



Transforming Knowledge for Africa’s Future

International Forum of UNESCO Chairs and Partners convened by the African Union Commission and UNESCO

Under the patronage of H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Addis Ababa, Monday 30 September to Wednesday 2 October 2024

CONCEPT NOTES FOR PLENARY AND PANEL SESSIONS

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High Level Opening Session - Envisaging Africa's Future

30 September 2024 | 9:30 - 12:00

Agenda

Envisaging Africa's Future	
2 hours 30 minutes	<p>Anthems</p> <p>Welcome</p> <p>Moderator: H.E. Prof. Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. African Union Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO • H.E. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission • Mr. Claver Gatete, Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa <p>Opening Address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the International Commission on the Futures of Education <p>Launch of the Amharic and Kiswahili versions of <i>'Reimagining our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education'</i>, the report from the International Commission on the Futures of Education</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Interlude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Injairu Kulundu-Bolus, Senior Lecturer, Rhodes University, South Africa <p>-----</p> <p>Panel Debate: Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future</p> <p><i>This Panel brings together leading African thinkers who will bring different perspectives to the theme of the Forum. The speakers will consider the visions of the future presented at the Summit of the Future, Africa's contributions to knowledge, and the imperative of transforming knowledge for the future of Africa, humanity and the planet.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Mohamed Elfarnawany, Director of Africa Division, UNESCO</p> <p>Keynote Address: H.E. Prof. Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, African Union Commission</p> <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba, Founder, PLO Lumumba Foundation, Kenya • Dr Obiageli "Oby" Ezekwesili, Founder and President of Human Capital Africa and Senior Economic Advisor of Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative. Former Vice-President of the World Bank, Africa Region; and a former Minister in Nigeria

Envisaging Africa's Future

- **Prof. Paul Zeleza**, Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives and Professor of African Studies, Howard University, United States of America
- **Prof. Catherine Odora Hoppers**, Research Professor in Pluralistic Societies: Transdisciplinarity, Cognitive Justice and Education, University of Calgary; Professor of Education, Gulu University, Uganda
- **Prof. Achille Mbembe**, Professor, Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research University of Witwatersrand, South Africa (tbc)

Plenary Panel Discussion. Envisaging Africa's Futures

30 September 2024 | 14:00 - 15:30

Organizer: Futures Literacy and Foresight, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

The future of humanity is inextricably linked to Africa's future. The continent finds itself at the forefront of megatrends that will shape the future of the world: technological innovation, digital transformation, rapid demographic shifts, environmental sustainability, and much more, are some examples of today's trends which will undoubtedly have a major impact on our future. These megatrends represent powerful forces shaping our world, offering opportunities for global innovation, progress and collaboration but also highlight the need for context-specific approaches in achieving the targets outlined in Agendas 2030 and 2063.

Leveraging Futures Literacy & Foresight enables decision-makers and those who inform them to integrate different ways of knowing the past, present and future – and most importantly, to reframe the narrative around what it means to 'Transform Africa's Future'.

Transforming Africa's future may involve centering lived experiences on the continent and amplifying African imaginaries of the world. It is also about reconciling these perspectives with global dialogues, to position Africa as an integral part of shaping a collective future. Here, it is critical to appreciate diverse knowledge traditions, better understand the array of hopes and fears stemming from different lived experiences and learn to embrace the full spectrum of future possibility, exploring what this means for the continent and the future of humanity.

This panel brings together intersectional perspectives to reflect on the past, unearth assumptions and challenges of the present, and paint images of the future that can guide society towards transformative action. This session will exemplify the critical need for participatory processes that harness collective intelligence, by bringing together futurists, philosophers, researchers and policymakers across generations and sectors, each of African origin, working and living in the continent and/or the diaspora.

This session will see speakers ideate what Africa and Africanness means beyond the confines of man-made geographical boundaries, envision alternative future scenarios and their implications, share stories and insights from real-world case studies, and lay out tangible recommendations for capacity building and transformative policymaking.

The 'Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future' forum aims to address a range of themes such as: healthcare, education, employment, gender inequality, technology, governance and security. This panel will critically explore future trajectories of these topics, prompting reflection on notions of inclusion and sustainability. We gather to learn, spark systems change, and codesign a better future for Africa and the world.

Agenda

Plenary Panel Discussion. Envisaging Africa's Futures [30 September, 14:00-15:30, local time]	
5 minutes	Opening remarks
15 minutes	Keynote speech <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zainab Usman, Foundating Director, Africa Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
40 minutes	Panel discussion <p>Moderator: Gustavo Merino, Director, Social Policies, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hanan Morsy, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa• Rika Preiser, Associate Professor, Centre for Sustainability and Transitions, Stellenbosch University, South Africa• Sylvestre Kouame Kouassi, Chairholder, Chaire UNESCO sur Anticipation, Prospective et Territoires Durables, Université Alassane Ouattara de Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire• Kais Hammami, Director for Foresight and AI, Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) <p>Remarks: Rita Bissoonauth, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office to the African Union and Representative to Ethiopia, Ethiopia</p>
25 minutes	Comments and Q&A <p>All participants</p>
5 minutes	Closing remarks

PARALLEL SESSIONS I

Code 6

Parallel Session 1.1: What is the Future of the Right to Education? A Consultation with UNESCO Chairs and Partners

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizer: Right to Education Programme, Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems Division, UNESCO.

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

In a rapidly changing world, where technology, globalization, climate change, growing polarization of societies, and demographic and social dynamics are reshaping every aspect of our lives, education is undergoing a transformational journey. Education is no longer confined to traditional school-based education for children but has expanded to encompass lifelong and life-wide learning. This begins from early years with access to quality early childhood care and education, and extends to upskilling and reskilling of adults, encompassing formal, non-formal and informal learning and settings. While the central principles of the right to education remain unchanged, stakeholders must constantly interpret and apply human rights norms to reflect these diverse and ever-changing realities.

In the context of the 10th consultation on the [1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education](#) Member States highlighted new challenges as well as existing barriers to the right to education (see [full report](#)). These challenges were captured in the [Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education](#) that aims to broaden our understanding of the right to education towards lifelong learning by reimagining the nature of learning and the spaces in which it occurs. This is further bolstered by the [Transforming Education Summit](#) that calls for a transformative approach to education within a lifelong learning perspective – which must be grounded in human rights.

Moreover, considerable change has occurred since key treaties on the right to education were conceived and adopted over half a century ago. [UNESCO's Initiative on the evolving right to education](#) is investigating how the right to education, as enshrined in international normative instruments, could be further reinforced to meet these evolving needs.

As the global landscape for education has shifted towards more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable systems for all and the end of the 2030 Agenda approaches, the world – and more specifically the African region – stands at a critical juncture. In this context, the [African Union's Agenda 2063](#) further underscores the importance of education as a central pillar in the continent's long-term vision for a more prosperous and unified Africa, driving forward the aspirations for inclusive growth and sustainable development for all.

Africa, often mistakenly viewed as homogeneous, is a continent of diverse landscapes and societies with the world's youngest population, presenting both opportunities and challenges, particularly in education. While primary education has improved, access to higher education remains limited, with sub-Saharan Africa's tertiary enrolment ratio at 9.4%, far below the 38% global average ([World Bank, 2020](#); see also [UIS](#)). Educational disparities are more severe in rural and conflict-affected areas, especially for persons in vulnerable situations ([UNESCO and African Union, 2023](#); see also [IIEP Learning Portal, 2020](#)). The digital divide, with only 36% internet access in sub-Saharan Africa, hinders remote learning opportunities, among other things ([World Bank, 2022](#); [IIEP Learning Portal, 2020](#); see also [Global Education Monitoring Report, 2023](#)). North Africa faces similar challenges, including high unemployment rates, particularly among youth, but shows development in digital development with 67% mobile phone access and 48.3% internet access, though urban-rural disparities persist ([OECD,](#)

[2021](#)). For Africa, to achieve the ambitious goals outlined in Agenda 2063, addressing the barriers and leveraging its demographic bulge remains crucial.

Rationale

Despite progress in educational access and policy development, many countries - including African nations, continue to grapple with issues of educational quality, equity, and relevance. The lifelong and life-wide learning perspective is crucial in this regard, advocating for educational systems that are flexible, inclusive, and capable of adapting to learning needs.

Aim and expected outcome:

This consultation aims to harness the expertise and insights of UNESCO Chairs across the globe, with a specific focus on African Chairs, to further inform [UNESCO's Initiative on the evolving right to education](#) by discussing and examining the existing international normative framework on the right to education, and how it could be strengthened in light of emerging and future trends in the context of the African region.

Objectives

- Discuss the areas that need further strengthening in the international normative framework, and their implications, what it takes to address the twin crisis of equity and relevance in education, including specific suggestions put forward in the UNESCO working research paper on the evolving right to education Initiative, in light of education trends and emerging challenges, and specific challenges in the African region; and
- Assess and discuss the current state of educational transformations in Africa, with a focus on how the evolving dimensions of the right to education are being considered and implemented across countries in the region. This includes examining legal frameworks, policy adjustments, and country/local-level initiatives.

A [guiding note](#), including main findings of the UNESCO working research paper on the evolving right to education Initiative and guiding questions for the open floor discussion, can be found in Annex.

Agenda

Parallel Session 1.1: What is the Future of the Right to Education? A Consultation with UNESCO Chairs and Partners	
30 September 2024 16:00 - 17:30	
8 minutes	Master of ceremony: Abdoulaye Salifou , Head of Education, UNESCO, Liaison Office to AU, UNECA, and Representative to Ethiopia, Addis Ababa <ul style="list-style-type: none">• His Excellency Mohammed Belhocine, African Union Commissioner in charge of Education, Science and Technology and Innovation (tbc)• Sobhi Tawil, UNESCO's Director for the Division for Future of Learning and Innovation
7 minutes	Keynote intervention: Decolonizing knowledge to strengthen the right to education <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moira Faul, Senior Lecturer, Geneva Graduate Institute and Executive Director (NORRAG), Switzerland

Parallel Session 1.1: What is the Future of the Right to Education? A Consultation with UNESCO Chairs and Partners

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

30 minutes	<p>Panel discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Abdoulaye Salifou, Head of Education, UNESCO, Liaison Office to AU, UNECA, and Representative to Ethiopia, Addis Ababa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faranaaz Veriava, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Education Law in Africa, University of Pretoria, South Africa • Mark Bray, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education, University of Hong Kong, People’s Republic of China • Winnie V. Mitullah, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Women and Community Health, University of Nairobi, Kenya • Guédégbé Samson Igor Bidossessi, Chairholder, Chaire UNESCO Droits de la personne humaine et de la démocratie, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Benin • Jouhaina Gherib, Vice-President, International Association of Universities, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa and Former President, University of Manouba, Tunisia • Olivier Avisais, Professor of Education, Université du Québec, Montréal, Canada • Susan Osireditse Keitumetse, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on African Heritage Studies and Sustainable Development, University of Botswana, Botswana • Openjuru L. George, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Learning, Vice-Chancellor of Gulu University, Uganda <p>Discussant: Emmanuel Ganse, UN SDG Young Leader (2022-2024) and founder of Tonafa Institute</p>
40 minutes	<p>Open floor discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Borhene Chakroun, UNESCO’s Director for the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All UNESCO Chairs, partners and participants • Borhene Chakroun: Concluding remarks and next steps
5 minutes	<p>Closing session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sobhi Tawil, UNESCO's Director for the Division for Future of Learning and Innovation

Annex: Guiding Note for participants

What is UNESCO's Initiative on the evolving right to education?

UNESCO's Initiative on the evolving right to education investigates how to reinforce the right to education amid current, emerging and future challenges and opportunities. Launched in 2021, it addresses issues like the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the pre-existing learning crisis (i.e. the [twin crises](#) of equity and relevance), the rise of digital learning, global mobility, the need for lifelong learning opportunities. The Initiative fosters dialogue among stakeholders to strengthen countries'

obligations for inclusive, equitable, quality education for all. For more details, [visit UNESCO's relevant webpage](#) and access the [brochure here](#).

Why is all this relevant for the UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum on Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future?

The UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum on Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future is an opportunity to address global education needs while considering regional perspectives. It aims to reimagine education rights through lifelong learning, creating adaptable systems that address global challenges and regional aspirations. By aligning with SDGs and Africa's Agenda 2063, the event seeks to shape educational frameworks that empower individuals, drive innovation, and respond to unique regional needs, crucial for both Africa's and the world's future.

What are some of the key findings from the research paper?

The research paper titled '[Bringing into focus the future of the right to education](#)' is a working paper that is enriched following each consultation, event or meeting. The research paper explores how the right to education, enshrined in international law in the 20th century, must be redefined to address contemporary, emerging and future global challenges and opportunities.

Key takeaways

- 1. Redefining the aims and scope of the right to education:** The paper identifies the need to recognize lifelong learning as integral to the right to education, encompassing early childhood to adult education and incorporating formal, non-formal, and informal learning. It also emphasizes that in an evolving world, there is a need for a renewed focus on education that nurtures human rights, global citizenship, sustainability, and well-being.
- 2. Inclusivity and equity:** The paper highlights that education systems should be inclusive by design, offering equitable opportunities for all learners, regardless of background or ability. Legal frameworks are noted as crucial in protecting individuals in vulnerable situations, addressing all forms of discrimination, and ensuring safe learning environments for all, with attention to crisis-affected populations, displaced persons, and legal protections for refugees, migrants, and those displaced by climate change.
- 3. Addressing pressing global challenges:** The paper outlines the need to address climate change impacts, including through education for sustainable development, and special protections for climate-related displaced persons. It also notes the opportunities presented by technology and AI for remote and personalized learning, while emphasizing the importance of regulation to prevent exacerbation of inequalities and ensure ethical use, human rights compliance, and data protection.
- 4. Support for educators and learning systems:** The paper underscores the importance of empowering and supporting teachers through enhanced training, professional development, and improved working conditions, particularly in response to the global teacher shortage. It also stresses the need for intersectoral collaboration, recognizing that education governance extends beyond education departments to broader structures.
- 5. Governance and financing education:** The paper discusses the importance of clear governance structures, including defining State obligations, maintaining quality standards, and ensuring accountability to advance the right to education. It also highlights the need to regulate non-state actors to mitigate potential negative impacts of privatization and ensure that public-private partnerships align with the State's responsibility to provide quality education. Additionally, the paper suggests reviewing international frameworks for education financing, with a focus on prioritizing resources for disadvantaged groups and defining obligations related to international cooperation and resource allocation.

Guiding questions to consider for the ‘open floor discussion’

1. What are the priority areas where the right to education needs to be strengthened in Africa to address the twin crises of equity and relevance, particularly in the context of socio-economic disparities, digital divides, displacement and climate change, and diverse cultural contexts across the continent?
2. How are African countries adapting their education systems to address the evolving dimensions of the right to education, especially regarding inclusive lifelong learning, digital transformation, and access in conflict-affected and rural regions? What major challenges – such as resource allocation, infrastructure, and regional disparities – are impeding progress?

Parallel Session 1.2: Transforming Learning and Skills Development in Africa to Accelerate SDG4 and Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) Commitments

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizer: UNESCO Dakar Office

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The Transforming Education Summit (TES) mobilized worldwide momentum to accelerate progress towards SDG4 and placed education at the top of the political agenda, while the AU Year of Education has put spotlight on the crucial role of education to transform society and equip citizens with the knowledge and skills to build “the Africa we want”. The approaching end of CESA 16 – 25 and SDG4 calls for a stocktake of achievements, lessons learnt, and deepening reflections on the ways forward. This requires a participatory approach to collective reflection and action, and to devise innovative methods to transform education.

Against this backdrop, AUC, ADEA, UNESCO, UNICEF are joining forces to develop the second Continental Report on SDG4 and CESA. The report builds on the first continental report “[Education in Africa: Placing Equity at the Heart of Policy](#)” and will explore the theme of “Transforming learning and skills development in Africa to accelerate SDG4 and CESA commitments”. It aims to monitor the progress towards 2025 targets of CESA and SDG4 using a consolidated monitoring framework of both agendas, to propose policy recommendations for accelerating progress towards Education 2030 goals, and to look into the futures of education of Africa.

The session will gather stakeholders from governments, the UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Network, think tanks, international organizations and private foundations within and beyond Africa to address pressing challenges and to share innovative solutions for Africa's education transformation.

Objectives

- Provide a platform for dialogue among multiple stakeholders to collectively reflect on the current state and futures of education in Africa.
- Gather inputs from partners on the 2 nd Continental Report on SDG4/CESA.

Deliverables

A synthesis report of the session whose key elements will feed into the second Continental Report on SDG4 and CESA. Panelists are invited to submit think pieces based on their interventions during the session.

Agenda

Emcee: Dean Chen, Junior Professional Officer, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa

Rapporteur: Dimitri Sanga, Director, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa

Parallel Session 1.2: Transforming Learning and Skills Development in Africa to Accelerate SDG4 and Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) Commitments

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

10 minutes

Opening remarks

Sophia Ndemutila Ashipala, Head of Education Division, African Union Commission

Parallel Session 1.2: Transforming Learning and Skills Development in Africa to Accelerate SDG4 and Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) Commitments

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

	Adama Coulibaly , Inspector-General, Ministry of National Education and Literacy, Côte d'Ivoire, member of the Sherpas Group of the SDG4-Education2030 High-level Steering Committee
15 minutes	<p>Presentation: Transforming Learning and Skills Development to Accelerate SDG4 and CESA Commitments – Rationale of the 2nd Continental Report on SDG4 and CESA</p> <p>Speaker: Borhene Chakroun, Director, Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO</p>
35 minutes	<p>Panel discussion (each panelist has 7 minutes)</p> <p>Moderator: Dimitri Sanga, Director, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorcas Beryl Otieno, UNESCO Chair for Higher Education Development for a Green Economy and Sustainability, Senior Lecturer, Kenyatta University (Kenya) • Biniam Bedasso, Research Fellow, Centre for Global Development • Melisew Dejene Lemma, Associate Professor, Hawassa University (Ethiopia), member of the UNITWIN Network on Gender, Media and ICTs • Xiaohan Bi, Deputy Director, UNESCO-ICHEI • Jean-Marc Bernard, Chief Technical Officer, Education.or
25 minutes	<p>Comments and Q&A</p> <p>Moderator: Matthew Robert Goldie Scot, UNICEF Liaison Office to African Union</p> <p>All participants</p>
5 minutes	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Shem Bodo, Senior Programs Officer, Association for the Development of Education in Africa</p>

Parallel Session 1.3: International Peace and Security: How can Education Impede or Facilitate Long-lasting Peace?

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizer: UNESCO/Section for Global Citizenship and Peace Education and IBE

Co-organizers: UNESCO Chair in Education for Peacebuilding and Human Rights, University of Ulster

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and Rationale

It is widely believed that access to quality education can foster understanding, promote social cohesion, and reduce violence, particularly in conflict affected contexts. Yet conventional educational frameworks often fail to address the ways in which education can reinforce existing social hierarchies and power structures, with significant implications for the success of peacebuilding efforts through education.

Educational systems worldwide are deeply entwined with political, economic, social, and cultural power dynamics. Far from being a neutral force, education can serve as a potent tool for perpetuating privilege, exclusion, and division. For instance, curricula frequently reflect the interests of dominant groups, marginalizing alternative perspectives and reinforcing ideologies that can fuel tensions. Moreover, the unequal distribution of educational resources and opportunities often benefits those already in power, deepening social divides that can lead to unrest and conflict, both locally and globally. Additionally, education in many contexts reinforces dominant knowledge systems and languages devoid of local sensitivity.

As the global community strives to achieve ambitious goals for peace through education, such as those outlined in the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG4\)](#), it is crucial to critically examine the underlying assumptions that guide these efforts. The notion that education is an unequivocal force for peace must be reconsidered first to recognize how it can also be a mechanism for control and oppression. Only by critically unpacking the role of education as an impediment to peace can its transformative potential be fully realized. This reflection is particularly urgent in regions where educational inequity exacerbates social tensions and contributes to cycles of violence, highlighting the complex relationship between education, inequality, and peace.

This shift requires interdisciplinary research that can bridge the gaps between education and other critical disciplines, including, for example, economics, politics, sociology, anthropology, and international relations. By drawing on diverse fields, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of how educational systems interact with broader societal structures, and how these interactions can either undo or promote peace.

Educational policies that are effective and sustainable require the generation of an evidence base that is rooted in the specific circumstances and needs of conflict affected contexts. As such South-South partnerships and support for locally led research initiatives are needed to challenge Global North-dominated models of research and knowledge production. Traditional research paradigms often replicate colonial dynamics, with Global North researchers – or Global South researchers steeped in Eurocentric conceptions of knowledge and being – imposing their methods, frameworks, and interpretations on communities in the Global South. North-South research collaborations should therefore be founded on principles of radical equality, mutual respect, and reciprocity.

Addressing the dual role of education in perpetuating and alleviating global inequalities and conflict requires a profound transformation of our knowledge systems. The imposition of external educational frameworks without consideration of local contexts can reinforce social hierarchies and marginalize

indigenous knowledge systems. By fostering collaborations that integrate and respect local knowledge traditions, we can develop educational practices that are more inclusive, effective, and aligned with the aspirations of the communities they serve. This approach is not only critical for achieving educational equity but also for realizing the broader goals of social cohesion, peace, and sustainable development that are vital for our collective future.

Objectives and Outcomes

- Unpack the ways in which education can impede peace and security
- Unpack the ways in which education can be transformed to build, protect and sustain long-lasting peace
- Put forward concrete ways on how contextually sensitive knowledge production can support this overall process
- Discuss ways in which South-South or North-South collaborative research founded on respect, equality and local sensitivity can support this process of transforming education for peace

Agenda

Parallel Session 1.3: International Peace and Security: How can Education Impede or Facilitate Long-lasting Peace? [30 September, 16:00-17:30, local time]	
16:00 – 16:10	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Cecilia Barbieri, Chief of Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education, UNESCO</p>
16:10 – 17.10	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Cecilia Barbieri, Chief of Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education, UNESCO</p> <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meke Meite, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Culture of Peace, Université Felix Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire, Cote D'Ivoire • Alain Tschudin, Professor and Senior Researcher & Prospective UNESCO Chair “Gandhi-Montessori-Luthuli” on Education for Peace and Transformative Solidarity, Stellenbosch University, South Africa • Ademola Akinyoade, co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Peace and Citizenship, Afe Babalola University, Nigeria • Azeem Badroodien, Co-Investigator, PEER Network, University of Cape Town, South Africa
17.10– 17.45	<p>Comments and Q&A</p> <p>All participants</p>
17.45– 18.00	<p>Wrap-up and closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecilia Barbieri, Chief of Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education, UNESCO

Parallel Session 1.4: How can Open Science foster the Transformation of Knowledge that is Necessary to meet Societal Needs?

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizers: Australian National University and Leiden University

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

In December 2023, UNESCO published the first global report on the trends of Open Science (OS). The main findings were that OS is increasing but does so unevenly, and most OS policies are focused on access to outputs, with less emphasis on OS for stakeholder participation and dialogue. Given that participatory practices in science are crucial for research to address societal needs, this raises the question on how OS can be developed to better respond to needs framed by the [UN Pact for the Future](#) and the goal of *Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future*.

