



# Preprints and Open Scholarship: Accelerating African Knowledge Dissemination

Open Access Week 21 Oct 2025

**Presented By: Nancy Nyambura**  
*AfricArXiv & Access 2 Perspectives*

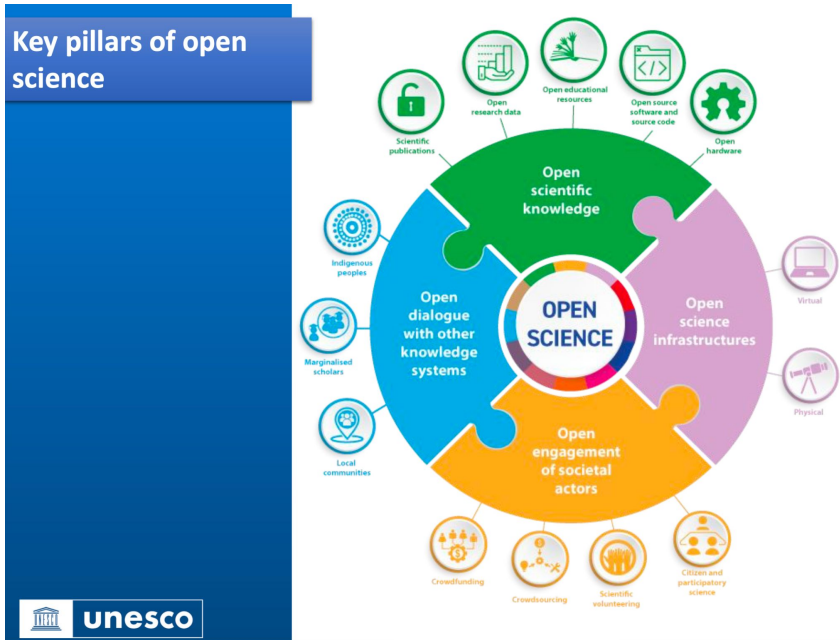


Access 2  
Perspectives

1. Introduction: Open Scholarship
2. AfricArXiv
3. Preprints
4. Advantages of Preprints for African Research
5. Addressing Concerns About Credibility
6. Practical Recommendations and Call to Action

What is open scholarship and preprints?

- ❖ A preprint is an early version of a manuscript posted publicly before formal peer review. Open scholarship expands this idea to include data, code, methodologies, and peer-reviewed versions, opening the entire research pipeline to scrutiny, reuse, and collaboration.
- ❖ Across Africa, we see increasing awareness about open science — inspired by the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (2021).



Preprints fall under the Open Science pillar of Open Scientific Knowledge, since they allow researchers to openly share findings before journal publishing.

DOI [10.5281/zenodo.5499714](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5499714)  
<https://www.unesco.org/en/open-science/>

# Overview of AfricArXiv



[Repositories & Collections](#) [All of AfricArxiv](#) [Statistics](#)

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## Welcome to AfricArXiv

This initiative showcases UbuntuNet's commitment to fostering knowledge sharing, collaboration, and accessibility within the African research community. With AfricArxiv, researchers across the continent have a dedicated platform to disseminate their findings, making them accessible to a global audience. By facilitating open access to scholarly work, UbuntuNet Alliance plays a pivotal role in advancing the principles of open science, enhancing research visibility, and driving innovation across Africa.

[Q](#) Search

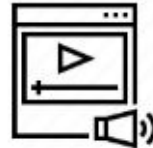
### Communities in AfricArxiv

Select a community to browse its collections.

# Overview of AfricArXiv



A digital archive for scholarly results accepting manuscripts, reports, datasets, code, illustrations, presentations



## Building solutions for challenges



*Higher*

digital visibility of African scholarly output



*Increasing*

African representation in intl. research networks



*Gaining*

access to research funding



*Bridging*

Language barriers  
(Multilingualism)

# Decolonising Scientific Writing for Africa



*by ST Communications*

I-X-ray ebona izinto ezincane kakhulu ingasetshenziswa ukwenza imephu yezitho zezinambuzane ezincane

Zulu translation of DOI: 10.31730/osf.io/2urxf

*by ST Communications*

Mokgwa wa X-rei ya maekherosekhoupu o ka šomišwa go bona ditho tše nyanenyane tša dikhunkhwane

Northern Sotho translation of DOI: 10.31730/osf.io/2urxf

*by ST Communications*

Za a iya amfani da dabarar X-ray maras gani don taswirar kanaan gabobin kwari

Hausa translation of DOI: 10.31730/osf.io/2urxf

*by ST Communications*

A lè lo ilàṅà X-ray tí a ò lè fojú lásán rí láti fi máàpù àwọ̀n ẹ̀ya ara kòkòrò kékeré

Yoruba translation of DOI: 10.31730/osf.io/2urxf

*by ST Communications*

Akakodyo k'okutangaaza ne X-ray kasobola okukozesebwa okulaga ebitundu by'ekiwuka ebitinniinya.

