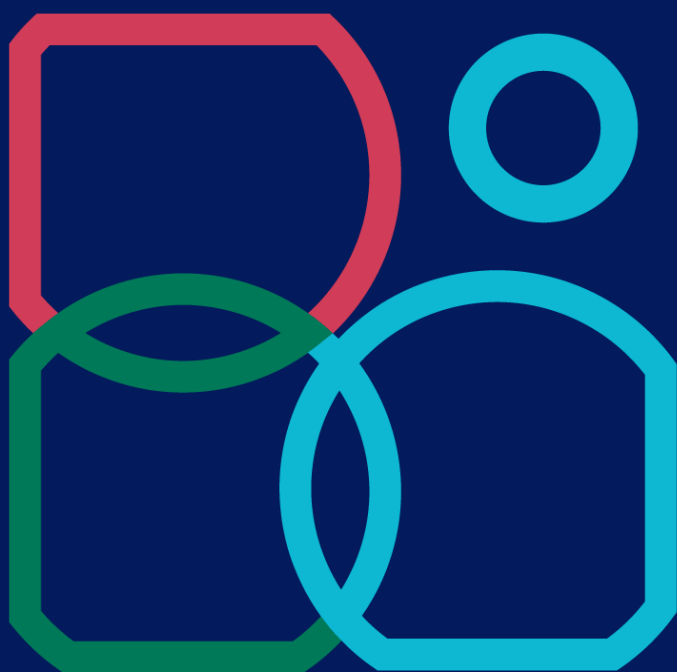


**Leiden-Delft-Erasmus  
East Africa Research  
Network**



# **LEARN PhD Academy**

**Call for Applications**

# LEARN PhD Academy

## Call for Applications

Are you a PhD candidate enrolled in an East African university? Are you researching pressing urban challenges in East African cities? Are you looking to sharpen your ideas, get feedback, and connect with other doctoral students and scholars across East Africa?

The Leiden-Delft-Erasmus East Africa Research Network (LEARN) invites you to apply for a 5-day PhD Academy designed for doctoral candidates who are advancing their research and writing. The academy provides an opportunity to share your work and collaborate with peers and experienced scholars to make progress on your research.

## Who Should Apply

PhD candidates who:

- Are enrolled in a PhD programme at a university in East Africa.
- Have completed their coursework and qualifying requirements or are at an advanced stage of their doctoral studies.
- Are researching urban challenges in East African cities.
- Have a draft chapter, approved proposal, or article outline/draft.

Applications are welcome from all relevant disciplines, including urban studies, urban and regional planning, geography, development studies, environmental studies, public health, sociology, and related fields.

## Research Themes

We welcome applications from PhD candidates whose research falls under one or more of the following broad themes:

### Urban Resilience

- Informality and urban resilience
- Financing urban resilience in East African cities
- Housing resilience

### Digitalisation

- Cities, technology, and sustainability
- AI and data governance
- Digital tools for informal settlements and informal economies
- E-governance and digital public infrastructure for basic services
- Digital inclusion/digital divide

- Digital and data tools for climate-resilient settlements

### Cities and Climate Change

- Climate risk and infrastructure adaptation
- Urban climate justice, equity, and governance
- Nature-based solutions (NbS) for urban sustainability
- Climate mobility

Note: The subtopics listed above are indicative. Applicants whose research aligns with the broader themes are encouraged to apply.

### Why Join

- Strengthen your research design, methods, and analysis.
- Tailored mentorship: Get substantive feedback on your dissertation chapter, article draft, and practical guidance for moving your research to the next stage.
- Skills development: Enhance your academic writing and science communication knowledge.
- Peer Learning: Learn alongside other PhD candidates working on urban challenges across East Africa.
- Network: Connect with mentors and peers who understand urban research in African contexts.
- Financial support to cover travel and accommodation costs to facilitate attendance.

### What to Expect

The programme will include:

- I. Plenary sessions on key doctoral topics including research design, theory, methods, academic writing and knowledge dissemination/science communication.
- II. Research clinics where you work on your own research with guidance from facilitators.
- III. Writing sessions to help you advance your article, dissertation chapter(s) and research plans.
- IV. Peer learning through group discussions, presentations, and feedback sessions.

### Application Requirements

Applications are submitted through the [LEARN PhD Academy application form](#):

The form asks for:

1. Your motivation statement and a summary of your doctoral research, including methodology, completed directly in the form.
2. A Curriculum Vitae (CV), attached to the form.
3. A draft chapter, article outline/draft, or approved proposal, attached to the form.
4. Proof of registration as doctoral candidate, attached to the form

**Note:** Upon acceptance, a letter of support from a supervisor or department will be required.

## Dates, Venue and Mode of Delivery

Date: 23-27 November 2026

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mode of delivery: In-person

Language: English

### Costs:

There is no participation fee. LEARN will cover travel and full-board accommodation for selected participants.

### Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed on:

- Fit with one or more of the call's themes, and the relevance of the research to urban challenges in East African cities.
- Stage of doctoral study, i.e. whether the candidate is positioned to make concrete progress on a chapter, article or research plan during the week.
- Quality and clarity of the research design and methodology.
- Quality of the writing sample submitted.
- What the candidate stands to gain from the academy, and their willingness to give constructive feedback to peers.
- Overall balance of the cohort across countries, institutions, disciplines and gender.

Interested PhD candidates should submit their application by **09 October 2026, 5:00pm EAT** through the application form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfMQtkH2iVEi4W99z8tI\\_kX9OeFM0znHH6JAth77Hii3HrxUA/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=116797676549687463314](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfMQtkH2iVEi4W99z8tI_kX9OeFM0znHH6JAth77Hii3HrxUA/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=116797676549687463314)

Applications sent by email will not be considered.

Shortlisted applicants may be contacted for clarification. All applicants will be notified of the outcome by **23 October 2026**.

For further information or enquiries, including questions about eligibility, the themes, or the application form, write to [learn@nuvoniresearch.org](mailto:learn@nuvoniresearch.org). We are happy to answer questions at any point before the deadline.