Rationale

The [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) signify an ambitious vision for global good. Science, engineering, technology and innovation (SETI) are expected to play a significant role in helping achieve this global goal of transforming the world. Beyond this broad consensus, however, we find very different approaches to connecting science and sustainable transformation.

Open Science, as developed in 2021 [UNESCO's Recommendation](#), proposes a variety of values that are relevant for science and science-related organizations to respond to society: regarding not only quality and integrity, but also collective benefits, equity and fairness, diversity and inclusion. However, some of the developments in OS, such as Open Access in pay-to-Publish models, or a focus on Open Data without considerations to the benefits of local or indigenous communities, are in contradiction with these values.

Aims

The session will discuss forms and practices of Open Science that consider societal needs and aspirations in a variety of settings: in participatory-research, in communication and in data-sharing, and will reflect on methods to monitor these practices. The keynote address will offer insights on understanding community priorities and expertise in this context.

Agenda

Parallel Session 1.4: How can Open Science foster the Transformation of Knowledge that is Necessary to meet Societal Needs?	
30 September 2024 16:00 - 17:30	
90 minutes	<p>Moderators: Sujatha Raman, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Science Communication for Public Good, Australian National University, Australia and Ismael Rafols, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Diversity and Inclusion in Global Science, Leiden University, Kingdom of the Netherlands</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temilade Sesan, International Development Consultant, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Parallel Session 1.4: How can Open Science foster the Transformation of Knowledge that is Necessary to meet Societal Needs?

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

- **Louise Bezuidenhout**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Diversity and Inclusion in Global Science, Leiden University, Kingdom of the Netherlands
 - **Rajesh Tandon**, Co-Chair of the UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, PRIA, India
- Rapporteur: Rita Agha Oluwadarasimi, Member, UNESCO Chair in Science Communication for Public Good, Australian National University, Australia

Resources

- UN Pact for the Future: <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future>
- SDGs: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- UNESCO's Recommendations on OS: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949>

Parallel Session 1.5: Financing a Pact for Shared Futures with Education Investment at the Core

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizers: UNESCO/FLI and UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, York University (Canada)

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and rationale

As the global community faces escalating challenges such as threats to peace, climate change, biodiversity loss, and growing inequalities, including economic insufficiencies and disparities, the need to strengthen the link between sustainable development and financing for development has never been more urgent. The Summit of the Future, forging the [Global Pact for the Future](#), presented a critical opportunity to prioritize a forward-thinking approach for financing to eradicate poverty and hunger, close economic gaps, and promote peaceful and more balanced societies. However, it remains that following the pandemic, countries are not facing an equal playing field when it comes to their opportunities to both recover and resume their strategies to implement sustainable development. Despite some progress made since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, financing gaps remain a major obstacle to achieving the SDGs. A special focus of this session will be on financing sustainable investment in education as education is determined as a cross-cutting foundation and a key enabler of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which the new Pact for the Future is set to accelerate. Highlighted during the Transforming Education Summit in 2022 and as one of the six transitional investment pathways to accelerate the SDG implementation, education investment is needed as a pillar to financing sustainable development. This is not only relevant to create access to formal education for children and youth but to embrace the concept of lifelong learning including nonformal opportunities to educate the general public to better understand and support action in the themes of sustainability, among them food security, no poverty, climate action etc. in each country. Embracing global understanding and compassion through sufficient education investment also serves as a driver to support one's nation's financing of other regions/countries or globally tackling the multitude of sustainability challenges. This session will further explore how sustainable development and financing for development can be more effectively connected within the framework of the SDGs, and the Global Pact for the Future, but also with other Programmes underway, such as the Paris Agreement or the new Action Plan expected from COP 16 on Biodiversity.

Objectives

Speakers will address current and future financing mechanisms with a focus on education financing. Perspectives will include the role of higher education, building on their mandate in teaching and learning, research, community engagement including public-private partnerships. Speakers will identify key priorities and future opportunities for dialogue for integrating education for sustainable development and financing for development as key enabler elements of holistically elevating their respective SDG commitments and enhancing global cooperation, especially exploring the uniqueness of the interests and needs of Africa.

Agenda

Parallel Session 1.5: Sustainable Development and Financing for Development: Financing a Pact for Shared Futures with Education Investment at the Core	
30 September 2024 16:00 - 17:30	
3 minutes	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Moderator: Katrin Kohl, co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, York University, Canada</p>
7 minutes	<p>Introduction, setting the scene for the conversation</p> <p>Charles Hopkins, co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, York University, Canada</p>
40 minutes	<p>Panel discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hilligje van't Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities • Abdul Husaini, , Coordinator, Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) on Education for Sustainable Development, Nigeria • Xiaozhou Xu, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Entrepreneurial Education, The Zhejiang University, People's Republic of China • Michael Kakande, Founder and Chairperson, Resilient 40, Uganda • Mohammad Nurunnabi, Director, Center for Sustainability and Climate (CSC), Aide to the President and Chair in Accounting Prince Sultan University, Saudi Arabia
35 minutes	<p>Comments and Q&A</p> <p><i>Respondent and Moderator:</i> Zainal Abidin Sanusi, Professor, Director, Sejahtera Centre for Sustainability and Humanity, International Islamic University of Malaysia, Malaysia</p> <p><i>Co-Moderator:</i> Katrin Kohl, co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, York University, Canada</p>
5 minutes	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Charles Hopkins, co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, York University, Canada</p>
	<p>Session Rapporteurs: Anteneh G. Kallo, PhD (c), Addis Ababa University and Lecturer, Hawassa College of Teacher Education, Ethiopia and Ibrahim Akibu Ja'afaru, B.Tech., Estate Surveyor/Valuer, Coordinator/Secretary, Coordinator RCE Minna Youth Network, Nigeri</p>

Resources

2024 Pact for the Future (focus of session on Chapter 1) including annex documents

<https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/pact-for-the-future>

2022 Transforming Education Summit <https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit/financing-education>

2023 Six Transitions: Investment Pathways to Deliver the SDGs <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/six-transitions-investment-pathways-deliver-sdgs>

Parallel Session 1.6: Science, Technology, and Innovation and Digital Cooperation

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizer: Division of Science Policy and Basic Sciences/Basic Sciences, Research, Innovation and Engineering section (RIE)

CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

One of the primary objectives of the Pact for the Future is to ensure that emerging technologies are developed in a manner that is human-centered, aligns with universal human values, and safeguards the planet. While we are all cognizant of the transformative potential of technology to drive positive change, we must also acknowledge the challenges it poses, particularly in exacerbating existing gaps and inequalities.

This session will provide the opportunity to deliberate on strategies to ensure that these advancements are accessible and beneficial to all, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of developing countries that still lack access to essential, life-changing technologies.

This is an interactive session that will involve direct participation by the attendees. Its aim is to facilitate an open discussion between various stakeholders in a relaxed setting, allowing them to listen to each other and put forward their own vision for the Pact for the Future.

Based on the number of participants, the room will be divided into two or three groups. Each group will ensure gender balance and diverse representation, including researchers, high-level participants, policymakers, representatives from African institutes, and representatives from non-African institutes interested in collaborating with African stakeholders.

Each group will have 30 minutes to discuss the specific topic given to them by the moderator, with 10 minutes dedicated to drafting their proposal and recommendations. The groups will then have 30 minutes to present their group's proposal and to discuss the outcome with others.

The closing remarks will summarize all the input presented by the representatives of each group and emphasize the importance of international collaboration and constructive dialogue for science, technology, innovation, and digital cooperation in Africa and the continent's future.

Agenda

Parallel Session 1.6: Science, Technology, and Innovation and Digital Cooperation	
30 September 2024 16:00 - 17:30	
10 minutes	<p>Opening Remarks</p> <p>Amal Kasry, Chief of Section for Basic Sciences, Research, Innovation and Engineering, UNESCO</p> <p>An introduction to the importance of Science, Technology and Innovation and Digital Cooperation with a significant emphasis on the Pact for the Future, as it is a fundamental pillar of it.</p>

Parallel Session 1.6: Science, Technology, and Innovation and Digital Cooperation

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

70 minutes	Interactive Session <u>Moderators:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amal Kasry, Chief of Section for Basic Sciences, Research, Innovation and Engineering, UNESCO• Widad Mustafa El Hadi, Professor of Information and Communication Sciences at the University of Lille, France• Keith Holmes, Research Coordinator, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, UNESCO
10 minutes	Closing Remarks Amal Kasry, Chief of Basic Sciences, Research, Innovation and Engineering section, UNESCO.

Parallel Session 1.7: Youth and Future Generations

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizers: Bureau for Strategic Planning and Youth Section, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and Rationale

Future generations can be defined as ‘all those generations that do not yet exist, are yet to come and who will eventually inherit this planet’¹. Choices made today will have consequences for the 10 billion people yet to be born this century, most in low- and middle-income countries². While we have unprecedented capacity to understand the intergenerational impact of our decisions, a systematic and consequential approach to think, plan and act with future generations in mind is missing.

The Pact for the Future, just adopted at the UN General Assembly in New York, and notably its Declaration on Future Generations, give a new impetus to these concerns, in a quest to ensure a better today and tomorrow. It highlights the need to invest in social services for young people, promote equal opportunities, especially for the most marginalized, protect them from violence, foster social inclusion and promote meaningful youth participation in national policy and decision-making, as well as intergovernmental processes. In turn, the Declaration, which builds on the pioneering [1997 UNESCO Declaration on the Responsibility of the Present Generations towards Future Generations](#), aims to establish guiding principles and specific commitments to safeguard the interests of future generations. UNESCO has been contributing to reinforcing the focus on youth and responsibilities towards future generations, aiming at an ambitious Declaration anchored in human rights, resilience and an ethics of the future, integrating UNESCO’s unique capability-based approach to futures.

An approach to future generations is underpinned by science and innovation, treating data, education and knowledge as global public goods shared across generations, foresight and future-proofing, a valorization of plurality of voices and inclusive representation of youth and the interests of future generations in decision-making. The UN High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) have developed a set of [UN System Common Principles on Future Generations](#)³ to further advance action in this regard.

Concern for future generations is preconditioned on upholding the needs and rights of present generations, and thus is set in a context of Sustainable Development Goal acceleration. While youth are part of present generations, their lives extend further into the future than those of adults and they will be more affected by short-term thinking and poor decisions. According to the World Youth Report (2020), there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16% of the global population. By 2050, almost 30% of the world’s youth will be in sub-Saharan Africa⁴. However, youth are among those most affected by current crises. Young people across all regions are very worried about the climate emergency⁵ and 80% are vulnerable to depression and disillusionment⁶.

¹ <https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2022/09/Elements-Paper-Declaration-for-Future-Generations-09092022.pdf>

² [Our-common-agenda-policy-briefs-a-quick-summary.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

³ <https://unsceb.org/united-nations-system-common-principles-future-generations>

⁴ *World Youth Report*. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/10/WYR2020-Chapter2.pdf> (2020)

⁵ *Nature*. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02582-8> (2021)

⁶ [World Economic Forum, Global Risks Report \(2021\)](#)

Youth unemployment in Africa in 2020 was double that for adults⁷ and inclusion is a challenge: 4 million girls in sub-Saharan Africa will never attend school compared to 2 million boys⁸. Also, youth often find themselves at the margins of key processes, across regions. At the same time, as young people globally, African youth are shaping their future and possess innovative capacities to address socioeconomic challenges.

This **breakout session** will identify opportunities for cooperation between UNESCO Chairs, young people from Africa and beyond, UNITWIN Networks and other stakeholders to take the commitments of the Pact and the Declaration forward, to think and act with future generations in mind, and to contribute to implementation at local, national and regional levels for the African continent.

It will consider the role that researchers and other stakeholders can play in ensuring that knowledge, science, data and strategic foresight are leveraged and shared to safeguard the interests of future generations, and how intergenerational collaborations can be built. The Seminar will also explore how new, inclusive and diverse knowledge can be built, and innovative solutions fostered, with young people from the region, to drive long-term and forward-looking policies that cater to current and future generations alike. It will also discuss how education systems and life-long learning societies can be better built and tailored to knowledge-based societies in Africa and to the needs of young people today and in the future.

Provisional Agenda

Parallel Session 1.7: Youth and Future Generations	
30 September 2024 16:00 - 17:30	
10 minutes	<p>Moderator: Abdul Rahman Lamin, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO Harare</p> <p>Opening remarks: Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO (video message)</p>
40 minutes	<p>Moderator: Abdul Rahman Lamin, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO Harare</p> <p>Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Momanyi, Executive Director, Horn of Africa Youth Network, Kenya • Marleen Temmerman, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Youth Leadership in Science, Health, Gender and Education, Aga Khan University, Kenya <p>Kennedy Amone P’Olak, Lecturer, Gulu University, Uganda</p>
35 minutes	Comments and Questions
5 minutes	Closing remarks

⁷ 12.5% compared to 6.4% for adults. ILO. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_834081.pdf (2022)

⁸ 4 million girls in sub-Saharan Africa will never attend school compared to 2 million boys UNESCO. [New Methodology Shows that 258 Million Children, Adolescents and Youth Are Out of School](#) (2019)

Parallel Session 1.8: South-South Cooperation to Advance Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development in Africa and the Global South

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizer: UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC)

Co-organizer: United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and Rationale

Countries in the Global South share similar challenges when it comes to ensuring the role of higher education institutions in advancing sustainable development, such as lack or instability of funding for research, low academic mobility rates, and weak innovation ecosystems to connect science, research, and technology to communities. At the same time, there is great diversity among the Global South regions in terms of which sustainable development goals should be prioritized and what the main areas of concern are to ensure the right to higher education for all.

For instance, when comparing sub-regions in Asia and Africa, we find that from 2000 to 2020, the biggest regional increase in the gross enrolment rate in higher education was found in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (up 36%), and the smallest in Sub-Saharan Africa (up 5%)⁹. Numbers are similar, however, in the gross enrolment rate in 2020 for Northern Africa and Western Asia, and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, reaching between 48 and 54%, compared to 79% in Europe and Northern America in the same year¹⁰. Data from Sub-Saharan Africa on yearly research output shows rapid and strong growth over the past two decades. However, countries in the Global South with comparable levels of research output in 2003, such as Malaysia and Vietnam, grew faster over the same period¹¹. Regarding investment in research and development as a share of GDP, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States, South Asia, and Latin America have similar rates, ranging from 0.5 to 0.66, in contrast to a global rate of 1.79¹².

While the similar challenges pave the way for consensus-making and collaborative efforts toward common goals, major differences are also opportunities for positive exchanges among policymakers, academia, communities, and youth in different Global South regions and sub-regions. Horizontality and solidarity, as fundamental pillars of south-south cooperation, should facilitate and sharing of best practices, innovative solutions, and tailored strategies that address unique regional needs while fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.

Therefore, on this multistakeholder panel, we aim to discuss the significance of South-South cooperation as a strategic tool for advancing science, technology and innovation for sustainable development in Africa and the broader Global South; to facilitate dialogue among UNESCO Chairs, higher education institutions, students, and other partners to strengthen collaborative research and innovation networks and the transferability of STI beyond the academic sector; and explore how South-South partnerships can enhance educational programs, research training, and other academic and professional development opportunities the academic community, specially researchers and students in Africa and the other Global South regions.

⁹ World Bank, "A Decade of Development in Sub Saharan African Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Research"

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² UNESCO Science Report 2021

Provisional Agenda

Parallel Session 1.8: South-South Cooperation to Advance Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development in Africa and the Global South 30 September 2024 16:00 - 17:30	
10 minutes	Moderator: Ms. Bosen Lily Liu , Head of Partnership and UN Liaison, UNESCO IESALC Welcome and high-level opening remarks Importance of Higher Education in promoting SDGs across the Global South and inter-agency efforts on South-South University Cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Francesc Pedró, Director, UNESCO IESALC South-South cooperation as a relevant model for Africa and UNOSSC initiatives to support science, technology and innovation in the Global South <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang, Director a.i. United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)
10 minutes	Panel Discussion 1 <i>Establishing the baseline: What are the main challenges faced by higher education in Africa to develop and transfer STI for SDGs solutions?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyitayo Olatunde Olakanmi, Associate Professor & UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Manufacturing & Innovation Technologies (UCoSMIT), Botswana • Nomthandazo Ntlama-Makhanya, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair of Human Rights at University of Fort Hare, South Africa • Osman Abdulai Ayariga, All-Africa Students Union (AASU), Ghana
25 minutes	Panel Discussion 2 <i>Opportunities and good practices on South-South Cooperation.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osman Abdulai Ayariga, Policy Advisor, All-Africa Students Union (AASU) [Global Student Forum], Ghana • Li Li, Associate Professor at China Agricultural University (CAU), People's Republic of China • Eyitayo Olatunde Olakanmi, Associate Professor & UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Manufacturing & Innovation Technologies (UCoSMIT), Botswana • Antoine Kallab, Associate Director, Nature Conservation Center, American University of Beirut (AUB-NCC), Lebanon • Renato Esteban Operti Belando, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Hybrid Education Innovative Curriculum, Learning, Assessment and Educational Technologies, Universidad Católica, Uruguay; Senior Expert, UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Switzerland • Nomthandazo Ntlama-Makhanya, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair of Human Rights at University of Fort Hare, South Africa
25 minutes	Panel Discussion 3 <i>What further support is needed and can be provided? Avenues for improving south-south cooperation mechanisms and strategies among higher education institutions and other stakeholders in the Global South through the lens of Africa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomthandazo Ntlama-Makhanya, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair of Human Rights at University of Fort Hare, South Africa

Parallel Session 1.8: South-South Cooperation to Advance Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development in Africa and the Global South

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Renato Esteban Operti Belando, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Hybrid Education Innovative Curriculum, Learning, Assessment and Educational Technologies, Universidad Católica, Uruguay; Senior Expert, UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Switzerland• Osman Abdulai Ayariga, Policy Advisor, All-Africa Students Union (AASU), Ghana• Antoine Kallab, Associate Director, Nature Conservation Center, American University of Beirut (AUB-NCC), Lebanon• Li Li, Associate Professor at China Agricultural University (CAU), People's Republic of China• Eyitayo Olatunde Olakanmi, Associate Professor & UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Manufacturing & Innovation Technologies (UCoSMIT), Botswana
10 minutes	Q&A All participants
10 minutes	Ways Forward Moderator: Ms. Bosen Lily Liu , Head of Partnership and UN Liaison, UNESCO IESALC

Parallel Session 1.9: Science, Technology and Innovation Foresight for Countries in Africa

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizer: National Research University – Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Science and technology (S&T) play a significant role in social and economic development across the world. Technological advancements have dramatically changed various aspects of human life, including communication, transportation, healthcare, and entertainment. S&T has contributed to the development of newer, greener, and more sustainable technologies that enhance the quality of life and improve living standards. Being a tool for global leaders to address and resolve the most urgent problems to be resolved, S&T are of particular importance for development, including in African countries.

Africa has already a record of successful implementation of S&T foresight studies but there is a big room for activities in this area, e.g. with support by international organizations, which are among key players in promoting foresight worldwide.

The goal of this session is to introduce modern approaches toward S&T Foresight, discuss recent Foresight activities in African countries and stimulate new initiatives in introducing Foresight across the African continent.

Agenda

Parallel Session 1.9: Science, Technology and Innovation Foresight for Countries in Africa	
30 September 2024 16:00 - 17:30	
90 minutes	<p>Moderator: Alexander Sokolov, National Research University – Higher School of Economics (HSE), Russian Federation</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mlungisi Cele, CEO, National Advisory Council on Innovation, South Africa • Petrus Letaba, Professor, University of Pretoria, South Africa • Driss Guerraoui, Professor, University of Dakhla, Kingdom of Morocco • Jonathan Calof, UNESCO Chair on Anticipatory Systems for Innovation and Venture Creation, University of New Brunswick; University of Ottawa, Canada; National Research University – Higher School of Economics (HSE), Russian Federation; North-West University, South Africa • Tanja Hichert, Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Complex Systems and Transformative African Futures, Stellenbosch University, South Africa <p>Rapporteur: Tanja Hichert, Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Complex Systems and Transformative African Futures, Stellenbosch University, South Africa</p>

Parallel Session 1.10: Research Reimagined: AI's role in Africa's Future

30 September 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30

Organizer: Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation, Malaysia

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Africa's research ecosystems are at a pivotal moment, where the integration of Generative AI (Gen-AI) could significantly boost research productivity and innovation. This critical juncture arises from increasing global competition and the need to address pressing challenges like health disparities and climate change. Experts in academia and policymaking highlight that embracing AI technologies now is crucial to driving breakthroughs in these areas, ensuring that African researchers can compete and collaborate effectively on the global stage. To truly produce impactful results, AI must be applied in a way that respects and integrates diverse knowledge systems, ensuring the relevance of the findings.

By integrating Gen-AI technologies, researchers can overcome existing limitations, streamline processes, and produce findings that are truly impactful by addressing specific local needs and incorporating indigenous knowledge. However, it is essential to avoid the risk of generative AI replicating Westernized frameworks that may not align with regional contexts. To ensure research findings are genuinely impactful, AI must be adapted to the diverse local environmental and cultural contexts, promoting research that is both locally relevant and globally significant.

This session will provide an in-depth understanding of how Gen-AI is reshaping the research landscape in Africa, creating new opportunities for growth and development in areas such as innovation, knowledge generation, and capacity building. Growth refers to advancements in technology use, increased collaboration, and improved research efficiency, while development includes the creation of locally relevant solutions to regional challenges. However, these opportunities also come with risks, as Gen-AI could exacerbate inequalities by privileging certain knowledge systems over others.

This 90-minute session will explore the transformative potential of Generative AI in enhancing Africa's research ecosystems and sustainable development. Participants will gain insights into how AI can be leveraged to address regional challenges, drive innovation, and support sustainable growth across sectors. The session will include practical demonstrations, ethical discussions, and interactive activities, aligning with UNESCO's vision for transforming knowledge for Africa's future.

The primary aims of this session are to:

- Introduce the fundamentals and applications of Generative AI in research and development.
- Showcase practical examples and case studies relevant to Africa's context.
- Provide hands-on experience with AI tools.

Discuss ethical considerations and best practices for responsible AI use.

Agenda

Parallel Session 1.10: Research Reimagined: AI's role in Africa's Future	
30 September 2024 16:00 - 17:30	
90 minutes	<p>Moderator and opening remarks: Abtar Darshan Singh, UNESCO Chair on Harnessing Innovations in Technology to Support Teachers & Quality Learning, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU), Malaysia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maurice Nkusi, Head of Instructional Technology, Namibia University of Science & Technology, Namibia• Patrick Charland, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Curriculum Development, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada• Jonathan JS Kovilpillai, Program Manager, UNESCO Chair on Harnessing Innovations in Technology to Support Teachers and Quality Learning, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU), Malaysia• Janeth Kigobe, Programme Manager, UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education and Curriculum, Open University of Tanzania, United Republic of Tanzania• Huanhuan Wang, Beijing Normal University, People's Republic of China <p>Rapporteur: Abtar Darshan Singh.</p>

Plenary Panel Discussion: Futures of Higher Education in Africa

1 October 2024 | 9:00 - 10:00

Organizers: Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO and UNESCO Liaison Office to the African Union

CONCEPT NOTE**Context**

Higher education, a powerful force for the development of our societies, plays a key role in achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: indeed, it contributes to all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Historically, it has remained the weak link in the Africa's education systems. Notwithstanding, for several decades, donors and policymakers have prioritized primary and secondary education as the key to development and poverty reduction in Africa. It is only since the 1990s and 2000s that the importance of higher education for socio-economic development has regained prominence and become an integral part of the political agenda in African countries.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development positioned higher education as a major development sub-sector. At the regional level, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) detail the daunting development challenges in Africa. There is an imperative to empower young people and realize the potential of the demographic dividend for sustainable development.