Luganda translation of DOI: 10.31730/osf.io/2urxf

*by ST Communications*

ጥቃቅን የነፍሳት አካላትን ለይቶ ለማውጣት ማደከሮስኮፓዊ ኤክስ ራይ ቴክኒክን መጠቀም ይቻላል።

Amharic translation of DOI: 10.31730/osf.io/2urxf

[africarxiv.org](https://africarxiv.org) >> [decolonising-scientific-writing-for-africa](https://africarxiv.org/decolonising-scientific-writing-for-africa)

# What are Preprints



**Preprints** are versions of research papers shared publicly before undergoing formal peer review. The preprint contains data and methods, but has not yet been accepted by a journal

## Preprint

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Article [Talk](#)

---

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*For broader coverage of this topic, see [Manuscript \(publishing\)](#).*

In [academic publishing](#), a **preprint** is a version of a [scholarly](#) or [scientific paper](#) that precedes formal [peer review](#) and publication in a peer-reviewed scholarly or [scientific journal](#). The preprint may be available, often as a non-typeset version available for [free](#), before or after a paper is published in a journal.

# What are Preprints



## A Quick History of Preprints

**1960s:** Scientists mailed early papers to each other — the first “preprints.”

**1991:** arXiv.org launched, letting physicists share research online.

**2010s:** Preprint platforms grew — bioRxiv, medRxiv, SocArXiv, and more.

**2018:** AfricArxiv joined the global movement for African research.

# What are Preprints



**Johanna Havemann, Dr.** • 1st

Trainer & Consultant fostering Global Research Equity through Open Scienc...

2mo • 🌐



**#ScholarlyPublishing** taxonomy:

Personally and professionally, I do not differentiate between manuscripts, preprints, and peer-reviewed articles; a research article is a research article.

In my view, researchers are very much capable of writing articles about their work to share with their peers and the public. That in itself I regard as publishing, especially if the work is shared via an institutional repository.

Anything that follows (peer review, editing, formatting) is nothing more and nothing less than proofreading, gatekeeping (to ensure the scope of a journal is met), and opinionating (a core component of the scholarly debate).

What do you think?

Are there any formal definitions somewhere to be found?



**Nancy Nyambura** • You

Fractional Chief of Staff for mission-driven founders and changemakers | ...

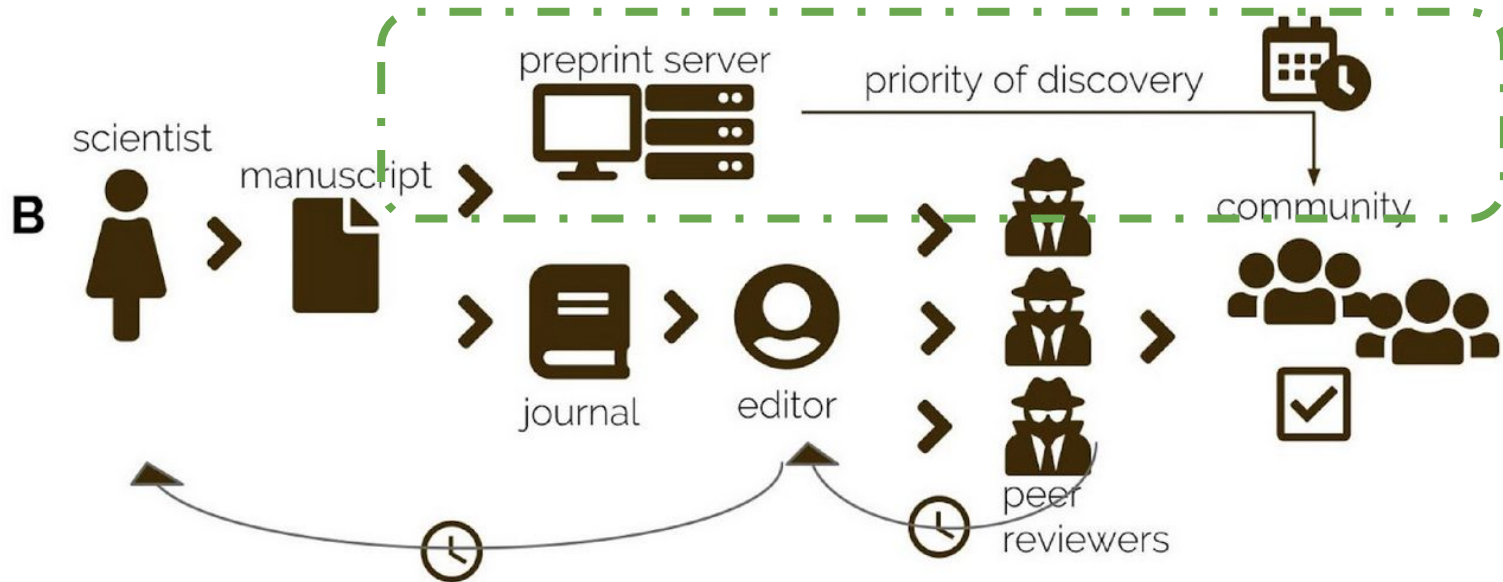
2mo • ...

