



17 December 2021

AC21 General Secretariat  
Nagoya University

AC21 grant: Final report and financial report

In 2020, we were generously awarded a AC21 grant for the project – ‘Governments and economic development in history: data and approaches to studying colonialism, independence, and development’. We applied for R130 250 to host a workshop in Stellenbosch with AC21 members from Chulalongkorn University, the University of Adelaide, Strasbourg University and the University of Minnesota traveling to South Africa.

The Covid-19 pandemic has frustrated our efforts to utilize the grant efficiently. On 30 June 2020, we submitted a letter to the AC21 General Secretariat for an amendment of our activities and budget of the grant. Sadly, we never received any confirmation.

All four partner universities agreed to this adjusted budget. The plan is for members of these universities will serve as an Advisory Committee for what will be the LEAP Historical Data Repository.

We proposed that allocated funds be spent as follows:

Virtual workshop (includes infrastructure support)	R10 000
Website creation (Nudge Design)	R50 000
Website administration (Kara Dimitruk, postdoc)	R30 000
Student assistants (data cleaning and curation)	R40 250

On 5 October 2020 we held a virtual workshop on Zoom. The workshop, on Big Data in Colonial History, was attended by participants of all five universities. It was reported in the LEAP Newsletter (also attached).

Without approval, we were cautious to proceed with a rearranged budget. Given the momentum of the project, however, and the need of supporting students during the difficult Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa, we spent the remaining funds on supporting Kara Dimitruk’s postdoc and on supporting student assistantships to help with data





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digitisation and transcription in the Cape Archives. We now have several complete datasets that we would like to release in the LEAP Historical Data Repository (launch June 2022). We have not yet spent the funds on designing the website, but will do so early in 2022.

The disruption of Covid-19 has created a difficult environment in which to manage the AC21 grant. A lack of communication between Stellenbosch and the General Secretariat has also been difficult. We do believe, however, that the funds have been used in an appropriate way; it has encouraged collaboration between universities. One of the participants at the AC21 workshop, for example, Jessica Vachbonyangratana from Chulalongkorn University has become editor of a journal formerly edited by me. It was through this collaboration that I became aware of the excellent work Jessica is doing. I have also have several follow-up conversations with Claude Diebolt of the University of Strasbourg about future publication opportunities. I also believe that the LEAP Historical Data Repository will be an 'output' that the AC21 Consortium can be proud of.

Yours sincerely,

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