A real challenge for Africa in the 21st century is the ability to develop a higher education sector that is relevant to the continent within an increasingly competitive global context. As an integral part of the global knowledge system, the continent must seek out, produce and adapt knowledge, knowledge infrastructure and skills to overcome its development challenges.

Rationale

Six years from the 2030 Agenda and one year from the end date of the African Union's Continental Education Strategy CESA 2016-2025, it is important to take stock of the progress made in higher education in Africa over the last decade. The panelists of this session will also examine the contributions of higher education in Africa to the major educational, scientific, technological, economic, social and societal challenges and opportunities of the coming decades. Among the major challenges that must mobilize scientific, research, and innovation stakeholders are peace, security and African integration; climate change, energy transition, sustainable and resilient agriculture, youth education and employment; Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, the Internet of Things, augmented reality; health and well-being; and industrialization. The responses to these challenges must combine both fundamental and applied research that will lead to scientific, technological, social and organizational innovations.

Objective

This session aims to analyze the current and future challenges facing higher education in Africa while presenting the progress made over the past decade. The panelists will be invited to present future scenarios and recommendations to be considered for high-quality higher education that aligns with the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Agenda

Plenary Panel Discussion: Futures of Higher Education in Africa 1 October 2024 9:00 - 10:00	
10 minutes	<p>Welcome/Introduction</p> <p>Abdoulaye Salifou, Chief, Education Sector, UNESCO Office in Addis Ababa</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO</p> <p><i>The address will explore how the future of higher education can be reimagined, referring to the report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, Reimagining our Futures Together: Towards a New Social Contract for Education. It will envisage the future landscape of higher education in Africa and how it can address today's pressing challenges by driving research, inclusive science and education as a common good.</i></p>
10 minutes	<p>Opening addresses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Ato Kora Tushune, State Minister for Higher Education, Ethiopia (tbc) • Souleymane Konaté, Secretary General, Conseil africain et malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur (CAMES), Burkina Faso.
25 minutes	<p>Round Table</p> <p>Moderator: Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO</p> <p><i>The panelists will reimagine higher education together, discuss how the future of higher education and visualize unknown possibilities, as well as the evolving role of higher education in addressing challenges faced by Africa and the whole of humanity. Panelists will discuss the futures of higher education in Africa and share their thinking on what and how higher education can contribute to transforming knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saidou Madougou, Director, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), the African Union Commission, Ethiopia • Mina Kleiche-Dray, Director of Research & Deputy Director, Department for Scientific Societies and Globalization, Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD) • Jouhaina Gherib, President, International Association of Universities, UNESCO Chair on Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa and Former President, University of Manouba, Tunisia • Alain Kiyindou, Regional Director, Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), Central Africa and the Great Lakes, Cameroon. • Elizabeth Colucci, Director for International Projects, OBREAL <p><i>Discussants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pauline Essah, Director of Research and Programmes, Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Plenary Panel Discussion: Futures of Higher Education in Africa 1 October 2024 9:00 - 10:00	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Openjuru, Coordinator, UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Learning, Vice-Chancellor of Gulu University, Uganda
10 minutes	Comments and Q&A All participants
5 minutes	Closing Remarks

Plenary Session: Overview of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029

1 October 2024 | 10:00 - 10:30

AGENDA

UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 will be introduced to outline key objectives, the five flagship programmes, and main expected outcomes for Africa.

90 minutes

Opening remarks: **Firmin Edouard Matoko**, Assistant Director-General for Priority Africa and External Relations, UNESCO (video message)

Presenter: **Mohamed Elfarnawany**, Director of Africa Division, UNESCO

Flagship Programmes

1. Campus Africa - **Stefania Giannini**, Assistant Director-General for Education UNESCO
2. General History of Africa - **Stefania Giannini**, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
3. Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development - **Lazare Eloundou Assomo**, Director of World Heritage, UNESCO
4. Harnessing New and Emerging Technologies for Sustainable Development in Africa - **Rita Bissoonauth**, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
5. Enhance Open Science, Innovation and Technology – UNESCO's Initiative Towards Open Access in Africa - **Shaofeng Hu**, Director, Division of Science Policy and Basic Sciences, UNESCO

PARALLEL SESSIONS II

Group A: Flagship Programmes of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029

Code 12

Parallel Session 2.1: Flagship Programme 1 | Campus Africa – Reinforcing Higher Education in Africa

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: Section for Higher Education, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The session on 'Unlocking Africa's Latent Knowledge and Youth Dividend through Campus Africa' is an opportunity to raise awareness around how this UNESCO Flagship can holistically support the modernization of Africa's higher education infrastructure in ways that advance the African Union vision outlined in [Agenda 2063 – 'The Africa We Want'](#) and unlock knowledge and capacities needed by Africa's young population.

Investments in applied research capacities, doctoral studies, academia-industry partnerships, and student mobility can go a long way to incubating future-oriented ideas, realizing breakthroughs and fully unlocking the continent's latent knowledge and youth dividend. A revitalized high technical education sector is also key to expanding opportunities to skill all students, especially young women, marginalized and refugee groups, for innovation, the transition to the world of work, and jobs of the future.

By presenting information on Campus Africa's aims, context and impactful interventions, and bringing together higher education institutions, AUC, RECs, UNESCO aims to garner the political will, regional and international cooperation, strategic partnerships and enabling conditions needed for the successful delivery of this Flagship initiative.

Rationale

Africa is a continent of opportunity, with the youngest population on the planet, growing innovation sectors and rising economic power. However Africa's population ([70% of whom are under 30](#)) continues to grow a rapid pace and is [expected to double to 2.5 billion people by 2050](#). With such a fast-growing population, the continent is challenged to tackle high levels of youth unemployment, to close skills gaps, to address the skills mismatch between higher education and industry demands, and to arrive at sustainable solutions for African development challenges that better harness the continent's endogenous talents, creativity and entrepreneurship potential.

The sheer size of the youth population requiring skills development opportunities and job-related support in a world characterized by digital and environmental transitions, and exposure to a hyper-connected future, requires action on several fronts. Employment creation, in part, will be dependent on the success of structural transformation and deeper regional integration within African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the capacities of higher and technical education institutions, in turn, to produce experts, innovation leaders and entrepreneurs in science, technology, agribusiness, the energy sector at the rate needed for economic growth according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2022).

Across the board, quality and transformative education at all levels will be indispensable to transforming Africa's explosive population growth into a 'demographic dividend.' But supporting societies and young people to be employment, entrepreneurship and innovation-ready, with a focus on green growth and sustainability areas, will also require heightened investments in higher education infrastructure and capacities for inter-disciplinary applied research, knowledge partnerships in key growth sectors, as well as more diverse and flexible learning pathways. Research, development, innovation and employability hubs within universities, polytechnics and technical colleges are already starting to lever multi-disciplinary academia-industry linkages and facilities, micro learning pathways and career counselling to this end.

Against this backdrop, no single university or higher education institution can go it alone. Multilateral partners, African research networks and higher education collaboration mechanisms must come together to support higher and tertiary education actors and universities, driven by a shared set of desired outcomes for Africa's youth, scholars, graduates and the applied research community.

UNESCO, in response to these challenges and trends, has developed the Flagship programme "Campus Africa", whose overall objective is to support Member States in their progress towards integrated, inclusive, and quality tertiary education systems and institutions, and to leverage its networks and convening power to bring partners together towards a revitalized, joined up higher education sector on the continent.

Steering a course for the future with Campus Africa

Campus Africa is a UNESCO Flagship programme operating within the framework of UNESCO's [Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029](#), and in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the [African Union 2063 Agenda - 'The Africa We Want'](#), in particular, its goal on "well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation".

As part of efforts to support African Member States in addressing present and future challenges for youth employment and sustainable development, the Campus Africa Flagship has the following pillars:

- **Pillar 1: Research Capacities.** Enhancing professional research management of African higher education institutions and increasing research outcomes with effective networking.
- **Pillar 2: Scholarships for Doctoral Programmes.** Facilitating mobility and equity through Campus Africa scholarships for PhD fieldwork.
- **Pillar 3: Employability & Advanced Higher Technical Education.** Improving relevance through youth skill development and employability in higher technical education.

Two further underlying priorities for Campus Africa serve as enabling components: robust quality assurance systems to underpin qualifications recognition decisions; and better-informed decision making with open data.

Key Orientations and Frameworks

The contents of this session are oriented by several key frameworks. The discussions follow up on **TES** commitment to mobilize governments and partners to rethink and transform education globally and are guided by the Higher Education Roadmap – 'Transforming Higher Education: A roadmap to advance towards 2030 and beyond', which was delivered by UNESCO at the WHEC2022, with the purpose of encouraging stakeholders to renew their strategies for transforming higher education. The roadmap provides a general reference to inspire flexible approaches responding to institutional, national, and regional needs in higher education.

The issues addressed are contextualized within the African higher education sector and reflect [UNESCO's global priority on Africa](#), and its contribution to the African Union (AU) Year of Education 2024 and specifically the theme: "Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa".

The session is also guided by the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its pledge to '[leave no one behind](#)', while taking into consideration the report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education '[Reimagining Our Futures Together: A new social contract for education](#)'.

Last, but not least, work at global level addressing the role of higher education institutions for achieving the 2030 Agenda is contextualized for the African higher education sector. This includes the report on '[Knowledge-driven actions: Transforming higher education for global sustainability](#)', prepared by UNESCO's Global Independent Expert Group.

Specific Aims and Objectives

The session will provide a general overview of, and define a forward-looking agenda for, **Campus Africa** in line with regional priorities and needs. More specifically, the session aims to generate discussion on:

- Practical ways in which Campus Africa can support the [African Union 2063 Agenda - 'The Africa We Want'](#), by unlocking latent knowledge and research that supports inclusive, sustainable growth in key green transition and technology sectors (agribusiness, energy and digital development) as the basis for decent work, productive employment and poverty reduction
- How Campus Africa can support intra-continental mobility through cooperation around applied research, support to doctoral studies and the coordination of different knowledge outputs
- Models for strengthening higher technical education capacities through investments and partner support to employability and innovation hubs
- What is at stake in countries efforts to strengthen their quality assurance and qualifications recognition mechanisms and how the Addis Regional Conventions can play a supporting role
- Data requirements underpinning the management of a revitalized higher education sector and evidence needed to mobilize technical and financial support and strategic partnerships.

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.1: Flagship Programme 1 Campus Africa – Reinforcing Higher Education in Africa	
1 October 2024 11:00 - 12:30	
90 minutes	<p><i>Welcome remarks</i></p> <p>Rita Bissoonauth, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office Addis Ababa</p> <p>Moderator: Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning, UNESCO</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul-André Calatayud, Representative for East Africa, Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), Kenya • Souleymane Konaté, Secretary General, Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Burkina Faso • Saidou Madougou, Director, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), African Union Commission, Ethiopia • Alain Kiyindou, Regional Director, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), Central and Great Lakes Africa, Cameroon <p><i>Closing remarks</i></p> <p>Mohamed Elfarnawany, Director of Africa Division, UNESCO</p> <p>Rapporteur: Carmela Salzano, Senior Project Officer, Section for Higher Education, UNESCO</p>

Parallel Session 2.2: Flagship Programme 2 | The General History of Africa –Rethinking Knowledge Systems and Education Through the General History of Africa

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: UNESCO Section for Global Citizenship and Peace Education and IBE

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and rationale

Historical thinking and practices can offer a central starting point for thinking about the present and the future. In particular, critical approaches to history that seek to understand the histories of those that have been silenced or made marginal opens a world of knowledges and experiences that are essential to reinvent and forge a future based on solidarity, equality and justice.

Addressing Africa’s challenges are closely tied to the continent’s ability to generate, share and use knowledge rooted in its own history, culture, and ways of being. Producing and using context-based knowledge that incorporates the richness of African cultures, languages, and traditions, can contribute to unlocking Africa’s suppressed potential, address the needs of the inextricably interconnected local and global communities and forge inclusive and sustainable futures.

Embarking on this knowledge transformation process involves challenging hegemonic knowledge systems and philosophies, and of knowledge production and dissemination, which continues to impact approaches to research and education systems. It requires recognition of multiple ways of knowing and being and the centering of African thinking, a commitment to learning about multiple pasts, recognizing multiplicity and different visions within Africa in an evolving and complex global context. This entails decolonizing knowledge about Africa’s history and its teaching and learning, as a starting point for realizing broader transformative change.

With this objective at heart, UNESCO spearheaded an initiative that started in 1964, to rewrite and retell Africa’s history, freeing it from distortions and falsehoods resulting from colonialism and Eurocentric assumptions. The initiative led to the publication of a [collection of 8 volumes](#) on the General History of Africa (GHA), written by Africans, from a pan-African perspective. The GHA marked a profound shift in the understanding of Africa’s past and in the study of Africa.

Following this, in 2009, African Union (AU) Member States considered it essential to continue producing new knowledge and perspectives on the GHA that responds to and anticipates the demands of African realities and challenges, and to teach and learn the GHA, particularly to the younger generations in Africa and its Diasporas, and to disseminate its narratives more broadly. The aim is to encourage profound self-knowledge, sense of pride in African culture and heritage, a clear understanding of Africa’s shared and diverse ties with its Diasporas and its connections and interactions towards the rest of the world, foster self-esteem and self-confidence for present and future transformative thinking and making of the continent. These objectives are enshrined in UNESCO’s Flagship Programme “The General History of Africa (GHA) as a catalyst for achieving Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda”.

Despite the immense contribution of this publication to the decolonization and questioning of historical narratives, this still does not always translate into effective and impactful teaching and learning practices on the African continent, among the diaspora and beyond. Teaching and learning the GHA can take on different forms and emphases across different times and geographical settings.

From teaching it within the subject of history, to fully mainstreaming it into policies, curricula and pedagogies, the GHA highlights how decolonizing the teaching of African history and education systems more broadly can be enacted.

National priorities, predominant international educational discourses and globally adopted frameworks raise questions and challenges about the ways in which the GHA can be taught and learned, and about the possibilities that it offers for system-wide education transformation.

Objectives

This parallel session will present the three new GHA volumes, particularly the newly published Volume X: Africa and its Diasporas, which together update and expand the existing GHA collection, focusing on the latest social, political and archaeological developments on the continent and its diaspora, and delve into the notion of Global Africa. Against the backdrop of this ongoing process of knowledge production, the panel will engage in a critical and forward-looking discussion of the relevance of decolonizing history to create a knowledge-based system that informs and shapes public policies with a view to addressing contemporary African and global challenges. It will discuss the importance of ensuring that transformed knowledge paves the way to transformed education systems and connects with the younger generations.

The session will explore different approaches for integrating the GHA into education across different contexts, mapping issues, tensions and opportunities, while identifying the connections between diverse cultures, practices and knowledge systems required for building just, peaceful, inclusive and collective futures.

It will present UNESCO’s Resource Pack for Mainstreaming the GHA into Education Systems and discuss its potential contribution to empowering Africa’s youth to think autonomously and critically, produce knowledge, innovate, and encourage a sense of pride in African identity, culture and heritage, to bolster self-esteem and self-confidence as foundations for self-appropriation and leadership over one’s destiny and that of the African continent, and over issues of both local and global significance in an increasingly interconnected complex world.

The session also aims to feed into the discussion about the work of the proposed UNITWIN Network on The General History of Africa, for which a thematic meeting will be held on Day 3, providing the basis for identifying strategies and actions to enhance collaboration and synergies between researchers, educators and policy makers to advance the production and the teaching and learning of new historical knowledge and perspectives.

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.2: Flagship Programme 2 The General History of Africa – [Rethinking Knowledge Systems and Education Through the General History of Africa]	
1 October 2024 11:00 - 12:30	
10 minutes	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mamadou Ndoye, Expert in Education Policies, former Minister of Education, Senegal
45 minutes	Panel Discussion Moderator: Cecilia Barbieri , Chief of the Section, Global Citizenship and Peace Education, UNESCO Panelists:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augustin Holl, Professor, Chair of the Scientific Committee for the drafting of new GHA volumes, Cameroon • Denise Bentrovato, Senior Researcher and Extraordinary Lecturer in History Education & Co-Director of the African Association for History Education, University of Pretoria, South Africa • Karine Silva, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Education towards Racial Equality, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil • Lily Mafela, History and History Education Specialist, Dean Faculty of Education, University of Botswana, Botswana
25 minutes	Comments and Q&A All participants
5 minutes	Wrap-up and Ways Forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renato Opertti, Senior Expert, UNESCO-IBE
5 minutes	Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mamadou Ndoye, Expert in Education Policies, former Minister of Education of Senegal

References/Resources

General History of Africa (GHA) Volumes

Hutchinson, Yvette, et. Al (2023). *Decolonizing Education for Sustainable Futures*.

Lopez, Ann and Singh, Herveen (ed.) (2024). *Decolonizing Educational Knowledge, International Perspectives and Contestations*

Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. UNESCO, Paris, UNESCO, 2021

Parallel Session 2.3. Flagship Programme 3 | Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development – Innovative Partnerships in Culture: Building Bridges for Sustainable and Socio-economic Development in Africa

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

With a view to addressing the growing challenges facing cultural property in Africa and focusing on ‘the central role of culture at the very heart of development issues’, UNESCO launched a major initiative - Global Priority Africa in 1989. The adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in line with the Moonshot 5 ‘to ensure an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics of the Agenda 2063: “The Africa We Want”, embedded on a pan-African vision, further highlight the shared ambition to place culture at the heart of sustainable development policies.

As part of UNESCO’s Global Priority Africa, Flagship Programme 3 “Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development” seeks to empower youth, women, local communities to protect and promote the rich cultural heritage of Africa, based on the national needs identified through consultations with Member States, experts, relevant partners, and local communities, to support local livelihoods and boost socio-economic growth for Africa’s future, focusing on two main objectives:

1. Supporting African Member States in World Heritage capacity building, particularly for nominations and the removal of sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger; and
2. Strengthening African Member States’ capacities in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property, return and restitution requests, and the preservation and promotion of collections and museums.

Africa has the youngest population in the world, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30. This provides a unique opportunity to adapt traditional models of knowledge and promote a new approach to research and knowledge-based economies in the African continent that can be funnelled into safeguarding and promoting the rich and diverse tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and the importance of the return and restitution of cultural property.

By encouraging interdisciplinary, academic and collaborative research in Africa, as well as active partnerships between UNESCO Chairs, African universities, experts’ networks, museums and international partners, this collective approach aims to have a significant impact on the preservation and promotion of Africa’s cultural heritage and its creative industries, while enabling the development of new platforms of exchange and artistic creation for the local communities. Indeed, strong partnerships with local networks of actors and experts are key to advance on innovative approaches to the development of projects and cultural policies and promoting innovation and development, through a more inclusive and effective South-South and South-North partnerships.

Objective

The proposed panel session will examine the current panorama of Africa’s cultural and creative sectors, allowing to exchange on innovative policies and frameworks that could contribute to the preservation of Africa’s cultural heritage. Panellists will be discussing the role of education, regional networking, and of capacity building activities to develop a skilled new generation of experts, including the importance of building bridges between higher education institutions and partners, in

the private and public sectors, in Africa and abroad.

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.3. Flagship Programme 3 Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development – Innovative Partnerships in Culture: Building Bridges for Sustainable and Socio-economic Development in Africa	
1 October 2024 11:00 - 12:30	
90 minutes	<p>Moderator: Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of World Heritage Centre, UNESCO</p> <p><i>Opening remarks</i></p> <p>H.E. Nasise Challi Jira, Minister of Tourism, Ethiopia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ababa Ayalew, Director General, Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH), Ethiopia• Henry Chiwaura, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Preservation and Promotion of cultural heritage for national development, Mzuzu University, Malawi• Susan Keitumetse, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on African Heritage Studies and Sustainable Development, University of Botswana, Botswana• Hamady Bocoum, Director, Black Civilizations Museum, Senegal• Chimbidzikai Mapfumo, National Professional Officer, UNESCO Regional Field Office for Southern Africa <p>Closing remarks: Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of World Heritage Centre, UNESCO</p> <p>Rapporteur: Cristina Cusenza, Associate Project Officer for Culture, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa</p>

Parallel Session 2.4: Flagship Programme 4 | Strengthening Regional and International Collaboration on Artificial Intelligence Research and Innovation

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: UNESCO Liaison Office for the Africa Union, Ethiopia.

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and Rationale

The African Union (AU) has recently developed the [Continental Artificial Intelligence continental strategy](#), in line with the [African Union's Agenda 2063](#) and strategies for digital transformation, science, technology and innovation. The Strategy proposes fifteen action areas, which **including promoting research and innovation in AI through partnerships between academia and the private and public sectors**. This action area aims at promoting the development of challenge-driven AI research in priority areas, through collaboration between the research community and the public and private sectors.

There is still relatively little research and development in AI in Africa. This means that AI applications developed in other regions are likely to lack contextual relevance, particularly in terms of cultural and infrastructural factors, and will not be fit for purpose in Africa. Continuous African-led research is needed to: (a) assess new risks arising from AI development and use in Africa; (b) evaluate the efficacy of governance tools to promote the development and use of AI systems that are inclusive, fair, sustainable and just; (c) review best practices in AI governance coming out of similar country contexts worldwide; (d) co-develop policy innovations with policy-makers and stress test them in a safe environment; and (e) support regulatory sandboxing initiatives. Furthermore, in line with Flagship Programme 4 of the [Operational Strategy for Priority Africa](#), there is a need to improve the capacity of African countries in the implementation of AI; assess the impact of AI on individuals, societies and the environment; build multiple partnerships to support the ethical application of AI; and use AI to address environmental challenges in Africa and strengthen gender equality in the design and use of AI.

Objective

Encourage research and innovation in AI through partnerships between academia and the private and public sectors; Strengthening regional and international collaboration on AI research and innovation; Increasing collaboration and conduct responsible AI research and innovation; Facilitate access for African researchers and innovators to global knowledge exchange and capacity-building programs through collaborations with the global academic and innovation ecosystems to address development challenges.

Questions to be addressed

- How to stimulate scientific research in AI within African universities in the context of the adoption of the new AU AI strategy?
- What scientific and academic agenda for AI in Africa?
- What educational engineering and skills for researchers?
- What regional and global collaborations should be put in place to prevent Africa from being left behind in the AI battle?
- What investments should be made to support R&D in AI and the promotion of African AI start-ups?

- How to raise awareness of lecturers and researchers as well as students on the ethical and legal aspects of AI within African universities?
- What strategies to strengthen the gender dimension and inclusion in AI?