Let me share something I believe is relatable to many people starting out in their research journey.

When I first began engaging with academic research, every paper looked the same to me, just a clear write-up of someone's findings. I did not yet know what terms like "preprint" or "manuscript" meant 🤔🙄, a natural stage in learning of course. I saw a research article as a contribution, regardless of what stage it was in or where it was hosted. Only later did I learn about peer review and formal publishing as added layers.

Your post reminds me of music. A demo track might be raw, but it is still the artist's real song, valid, expressive, and at times more powerful. Calling it a "demo" does not make it any less meaningful. In the same way, calling a research paper a "preprint" should not take away from its value or contribution. These layers can add value, validate the work, but they also shape how we label and judge people's work, how much weight we place on them.

If you ask me, getting to a place where we do not "discriminate" without cause requires a mindset shift. Research is knowledge in motion, no matter the stage or venue in which it appears.



**Figure 1.** (A) Traditional peer review publishing workflow. (B) Preprint submission establishing priority of discovery.

*Publications* **2019**, 7(2), 34;  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/publications7020034>

# Advantages of Preprints for African Research



- **Rapid Dissemination**
- **Increased Visibility**
- **Establishing Priority**
- **Collaboration and Feedback**
- **Cost Effectiveness**
- **Increase in citations**

## The Impact of Preprints on the Citations of Journal Articles Related to COVID-19

Hiroyuki Tsunoda<sup>1</sup>[0000-0002-6897-6611], Yuan Sun<sup>2</sup>, Masaki Nishizawa<sup>2</sup>, Xiaomin Liu<sup>3</sup>, Kou Amano<sup>2</sup>[0000-0002-8079-4941] and Rie Kominami<sup>4</sup>[0000-0002-5085-3277]

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<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Informatics, Tokyo 1018430, Japan

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tsunoda-h@tsurumi-u.ac.jp

**Abstract.** To investigate the impact of preprints on the citation counts of COVID-19-related papers, this study compares the number of citations received by drafts initially distributed as preprints and later published in journals with those received by papers directly submitted to journals. The difference in the median number of citations between COVID-19 preprint-distributed papers and COVID-19 directly submitted papers published in 184 journals was tested using the Mann-Whitney U test. The results showed that 129 journals had a statistically significant higher median citation count for COVID-19 preprint-distributed papers compared to directly submitted papers, with a p-value of less than 0.05. In contrast, no journals had a statistically significant higher median citation count for COVID-19 directly submitted papers. This indicates that 70.11% of the jour-

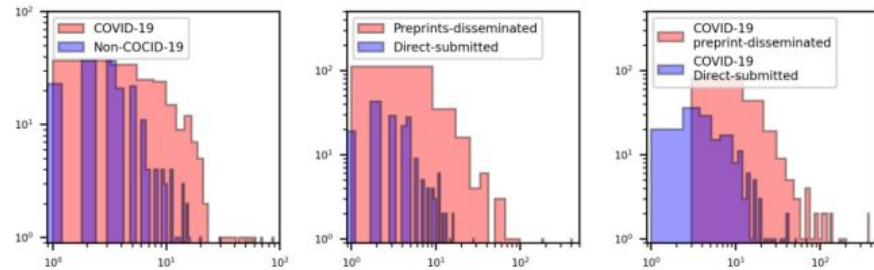
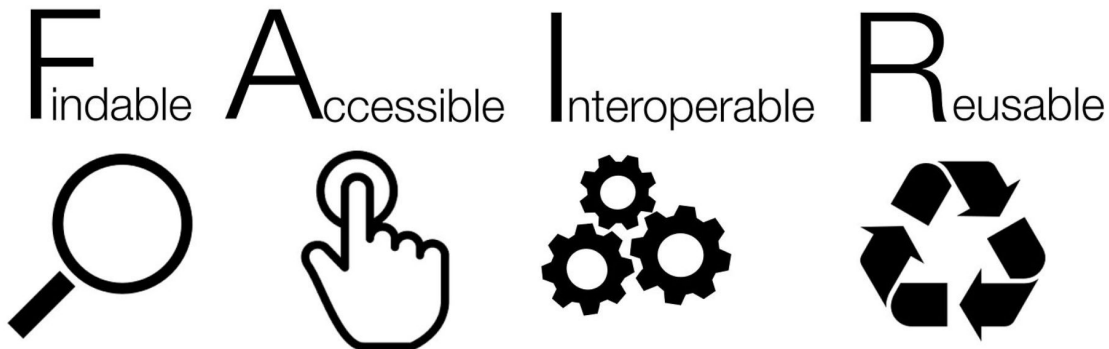


