Recommendation**

Establish a national research fund with explicit criteria that privilege locally formulated research questions and community-engaged scholarship.

*This analysis offers a new framework for decolonising research systems through policy realignment.*

## ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

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