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.4: Flagship Programme 4 | Strengthening Regional and International Collaboration on Artificial Intelligence Research and Innovation

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

90 minutes

Moderator: **Lydia Gachungi**, Communication and Information Regional Adviser, UNESCO Addis Ababa Liaison Office, Ethiopia

Opening remarks

Rita Bissoonauth, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office to the African Union and Representative to Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Speakers

- **Sit Fung**, Chief, International Institute of Online Education (IIOE), UNESCO International Centre for Higher Education Innovation, People's Republic of China
- **Lishan Adam**, Research ICT Africa Network, Ethiopia
- **Souhila Amazouz**, Senior ICT Policy Office, Department of Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission, Ethiopia
- **Abdoulaye Salifou**, Chief of Education, UNESCO Liaison Office Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **Taye Girma**, Deputy Director General, Ethiopia Artificial Intelligence Institute, Ethiopia

Rapporteur: **Lydia Gachungi**.

Parallel Session 2.5. Flagship Programme 5 | Enhance Open Science, Innovation and Technology – UNESCO’s Initiative Towards Open Infrastructure in Africa

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: Section of Basic Sciences, Innovation and Engineering, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Open Science is still a great challenge for Africa. This includes access to information, data, and state-of-the-art laboratory equipment. Many highly skilled scientists feel compelled to seek career opportunities abroad, resulting in a brain drain.

This session will explore the challenges of Open Science in Africa and highlight how UNESCO's “Remote Access to Lab Equipment” initiative is helping to overcome resource shortages. This initiative aims to bridge the knowledge gap between the Global North and South by providing greater access to scientific resources.

The session will highlight the partnerships and success stories of the “Remote Access to Lab Equipment” initiative and motivate African researchers to participate. Additionally, it seeks to encourage Member States to support the initiative, enabling UNESCO to reach as many researchers in Africa as possible.

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.5. Flagship Programme 5 Enhance Open Science, Innovation and Technology – UNESCO’s Initiative Towards Open Infrastructure in Africa	
1 October 2024 11:00 - 12:30	
90 minutes	<p>Moderators: Shaofeng Hu, Director, Division of Science Policy and Basic Sciences, UNESCO and Amal Kasry, Chief of Section for Basic Science, Research, Innovation and Engineering, UNESCO</p> <p><i>Opening remarks</i></p> <p>Shaofeng Hu</p> <p><i>Keynote</i></p> <p>Amal Kasry</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyitayo Olatunde Olakanmi, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Manufacturing and Innovation Technologies, Botswana International University of Science and Technology, Botswana • Grace Chibiko Offorma, Professor of Curriculum Studies, University of Nigeria, Nigeria • Widad Mustafa El Hadi, Professor of Information Science, University of Lille, France <p>Closing remarks: Shaofeng Hu</p>

Group B - Envisaging Africa's Future: Implications for Africa's Research Ecosystems

Code 17

Parallel Session 2.6: Transforming Research for Just and Sustainable African Futures – Towards New Ecologies of Knowledge

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: University of Bristol

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

As Mbembe (2023) has argued, addressing the challenges of the 21st Century, including climate change, inequality, the threats posed by global pandemics such as COVID-19 and the opportunities and risks associated with the rise of new technologies, requires the development of a new planetary consciousness that recognizes the interconnectedness of all living things. Such a consciousness would require decentering existing dominant models of knowledge and research and instead expanding the knowledge commons to include 'all of the archives of the world', including community-based and Indigenous Knowledge systems that have been neglected and marginalized, for example through European colonialism.

The African Union's [Agenda 2063](#) and [Continental Education Strategy for Africa \(2016-25\)](#) make a strong case for African-led research to address the challenges of unsustainable development on the continent. The report of the Sahle-Work Commission entitled [Reimagining our Futures Together: Towards a New Social Contract for Education](#) makes a powerful case for inter- and transdisciplinary research that can integrate diverse knowledge systems to produce new ecologies of knowledge urgently required to realize more just and sustainable futures. Important here is the need to shift from dominant 'extractivist' modes of research (Shiva, 2005) and embrace knowledge co-creation between researchers, communities, policymakers and practitioners to generate research relevant to the needs of African communities (Tikly, 2024).

Yet, creating new ecologies of knowledge raises methodological challenges involved in integrating diverse knowledge systems. These include overcoming power imbalances between academic and non-academic participants in the research process and integrating diverse knowledge cultures (Lepore et al., 2023). It also involves engaging with and seeking to transform the wider research ecosystem that is characterized by power imbalances between Northern and African partners reinforced by legal and regulatory frameworks, the predominance of Northern theories and methodologies as well as inequalities in access to research funding and publishing opportunities (Aboderin et al., 2023; Odora Hoppers, 2022).

This panel aims to better understand how existing research ecosystems can be transformed to generate new ecologies of knowledge relevant to achieving just and sustainable African futures, for Africa and beyond. In realizing this aim, the panel will bring together leading scholars from Africa and the diaspora to address the following questions: 'What is the colonial legacy in research on the African continent? How can new ecologies of knowledge be co-created between academic and non-academic partners? How can the wider research ecosystem be transformed to support African-led research? What can a distinctly African approach to research contribute to global understanding?

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.6: Transforming Research for Just and Sustainable African Futures – Towards New Ecologies of Knowledge

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

90 minutes

Moderator: **Leon Tikly**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Transforming Knowledge and Research for Just and Sustainable Futures, University of Bristol, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Keynote

Catherine Odora Hoppers, Research Professor in Pluralistic Societies: Transdisciplinarity, Cognitive Justice and Education, University of Calgary; Professor of Education, Gulu University, Uganda

- **Moira Faul**, Senior Lecturer, Geneva Graduate Institute and Executive Director, NORRAG, Switzerland
- **Rajesh Tandon**, UNESCO Co-Chair on Community-based Research & Social Responsibility in Higher Education, Founder-Dean, PRIA International Academy, India
- Pauline Essah, Director of Research and Programmes, Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Closing remarks

George Openjuru, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Learning, Vice-Chancellor of Gulu University, Uganda

Rapporteur: Leon Tikly, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Transforming Knowledge and Research for Just and Sustainable Futures, University of Bristol, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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Parallel Session 2.7. Embracing Diversity for Africa's Future: Integrating African Knowledge Systems in Education in Africa

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: University of Ghana

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The urgent and ongoing debate on the incorporation of African philosophies into the education system, in contrast to the dominance of Western educational philosophies, is a pivotal issue in Ghana and other African countries. This discussion is shaping the future of education in the continent, with the goal of creating a more inclusive and culturally relevant approach to learning (Amponsah, 2023; Amponsah & Babarinde, 2022).

The rationale behind this panel discussion is the recognition that Africa's education system predominantly emphasizes Western educational philosophies, potentially overlooking the country's rich Indigenous knowledge and traditions. By exploring the potential benefits of incorporating authentic African frameworks into education, the discussion aims to instill a sense of optimism about the importance of cultural relevance in shaping educational policies and practices in Africa.

The panel discussion aims to promote cultural diversity within the African education system by recognizing the *value of Indigenous philosophies* alongside Western ideologies. The panel strongly advocates for integrating African frameworks into education at all levels, aiming to enhance lifelong learning opportunities for students, ensuring that education *is informative and culturally enriching*. These aims align with the UN SDG and AU Agenda 2063. Specifically, Indicator 4.7 of the SDGs, among other things, encourages global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. Besides, the AU 2063 holds an ambitious desire that highlights the importance of indigenous education as part of a broader strategy to promote cultural heritage, integrate traditional knowledge with modern education, preserve African languages, and contribute to sustainable development.

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.7. Embracing Diversity for Africa's Future: Integrating African Knowledge Systems in Education in Africa	
1 October 2024 11:00 - 12:30	
90 minutes	<p>Moderator: Samuel Amponsah, Associate Professor, University of Ghana, Ghana</p> <p><i>Keynote</i></p> <p>Kewulay H. Kamara, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Futures Education, University of Makeni, Sierra Leone</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winnie V. Mitullah, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Women and Community Health, University of Nairobi, Kenya • Wangoola-Wangoola Ndawula, Nabyama (Founder), Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity in Busoga Kingdom, Uganda • Darla K. Deardorff, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competences, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Parallel Session 2.7. Embracing Diversity for Africa's Future: Integrating African Knowledge Systems in Education in Africa

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Rapporteur: **Samuel Amponsah**

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Parallel Session 2.8. Rethinking the Curriculum: The Need for Endogenous Education in the 21st Century (Parts 1 and 2)

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizers: African Curriculum Association in collaboration with UNESCO IBE and Organisation of Southern Cooperation (OSC)

CONCEPT PAPER

Background

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping minds, developing perspectives and broadening of minds. Education is also a place where the debate and ideas on world views should take place to develop a better world for future generation. It should offer opportunities to all learners to be able to engage, collaborate, explore and evolve.

However, In the 21st century, education systems worldwide face the challenge of remaining relevant and inclusive in increasingly diverse and interconnected societies. Existing curricula often reflect a Eurocentric bias, marginalizing the rich cultural diversity and indigenous knowledge systems that exist globally.

This concept paper explores the theme within the above purpose of education and the role endogenous education can play in doing so. Education informed by Endogenous knowledge emphasizes on integrating local knowledge, traditions, and perspectives into the educational framework to create culturally relevant and sustainable learning environments; education which is balanced and inclusive , enhance cultural introspection for a more complete understanding of inter-indebtedness and interdependence of cultures, empower local communities, foster critical thinking encouraging problem posting dialogue where learners are seen as the ‘ protagonist’ rather than mere recipients of knowledge , promote environmental stewardship, and leverage technology for educational advancement.

Endogenous education offers a pathway to address these shortcomings by integrating local knowledge, traditions, and perspectives into the educational framework. By emphasizing the importance of local contexts, endogenous education challenges the dominance of Eurocentric content and promotes a more balanced and inclusive educational experience.

Moreover, Endogenous education, also, offers a transformative approach by bridging between academic and non - academic knowledge Moreover, integrating sustainable development goals and leveraging technology to preserve indigenous knowledge are critical steps towards creating holistic educational experiences. These initiatives equip students with the skills and values necessary to address global challenges while respecting and preserving and drawing from local ecosystems and cultural heritage.

Central to the success of implementing endogenous education is community participation and collaboration. By engaging local communities in curriculum design and educational practices, we ensure that education is responsive to the specific needs and aspirations of diverse populations.

It requires concerted efforts from educators, policymakers, communities, and stakeholders to dismantle existing barriers and co-create educational systems that are inclusive, relevant, and sustainable.

The technological advancements and globalization of the 21st century further highlight the inadequacies of traditional curricula. While technology offers new opportunities for learning and knowledge preservation, it is often not utilized to its full potential in integrating indigenous

knowledge and practices into the educational framework. Additionally, the current educational systems do not adequately involve local communities in the curriculum design process, resulting in education that is not fully responsive to the specific needs and contexts of the communities it serves.

Given these challenges, there is an urgent need to rethink the curriculum to include endogenous education. Endogenous education emphasizes the integration of local knowledge, traditions, and perspectives, making education more culturally relevant, inclusive, and sustainable. By addressing the gaps and limitations of existing curricula, we can create educational systems that are more equitable and responsive to the diverse needs of all learners, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and sustainable future.

The purpose of this concept paper which will be the base document for proposed parallel sessions on the above referred theme is to explore the rationale, need and significance of integrating endogenous knowledge into the current educational systems as well as challenges in doing so. *The session would also deliberate on the way forward in a systemic manner for integration of endogenous education in rethinking curriculum.*

Need/Relevance of Integrating Endogenous Knowledge into Curriculum / Educational Systems

The need is to create educational systems that are more inclusive, relevant, and sustainable, addressing the needs of diverse student populations and fostering a more equitable and just society. By focusing on these goals, endogenous education can transform curricula to better serve the needs of students and communities in the 21st century.

Enhance Cultural Relevance and Inclusivity

- *Develop culturally reflective curricula:* Ensure that educational content represents the cultural, social, and historical contexts of students, incorporating local knowledge, traditions, and perspectives.
- *Promote multilingual education:* Encourage the use and preservation of indigenous languages within the educational system, fostering linguistic diversity and cultural pride.

Empower Local Communities

- *Increase community involvement in education:* Actively engage local communities in the development and implementation of curricula, ensuring that education is responsive to their needs and contexts.
- *Strengthen the role of education in community development:* Utilize education as a tool for community empowerment, addressing local issues and promoting sustainable development.

Foster Critical Thinking and Global Competence

- *Encourage critical engagement:* Develop students' ability to critically engage with both local and global issues, fostering analytical skills and a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.
- *Prepare students for global citizenship:* Equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate and contribute to a globalized world while maintaining a strong sense of local identity.

Promote Environmental Stewardship

- *Integrate environmental education:* Incorporate sustainability practices and environmental education at all levels of schooling, teaching students about ecological responsibility and sustainable living.
- *Cultivate ecological citizenship:* Foster a sense of responsibility towards the environment, encouraging students to become active participants in sustainable development.

Leverage Technology for Education

- *Utilize digital tools:* Employ technology to enhance learning experiences, preserve and promote indigenous knowledge, and create inclusive and accessible educational resources.
- *Ensure equitable access to technology:* Address the digital divide by providing all students with access to technological resources, ensuring that technology-enhanced learning benefits everyone equally.

Expected Outcomes

These anticipated outcomes demonstrate the transformative potential of rethinking the curriculum making endogenous knowledge an integral part of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in the following ways:

Increased Cultural Relevance in Education

- Development of curricula that are more reflective of and responsive to the cultural, social, and historical contexts of students.
- Promotion of linguistic diversity through the revitalization and integration of indigenous languages in educational settings.

Empowerment of Local Communities

- Enhanced collaboration and partnership between educational institutions and local communities in curriculum development and implementation.
- Strengthened sense of community ownership and engagement in educational processes and outcomes.

Enhanced Critical Thinking and Global Competence

- Improved ability of students to critically analyze and engage with diverse perspectives, issues, and challenges.
- Preparation of students for active participation in a globalized world, with a strong understanding of local identities and global citizenship.

Promotion of Environmental Stewardship

- Integration of sustainable development goals into educational practices, fostering a culture of environmental awareness and responsibility.
- Implementation of practical initiatives within schools and communities to promote sustainable living practices and ecological literacy.

Advancement in Technology and Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge

- Increased use of digital tools and platforms to document, preserve, and share indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.
- Improvement in digital literacy skills among students and educators, enhancing access to culturally relevant educational resources.

Community-Centered Educational Systems

- Development of inclusive and community-responsive educational systems that prioritize local needs, knowledge, and traditions.
- Creation of learning environments that foster respect for cultural diversity and promote social cohesion within communities.

Policy and Systemic Changes

- Influence on educational policies and practices at local, national, and international levels to promote inclusive and culturally responsive education.
- Adoption of frameworks and guidelines that support the integration of endogenous education principles into mainstream educational systems.

Long-term Impact and Sustainability

- Sustainable impact on educational practices and outcomes, leading to continuous improvement in the quality and relevance of education.
- Long-lasting benefits for students, communities, and societies, contributing to social equity, cultural preservation, and sustainable development goals.

Features of the Session

Objectives

- Enhance understanding on endogenous knowledge and its relevance in advancing balanced and inclusive education
- Sharing ongoing initiatives around integration of endogenous knowledge into curricular reforms
- Taking stock of challenges and learnings
- Deliberating around Way forward

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the session participants would be able to

- Appreciate the relevance of endogenous knowledge into curriculum transformation
- Learn about the current initiatives across countries, challenges as well as key learnings
- Understand the key strategies to be deployed to integrating endogenous knowledge into the process of curriculum transformation

Methodology

The session will include the following:

- **Keynote Address.**
- **Panel Discussions** on significance of Endogenous knowledge, challenges in incorporating endogenous knowledge into curriculum transformation, ongoing endeavors to do so.
- **Way Forward** in terms of concrete action points for making endogenous knowledge an integral part of Curriculum transformation.

Target Audience

- Curriculum developers, policy makers, educators, teachers, etc.
- Larger group of stakeholders – community, parents, etc.
- National, international/ bilateral and multilateral organizations.

Agenda (Part 1)

Parallel Session 2.8: Rethinking the Curriculum: The Need for Endogenous Education in the 21 st Century (Part 1)	
1 October 2024 11:00 - 12:30	
15 minutes	<p>Moderator: Jacqueline Onyango, Vice Chairperson, African Curriculum Association (ACA), and Deputy Curriculum Director, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, Kenya.</p> <p>Welcome: Ali Kore, Chairperson African Curriculum Association (ACA) and Director General, Chad National Curriculum Centre, Chad</p> <p>Opening Remarks: Svein Oesttveit, Director a.i., UNESCO International Bureau for Education</p> <p>Introduction of participants, the session and session dynamics: Gertrude Namubiru, Secretary General African Curriculum Association (ACA) - National Curriculum Development Centre, Uganda</p>
30 minutes	<p>Keynote speech: Endogenous education and its significance</p> <p>H.E. Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam, Saudi Arabia, The Secretary-General of Organization of Southern Cooperation (OSC)</p>
45 minutes	<p>Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shubhangi Sharma, Indian, USG, Dept of SEED, Organization of Southern Cooperation (OSC), Ethiopian, Head of Planning, OSC Institute, Organization of Southern Cooperation • Offorma Grace, Member of ACA Executive Committee, President of Curriculum Organization of Nigeria, Nigeria • Thomas Osei Kumah, Member of ACA, Curriculum Specialist, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ghana <p>Rapporteur: Kakooza Abdulaziz, ACA member, Curriculum Specialist, National Curriculum Development Centre, Uganda</p>

Agenda (Part 2)

Thematic Meeting 2.10. Rethinking the Curriculum: The Need for Endogenous Education in the 21 st Century (Part 2)	
2 October 2024 14:30 - 16:00	
20 minutes	<p>Moderator: Jacqueline Onyango</p> <p><i>The future of Endogenous education</i></p> <p>Loyce Chasale Curriculum Specialist, African Curriculum Association (ACA) - Malawi institute of Education, Malawi</p>
30 minutes	<p><i>Needed actions to ensure that endogenous knowledge gets necessary legitimacy in the process of educational transformation for the 21st century)</i></p> <p>Shubhangi Sharma, Under Secretary General, Dept of SEED, OSC</p>

Thematic Meeting 2.10. Rethinking the Curriculum: The Need for Endogenous Education in the 21st Century (Part 2)

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

20 minutes	Comments and Q&A Moderator: Gertrude Namubiru All participants: Individual reflection and development of a personal action plan to implement endogenous education practices.
20 minutes	<i>Summarizing of Key Points and Insights from the and Wrap Up</i> Paul S. Mushi , Associate Professor in Education, Curriculum and Instruction at the Jordan University College (JUCo) in Morogoro, Tanzania; Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at JUCo.

Parallel Session 2.9. Learning Counts: Spotlight on Basic Education Completion and Foundational Learning in Africa

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The Spotlight Series developed in partnership between the Global Education Monitoring Report, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the African Union (AU) leverages research and analysis on foundational learning and basic education completion to influence policy decisions and support policy dialogue across Africa. It shows that, at most, one in five children who reach the end of primary school in Africa achieve the minimum proficiency level required to continue their education and fulfil their potential.

Echoing the ambitions of the AU Year of Education, a 90- minute session during the UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum will draw on the Spotlight research to position foundational learning in the context of the Forum’s ambition to envisage a transformative future for Africa. It will demonstrate the importance of building education systems that equip students to become effective change agents; citizens who will help build the continent’s sustainable development as envisioned by the AU and its 2063 Agenda.

The 2022 Spotlight report, [Born to Learn](#), synthesized evidence on completion rates and levels of minimum learning proficiency in the continent, informing the debate on national SDG 4 / CESA benchmarks. It draws on five country reports covering the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), [Ghana](#), [Mozambique](#), [Rwanda](#) and [Senegal](#) and a series of case studies from all African regions. The second report, [Learning Counts](#), released in May 2024 examines how countries align their mathematics curriculum, textbooks, teacher support and assessment – with reference to the Global Proficiency Framework for Mathematics. The report draws on country reports from Mauritania, [Uganda](#), [Zambia](#), and [South Africa](#), country research in Niger and a series of case studies from across the continent.

The session will feature the latest policy analysis on successful practices drawing from the Spotlight series; it will inform of existing African Union peer learning mechanisms for collaboration on the continent being bolstered by the Spotlight research - key pillars for creating the strong, prosperous, inclusive and cohesive future we all desire. Interventions from UNESCO Chairs, academics and foundational learning champions from across the continent will unpack some of the key themes from the most recent Spotlight report including teacher preparation and support and initiatives to reach the most marginalized learners.

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.9. Learning Counts: Spotlight on Basic Education Completion and Foundational Learning in Africa	
1 October 2024 11:00 - 12:30	
5 mins	Welcome remarks Dmitri Sanga , Director, UNESCO Office in Dakar and Regional Bureau for Education

Parallel Session 2.9. Learning Counts: Spotlight on Basic Education Completion and Foundational Learning in Africa

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

10 minutes	<p>Presentation of Learning Counts 2024 Spotlight Report</p> <p>Pierre Gouédard, Senior Project Officer (Data & Analysis), Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO</p>
10 minutes	<p>Situating foundational learning at the heart of the AU Year of Education</p> <p>Sophia Ndemutilla Ashipala, Head of Education Division, Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), African Union Commission</p>
10 minutes	<p>Teacher training and support to deliver foundational learning in the classroom</p> <p>Elifas Tozo Bisanda, UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education and Curriculum, The Open University of Tanzania, United Republic of Tanzania</p>
10 minutes	<p>The right to basic education in South Africa</p> <p>Faranaaz Veriava, Head of Education Rights and Acting Co-Executive Director at SECTION27, representing UNESCO Chair Education Law in Africa, South Africa</p>
10 minutes	<p>Coming to Age</p> <p>Marleen Temmerman, UNESCO Chair on Youth Leadership in Science, Health, Gender and Education, Aga Khan University, Kenya</p>
30 minutes	<p>Interactive discussion with audience</p> <p>Dmitri Sanga, Director, UNESCO Dakar Regional Office</p>
5 minutes	<p>Closing remarks, Dmitri Sanga, Director, UNESCO Office in Dakar and Regional Bureau for Education</p>
	<p>Session rapporteur: Pierre Gouédard, Senior Project Officer (Data & Analysis), Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO</p>

Resources

[Spotlight Report series](#)

2024 Spotlight on basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa [Learning Counts](#)

Parallel Session 2.10. Assessing AI Research and Innovation Capacities for Africa's Leapfrogging in the 4th Industrial Revolution

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

Organizer: Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO Nairobi Regional Office.

Co-organizer: Natural Science Sector, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

UNESCO developed a [Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#), which has been adopted by 193 countries to ensure Artificial Intelligence (AI) delivers fair, sustainable, and inclusive outcomes. The Recommendation sets out values and principles based on protecting human rights and dignity and translates them into specific policy areas and recommendations for governments, premised on the belief that self-regulation, which has until now remained the norm, is insufficient. It provides UNESCO's support towards a policy and regulatory approach recognizing that countries are at different stages of AI development, with a view to formulating and delivering targeted policy support for different countries.