Fig. 1. Distribution of the median number of citations.

- **Concerns About Quality:** Lack of peer review in preprints and its implications for credibility
- **Ethical Considerations:** Issues like data theft and the need for ethical guidelines

- A key concern with preprints is data transparency.
  - **Findable** – Preprints and datasets should have DOIs or persistent identifiers so they can be easily discovered.
  - **Accessible** – Both the manuscript and underlying data should be openly available (not behind paywalls).
  - **Interoperable** – Data should use standard formats so it can be combined with other datasets.
  - **Reusable** – Sufficient metadata and licensing should allow others to reuse and build on the work.



- The CARE Principles—Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics



# Preprints Landscape in Africa



Despite the benefits, awareness and uptake of preprints in African academic institutions remain limited.

- Limited Infrastructure and Internet Access
- Low Visibility and Impact
- Concerns About Credibility
- Lack of Awareness and Training
- Funding and Institutional Support
- Cultural and Systemic Barriers



# Practical Recommendations and Call to Action



These challenges highlight the need for targeted interventions to promote the adoption of preprints in Africa


- Researchers should actively share early findings as preprints to increase impact and allow for collaboration.
- African institutions continue to establish supportive policies recognizing preprints in academic evaluation.
- Funders to invest in platforms and initiatives that promote preprint usage.
- The scientific to community engage openly with preprints, providing constructive feedback to maintain quality.

# Submission process

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→ Log in

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→ Log in with ORCID

  Search

## Communities in AfricArxiv

Select a community to browse its collections.

Now showing 1 - 5 of 5

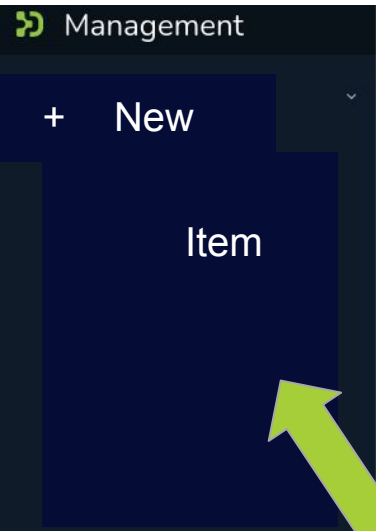


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[General Repository](#)

# Submission process



Communities & Collections All of AfricArxiv ▾ Statistics



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# Welcome

This initiative showcases UbuntuNet Alliance research community. We make research findings, making them accessible and available, a pivotal role in advancing the platform.

collaboration, and accessibility within the digital platform to disseminate their research. Early work, UbuntuNet Alliance plays a pivotal role in driving innovation across Africa.

Search the repository ...

## Communities in Africa

Select a community to browse it

Now showing 1 - 5 of 5

[AfricArXiv Projects](#)

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[General Repository](#)

[Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa](#)

[UbuntuNet Alliance](#)

Search



New item x

Create a new item in

- General Repository  
**Journal Articles**
- General Repository  
**Lesson**
- General Repository  
**Other**
- General Repository  
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- General Repository  
**Policy Briefs**
- General Repository  
**Poster**
- General Repository  
**Preprints**

# Submission process



← → ↻ https://africarxiv.ubuntu.net/workspace/items/55/edit ☆

Communities & Collections All of AfricArxiv 🔍 🌐 👤

Home » Edit Submission

Drop files to attach them to the item, or [browse](#)

Collection Conference and Workshop Papers Add more +

Describe ⓘ ^

Author

Enter the author's name (Family name, Given names).

[+ Add more](#)

Title \*

Enter the main title of the item.

Other Titles

If the item has any alternative titles, please enter them here.

