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Graduate study

I am a fourth-year student in the MPhil–DPhil in Economics at the University of Oxford, based at Nuffield College. I enrolled in 2023, have completed two years of coursework, and expect to finish in 2028. My supervisors are Dennis Egger and Stefano Caria. I previously completed a master's degree in Development Economics at MIT. My provisional dissertation title is *Learning from Experiments at Scale: Information Frictions, Technology Diffusion and Economic Adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa*. I use field experiments and structural models to study how households, firms and jobseekers respond to new information and economic opportunities.

In Chiradzulu, Malawi, I led the implementation of a field evaluation of GiveDirectly's cash transfer rollout, alongside separately randomised interventions for local firms. I study how uncertainty about future demand and limited access to capital shape firms' responses to a local demand shock. By varying whether firms receive demand forecasts and capital grants, we can test which frictions (information, credit or demand) constrain investment and whether relaxing them together changes firms' decisions. In related work, I co-authored an AEA Papers and Proceedings article on heterogeneity in the effects of cash transfers and am following up by studying whether recipients' cognitive skills help explain differences in their responses. I also co-authored a systematic review and meta-analysis on the relationship between mental ill-health and labour market outcomes. AEA trial registration and pre-analysis plans · AEA P&P article · NBER working paper.

Research interests and work in progress

My current research asks how generative AI changes job search, hiring and labour demand in low- and middle-income countries. I am particularly interested in what happens when AI makes it easier to apply for jobs in settings where formal vacancies are scarce and employers have limited information about applicants' skills. With Stefano Caria and colleagues at Oxford's Centre for the Study of African Economies, I am setting up the Oxford Initiative on AI, Work and Development that uses field experiments to study AI adoption in job search and hiring, firms' employee demand after adopting AI, and what helps displaced workers move into new jobs.

In South Africa, Daksh Walia and I are working with Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator to design a field experiment on its SA Youth job-search platform. We ask whether AI-assisted job search improves matching and how it affects other applicants competing for the same jobs. An assistant could help jobseekers find vacancies that better suit their skills. It could also crowd applications into particular vacancies or make written applications less informative about applicants' skills, a possibility raised by Cowgill et al. (2026).

We will randomise access to an AI assistant among 10,000 jobseekers to learn how it changes where they choose to apply. We will also randomise vacancy recommendations to shift the number of applicants that vacancies attract and how many of those applicants have access to the assistant. Together, these sources of variation let us study how changes in application behaviour affect other jobseekers' chances of getting an interview or offer. In a linked recruiter experiment, we plan to test whether independent skills verification helps employers identify qualified applicants as AI-assisted writing becomes more common.

Motivation for attending

The SA Youth experiment is still at the design stage, and I would use the tutorial to work through two questions that will shape what we can learn from it. First, how can we generate meaningful variation in AI use when jobseekers assigned access may use the assistant selectively and those in the control group may already use other tools? I would value feedback on how to measure which parts of job search people use AI for and how to interpret treatment effects when use differs across tasks. Second, which findings are likely to travel across settings or remain informative as models improve? If more capable tools change how employers screen applicants and how jobseekers choose where to apply, the behaviour we estimate today may itself change. I

want to design the experiment so it can identify mechanisms that help us understand how those effects might evolve.

I would bring experience running large-scale field experiments with policy partners and a perspective from labour markets where formal vacancies are scarce and employers often have limited ways to verify applicants' skills. In these settings, AI can make it cheaper to apply without expanding the pool of jobs, and it can change the value of the few signals employers already use. That makes it especially important to study who gets screened in, who faces more competition, and whether employers end up making better matches.