Aware of the significant difference, capacities and approaches across regions in building regulations, strengthening institutional capacities, but also to assess research, development and innovation gaps in country's journeys towards development, adoption, deployment and use of AI, UNESCO has developed a [Readiness Assessment Methodology](#) to assist them in "identifying their status at specific moments of their readiness trajectory along a continuum of dimensions".

The Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) encompasses five dimensions: Legal and Regulatory, Social and Cultural, Economic, *Scientific and Educational*, and Technological and Infrastructural. Each dimension is broken down into sub-categories containing qualitative and quantitative indicators and sub-indicators for a cohesive assessment. In addition to providing rich information about the status of individual countries, the RAM also provide comparative information for countries to learn from each other.

This session will allow a robust conversation to outline challenges and opportunities for research and innovation for AI and emerging technologies to enhance the development of the continent. It will bring forward tangible perspectives from recently concluded RAMs supported by UNESCO, while inviting bold insights from academia, including UNESCO Chairs, but also from government-led institutions and other relevant partners and stakeholders.

The session will identify concrete steps forward and provide recommendations for securing Africa leapfrogging in the 4IR, allowing a step forward from the RAM Report to the operationalization of key recommendations emerging from analysis under its *Scientific and Educational Dimension*. This Session will also offer a swift follow-up to the recently concluded Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Forum on Artificial Intelligence (24-26 June 2024), and to the [Nairobi Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies in Eastern Africa](#) that was adopted on 26 June 2024, and more precisely to its recommendations on "Research, Development and Innovation".

Agenda

Parallel Session 2.10. Assessing AI Research and Innovation Capacities for Africa's Leapfrogging in the 4th Industrial Revolution

1 October 2024 | 11:00 - 12:30

90 minutes

Moderators: **Hugue Ngandeu Ngatta**, Programme Specialist for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, UNESCO and **Yoslan Nur**, Programme Specialist for Natural Sciences Regional Office for Eastern Africa, UNESCO

Speakers

- **Diana Nyakundi**, Research Fellow at Research ICT Africa, Lead National Researcher for the Readiness Assessment Methodology, Kenya
- **Claude Migisha**, Digital Development Expert, Lead National Expert for the Readiness Assessment Methodology, Rwanda
- **Joyce Nakatumba-Nabende**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Computer Science, Makerere University, Uganda
- **Andrew Masila**, Innovation, IT Research and Development Lead, Safaricom, Kenya
- **Sharola Odipo**, Founder and President, Women in AI Africa, Kenya
- **Leah Davina Junck**, Senior Researcher, University of Cape Town and Research Consultant, Global Centre on AI Governance, South Africa

Rapporteur: **David Nderitu**, Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, History and Religious Studies, UNESCO Chair on Bioethics, Egerton University, Kenya

Plenary Panel Discussion (Parts 1 and 2): The International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development & the Futures of Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa

1 October 2024 | 14:00 - 17:30

Organizer: Division of Science Policy and Basic Sciences, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

On 25 August 2023, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period 2024– 2033 the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDSSD) and invited UNESCO to lead its implementation. This Decade presents a unique opportunity for humanity to unlock the full potential of science – natural and social and human sciences – in pursuing sustainable development and ensuring a safe and prosperous future for all.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 identifies Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) as key to contributing to achieving Africa's socio-economic development goals. It highlights the importance of STI in addressing pressing continental challenges like poverty, disease, climate change, food security, and healthcare. This commitment is detailed in the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024), which has been implemented over the last decade. Building on the lessons learned from STISA2024 and adapting to new challenges, the African Union is now developing STISA-2034, the next phase of this critical initiative.

Under the framework of IDSSD, UNESCO calls on all stakeholders including universities to take a leading role in enhancing scientific literacy, creating actionable scientific knowledge, and advancing research in basic sciences. Universities are also urged to spearhead the adoption of open science practices and to promote multidisciplinary research. These efforts can only flourish if deployed in an enabling environment where there is a stronger nexus between scientific evidence and policymaking and scientists can work in freedom and safety without any discrimination. A closer interaction between science and society will also be critical to consolidate trust in science. To that, a science culture needs to be nurtured. At the centre of this endeavour lies the promotion of a science vision that is anchored in human rights and notably the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits (article 27 para. 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Finally, main IDSSD goals are to transform innovation systems to respond better to scientific and societal needs, advance scientific knowledge to deepen our understanding of nature and humanity, and to generate, use and leverage scientific knowledge to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and beyond.

In alignment with the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA2034) being developed, to leverage STI to address Africa's developmental challenges, promote growth, foster industrialization, and enhance global competitiveness. The Science Decade provides a complimentary platform to foster implementation and mobilize the global partners to build partnerships and initiate joint programmes and projects in advancing STI in Africa, transforming knowledge in Africa in terms of its generation, distribution, and application, therefore, aiding in the achievement of STISA's goals for Africa's future.

Objectives

1. Discuss strategies for empowering universities and partners to develop and implement comprehensive programmes under the Science Decade to support the STISA implementation.
2. Explore ways to nurturing culture of science in Africa and beyond, advancing inclusion, diversity, equality, freedom and accessibility in STI.
3. Discuss the role of universities and centres of excellence in leading transforming knowledge in Africa in terms of its generation, distribution, and application.

Agenda (Part 1)

Plenary Panel Discussion. The International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development & the Futures of Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa	
1 October 2024 14:00 - 16:00	
10 minutes	Moderation and Introduction to the Keynote Lectures Mr. Sobhi Tawil, Director, Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO
20 minutes	Keynote Lecture 1: New Opportunities Brought by Science Decade for Science and Technology Innovation in Africa Mr. Shaofeng Hu, Director of Natural Science Sector, UNESCO
20 minutes	Keynote Lecture 2: Living and Shaping the African Research Ecosystem for the Next Generations Ms. Sabine Becker-Thierry, Executive Officer, United Nations University
20 minutes	Keynote Lecture 3: The mission of STISA 2034 Prof. Saïdou Madougou, The Africa Union Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
20 minutes	Keynote Lecture 4: The Role of Science in Achieving Human Rights and Its Recognition as a Human Right Prof. Sanaa Alsarghali, UNESCO Chair in Human Rights, Democracy and Peace, An-Najah National University, Palestine
10 minutes	Questions and Comments
20 minutes	Coffee break

Agenda (Part 2)

Plenary Panel Discussion. The International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development & the Futures of Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa	
1 October 2024 16:00 - 17:30 (Part 2)	
10 minutes	Moderation and Introduction to the Keynote Lectures Mr. Sobhi Tawil, Director, Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO
60 minutes	Panel discussion <i>Moderator: Ms. Amal Kasry, Chief of Basic Sciences, Research Innovation, and</i>

Plenary Panel Discussion. The International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development & the Futures of Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa

1 October 2024 | 16:00 - 17:30 (Part 2)

	<p>Engineering Section, Natural Sciences Sector, UNESCO</p> <p><i>Panelists</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Ato Kora Tushune, Minister of Higher Education, Ethiopia (tbc)• Souleymane Konaté, Secretary General, Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Burkina Faso• Sujatha Raman, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Science Communication for the Public Good, the Australian National University, Australia• Patrizio Bianchi, Representative of the Network of Italian UNESCO Chairs (ReCUI), Italy• Hugue Ngandeu Ngatta, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, UNESCO
20 minutes	<p>Comments and Q&A</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Amal Kasry, Chief of Basic Sciences, Research Innovation, and Engineering Section, Natural Sciences Sector, UNESCO</p> <p>All participants</p>
10 minutes	<p>Session Speed Networking</p> <p>Engaging and interactive activity where all the participants and the audience can share their thoughts and insights on the session.</p>

Plenary Session: Strengthening Collaborative Research Partnerships and Networks

2 October 2024 | 9:00 - 10:00

Organizer : Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO and UNESCO Liaison Office to the African Union

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Changing course towards a more sustainable future requires transformations in the generation, sharing, and use of knowledge. Research is not produced in isolation, but through social and cultural processes and interactions that engage various different societal actors.

According to the [*Reimagining our Futures Together*](#), the Report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education,

'Research partnerships that are interdisciplinary, inter-sectoral and cross-cultural, that span academic, civil society and educational milieus, and that foster shared communication and mutual learning, offer tremendous potential...' (UNESCO, 2021, p. 125)

Despite the increasing appreciation of the value of collective intelligence, transdisciplinary approaches, and collaborative research partnerships and networks, serious challenges persist. These include imbalances of research funding, infrastructure, expertise, and the fragmentation of initiatives and efforts. Historically rooted power relations perpetuate dominant ideas about research quality and knowledge generation. Although 'collaborative research partnerships' are appealing, the concepts of 'research' and 'partnership' are more problematic than they seem.

Power dynamics within 'ecologies of knowledge' influence who sets research agendas, research methodologies, and whose knowledge and evidence are valued most. Language barriers, publication norms and standards, and other factors, put most researchers and other knowledge producers in Africa at a disadvantage, making truly collaborative research partnerships and networks elusive.

The vision is to strengthen authentic, equitable international collaborations can empower researchers, strengthen research capacities, and value knowledge systems from across Africa. The co-construction of collaborative research agendas for the future implies transdisciplinary, inter-sectoral, cross-cultural, and forward-looking approaches nourished by diverse ecologies of knowledge, including modern as well as Indigenous and local knowledge systems.

This session considers what could be done to advance mutually beneficial and equitable collaborative research partnerships and networks. What are the prerequisites, obstacles and enablers? How might past injustices be repaired? What could members of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme and partners contribute towards this agenda? Participants will explore strategies, policies, and actions towards inclusive, equitable, and sustainable research ecosystems, partnerships and networks that empower researchers, institutions, and Indigenous and community-based knowledge systems from across Africa and beyond.

Agenda

Plenary Session: Strengthening Collaborative Research Partnerships and Networks	
2 October 2024 9:00 - 10:00	
2 minutes	<p>Opening Remarks</p> <p>Moderator: Sobhi Tawil, Director, Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO</p>
10 minutes	<p>Keynote Address:</p> <p><i>This keynote address will set the stage for the panel session by offering a nuanced perspective, with examples, of strategies to strengthen collaborative research partnerships and networks. Consistent with the Forum’s theme of Transforming Knowledge for Africa’s Future, it will examine the necessary institutional frameworks, collective dynamics, and policies between partner institutions and agencies.</i></p> <p>Mina Kleiche-Dray, Director of Research & Deputy Director, Department for Scientific Societies and Globalization, Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD)</p>
28 minutes	<p>Panel discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Sobhi Tawil</p> <p><i>This panel discussion will explore pathways for strengthening research partnerships and rebalancing power dynamics of research for fostering more equitable collaborations that integrate diverse knowledge systems.</i></p> <p><i>Panelists</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonia Bahri, Advisor to the President, French National Commission for UNESCO • Marema Toure, President, Association of African Women for Research and Development (AFARD-Senegal) / Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) • Obed Ogega, Programmes Manager, African Academy of Sciences • Taya Owens, US Mission to UNESCO, United States of America • Abdelbasset Ben Hassen, President, Arab Institute for Human Rights • William Blake, Director of the Sustainable Earth Institute, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
15 minutes	<p>Comments and Q&A</p> <p>Moderator: Sobhi Tawil</p> <p>Audiences, All participants</p>
5 minutes	<p>Closing Remarks</p>

Parallel Session 3.1: Putting African Indigenous Knowledge to Work for the Future of Africa

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

Organizers: PRIA

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Academic literature on the value of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) for the future of Africa has emerged in many parts of Africa over the past 10-15 years. But what do we know about how to support the deepening of African Indigenous scholars' knowledge bases or about the practice of Indigenous knowledge to address issues of the climate crisis and similar chronic challenges? How do we transform African universities to deal justly with African and non-African knowledge systems?

AIK is crucial for the sustainable development and improved indigenous knowledge production in Africa (Idowu, 2022). Integrating AIK into higher education curricula can address societal problems, enhance human capacity, and contribute to national and continental development (Agbaje, 2023). By acknowledging indigenous knowledge holders as public intellectuals and integrating AIK into higher education curricula, Africa can promote social cohesion and meaningful knowledge exchange (Kgope, 2023). AIK serves as a valuable tool for promoting teaching and learning in Africa's public education system, offering solutions to complex challenges faced by the continent (Mawere, 2015). Additionally, African Indigenous knowledge, encompassing practices, beliefs, and insights developed by local communities, inspires solutions to Africa's persistent challenges (Heto & Mino, 2022).

The incorporation of AIK into sectors like healthcare, education, and environmental conservation is vital for Africa's holistic development. Indigenous healing knowledge significantly influences healthcare for the majority of the population in many African states (Maluleka & Ngoepe, 2018). Neglecting indigenous knowledge systems could negatively impact biodiversity conservation in Africa, underscoring the importance of valuing and preserving Indigenous Knowledge (Kelbessa, 2022). Initiatives to digitize and safeguard indigenous knowledge systems, such as South Africa's National Recorded System, emphasize the need to ensure the continuity of this knowledge for future generations (Balogun, 2023).

This session is made up of African Indigenous intellectuals and others who are leaders in putting African Indigenous knowledge to work, to the practice of a new African vision.

Objectives

1. Sharing locally land-based principles of indigenous African Knowledge.
2. Demonstrating respectful partnership practices in advancing sustainable development.
3. Strengthening African coalition for advancing inclusion of AIK in Higher Education teaching and research

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.1: Putting African Indigenous Knowledge to Work for the Future of Africa	
2 October 2024 10:00 - 11:30	
90 minutes	<p><i>Welcome remarks</i></p> <p>George Openjuru, Vice-Chancellor, Gulu University, Gulu, Uganda</p> <p>Shaofeng Hu, Director, Division of Science Policy and Basic Sciences, UNESCO</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hélène Kienon-Kabore Timpoko, University Professor (CAMES), Archaeologist, Historian, Anthropologist, Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny de Cocody, Côte D'Ivoire• Wangoola-Wangoola Ndawula, Nabyama (Founder), Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity in Busoga Kingdom, Uganda• Alois Porokwa, Maasai Elder, Executive Director, NALEPPO, Manyara, United Republic of Tanzania• Alice Lamwaka, Director of Indigenous Medicine, Gulu University, Uganda• Heike Winschiers-Theophilus, Chair on Digital Technology Design with Indigenous Peoples, Namibia Institute of Science & Technology, Namibia <p><i>Closing remarks</i></p> <p>George Openjuru, Vice-Chancellor, Gulu University, Gulu, Uganda</p> <p>Rapporteur: David Monk, Co-Coordinator, African K4C Centre, Gulu University, Uganda</p>

References

- Agbaje, O. (2023). Curriculum reform in african higher education: solving society's problems and meeting its needs. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 43(51), 141-149. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-023-00206-x>
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Maluleka, J. and Ngoepe, M. (2018). Integrating traditional medical knowledge into mainstream healthcare in limpopo province. *Information Development*, 35(5), 714-723.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0266666918785940>

Mawere, M. (2015). Indigenous knowledge and public education in sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, 50(2), 57-71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000203971505000203>

Parallel Session 3.2: Driving Africa's Priorities and Ambitions through Partnerships

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

Organizer: Division of Partnerships, Bureau for Strategic Planning, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

Research and innovation are fundamental engines for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and forging a brighter, sustainable future that firmly upholds the imperative of leaving no one behind. In the context of the commitments of [Agenda 2063](#), and as we pass the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda, prioritizing research and innovation becomes even more critical in a context marked by the urgency to accelerate socio-ecological transitions and bridge financing gaps. As enshrined in the [Pact for the Future](#) adopted by the UN General Assembly on 22 September 2024, this calls for a significant increase in investment, diversification of financing sources—including Official Development Assistance—and the deepening of innovative partnerships that support developing countries in building the capacities and infrastructures needed to seize and multiply opportunities through education, science, technology, and innovation.

As we look to the future, opportunities to overcome longstanding imbalances in knowledge production are unlocking new, promising pathways to connect the potential of science and education activities with Africa's development priorities. Yet, despite representing 18% of the global population, Africa still accounts for only 3% of global spending on education¹³, produces less than 1–2% of global research outputs¹⁴, and faces an estimated shortage of 100,000 PhD researchers over the next decade to meet its research demands. To fully seize these opportunities and ensure R&D agendas align with national and regional priorities, African countries will require strengthened support to close existing gaps in scientific capacity, education, knowledge production, and skills¹⁵.

Rationale

Advancing the African Union's Agenda 2063 vision of fostering prosperity through an [education and skills revolution emphasizing science and technology](#) relies heavily on unlocking public and private support and leveraging innovative partnerships and financing mechanisms. Closing the long-standing gaps stemming from chronic underinvestment in education and research and fragile R&D support is therefore a critical step in enabling African countries to translate their resources and human capital into informed policies that effectively advance continental goals. Achieving this vision also requires fostering inclusive South-South and triangular knowledge cooperation partnerships that promote ownership and capacity across African knowledge communities to lead change. As advanced by [UNESCO's Global Priority Africa](#), alongside the role of governments and development institutions in scaling up financing, diversifying support and fostering collaboration and co-creation with stakeholders is also key to delivering meaningful impacts and shaping research and education agendas to better inform policy choices.

¹³ Education finance watch (2023): <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388733>

¹⁴ Nature (2023), Research funding in Africa: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d44148-023-00360-4>

¹⁵ World Economic Forum (2023): <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/11/innovative-approaches-for-unlocking-research-and-development-funding-in-africa/>

Objectives

This session will focus on the importance of leveraging partnerships, networks and resources to advance Africa's priorities through knowledge systems, capacity and innovation. It will convene a diverse group of experts and stakeholders to connect approaches from higher education institutions, knowledge organizations, and international organizations around the following main objectives:

- Explore success factors to foster innovative partnerships models in education, research and knowledge exchange, with a view on how new forms of collaboration can drive meaningful impacts and empower African societies through co-creative and inclusive cooperation schemes.
- Discuss key enablers for creating conducive environments for resource mobilization, as well as main obstacles and opportunities for funding and financing education and R&D cooperation.
- Assess how actors from different sectors and disciplines can contribute to aligning R&D agendas with priorities in Africa, in synergy with the AU 2063 agenda goals and specific regional and national needs (e.g., skills and job creation, digital transformation, climate resilience and adaptation, or agriculture and food systems among others).
- Learn about good practices, trends, and examples on how partnerships can strengthen Africa's research, education, and innovation ecosystems, focusing on cooperation models that scale impact, enhance sustainability, and foster joint ownership among institutions and communities.

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.2: Driving Africa's Priorities and Ambitions through Partnerships	
2 October 2024 10:00 - 11:30	
90 minutes	<p>Moderator: Svein Oesttveit, Director a.i., UNESCO International Bureau for Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quentin Wodon, Director, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, Ethiopia• Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education Division, Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), African Union Commission• Leon Tikly, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Transforming Knowledge and Research for Just and Sustainable Futures, University of Bristol, United Kingdom• Susan Osireditse Keitumetse, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on African Heritage Studies and Sustainable Development, University of Botswana, Botswana• John Villiers, Programme and policy officer, European Union Delegation <p>Rapporteur: Keith Holmes, Research Coordinator, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, UNESCO</p>

Parallel Session 3.3. Transforming Knowledge: Creating a Future within the Present through Education

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

Organizer: International Bureau of Education, UNESCO.

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

Acknowledging the diversity of knowledge and ways of knowing is very important for recreating the world; creating the future in the present; one world in many worlds and ...” the Africa we want”¹. This issue does not feature prominently in existing literature reviews and the decolonization debate. This reveals the urgent need to interrogate cognitive rights, equity in knowledge and diversity of ways of knowing in educating future generations. Plurality and inclusivity of knowledge types as part of the global knowledge heritage speak to research; to identify issues, indicators of cognitive and hidden epistemic discrimination. Alternative strategies must be found to nurture alternative ecologies of knowledge, enabling factors of knowledge plurality and inclusivity and participatory processes of designing transformative curriculum and pedagogies.

Rationale

Envision a “world of many worlds” based upon strong claims for epistemic and cognitive justice. Educate for the creation of a future within the present, based on a social contract; the revitalization of indigenous and local knowledge, ways of learning, and participatory, bottom-up local strategies. UNESCO Chairs must be the think tank in the search for knowledge and skills that societies would need to create alternative approaches to sustainable development, interrogate models and pathways of educating young people, lead authentic and critical discussion on alternative ecologies of knowledge, and inclusive participatory processes of educational transformation.

Aims

The session aims to re-envision Africa’s development using education as an enabling force to create spaces for the plurality of human concerns and ways of being, with a right -based perspective, is to envision a “world of many worlds” based upon strong claims for epistemic and cognitive justice. Frame the transformation of knowledge for Africa’s future, within the broader UNESCO global commitments (SDG4, AU vision 2063, 2023 UNESCO Recommendations on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Global Citizenship and the transformative education approach. Explore, identify, acknowledge, and infuse local knowledge and ways of learning and knowing into education system’s curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Interrogate the status quo and formulate joint research projects with the view to formulating evidence-based alternatives to facilitate authentic and critical approaches that advocate alternative ecologies of knowledge and promote inclusivity; and the power of social momentum in processes of educational transformation from the perspective of knowledge diversity, cognitive and epistemic right.

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.3. Transforming Knowledge: Creating a Future within the Present through Education

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

90 minutes	<p>Moderators: Overson Shumba, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Mathematics, Science, and Technology Teacher Education for Sustainable Development, Copperbelt University, Zambia</p> <p><i>Keynote</i></p> <p>Florence Ssereo, Programme Specialist, International Bureau of Education, UNESCO</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patrick Charland, Chairholder, Chaire UNESCO de développement curriculaire, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Canada• Abtar Kaur, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU), Malaysia• Dominica Dipio, Professor, Makerere University, Uganda• Renato Operti, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Hybrid Education Innovative Curriculum, Learning, Assessment and Educational Technologies, Universidad Católica del Uruguay; Senior Expert, UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Switzerland <p>Rapporteur: Paul Mushi, Jordan University College, United Republic of Tanzania</p>
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Parallel Session 3.4. Stronger Higher Education and Impactful Doctoral Education for a Stronger African Continent

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

Co-organizers: The International Association of University and The University of Manouba-Tunisia

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and Rationale

The demand for quality higher education has risen dramatically in the last decade, it is developing rapidly, yet to a varying degree across the African continent. One of the areas that has received particular attention over the last decades is doctoral education in Africa. International partnerships and development projects point towards the opportunities and challenges in this area.

However, in the absence of aggregated data, it is still difficult to detect distinct trends concerning doctoral training in Africa. More qualitative data collection and analysis would help to better inform national and continental public choices in this area. Existing reports show that an increase in student numbers in certain countries have led to an increased demand for qualified higher education teachers and comes with the need to train more doctoral students, while other countries face quite the opposite challenge, to ensure successful integration of trained PhD holders into the higher education sector. Doctorate bachelor ratio and doctorate staff ratio are important indicators of the quality of teaching in universities, one of the areas that requires particular attention. Also, pressing questions of gender imbalance, as well as the need for interdisciplinary approaches in research, as identified as one of the outcomes of the UNESCO 3rd World Higher Education Conference (WHEC) Road Map, require shifts in policy and academic cultures. Doctoral pathways are still compartmentalized. Moreover, we see that digital access and practices in doctoral training are still unevenly distributed between countries and between disciplines.