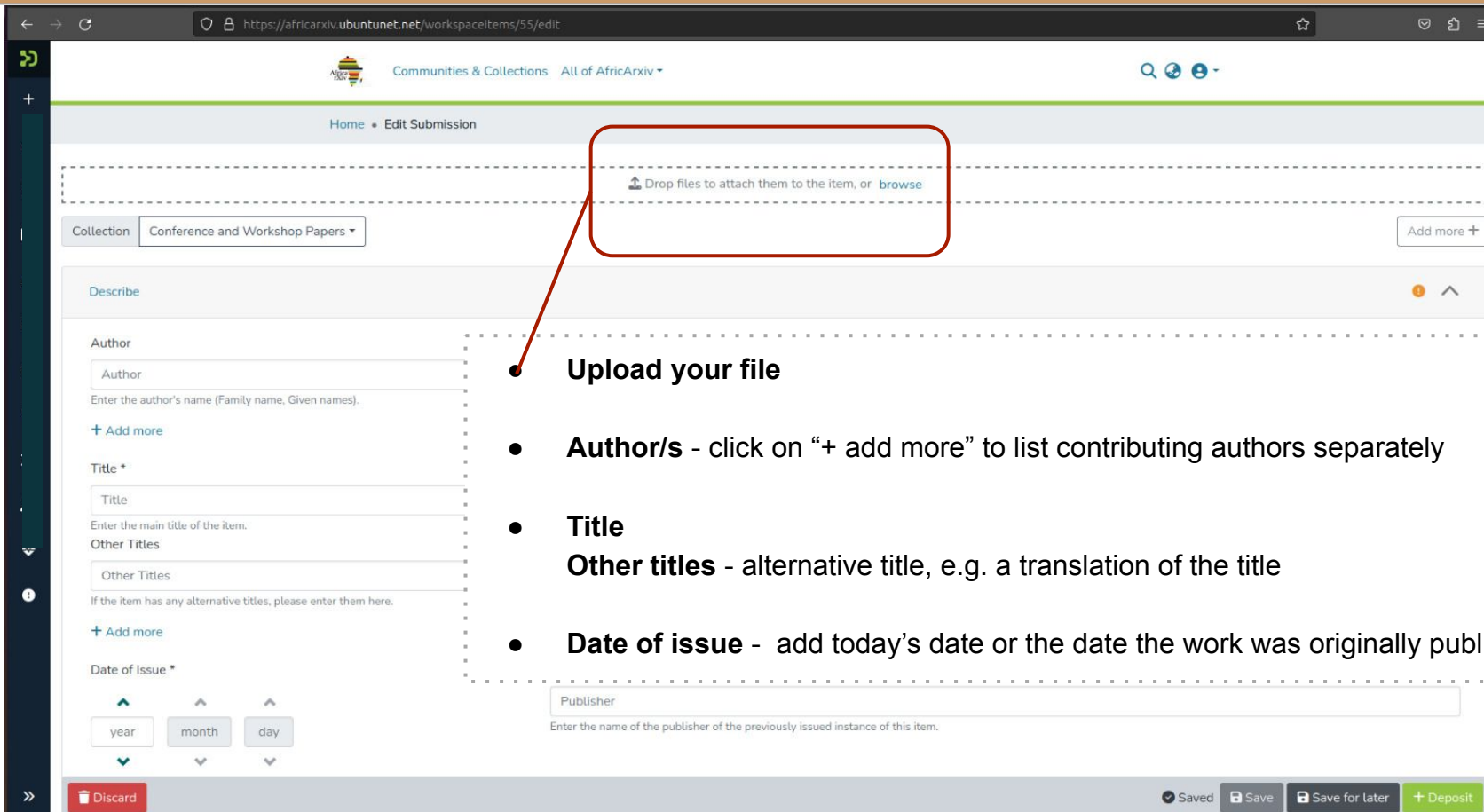
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Date of Issue \*