Strengthening doctoral education is also integral to UNESCO's Campus Africa initiative. UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks have the potential to help leverage on the opportunities and to help address some of the challenges. The Chairs' Network is a unique force for ideas and proposals on a global scale and could become a true 'global observatory'. Indeed, the Chairs can help share expertise and good practices, network initiatives, and frame critical conversations to better understand the overall landscape. They can be real assets in the development of the competencies needed on the African continent by accompanying the transformation of the African higher education systems to ensure a better future for all African countries.

Objectives

The proposed session aims to present a selection of projects that are being developed across the continent, across different yet complementary higher education cultures and across cultural and linguistic divides; it will discuss how UNESCO chairs can play a role in developing quality doctoral education across the continent and for the benefit of the continent.

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.4. Stronger Higher Education and Impactful Doctoral Education for a Stronger African Continent	
2 October 2024 10:00 - 11:30	
10 minutes	<i>Welcome/Introduction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jouhaina Gherib, Chair holder of the UNESCO Chair on Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa, Former President, University of Manouba, Tunisia• Hilligje van't Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU), Global (UNESCO House, Paris, France)
10 minutes	<i>Keynote speech</i> Nana Aba Appiah Amfo , Vice-Chancellor, University of Ghana, Ghana
30 minutes	<i>Panel discussion</i> Moderator: Wondwosen Tamrat , President, St Mary's University, Ethiopia (tbc) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah, Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Abuja, Nigeria• Sunungurai Dominica Chingarande, Vice-Chancellor, Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe (tbc)• Jouhaina Gherib, Chairholder UNESCO Chair on Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa, Former President, Full Professor, University of Manouba, Tunisia
35 minutes	<i>Comments and Q&A</i> Moderator: Hilligje van 't Land All participants
5 minutes	<i>Closing remarks</i> Jouhaina Gherib

References/Resources

- [UN Pact of the Future](#) initiative (September 2024), UNESCO
- the Report of [International UNESCO Chairs Conference](#) (November 2022)
- [UNESCO World Higher Education Conference 2022](#)
- The [Africa's Agenda 2063](#).
- ARUA: <https://arua.org/third-arua-universities-profiles-report-launched/>
- From your respective countries and universities from AAU

- [Innovative Doctoral Course For Sustainability \(IDOCOS\)](#)
- [IAU-ACUP International Seminar on Innovative Approaches to Doctoral Education and Research Training in subSaharan Africa](#)
- [IAU Horizons on Doctoral Education in Africa](#), Vol. 19, no. 2 (14 papers)

Parallel Session 3.5. Transforming Knowledge through Higher Education for the Future of Work and Beyond

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

Organizer: UNESCO/PLS/HED

CONCEPT NOTE

Global Context

The world of work is undergoing a significant transformation, especially in sectors where business models have shifted to integrate advanced technologies and are deploying big data, machine learning, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI). Technological innovation has already disrupted some jobs and created new ones (ILO, 2021). By some estimates, half of today's jobs—around 2 billion—are also expected to phase out due to automation by 2030 (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Even if the estimate on automation proves exaggerated, around 44% of all workers' skills are likely to be disrupted in the next five years according to the World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2023).

While technological impacts on the world of work have generated the most noise in recent years, parallel megatrends related to the globalization of value chains and production processes have already greatly impacted the types and location of work available to local workforces, including in Africa, and the distribution of income across regions and countries.

Climate change, meanwhile, holds the potential to cause significant economic disruption and harm to workers in local economies. Mitigating climate change will require many workers from high-CO2 emission sectors to relocate to jobs in the green economy, with a growing demand for green occupations and skills (Cedefop, 2022). The [International Labour Organization](#) further projects that climate change will lead to significant job losses in lower-income countries and Small Island States, with women and vulnerable groups, such as informal workers, migrants, persons with disabilities and small enterprises, hit hardest.

Finally, current pressures from rapidly evolving labour markets, alongside a longer life expectancy in middle-high income countries, mean that workers will need to work for longer, and to skill, upskill, and reskill throughout their lifetimes to stay relevant in the workforce, prepare for career shifts or return to the workforce after a break (OECD, 2021).

The future of work in Africa

The vision and imperatives for the future of work in Africa are driven by the same technological advancements, demand for transition to low carbon economies and demographic shifts. By 2030, Africa is expected to have the world's largest working-age population, with over 375 million young people entering the workforce (McKinsey and Company, 2023). This demographic dividend offers immense potential if coupled with adequate investments in education, digital infrastructure, innovation and entrepreneurship.

For the moment, however, and with more than 10 million youth expected to enter the labour market annually, unemployment is still excessively high at 47.8% for young men, and as high as 58.3% for women (UNESCO, 2024). A significant portion of young people work in the informal sector with [estimates suggesting that about 80% of youth are employed in informal jobs](#)¹ (affecting job quantity, quality and security). It is also estimated that by 2050, about 72.6 million new jobs for sub-

Saharan Africa's young people will be needed (ILO 2024). But the region creates only 3 million new formal wage jobs each year. Meanwhile Africa exhibits the highest rates of self-employment and unpaid family labour, constraining social protections and potential earnings based on skills.

Poor prospects in local labour markets generate youth migration to swelling urban centres without gainful employment opportunities, and brain drain overseas for higher education students. The investments needed in skills, employability and entrepreneurship training are inadequate for the size of the challenge, creating a huge skills shortage and/or mismatch for inclusive growth needed to power green and digital transitions.

Access to higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) remains low. The most recent GEMR data indicates that the global gross enrolment rate in tertiary education is approximately 39%¹ and has been steadily increasing, with an average growth of around one percentage point per year since 2000¹. In Africa, the most recent data puts the gross enrolment rate in tertiary education in Africa at around 10%¹⁺² with rate varying significantly across countries within the continent. For example, Mauritius has a gross enrolment rate of around 40%, while countries like Niger have rates as low as 4.4%².

The anticipated digital revolution and explosion of digital jobs must also be tempered by the reality that, as of January 2024, only 46% of the continent's population, or approximately 646 million people had access to the internet². While this reflects a significant increase from previous years, ongoing improvements in telecommunication infrastructure and the widespread adoption of mobile devices, more substantial investments are needed to widen access to the internet and improve digital skills needed for the future of work. Transitioning to a more diversified and skills-based economy is essential for sustainable growth, but approximately 60% of the population are still reliant on agriculture as the main source of income.

Leveraging cooperation and knowledge for the future of work

The fast pace of technological change, and precarity created by globalization and climate change, underline the urgency for all countries to anticipate the future of work, and for education (including higher education) and professional training systems to recalibrate to keep up with changing skills and workforce demands. Low and middle-income countries are especially urged to reshape their education offer and embrace new technologies to overcome stubborn development challenges (GEM report, 2023).

But today's challenges are inherently complex, and transformative policies that anticipate the future of work, and ensure social protection for all population groups, will not emerge from individual governments working in isolation. The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) and the African Union's Agenda 2063, Goal no. 2 of having well-educated citizens and a skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) will require multistakeholder cooperation between government, employers, workers associations, the education and training, and research communities.

Research, evidence and new knowledge production at the intersection of economic, labour market, education, migration and social policy, and their practical applications, will also be key to effective country responses. Sound evidence and analysis can help governments to: i) understand the economic and social impacts of megatrends on populations, their skills and social protection requirements; ii) support the design of human-centred labour market and social protection policies in green economy and inclusive growth sectors; iii) generate closer academia-industry linkages in the design of responsive higher technical education and skills training curricula, and; iv) equip individuals

and communities with the technical, employability and soft skills needed for the future of work and beyond.ⁱ

For the moment, the contribution of African countries to knowledge production is very low. [In 2024, African countries are estimated to invest around 0.45% of their GDP in Research and Development \(R&D\)¹. This is significantly lower than the global average of 1.7%¹](#). Existing and future research and knowledge production efforts must tap into the scientific and technological capabilities already built up in Africa's public and private universities and research eco-systems.

In a spirit of mutualism, public-private and regional cooperation - the joining together of the latest research, evidence and knowledge production capacities from across African academia, with the latest technical and digital know-how from industry and business sectors, should also be seen as a 'common good.' Indeed, the complexity of tackling 'the future of work' and its economic and social implications in Africa calls for diverse partners from across the continent to initiate and advance work around issues of common interest, cross-pollinating ideas and converting applied research outputs into policy, education and training, and product innovations.

Session description and objectives

This session will bring together UNESCO Chairs, labour market experts, skills training managers and representatives of the higher education research community and employers who are advancing research, knowledge production and their practical applications for the future of work in Africa.

Participants will offer different perspectives and angles on how African research and knowledge outputs led by the UNESCO Chairs, and through tripartite research, development and innovation (RDI) cooperation and technical skills training, are being levered and transformed to prepare young people for the future of work.

The session will combine a short keynote, with speaker contributions to a roundtable that facilitates thinking and dialogue around six guiding questions:

1. What can high-quality, inter-disciplinary research tell us about current megatrends and their implications for how the future of work is taking shape in Africa?
2. What types of policies, anchored in research, evidence and knowledge, and working with various groups (e.g., government, private sector, civil society) and through tripartite cooperation (involving three parties, typically government, employers, and workers) have been developed by countries to respond to the impacts of megatrends and anticipate new skills needs?
3. What does knowledge tell us about the skills likely to be most in demand, and in which digital, green economy and inclusive growth sectors, to prepare Africa's youth for the future of work?
4. Based on evidence gathered, what types of professional and employability skills training, and qualifications frameworks, are proving effective in preparing and protecting local populations?
5. What are youth perspectives on pathways to future-fit, equitable, responsive education and skills training systems in Africa?
6. What are the overall implications for Africa's research eco-systems (including knowledge use and dissemination for different purposes), and for the modernization of the higher education sector in Africa, and what can be done to strengthen partnerships and synergies among national, regional and global stakeholders in supporting that modernization?

Provisional Agenda

10:00 – 10:15	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO</p>
10:15 – 11:15	<p>Roundtable discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Abdoulaye Salifou, Head of Education, UNESCO Liaison Office to the African Union and Representative to Ethiopia, Ethiopia</p> <p><i>What can research, evidence and knowledge tell us about the impacts of current megatrends on existing employment prospects and the future of work in Africa, and what do we know about skills in demand in green, digital and inclusive growth sectors?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willy Ngaka, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Literacies, Green Skilling and Capacity Development for Sustainable Communities in Africa, Kyambogo University, Uganda • Titus Ngatia, Director-Future of Education & Work in Africa (FEWA) Conference 2024, Kenya <p><i>How can governments, higher education and the business community convert knowledge into new policy instruments, business innovations and the multistakeholder partnerships needed to support inclusive growth, employment, job creation and entrepreneurship?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyitayo Olatunde Olakanmi, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Manufacturing & Innovation Technologies (UCoSMIT), Botswana • Andrew Masila, Innovation, Technology R&D Lead, Safari.com, Kenya <p><i>How is knowledge being converted into practical applications for education and skills training systems, professional skills training, employability and certification?</i></p> <p>[Speaker(s) tbc]</p> <p><i>What are youth perspectives on future-fit, equitable, responsive higher education systems in Africa?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osman Abdulai Ayariga, All-Africa Students Union, Ghana <p><i>Overall implications for Africa’s research eco-systems, and for the modernization of the higher education sector in Africa?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenda Cox, UNESCO chair in Open education and social justice and also a member of the UNITWIN network for Open Education, South Africa
11:15 – 11:30	<p>Wrap-Up and Closing Remarks</p>

Parallel Session 3.6. Fostering Global Partnerships: Advancing Sustainable Postsecondary Research Collaboration between African Higher Education and Historically Black Universities in the United States

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

Organizer: Payne Centre for Social Justice

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

In the dynamic landscape of Africa, characterized by its vast diversity and a burgeoning youthful population, lies a profound opportunity for transformative educational initiatives. By 2040, Africa is projected to host the largest working-age population globally, making strategic investments in education and skills development crucial for sustainable economic growth (McKinsey Global Institute, 2021).

Currently, many African students pursue higher education abroad due to challenges in local accessibility and quality (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020). The concept of an African Education City, inspired by successful models like Qatar's Education City, emerges as a transformative solution. Spearheaded by the Payne Center, this ambitious initiative proposes to establish a consortium of leading Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from the United States on African soil. This visionary project seeks to replicate the high standards of American education within Africa, offering cutting-edge facilities and fostering innovation in STEM fields critical for sustainable development (World Bank, 2019).

This session aims to redefine educational paradigms by fostering robust collaborations between universities in the United States and Africa, catalyzing economic prosperity and social development across the continent. It will convene thought leaders and policymakers to explore innovative pathways for enhancing educational resources within Africa. Central to the dialogue will be envisioning the future role of these institutions beyond their traditional American contexts, emphasizing how an Education City can empower local communities and drive continental progress (UNESCO, 2022). At its core, Africa's Education City initiative aims to democratize access to world-class education. By establishing a hub of excellence in Africa, this project promises to attract a diverse cohort of students, researchers, and educators from around the world.

Through collaborative efforts between HBCUs and African institutions, the Education City will serve as a nexus for academic innovation, research breakthroughs, and transformative learning experiences (World Economic Forum, 2020). This paradigm shift not only addresses educational deficits but also cultivates fertile ground for economic growth and global collaboration, aligning with UNESCO's goals of promoting inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2021).

The UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum represents a pivotal moment to shape the future of postsecondary education in Africa. By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of diverse stakeholders, this gathering seeks to chart a course towards a connected future where educational opportunities transcend boundaries. It is poised to unlock substantial global support, fostering sustainable development, technological advancement, and inclusive growth across the continent and beyond (World Bank, 2021).

In conclusion, this parallel session aims to catalyze actionable steps towards realizing the vision of sustainable postsecondary research collaboration between African higher education and HBCUs in the United States. Through innovative partnerships and visionary projects like Africa's Education City, the

parallel session endeavors to create lasting impacts that empower communities, drive economic progress, and foster a new era of global collaboration in education and research.

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.6. Fostering Global Partnerships: Advancing Sustainable Postsecondary Research Collaboration between African Higher Education and Historically Black Universities in the United States

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

90 minutes

Speakers

- **M. Christopher Brown II**, Executive Director and Research Scientist, Payne Center for Social Justice, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, United States of America
- **N. Joyce Payne**, Founder, Payne Center for Social Justice, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, United States of America
- **Tymon M. Graham**, Director of Research Strategy, Payne Center for Social Justice, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, United States of America
- **Nico Elema**, Director, Centre for Collaboration in Africa, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- **Mohamed Camara**, Professor of African Studies, Howard University, United States of America
- **Taya Owens**, US Mission to UNESCO, United States of America
- **Paul Zeleza**, Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives and Professor of African Studies, Howard University, United States of America

Parallel Session 3.7. Transforming Knowledge for Africa’s Future: Rethinking the Role and Contribution from the Social Sciences and the Humanities

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

Organizers: UNESCO and The Academy of Sciences

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Conversation on the need to reposition social sciences, humanities and the arts is not new among academic institutions and scholars in Africa, with different attempts made to map out gaps, challenges and opportunities for improvement, always with limited capacity for sustainability and lasting solutions.

In 1990, the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics was calling attention on the “web of socio-economic crises” Africa was facing, with shrinking budgetary allocations for education, and states becoming “increasingly authoritarian”. The Declaration also echoed “increasingly greater, deeper and more frequent encroachments on academic freedom and freedom to pursue truth and knowledge, particularly at the universities and other institutions of higher education.” The Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (1990), highlighted similar concerns, further emphasized, with a more global scope, under the [UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers \(2017\)](#).

The opportunity of a UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum on Transforming Knowledge for Africa’s Future, organized within the frame of the AU 2024 theme on “Education”, is a bold invitation to revisit this conversation, while leveraging on renewed efforts by UNESCO and other partners to revamp the social sciences, humanities and the arts in Africa, for evidence-based social policies that will advance sustainable development in Africa.

This conversation will also offer a follow-up to the Panel Discussion that was held last April 2024 in Pretoria, South Africa, organized by the by the Chair on Social Policy for Africa at the University of South Africa. It is also well aligned with relevant initiatives from different academic, research institutions and think tanks around Africa and beyond, with a view to interrogating the challenges and opportunities for social sciences informed knowledge production to re-defining priorities for the continent, while revisiting the context and enabling environment for such knowledge production, bringing forward the right to science, academic freedom and safety of scientists, while focussing on the social sciences and humanities. This is also a deliberate effort to identify challenges and opportunities for revamping the social sciences, humanities and the arts, in line with ongoing conversations and collaborations, including with the [African Academy of Sciences \(AAS\)](#), leveraging in this regard on key findings reflected in an [open-access article](#) available to guide discussions on how to lay the foundation for and/or revitalise the Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts research capacity, leadership, and funding in Africa.

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.7. Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future: Rethinking the Role and Contribution from the Social Sciences and the Humanities

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

90 minutes

Moderators: **Hugue Ngandeu Ngatta**, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, UNESCO and **Tabue Nguma**, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO Office in Dakar and Regional Bureau for Education

Opening remarks

Abdul Rahman Lamin, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO Harare

Keynote

Tanja Hichert and **Rika Preiser**, Co-Chairholders, UNESCO Chair on Complex Systems and Transformative African Futures, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Speakers

- **Christine Noe**, Principal, College of Social Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
- **Julius Gatune**, Assistant Professor Maastricht School of Management (MSM), Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Conservation on Anticipatory Socio-Technical Systems, Dedan Kimathi University of Science and Technology (DeKUT), Kenya
- **David Nderitu**, Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, History and Religious Studies, UNESCO Chair on Bioethics, Egerton University, Kenya

Closing remarks

Obed Ogega, Programmes Manager, African Academy of Sciences

Rapporteur: Saida Abdul Ramadhan, Programme Officer, African Academy of Sciences

Parallel Session 3.8. Transforming Lives, Shaping Futures: Enhancing Student Health and Well-Being in Higher Education

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

CONCEPT NOTE

Organizer: Health and Education, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa

Co-organizers: Manicaland State University of Applied Science, Zimbabwe and Technical and Vocational Teachers' College, Zambia

Background and Rationale

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) refers to individuals' right to make informed, autonomous decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion, and violence. Higher and tertiary education institutions (HTEIs) are home to many young adults who are vulnerable to SRHR-related concerns as they navigate new responsibilities, relationships, and experiences in unfamiliar settings. Higher and tertiary education institutions (HTEIs) are home to a many young adults who are vulnerable to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) related concerns as they navigate new responsibilities, relationships, and experiences on their own and in unfamiliar settings. Adverse SRHR outcomes, such as unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), immediately affect students' well-being and can cause disruptions in educational attainment, which ultimately limits the potential of this critical human capital to contribute towards national development.

By delivering comprehensive student health and well-being programmes that addresses the legal and policy framework, institutional capacity to deliver comprehensive CSE, SRHR services and prevention of / response to sexual and gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial well-being etc HTEIs have the potential to ensure students attain better SRH and well-being outcomes, enabling them to reach their full educational potential and contribute more effectively to the development of their country.

Building a healthy and knowledgeable future requires a holistic approach. This session dices into the critical link between health and education. It will explore successful interventions that promote a holistic view of student well-being, as well as identify gaps and areas where further research and evidence is needed to successfully enhance student health and well-being. This parallel session aims to be a catalyst for transformative change by fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange between HTEIs. This will be achieved by using an interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approach, drawing on knowledge from academics from both the global North and South as well as from students and local representatives.

Objectives

- Explore research gaps and potential to enhance student health and well-being, including sharing the latest evidence in comprehensive sexuality education
- Showcase best practices, highlight successful student health and well-being initiatives implemented across HTEIs
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and unlock possibilities for partnerships
- Amplify student voices by integrating student perspectives on challenges and potential solutions.

Outcomes

- Participants will gain concrete insights and strategies for prioritizing student well-being within their institutions.
- The session will facilitate the creation of a collaborative network dedicated to advancing student health across HTEIs in Africa and beyond.
- The discussion will identify potential areas for future collaborative research on student health and well-being.

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.8. Transforming Lives, Shaping Futures: Enhancing Student Health and Well-Being in Higher Education	
2 October 2024 10:00 - 11:30	
10 minutes	<p>Welcome and introduction</p> <p>Moderator: Alice Saili, National Programme Officer, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didier Jourdan, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair Global Health and Education, Université Clermont-Auvergne, France • Amon Chaka, Professor, Manicaland State University of Applied Science, Zimbabwe
10 minutes	<p>Aligning with global priorities: How student health and well-being support UNESCO's vision</p> <p>Peter Wells, Chief of Education, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO Harare and Alice Saili, Team Leader, Zambia Antenna Office UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is well-being key to quality education? • How does this session align with UNESCO's Campus Africa Initiative? • UNESCO's "Our Rights Our Lives Our Future Plus" programme
40 minutes	<p>Panel discussion</p> <p>Bridging the gap: research and local solutions for student health and well-being in HTEIs</p> <p>Moderator: Alice Saili, National Programme Officer, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO</p> <p>Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Lemond, Student, Kabwe Institute of Technology, Zambia • Eunice Manela, Student, Copperbelt University, Zambia • Chidochashe Mudzingwa, Student, Masving Polytechnic, Zimbabwe • Lovemore T Mlambo, Student, Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences, Zimbabwe • Amon Chaka, Dean, Manicaland State University of Applied Science, Zimbabwe • Harrison Phiri, Professor, Technical and Vocational Teachers' College, Zambia • Viola Nilah Nyakato, Professor, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda

Parallel Session 3.8. Transforming Lives, Shaping Futures: Enhancing Student Health and Well-Being in Higher Education

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vincent Nacidze, Cluster Coordinator, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO Harare <p>The panel discussion will cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Students' perspective</i>: students will share experiences with health and well-being challenges faced by students in their institutions as well as briefly present student-led initiatives promoting well-being on their campuses. • <i>Challenges and opportunities</i>: panelists will discuss the challenges and opportunities HTEIs face in prioritizing student well-being. • <i>Sharing the latest evidence</i>: panelists will present the latest evidence on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), SRHR and its impact on student health outcomes. • <i>Sharing best practices</i>: panelists will share best practices or successful initiatives implemented at HTEIs to enhance student health and well-being. • <i>Leveraging on the UNITWIN initiative</i>: panelists will discuss how the UNITWIN Network can leverage South-South and South-North collaboration to address student well-being in Africa.
25 minutes	<p>Q&A and Key Takeaways</p> <p>Moderator: Alice Saili, National Programme Officer, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO</p> <p>All participants</p>
5 minutes	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Harrison Phiri, Principal, Technical and Vocational Teachers' College, Zambia</p>
	<p>Rapporteur: Pennelope Kasere, National Program Officer Education for Health and Well-being, UNESCO, Zimbabwe</p>

Parallel Session 3.9. Youth Participation, Intergenerational Learning and Sustainable futures

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

Organizer: University of East Anglia

CONCEPT NOTE

The transition of youth from education to labour market is a critical phase not only for individual livelihoods, but also wider economies and societies. Yet, there is often a lack of youth voices in policy making and practice for the promotion of sustainable futures. The University of East Anglia's UNESCO Chair for Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation led a number of impact activities, which provided opportunities to consolidate research partners' work on youth literacies and participation that, in turn, had grown out of research for the [UN Volunteers 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report on Building Equal and Inclusive Societies](#). This included research on youth and social discrimination (Nepal), volunteering-state partnerships for social change (Malawi), youth participation in policy design (Ethiopia) and youth literacies and activism (Philippines). These workshops also built on a core objective of the UNESCO Chair – the promotion of methodological innovation in research, training and practice.