Publisher

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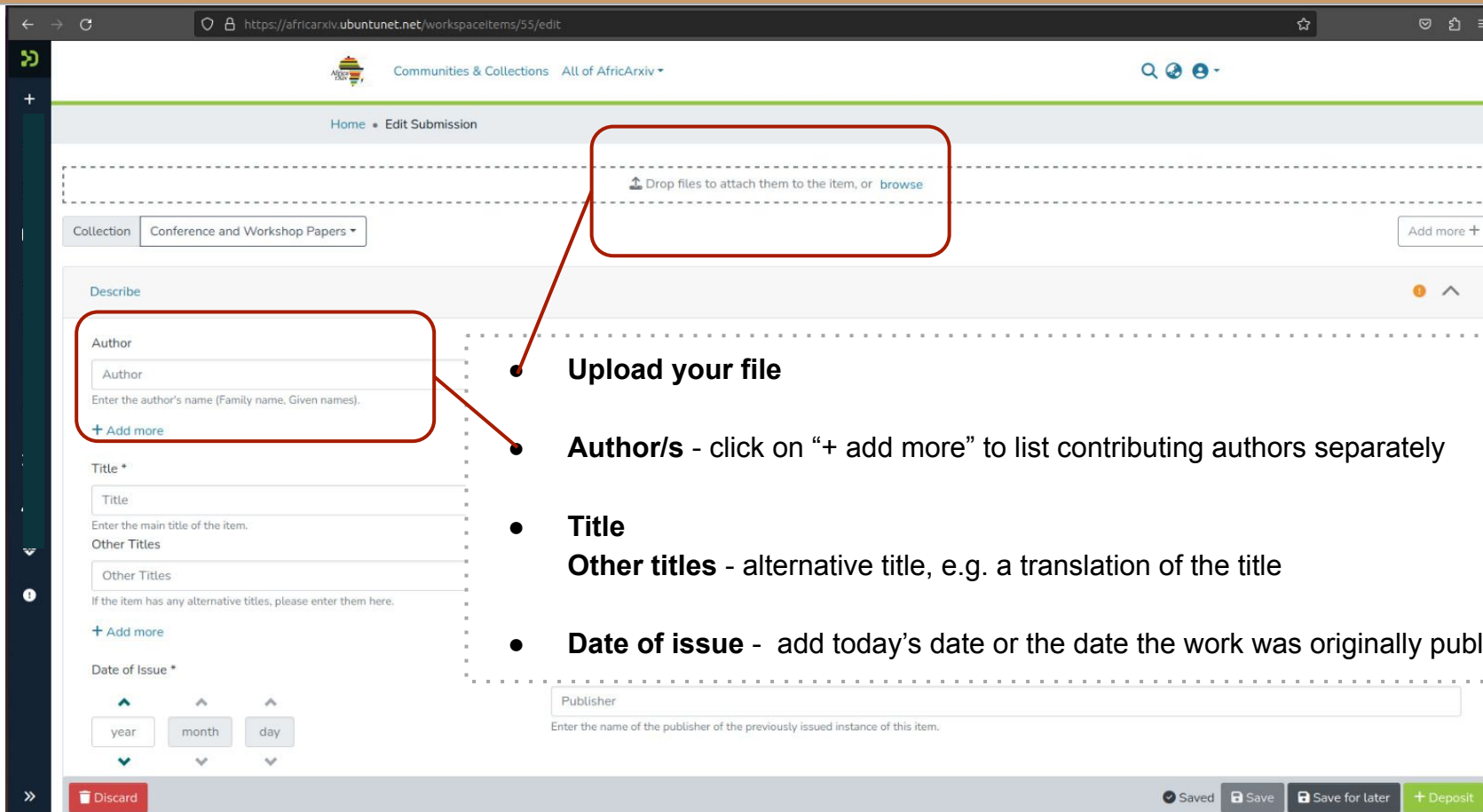
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- **Upload your file**
- **Author/s** - click on “+ add more” to list contributing authors separately
- **Title**  
**Other titles** - alternative title, e.g. a translation of the title
- **Date of issue** - add today’s date or the date the work was originally published

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Collection Conference and Workshop Papers Add more +

Describe

Author

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Enter the author's name (Family name, Given names).

[+ Add more](#)

Title \*

Title

Enter the main title of the item.

Other Titles

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If the item has any alternative titles, please enter them here.

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Date of Issue \*

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# Submission process



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Drop files to attach them to the item, or [browse](#)

Collection Conference and Workshop Papers ▾ Add more +

year month day

Enter the date of previous publication or public distribution. You can leave out the day and/or month if they aren't applicable.

Publisher Add more +

Enter the name of the publisher of the previously issued instance of this item.

Citation

Enter the standard citation for the previously issued instance of this item.

Series/Report No.

Series Report No.

Enter the series and number assigned to this item by your community.

+ Add more

Identifiers

ISSN

If the item has any identification numbers or codes associated with it, please enter them here.

+ Add more

Type

Select the type of content of the item.

+ Add more

Language

Discard Saved Save Save for later + Deposit

● **Identifiers** - Handle / DOI / ISSN

● **Type** - article, book chapter, dataset, presentation, preprint, ...

● **Language** - Please select the language that applies

# Submission process



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Collection **Conference and Workshop Papers** Add more +

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Please give the date of previous publication or public distribution. You can leave out the day and/or month if they aren't applicable.

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Drop files to attach them to the item, or [browse](#)

Collection: Conference and Workshop Papers

Publication:  [Add more +](#)

Publisher:   
Enter the name of the publisher of the previously issued instance of this item.

year month day

Please give the date of previous publication or public distribution. You can leave out the day and/or month if they aren't applicable.

Citation:   
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[+ Add more](#)

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If the item has any identification numbers or codes associated with it, please enter them here.  
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Select the type of content of the item.  
[+ Add more](#)

**Language**

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**Language - Please select the language that applies**

Footer: [Discard](#) [Saved](#) [Save](#) [Save for later](#) [+ Deposit](#)

# Submission process

A screenshot of the Africa rXiv submission form. The browser address bar shows the URL: https://africarxiv.ubuntunet.net/workspaceltems/55/edit. The form has a collection dropdown set to "Conference and Workshop Papers". There are four input fields: "Subject Keywords", "Abstract", "Sponsors", and "Description". A large dashed box on the right side of the form encompasses the "Abstract", "Sponsors", and "Description" fields. Red lines with circular endpoints point from the labels in this dashed box to the corresponding input fields on the left. At the bottom of the form, there are buttons for "Saved", "Save", "Save for later", and "+ Deposit".

Drop files to attach them to the item, or [browse](#)

Collection: Conference and Workshop Papers Add more +

Subject Keywords

Subject Keywords

Enter appropriate subject keywords or phrases.

Abstract

Abstract

Enter the abstract of the item.

Sponsors

Sponsors

Enter the names of any sponsors and/or funding codes in the box.

Description

Subject keywords

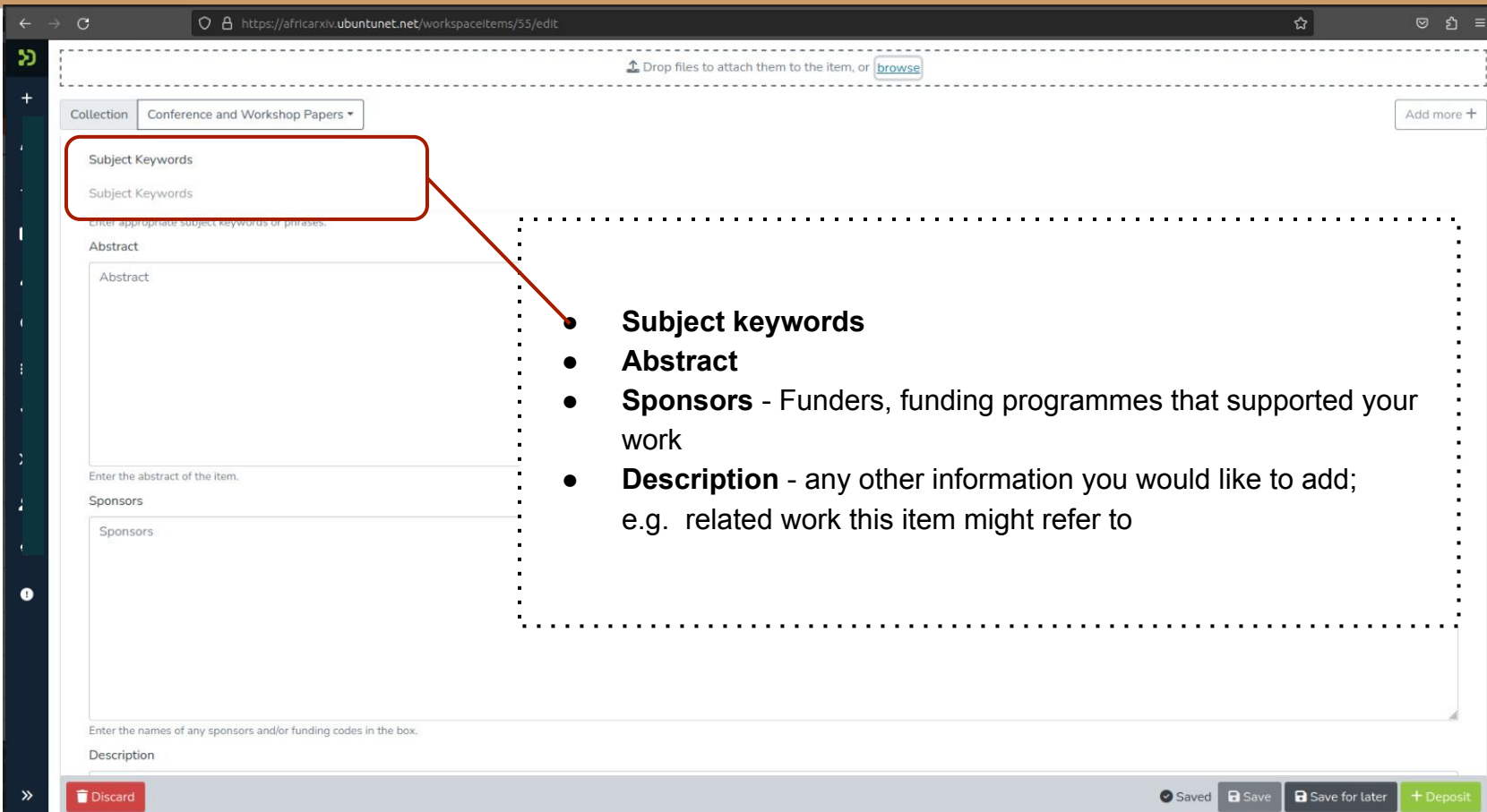
Abstract

Sponsors - Funders, funding programmes that supported your work

Description - any other information you would like to add; e.g. related work this item might refer to

Saved Save Save for later + Deposit

# Submission process

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Collection: Conference and Workshop Papers Add more +

Subject Keywords

Subject Keywords

Enter appropriate subject keywords or phrases.

Abstract

Abstract

Enter the abstract of the item.

Sponsors

Sponsors

Enter the names of any sponsors and/or funding codes in the box.

Description

Discard Saved Save Save for later + Deposit

- **Subject keywords**
- **Abstract**
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Drop files to attach them to the item, or [browse](#)

Collection: Conference and Workshop Papers Add more +

Subject Keywords

Subject Keywords

Enter appropriate subject keywords or phrases.

Abstract

Abstract

Enter the abstract of the item.

Sponsors

Sponsors

Enter the names of any sponsors and/or funding codes in the box.

Description

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Discard Saved Save Save for later Deposit