The workshops in Ethiopia, Malawi, Nepal, and Philippines were developed and conducted to (1) facilitate *intergenerational and cross-sectoral dialogue* on the potential of youth participation to create pathways towards sustainable livelihoods, bringing together policy makers and practitioners with youth leaders, and (2) explore the role of *creative and participatory methodologies* to facilitate conversations and actions between academia, governments, and practitioners.

Aim

This session aims to extend the impact of these country-level workshops through sharing their key findings and facilitating discussion among participants on best practices and aspirations for sustainable, stable employment and livelihoods for young people in Africa. A panel of three short presentations, outlining the workshop methodology and highlighting key findings from the Malawi and Ethiopia workshops will frame the discussion. Following this, an interactive session drawing on creative, participatory methods used in the workshops will facilitate dialogue and knowledge-sharing among participants to help map out future aspirations and policy direction.

Panel Details

A panel of three presenters – all members of this UNESCO Chair's research network – will share key aspects of the country-level workshops, as detailed below:

1. *Harnessing creative and participatory methodologies*. The first panelist will introduce the innovative, youth-centred workshop methodology and provide examples of creative, participatory methods were used to harness youth concerns and promote policy dialogue.
2. *Understanding and addressing youth unemployment in Malawi*. This short presentation highlights youth's views on the key factors contributing to youth unemployment in Malawi and its consequences. It shares key outputs from the Malawi workshop, mapping suggestions from direct dialogue between youth and policy makers and practitioners across sectors, including best practice and stakeholder engagement.
3. *Youth concerns for peace and security in Ethiopia*. The final presentation will showcase a key finding from the Ethiopia workshop; identifying the lack of peace and security as a critical concern of young people in the country, as a both cause and aggravating factor in youth unemployment, as well as its wider impact on society. It will share recommendations that emerged from the

intergenerational dialogue, as means to promote youth participation, innovation and sustainable livelihoods.

Interactive Session: Mapping futures

This interactive session will share collectively participants' views and experiences in best practices and aspirations for sustainable, stable employment and livelihoods for young people in Africa, and exploring the role of educational institutions and youth participation through intergenerational dialogue and institutional - community partnership.

Participants will be organized in groups, bringing together youth representatives and/or early career researchers, practitioners and policy-focused experts. Participants will have the opportunity to try out some of the creative, participatory methods (IDS, 2024) developed and adapted for intergenerational dialogue, showcased in the panel presentations. These may include drawing/writing methods such as asset mapping and/or ranking exercises to highlight future opportunities and directions. Where possible, digital platforms will be available to generate additional outputs (e.g. word clouds).

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.9. Youth Participation, Intergenerational Learning and Sustainable futures	
2 October 2024 10:00 - 11:30	
90 minutes	<p>Moderators: Ahmmardouh Mjaya, Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation, University of Malawi, Malawi and Tizita Lemma Melka, Assistant Professor, University of Bahir Dar, Ethiopia</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catherine M. Jere, Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland• Ahmmardouh Mjaya, Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation, University of Malawi, Malawi• Abiy Menkir Gizaw, Assistant Professor, University of Bahir Dar, Ethiopia• Tizita Lemma Melka, Assistant Professor, University of Bahir Dar, Ethiopia <p>Rapporteur: Abiy Menkir Gizaw</p>

Resources

IDS (2024) Participatory Methods, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex:
<https://www.participatorymethods.org/>

Parallel Session 3.10. Bringing the World Together: Achievements and Future Possibilities for Exchanges with Africa

2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

CONCEPT NOTE

Learning and Advancing Together with Africa for a Sustainable Future: University Initiatives for Academic Exchange and Partnership Development

Background

Today, academic institutions play an increasingly important role in peacebuilding, human rights, and sustainability. Various universities around the world are already working on the agenda set forth in the SDG Goal 4 education, and many practices have been accumulated in education for sustainable development and global citizenship education. On the other hand, such experiences and knowledge are not easily shared, and opportunities for more active mutual exchange and collaboration are needed. Therefore, in this session, we would like to use this session as an opportunity to discuss a platform to think together about a sustainable future society in Africa.

In this session, we will exchange experiences in these activities of ESD and GCED as UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN, and share with participants what kind of learning we can create together for the future society, how interdisciplinary research, education, and social contribution should be, and how we can build a partnership with Africa. We aim to create a platform to build and strengthen partnerships with Africa. We invite each university to share their initiatives and let's create a platform for future activities together.

We will have four cases which has collaborated with African Universities. They are York University UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, Stellenbosch University UNESCO Chair in Intercultural Competences, Hiroshima University UNITWIN Network of Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Educational Development, and Sophia University UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Dignity, Peace and Sustainability. Finally,

Ms. Salma Ahmed, Education Policy Specialist from Norway will take a role of discussant. Sharing their experiences and ideas for collaboration with African Universities, we will forward our steps for academic collaboration for our common sustainable future.

Agenda

Parallel Session 3.10. Bringing the World Together: Achievements and Future Possibilities for Exchanges with Africa 2 October 2024 10:00 - 11:30	
5 minutes	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Miki Sugimura, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Dignity, Peace and Sustainability, Sophia University, Japan</p>
60 minutes	<p>UNESCO Chair and UNITWIN Collaboration with African universities</p> <p>Moderator: Miki Sugimura, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Dignity, Peace and Sustainability, Sophia University, Japan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Hopkins, co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, York University, Canada • Katrin Kohl, co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards

Parallel Session 3.10. Bringing the World Together: Achievements and Future Possibilities for Exchanges with Africa
2 October 2024 | 10:00 - 11:30

	<p>Sustainability, York University, Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kazuhiro Yoshida, Coordinator, UNITWIN Network of Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Educational Development, Hiroshima University, Japan • Darla Deardorff, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competences, Stellenbosch University, South Africa • Eri Yamazaki, University Education Administrator (UEA), Sophia University, Japan • Miki Sugimura, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Dignity, Peace and Sustainability, Sophia University, Japan <p>Discussant: Salma Ahmed, Education Policy Specialist, Norway</p>
25 minutes	<p>Questions and Comments</p> <p>Moderator: Miki Sugimura, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Dignity, Peace and Sustainability, Sophia University, Japan</p>
	<p>Rapporteur: Katrin Kohl, co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, York University, Canada</p>

References

York University UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability
<https://www.yorku.ca/unescochair/>

Stellenbosch University UNESCO Chair in Intercultural Competence,
<https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=9960>

Hiroshima University Uni Twin on Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Educational Development
<https://www.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/en/news/5502>

Sophia University UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Dignity, Peace and Sustainability
<https://sophia-unescochair.jp/en/>

Parallel Session 4.1. Promoting Gender Equality in and through STEM Education

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizer: Section for Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Contemporary challenges such as climate change, sustainable food and water security, pandemics and natural disasters are driving rapid increases in labour market demand for professionals with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) competencies. Indeed, STEM skills play an essential role in the 'green' and digital transitions and are key to the development of sustainable and inclusive societies. More broadly, quality STEM learning fosters the acquisition of critical thinking, problem solving and innovation skills – all of which are facing increased demand from employers across various sectors and industries.

The African Union has recognized the importance of STEM and digital skills in boosting learning outcomes and socio-economic development in its Agenda 2063. Yet STEM graduates are in short supply across the continent: UNESCO figures show that, in 2018, sub-Saharan Africa had just 124 researchers per million inhabitants – compared with a global average of more than 1,000.¹ Women and girls are the greatest untapped population to address the gap between current STEM skills and anticipated needs across the continent: in 2018-2023, women represented at most one quarters of all higher education STEM graduates in five countries in sub-Saharan Africa², and women represent less than 15 per cent of engineering and technology researchers in six countries in West and Central Africa.³

In 2017, to improve understanding of the drivers of gender disparities in STEM studies and careers and to spearhead action to address them, UNESCO published a global report under the title [Cracking the code: Girls' and women's education in STEM](#). Using an ecological framework that considers learners, their family and peers, schools and wider society, the report identifies the factors that impact on girls' and women's participation, achievement and progression in STEM education, and proposes solutions to address them. The role of social, cultural and gender norms in shaping girls' confidence, interest and willingness to engage in STEM subjects is underlined. Since 2021, UNESCO and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) have also published a series of annual policy papers on promoting girls in STEM, exploring different areas such as female teachers⁴, confidence of girls⁵ and early learning activities⁶.

Against the broader backdrop of the 2022 United Nations Secretary-General's Transforming Education Summit and its [Call to Action on advancing gender equality in and through education](#), this session will consider how STEM knowledge systems can be transformed in Africa to address gender-based impediments to participation and achievement in STEM education and unlock opportunities for all. The particular role of collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as the [Global Platform for Gender Equality in and through Education](#) launched during the Transforming Education Summit, will be underlined. The session's outcomes will notably inform the development of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2026-2035.

Agenda

Parallel Session 4.1. Promoting Gender Equality in and through STEM Education

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

90 minutes

Moderator: **Marema Touré Thiam**, Sociologist and Vice President, Scientific Committee, CODESRIA, Senegal

Opening remarks

Elsbeth McOmish, Programme Specialist, Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNESCO

Keynote

Quentin Wodon, Director, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

Speakers

- **Adama Sow**, Associate Professor Director of Studies, University Research and Training Center for Internet Technologies, Cheick Anta Diop University, Senegal
- **Simone Yankey-Ouattara**, Acting Coordinator, African Union International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), Burkina Faso
- **Mariam Abbas Ibrahim Abdelghafour**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Women, Science and Technology, Sudan University of Science and Technology, Sudan
- **Fatima Ouahmi**, Professor, Faculty of Education Sciences, Université Mohammed V, Kingdom of Morocco
- **Armand Abanda**, Chairholder, Chaire UNESCO Partenariat stratégique et institutionnel pour l'accès des jeunes et des femmes aux technologies de l'information et de la communication en Afrique Centrale, Institut Africain d'Informatique, Cameroon
- **Sithobile Priscilla Dube**, Lecturer, National University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Medicine, Zimbabwe

Closing remarks

Awa Bousso Dramé, Researcher in Coastal Sciences, GIS & AI, & UNESCO-L'Oréal For Women in Science Laureate, Senegal

Rapporteur: **Yoslan Nur**, Programme Specialist, Natural Science Sector, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa

Parallel Session 4.2. Research Cooperation and Capacity Development in Water

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizer: UNESCO SC/HYD, FU/ADI and FU/NAI

Co-organizer: Ministry of Water, Ethiopia

Context

The UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) envisions a water secure world where people and institutions have adequate capacity and scientifically based knowledge for informed decision-making on water management and governance to attain sustainable development and to build resilient societies. Over the years, it has built up an extensive and very rich water network called the “UNESCO Water Family”, consists of 170 National Committees and Focal Points of the IHP, 29 water-related category 2 institutes and centres, 84 water-related UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Networks and 17 IHP Flagship Initiatives, supported by the Secretariats of the IHP and of the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) as well as Hydrology Focal Points in UNESCO’s Field Offices. The UNESCO water-related Chairs, established in a higher education or research institution, contribute to each stage of IHP work, from the exploration of emerging issues, through the development of international normative instruments to the implementation of policy recommendations at the national level. At least 20 of its water chairs are gathered in this UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Water is a critical resource for Africa's economic development, social well-being, and environmental sustainability. However, the continent faces numerous challenges, including climate change, population growth, urbanization, and pollution, that threaten water security and resilience. Research cooperation and capacity development are essential for addressing these complex and interconnected water challenges. Within the Ninth Phase of IHP for 2022-2029 “Science for a Water Secure World in a Changing Environment”, its *Priority Area 1: Research and Innovation*, and *Priority Area 2: Water Education in the fourth industrial evolution including sustainability* highlight the importance of Research Cooperation and Capacity Development in Water which will be further discussed during this Forum.

The *Campus Africa Flagship Programme* is one of UNESCO’s key initiatives under its Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029. This programme aims to contribute to the development of inclusive and equitable societies in Africa by leveraging education as a key driver for sustainable development. The three main areas of interventions are: the improvement in the continent’s Research Capacities; the promotion of scholarships for Doctoral Programmes by facilitating mobility and equity; and enhancing youth employability. The outcome of this workstream will promote investment in applied research and strengthen research leadership, governance and inter-university networks in priority areas in line with Agenda 2063. To ensure the achievement of this flagship programme, the potential collaborators include regional research and higher education institutions, networks, consortium and UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks based in Africa.

Objectives

The objectives of this session are to:

- Address pressing water challenges in Africa and identify innovative solutions to promote equitable access to water resources.
- Discuss potential research cooperation among UNESCO chairs and partners in addressing water issues.
- Identify specific needs for capacity development in water sector to support sustainable water management.
- Engage UNESCO Chairs and partners to assist higher education and research institutions in Africa with the implementation of Campus Africa by forming strategic partnerships and providing technical and financial support.

Expected Outcomes

The participants of this session including water chairs and partners are expected to contribute directly to attaining the strategic objectives and programmatic priorities of the IHP-IX and support UNESCO's work in water and its Priority Africa.

More specifically it is expected that:

- Issues and challenges on water in Africa addressed, innovative solutions identified and promoted, through sharing knowledge and experience among UNESCO Chairs and partners.
- Potential research cooperation among UNESCO chairs and partners obtained through developing collaborative research work and effective networking.
- The needs for developing capacity in water identified and strategized.
- UNESCO Chairs and partners engaged and contributed to the higher education and research institutions in Africa, as well as to the broader goals of sustainable development and resilience in Africa.

Additionally, the session will also highlight specific contribution of water-related chairs as member of UNESCO Water Family to the 50th anniversary of IHP and 60th years of water sciences at UNESCO that will be celebrated in 2025.

Provisional Agenda

Parallel Session 4.2. Research Cooperation and Capacity Development in Water	
2 October 2024 11:30-13:00	
10 minutes	Welcome/Introduction <i>Welcome Speech</i> Masheleni Hambani , UNESCO Addis Ababa Office

Parallel Session 4.2. Research Cooperation and Capacity Development in Water

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

	<p><i>Opening and Introductory Speech</i></p> <p>Borhene Chakroun, Director, UNESCO Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems</p>
10 minutes	<p>Keynote Speech</p> <p>Alexandros Makarigakis, UNESCO Nairobi Office</p>
30 minutes	<p>Panel discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Masheleni Hambani, UNESCO Addis Ababa Office</p> <p>Rapporteur: Patience Awopegba, UNESCO Nairobi Office</p> <p><i>Panelists (5 mins each):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Syed Mohammed Zaidi, UNESCO Chair in Desalination and Water Treatment, Qatar University, Qatar• Hilma Rantilla Amwele, UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Research for Climate Adaptation and Saline Agriculture in Arid Environments, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Namibia• Annelise Niangoran, Chaire UNESCO "Eau, Femmes et pouvoir de décisions", Université Félix Houphouët Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire• Cherifa Abdelbaki, UNESCO Chair for Sustainable Development and Resilience: Addressing Climate Change, Water Security, Food Sustainability, and Energy Resilience (SUDARE), University of Tlemcen, Algeria• East Africa to be added• Representative of Ministry of Water, Ethiopia to be invited
35 minutes	<p>Interactive Session with Water-related Chairs</p> <p>(1-2 mins each)</p> <p>Moderator: Nico Elema, AUDA-NEPAD Southern African Network of Water Centres of Excellence (SANWATCE), Stellenbosch University International, South Africa</p> <p>Rapporteur: Yoslan Nur, UNESCO Nairobi Office</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ramiro Pillco Zola, UNESCO Chair in Ecohydrology for Sustainable Water

Parallel Session 4.2. Research Cooperation and Capacity Development in Water

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

	<p>Management, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, Bolivia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eduardo Mario Menciondo, UNESCO Chair on Urban Water Quality Management, Recovery and Reuse, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Brazil• Bienvenu Armand Eric Foto, Chaire UNESCO sur la gestion de l'eau en République Centrafricaine, Université de Bangui, Central African Republic• Chiara Biscrini/ Maura Marchegiani, UNESCO Chair on Water Resources Management and Culture, University for Foreigners in Perugia, Italy• Onemayin David Jimoh, UNESCO Chair in Integrated Flood Management and Water Resources, Federal University of Technology, Nigeria• Omogbemi Omolaju YAYA, Director, Regional Centre for Integrated River Basin Management (RC-IRBM) - Centre under the auspices of UNESCO, Nigeria• Abdullah Alghafri, UNESCO Chair on Aflaj Studies-Archelohydrology, University of Nizwa, Oman• Nihal Ben Amar (Déchets, Eau, Energie), LAMSIN Laboratory, Tunisia
5 minutes	<p>Closing</p> <p>Masheleni Hambani, UNESCO Addis Ababa Office</p>

Parallel Session 4.3. Africa Also Knows: Possibilities and Prospects for Early Childhood Care and Education to Become the New Frontier of Knowledge for the Future We Want in Africa

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

CONCEPT NOTE

Context and objectives

The landmark report - “Reimagining Our Futures Together: A new social contract for education” ([“Futures of Education report”](#)) - calls for a new social contract rooted in human rights principles such as inclusion, equity, cooperation, solidarity, and collective responsibility. Central to this vision are the foundational principles of ensuring lifelong access to quality education and strengthening education as a public good. The report highlights the urgent need to reimagine and transform education systems globally. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), as the first stage of education that lays the building blocks for subsequent learning and development, is where the transformation must begin.

The crucial importance of ECCE for education and sustainable development is firmly inscribed in international and regional frameworks. Achieving ECCE for all by 2030 is one of the global education targets of SDG 4. [The Tashkent Declaration](#) adopted at the 2022 UNESCO World Conference on ECCE calls for transforming ECCE to offer every child a strong start in life through multisectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration and support. The AU [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#) emphasizes the critical role of ECCE in creating an inclusive continent, with its Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 ([CESA 16-25](#)) underscoring pre-primary education as a fundamental pillar for future learning and training.

Africa has been making steady strides in promoting access to quality ECCE, encouraging the expansion of ECCE through diversified approaches that include home visits, child-to-child programmes, parenting education, community-based and formal preschool education. Among early childhood development professionals, there is increasingly a clear emphasis on valuing holistic interventions attending to the health, nutrition, protection and education of young children. However, challenges still remain in the region. As of 2022, the net enrolment rate for children participating in pre-primary education programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa was 19% while the global average amounted to 50%; and there are persistent disparities that disadvantage poor and vulnerable children (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2024).

A fundamental issue in the transformation of ECCE is around the conceptualization of early childhood and kinds of knowledges generated and used for informing and inspiring the strengthening of the sector in Africa. As a new field for the region, Africa has tended to be the “recipient” of ECCE-related knowledge coming from the Minority World, centered around developmental psychology that defines stages of child development but increasingly informed by economics and neurosciences. While there are more and more African scholars who put forward the indigenous-based images of the child and early childhood based on their theorization and creation, these knowledges tend to remain at the fringe of the sector, insufficiently mobilized for informing ECCE policy, practice and professionalization of the workforce (Okwany 2016; Ngutuku 2018; Pence, Makokoro, Ebrahim & Barry 2023). Moreover, the vision of inclusion, which is central to the 2063 Africa We Want, requires a renewed attention in ECCE, promoting more contextual approaches that are culturally sensitive to the daily lives of young children and their families. In the midst of poly-crises, Africa’s ECCE needs multiple epistemic responses.

Reflecting and debating on the epistemic dimensions cannot be disassociated from the configurations around the research community. The Futures of Education report advocates for a global research

programme, which emphasizes renewed global cooperation and equitable partnerships, with universities playing a key role, particularly in supporting vulnerable groups, through strengthened knowledge generation and collaboration. Strengthening the contributions of African academics and researchers in Africa’s ECCE policy and practice necessitates a critical look at the state of play in terms of research opportunities, fundings and partnerships as well as the gender dimension of the research community for ECCE in Africa, and to share good practices that seek to overcome present barriers and enhance the potentials of African research.

Against this backdrop, this parallel session aims to support reflection and catalyze collaborative efforts among UNESCO Chairs and Partners, researchers, Member States, and key stakeholders for the transformation of knowledges for ECCE policy and practice. It will explore the evolution and future directions of ECCE in Africa, critically examining conceptions and knowledge of early childhood and contextualization of approaches to young children in Africa. It will seek to enhance knowledge generation, application and sharing mechanisms, and exploring ways to integrate indigenous research and knowledge in policy and practice to support inclusive, quality and sustainable ECCE systems in the region. At the juncture of the 2024 AU Year of Education and the preparatory phase of the new Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), the session will aspire to provide some key recommendations.

Objectives

The objectives of this parallel session are to:

- Reflect on the state and discuss way forward for ECCE knowledge generation, exchange and application in Africa with a view to reinforcing the implementation of the national, regional and international commitments related to ECCE, such as SDG Target 4.2, Tashkent Declaration and CESA.
- Address the importance of contextualization of ECCE and incorporating indigenous and local knowledge to conceptualize and envision the futures of ECCE that contributes to building inclusive, just, peaceful, and sustainable societies in Africa.
- Explore and foster collaboration among UNESCO Chairs and Partners, researchers, Member States, and key stakeholders to develop inclusive and transformative ECCE policy and practice and promote meaningful knowledge generation and exchange.

Provisional Agenda

Parallel Session 4.3. Africa Also Knows: Possibilities and Prospects for Early Childhood Care and Education to Become the New Frontier of Knowledge for the Future We Want in Africa	
2 October 2024 11:30-13:00	
10 minutes	<p>Moderator: Nodumo Dhlamini, Director of ICT Services and Knowledge Management, Association of African Universities, Ghana</p> <p>Video projection</p> <p>Welcome/Introduction by Nodumo Dhlamini, Director, ICT Services and Knowledge Management, Association of African Universities and Chair, Knowledge Generation Working Group of AU Early Childhood Education and Development Cluster</p>
20 minutes	<p>Keynote Speech</p> <p>Hasina Ebrahim, University of South Africa, co-Chair on Early Childhood Education, Care and Development</p>
30 minutes	<p>Stakeholder panel discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Yoshie Kaga, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Regional Office for West</p>

Parallel Session 4.3. Africa Also Knows: Possibilities and Prospects for Early Childhood Care and Education to Become the New Frontier of Knowledge for the Future We Want in Africa

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

	<p>Africa</p> <p>Perspectives from service provider, civil society and research community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oumar Barry, University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal, and UNESCO co-Chair on Early Childhood Education, Care and Development • Meseret Zelalem, Deputy CEO and Chief of Programmes, African Centre for Early Childhood Development, City of Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia • George Evans Owino, Programme Manager for Knowledge Management, Africa Early Childhood Network • Pauline Essah, Director of Research and Programmes, Education Sub-Saharan Africa, United Kingdom and Great Britain
25 minutes	Q&A and discussion
5 minutes	Wrap up/Closing remarks by Ms. Nodumo Dhlamini

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Pence, A., Makokoro, P., Ebrahim, H. B., & Barry, O. (2023). *Sankofa: Appreciating the past in planning the future of early childhood education, care and development in Africa*. Paris: UNESCO.