# Submission process

A screenshot of the Africa rXiv submission form. The browser address bar shows "https://africarxiv.ubuntunet.net/workspaceltems/55/edit". The form has a collection dropdown set to "Conference and Workshop Papers". There are three red-bordered boxes on the left side of the form: one around the "Subject Keywords" field, one around the "Abstract" field, and one around the "Sponsors" field. Red lines connect these boxes to a central list of items. A large dotted-line box encloses the "Sponsors" and "Description" fields. At the bottom of the form, there are buttons for "Discard", "Saved", "Save", "Save for later", and "+ Deposit".

Drop files to attach them to the item, or [browse](#)

Collection: Conference and Workshop Papers Add more +

Subject Keywords

Subject Keywords

Enter appropriate subject keywords or phrases.

Abstract

Abstract

Enter the abstract of the item.

Sponsors

Sponsors

Enter the names of any sponsors and/or funding codes in the box.

Description

- **Subject keywords**
- **Abstract**
- **Sponsors** - Funders, funding programmes that supported your work
- **Description** - any other information you would like to add; e.g. related work this item might refer to

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# Submission process

A screenshot of the Africa rXiv submission form. The browser address bar shows the URL: https://africarxiv.ubuntunet.net/workspaceltems/55/edit. The form includes a collection dropdown menu set to "Conference and Workshop Papers" and an "Add more +" button. The form fields are: "Subject Keywords" (with a "browse" button), "Abstract", "Sponsors", and "Description". A large dashed box on the right side of the form encompasses the "Abstract", "Sponsors", and "Description" fields. Red lines with circular endpoints point from the "Subject Keywords", "Abstract", "Sponsors", and "Description" labels in the legend to their respective form fields. At the bottom of the form, there are buttons for "Saved", "Save", "Save for later", and "+ Deposit".

Drop files to attach them to the item, or [browse](#)

Collection: Conference and Workshop Papers Add more +

Subject Keywords

Subject Keywords

Enter appropriate subject keywords or phrases.

Abstract

Abstract

Enter the abstract of the item.

Sponsors

Sponsors

Enter the names of any sponsors and/or funding codes in the box.

Description

Enter any other information you would like to add; e.g. related work this item might refer to.

**Subject keywords**

**Abstract**

**Sponsors** - Funders, funding programmes that supported your work

**Description** - any other information you would like to add; e.g. related work this item might refer to

Saved Save Save for later + Deposit

Drop files to attach them to the item, or [browse](#)

Collection Research: Socio-cultural Dynamics of Transmission

Here you will find all the files currently in the item. You can update the file metadata and access conditions or **upload additional files by dragging & dropping them anywhere on the page.**

## COVID-19\_Africa\_Rapid\_Grant\_Fund-header.png (468.44 KB)



COVID-19\_Africa\_Rapid\_Grant\_Fund-header.png

Bitstream format: PNG

Checksum MD5: 51736ecf072ff75c98f34fda0cda3c59

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Discard

Unsaved changes

Save

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**Thank you!**