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Parallel Session 4.4: Enhancing Collaborative Research Partnerships through Generative AI

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizer: Asia Pacific University

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

In a rapidly evolving global research landscape, integrating local knowledge—such as indigenous agricultural practices or traditional health solutions—with international expertise is crucial for addressing regional challenges like climate change, food insecurity, and public health crises. International expertise, including advanced technologies and scientific methodologies, complements local knowledge by offering new tools for analysis, collaboration, and innovation. By leveraging these combined strengths, research partnerships can more effectively create solutions tailored to regional needs while fostering sustainable development. Generative AI, a type of artificial intelligence capable of creating new content such as text, images, or data, offers transformative potential for enhancing research collaborations. For example, AI tools can generate literature reviews, assist in data analysis, and facilitate multilingual communication across research teams. By automating routine tasks, Generative AI allows researchers to focus on innovation and problem-solving, making it a powerful tool in addressing complex regional challenges such as climate resilience and healthcare solutions. This session provides insights into how AI can enhance research initiatives, while also addressing its limitations. Although AI tools like large language models offer significant potential, they often rely heavily on dominant internet languages, which can limit inclusivity and the representation of diverse perspectives. As a result, generative AI may struggle to fully integrate local knowledge and linguistic diversity, potentially reinforcing existing biases. Exploring both the strengths and limitations of AI will be key to fostering truly inclusive research collaborations.

This 90-minute session will focus on strengthening collaborative research partnerships and networks by leveraging the power of Generative AI. Participants will explore how collaborative research can be enhanced through AI, facilitating partnerships that address regional challenges and promote sustainable development.

The session aims to:

- Demonstrate the role of Generative AI in enhancing collaborative research partnerships.
- Explore strategies for integrating local and international knowledge through AI.
- Discuss the potential for AI to foster innovation and address regional challenges.

Agenda

Parallel Session 4.4: Enhancing Collaborative Research Partnerships through Generative AI	
2 October 2024 11:30-13:00	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abtar Darshan Singh, UNESCO Chair, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU) Malaysia• Janeth Kigobe, UNESCO Chair Program Manager, Open University Tanzania (OUT) Tanzania• Maurice Nkusi, Manager, Academic Development & Support Namibia University of Science & Technology• Ts. Jonathan JS Kovilpillai, UNESCO Chair Program Manager, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU) Malaysia• Patrick Charland, UNESCO Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Curriculum Development (UQAM)
10 minutes	Introduction and Overview (Abtar Darshan Singh) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and objectives• Overview of the importance of collaborative research partnerships in Africa and beyond
15 minutes	Generative AI and Knowledge Transfer (Janeth & Ts Jonathan) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can AI support localization of international knowledge transfer?• Role of AI in preserving and integrating local African knowledge and culture• Potential cases for successful AI integration in the African education scenario
20 minutes	Enhancing Co-Research through AI (Maurice & Patrick) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategies for integrating local and international research efforts• Examples of collaborative projects that could leverage AI• Potential long-term benefits and limitations for the research ecosystem
45 minutes	Discussion and Q&A (Abtar, Janeth, Maurice, Patrick & Ts Jonathan) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open floor for participant questions and insights• Summarizing key takeaways and next steps

Parallel Session 4.5. Health and Education: Innovating for Sustainable Development. Focus on Human rights and Sexual, Reproductive and Affective Health

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizers

- UNESCO Chair “Global Health & Education” (Université Clermont Auvergne)
- UNESCO Chair “Sexual Health & Human Rights” (Université Paris-Cité)

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and Rationale

A common thread: Human rights and their values; a lever for sexual health education and the improvement of global health

All over the world, we are witnessing a movement in which Comprehensive Sexuality Education is being sidelined, rejected or denied. Our aim is to provide a counter-voice and to show the importance of sustainable sexuality, reproductive health and relationships education, a pillar of global health, for all the world's young people. Today, all the values of fundamental human rights are being called into question, the same values that enable us to live with dignity and in good health. We would also point out that ‘ECS is not just about sex, but also about relationships, gender, puberty, consent and sexual and reproductive health, for all young people’.

The picture is more than mixed when it comes to implementing truly effective sexual health. Improving people's sexual health and, above all, supporting young people in making positive changes to their sexuality remains the key to combating violence, particularly gender-based violence, stigmatisation, discrimination and ignorance. Although the tools are multiplying, and individual initiatives are rich and creative, policies are still too cautious in many countries.

More than ever, the worlds of care and education need to transcend the divisions between them. They need to share and work together to create new ways of promoting well-being, prevention and care. The intersection between education and care needs to be better defined, between information and messages, advice, expertise and the resources of individuals in relation to their own health, and the therapeutic act in all its dimensions and of whatever nature.

Objectives

- To identify the specific needs in terms of improving emotional and sexual health through the inclusion of human rights, taking into account cultural roots.
- Share experiences: (a few examples of work carried out by our three Chairs in different fields and in different African countries).
- Rethinking university training for sexual health professionals in the fields of education, social work and healthcare from a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral perspective, with a view to moving away from univocal models (bio-medical, psychological, social, etc.) of sexuality. What are the conditions for this?

Methodology

The session will be organized around 3 themes and 3 questions that will be interactive, creative and forward-looking:

- On what basis can human rights and sexual health be combined to improve the overall, integrative health of populations?
- What inspiring experiences can we draw on for the future?

- How can we make them a reality in our collaboration through our Unitwin network... Proposals, research, ideas box, wishes...

Provisional Agenda

Parallel Session 4.5. Health and Education: Innovating for Sustainable Development. Focus on Human rights and Sexual, Reproductive and Affective Health	
2 October 2024 11:30-13:00	
10 minutes	<p>Welcome/Introduction</p> <p>Joëlle Mignot</p> <p>Co-titulaire. Chaire Unesco Santé sexuelle et Droits Humains, Université de Paris-Cité, Psychologue sexologue clinicienne et directrice des enseignements de sexologie Faculté de médecine Bichat</p> <p>Marleen Temmerman, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Youth Leadership in Science, Health, Gender and Education, Aga Khan University, Kenya</p>
10 minutes	<p>Presentation of the UNITWIN network and the work of the Chairs in Education and Health (Université de Clermont) and Sexual Health and Human Rights (Université Paris- Cité) (Joelle Mignot, Silvia Ruiters, Goof Buijs)</p>
10 minutes	<p>Presentation of UNESCO Chair on Youth Leadership in Science, Health, Gender and Education, Aga Khan University, Kenya</p>
45 minutes	<p>Comments and Q&A</p> <p>(15-minute discussion for each question)</p> <p>Moderator: Didier Jourdan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On what basis can human rights and sexual health be combined to improve the overall, integrative health of populations? • What inspiring experiences can we draw on for the future? • How can they be put into practice through our Unitwin network... Proposals, research, ideas box, wishes... <p>All participants</p>
10 minutes	<p>Closing remarks</p>

Parallel Session 4.6. Presentation of the "African Heroes" Edutainment Video Game

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizer: UNESCO Dakar Office

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Au cours des dernières décennies, l'Afrique est décrite comme une zone synonyme d'instabilité et d'insécurité. Partout, les jeunes mettent en avant un sentiment d'abandon et de mal être affaiblissant les socles culturels sur lesquels sont fondées les sociétés, participant au fossé intergénérationnel, à l'impuissance d'une jeunesse influençable manquant de repères, au choc d'une modernité en négociation avec les traditions et à l'installation durable de cette instabilité tant décrite. Malgré le travail pionnier de l'UNESCO depuis les années soixante pour révéler la véritable histoire de l'Afrique, celle-ci reste aujourd'hui encore largement méconnue, surtout par les jeunes africains. De nombreux jeunes du continent ne sont pas suffisamment sensibilisés/sensibles à leur histoire millénaire, ce qui peut entraîner une perte de connexion avec leurs racines et leur propre identité culturelle. Afin d'asseoir une paix et une cohésion durables en Afrique, il s'avère important de s'assurer, de la participation massive et inclusive de toutes les couches sociales, notamment des jeunes qui représentent plus de la moitié de sa population.

S'inspirant des nouvelles approches pédagogiques, ce projet mettra en place un continuum pédagogique accompagnant les apprenants de l'école à la maison. Il vise à mettre en œuvre une stratégie complémentaire à l'approche formaliste qui passe par le système scolaire, en développant des contenus de divertissement pédagogiques pour transmettre des messages éducatifs et impacter positivement les conditions des jeunes africains, telles que l'estime de soi. Cette stratégie permet également de toucher tous ceux qui, n'ont pas eu l'occasion de passer par les structures formelles de formation ou qui ont quitté l'école avant la durée minimale requise et dont certains n'ont pu acquérir les compétences nécessaires à la lecture, qu'il s'agisse de jeunes, de personnes plus âgées ou du public en général.

En partenariat avec NETINFO, l'UNESCO a développé la première phase pilote du projet pour smartphone dont le contenu est basé sur les volumes de l'Histoire Générale de [l'Afrique](#) (HGA).

Le jeu vidéo mettra en valeur l'histoire africaine loin des stéréotypes racistes et coloniaux pour développer une expérience innovante qui visent à rendre l'apprentissage de l'histoire africaine attractif, ludique et accessible à tous. Une révolution exceptionnelle susceptible d'avoir un impacte durable sur la connaissance des figures emblématiques de l'histoire africaine. Le Game Play est structuré autour des grandes figures emblématiques du continent africain et de sa Diaspora qui ont marqué significativement l'histoire.

Dans la première version du Game Play, les récits des personnages suivants ont été développés. Il s'agit de :

1. ZUMBI : Chef guerrier et héros de la lutte antiesclavagiste au Brésil
2. NZINGA : Princesse ayant résisté à la mise en esclavage des peuples du Royaume du Kongo
3. SHAKHA ZULU : Père de la nation zoulou et stratège militaire
4. MAKEDA : Grande reine d'Ethiopie éprise de savoir
5. KEITA : Roi des rois, fondateur de l'Empire du Mali
6. ZEYNAB : Bâtitseuse, visionnaire de la splendide ville de Marrakech

Objectives

En présentant « Héros Africains », le Secteur des Sciences humaines et sociales espère atteindre plusieurs objectifs. D'abord, la sensibilisation d'un large public à l'importance de l'histoire africaine. Ensuite, susciter un intérêt accru pour l'apprentissage de l'histoire et la préservation de la culture africaine parmi les jeunes. Enfin, nous espérons stimuler le développement de l'industrie du jeu vidéo en Afrique en informant des opportunités pour les jeunes développeurs talentueux et en encourageant l'innovation dans ce domaine. Ce projet ludo-éducatif du Secteur des Sciences humaines et sociales de l'UNESCO crée un pont entre la transmission de l'histoire et le divertissement pour les jeunes.

Parallel Session 4.7. Enhancing Arts and Culture Education through Research Cooperation

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizer: UNESCO Nairobi Office

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

With the recent adoption of the UNESCO Framework on Culture and Arts Education (World Conference on Culture and Education, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 13-15 February 2024), Member States and the international community have committed to reinvest in the synergies between culture and education, including arts education, to address the challenges of a fast-evolving context, and thereon contribute to building more resilient, and sustainable societies.

In nearly all African countries there is untapped potential for culture and arts education – across all dimensions of culture and creativity – to improve quality of learning, and contribute to vibrant cultural and creative industries, generating employment and economic well-being, especially among the youth.

TVET offers opportunities for incorporating culture and arts education in curricula and pedagogies. Indeed, there is a critical need to enable all learners to fully benefit from the opportunities of culture and education through inclusive access to quality education, respecting and engaging with the diversity of peoples and cultures as a positive and transformative force, and expanding sustainable lifestyles.

African countries and the African Union emphasize the primacy of culture for socio-economic development and regional integration as articulated in the African Union: Africa We Want: Agenda 2063, (2015) and The Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (2006).

Building on these opportunities as well as existing gaps, this side event aims to provide a platform for dialogue and collaboration for UNESCO Chairs working at the intersection of culture and education across African Universities – including leading countries in this field such as Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius - for enhanced cooperation, knowledge exchange and strengthened partnerships among research institutions.

With a view to promote a vibrant educational ecosystem that leverages the power of culture and arts to drive socio-economic development and regional integration across Africa, this initiative aims to promote the creation of a network of African universities specialized in arts and culture, fostering opportunities for student exchanges and collaborative projects, facilitating knowledge exchange and best practices, and developing teacher training programs to enhance the capacity of educators in integrating culture and arts into TVET curricula.

Agenda

Parallel Session 4.7. Enhancing Arts and Culture Education through Research Cooperation	
2 October 2024 11:30-13:00	
90 minutes	Moderators: Cristina Cusenza , Associate Project Officer for Culture, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, UNESCO and Scheherazade Feddal , Programme Specialist for Education, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa
	<i>Welcoming remarks</i>

Parallel Session 4.7. Enhancing Arts and Culture Education through Research Cooperation

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Joel Kipkemboi Kiboss, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Culture and Arts in Education for Sustainable Development, Kabarak University, Kenya

Keynote

Angela Martins, Acting Director for Social Development, Culture and Sport, African Union Commission

Speakers

- **Joel Kipkemboi Kiboss**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Culture and Arts in Education for Sustainable Development, Kabarak University, Kenya
- **Jill Margaret Pribyl**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Dance for Global Citizenship Education, University of Kisubi, Uganda

Closing remarks

Maylene Cotto-Andino, Ph. D. Associate Professor and Coordinator, Network for the Culture of Peace Chairs, Fundación Cultura de Paz, Spain Rapporteur: Denzia Hazoume, UNESCO

Thematic Meeting 1.8. Building Research Partnerships to Advance Production and Use of New Historical Knowledge: UNITWIN Network on the General History of Africa

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizers: Global Citizenship and Peace Education Section and Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The main objective of the second pillar of UNESCO's Priority Africa flagship on The General History of Africa is to contribute to building new knowledge on African and Diaspora History, ensuring that it contributes to supporting Member States address and manage social challenges at the national, regional, and global levels. Within that context, in addition to publishing three new volumes of the GHA, to complement the original eight volumes, that are currently being integrated in educational systems across Africa, UNESCO will establish a Consortium of Universities, Research Centers and Institutes on the General History of Africa (GHA), that will operate as UNITWIN Network, to lead the task of producing new knowledge. In April 2024, working closely with ten universities in Africa (7), Brazil (2) and North America (1), an application was submitted to the UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Programme, to establish a UNITWIN Network.

Once fully operational, the Network will promote collaboration and exchange among partner universities, in teaching, research, and community engagement, serving as a major platform to build the capacities of researchers, especially the younger generation, to produce new knowledge on African and Diaspora history and to strengthen the connection between knowledge production and the teaching and learning of the GHA. As a concrete first step, the Network will also work with institutional partners that, for many years, have been working to write Southern African Liberation History, as part of a broader effort to document the story of liberation movements across the region, distilling it with national iterations, and from the perspective of participants in the struggle against colonization and apartheid in Africa.

The objective of this session is therefore to highlight the significance of placing history in a contemporary context by providing opportunities for experienced researchers, to engage in producing new knowledge that informs current transformations in many societies across the continent and its diasporas. That knowledge, it is hoped, will bring new perspectives to historical discourses, consequently informing and shaping the design and development of public policies, aimed at addressing many challenges facing UNESCO Member States.

The session, which will bring together experts from participating institutions in the Consortium/UNITWIN Network, and other partners will provide an opportunity for reflection on the mission and viability of the Network as an institutional mechanism that concretely contributes to the implementation of UNESCO's GHA Flagship Programme, and in the long term be instrumental in building capacities of researchers, beyond the discipline of history, to include other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, and in establishing collaborations with other education stakeholders, namely practitioners, to ensure this knowledge reaches all learners.

The moderated discussion of the panel will be preceded by a keynote address, delivered by an eminent scholar and Chair of the International Scientific Committee of the new GHA volumes. In his presentation Professor Augustin Holl will situate the value of producing new and additional knowledge on African and diaspora history, in the context of the GHA's six-decade long journey of

seeking to decolonize the histories of Africa peoples and societies across the globe.

A summary of the deliberations, synthesizing the key interventions will be produced as an output of the session and ultimately developed into a high-quality background document, to guide the initial phase of the Network’s activities, following its official launch, expected to take place in the first quarter of 2025.

Agenda

Thematic Meeting 1.8. Building Research Partnerships to Advance Production and Use of New Historical Knowledge: UNITWIN Network on the General History of Africa	
2 October 2024 11:30-13:00	
90 minutes	<p>Moderator: Abdul Rahman Lamin, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, UNESCO Harare</p> <p><i>Welcome remarks</i></p> <p>Lamin Diagne, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO</p> <p><i>Keynote</i></p> <p>Augustin Holl, Professor, Chair of the Scientific Committee for the drafting of new General History of Africa volumes, Cameroon</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Idrissa Bah, Professor and Head of History Department, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Senegal• Lily Mafela, Professor of History and History Education, University of Botswana, Botswana Mohamed Camara, Professor of African Studies, Howard University, United States of America• Karine Silva, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Education towards Racial Equality, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil <p><i>Closing remarks</i></p> <p>Paul Zeleza, Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives and Professor of African Studies, Howard University, United States of America</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mathilde Stoleroff, UNESCO</p>

Thematic Meeting 1.9. Education Futures Network for Epistemic Justice and the Knowledge Commons (EpiNet) – New Research Connections and Partnerships

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizers: Western University and University of Bristol

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

In 2024, designated the African Union Year of Education, the UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum has been officially positioned by UNESCO to ‘mobilize diverse regional and international research networks so as to examine the implications of diverse future scenarios of Africa for research...and strengthen research partnerships between the existing UNESCO Chairs network and other research partners.’ However, empirical analysis on research networks and partnerships shows that research and evidence informing higher education policy and research engagement from the African continent, the Global South more generally, and the disempowered are marginalized (Asare et al., 2020). Often, partnerships are unequal and knowledge mobilization activities are closed within universities of the ‘North’ or within a select few strategic centres of knowledge production in the ‘South’.

The landmark report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021) chaired by President Sahle-Work Zewde, and entitled, *Reimagining our Futures Together: a new social contract for education* (Futures of Education Report), stresses the imperative for transformational change of knowledge mobilization, knowledge exchange, and research partnerships and networks against this longstanding backdrop. The Report recommends a ‘shift away from simplistic categorizations of knowledge relationships such as “North/South” or “Western/non-Western,” towards complex and relational ecologies of knowledge...these ecologies of knowledge will need to be enriched by diverse experiences and ways of knowing’ (UNESCO 2021:135). It calls on ‘universities, research institutions and international organizations to support and systematize learning and insights on these themes’ (UNESCO 2021:122), and to act in concert with grassroots communities and civil society organizations, social movements, and local and international networks, and through diverse partnerships.

The proposed session is of the budding Education Futures Network for Epistemic Justice and the Knowledge Commons (EpiNet). EpiNet aims to connect with new and existing diverse knowledge stakeholder partners and collaborators across Africa, Asia, North America, and Europe with the goal to create one mutually shared network. This new collective aims to strengthen ecologies of knowledge and respond to the International Commission’s calls in concrete ways.

Objective

- Mobilize insights from regional knowledge stakeholders across the African continent.
- Connect regional and community knowledge stakeholders across diverse higher education institutions, grassroots community collectives, and policy and expert communities.
- Generate recommendations from attendees to present to UNESCO Future of Learning and Innovation (FLI) Division, and UNESCO more broadly, in response to the International Commission’s calls for enhanced dialogue.

The session is intended as an interactive working session in which participants will be asked to address the following questions: What has your experience been of engaging in research partnerships and knowledge mobilization? Which knowledges should be prioritized to inform new education research agendas in the African context? How may we take this forward in new, dynamic, and more inclusive partnerships?

The session is envisaged as an open space to generate insights from attendees via an open call and via invitation to UNESCO Research Chairs, local and regional higher education institutions and research partners, and civil society and international organization representatives in attendance. Participants will be asked to provide local examples to mobilize knowledge from their own experiences and practice. An additional aim is to gauge interest in EpiNet and form connections amongst participants for potential collaboration and exchange.

The overall objectives are to synthesize and mobilize these insights and to facilitate participation from attendees, and in particular, from UNESCO Research Chairs and research partners in Africa. Insights from the discussion will be recorded and documented to be consolidated as a briefing note for the UNESCO FLI Division.

Agenda

Thematic Meeting 1.9. Education Futures Network for Epistemic Justice and the Knowledge Commons (EpiNet) – New Research Connections and Partnerships	
2 October 2024 11:30-13:00	
90 minutes	<p>Moderator: Leon Tikly, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Transforming Knowledge and Research for Just and Sustainable Futures, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</p> <p><i>Opening remarks</i></p> <p>Catherine Odora Hoppers, Research Professor in Pluralistic Societies: Transdisciplinarity, Cognitive Justice and Education, University of Calgary; Professor of Education, Gulu University, Uganda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moira Faul, Senior Lecturer, Geneva Graduate Institute and Executive Director (NORRAG), Switzerland • Rajesh Tandon, Founder and President, PRIA and UNESCO Co-Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, India <p>Rapporteur: Leon Tikly.</p>

Thematic Meeting 1.10. Intersections of Intercultural Communication/Education and Digital Literacies: Exploring Modalities for Developing Intercultural Competencies

2 October 2024 | 11:30-13:00

Organizer: Stellenbosch University

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

How can intercultural competence be developed in very concrete ways? Join this interactive panel discussion to explore three different modalities from three different parts of the world, shared by UNESCO Chairs. These modalities can be used to bring people together across difference, build community and practice key intercultural competencies such as listening for understanding, community, and to practice key intercultural competencies such as listening for understanding. Participants are also invited to bring other intercultural tools they use and time will be given to share these tools with each other. Given the increased polarization in today's world, such concrete intercultural tools are needed now more than ever to bridge divides and bring people together through our shared humanity. Participants will leave with an action plan on how they will use at least one of these tools in their own context.

Objectives

- Articulate what and why intercultural competence
- Explore 3 different modalities for developing intercultural competencies
- Develop action strategy for developing intercultural competence in own context

Agenda

Thematic Meeting 1.10. Intersections of Intercultural Communication/Education and Digital Literacies: Exploring Modalities for Developing Intercultural Competencies	
2 October 2024 11:30-13:00	
90 minutes	<p>Moderator and opening remarks: Darla K. Deardorff, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competence at Stellenbosch University, South Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camila Valdes Leon, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Dialogue, Casa de las Américas, Cuba • Miki Sugimura, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Dignity, Peace and Sustainability, Sophia University, Japan <p>Rapporteur: Darla K. Deardorff, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competences, Stellenbosch University, South Africa</p>

DAY 3 • Afternoon

PARALLEL SESSIONS V

Code 60

Parallel Session 5.1. Comparative Practices and Structural Transformations: Essential Elements of the Research Agenda for "The Africa We Want"

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: University of Alberta

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

The UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum, titled "Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future," will be held from 30 September to 2 October 2024 in Addis Ababa. This forum will convene experts, scholars, and stakeholders to discuss and strategize the future of Africa through various knowledge-sharing and developmental initiatives. Within this context, a dedicated 90-minute parallel workshop will explore the themes of comparative practices and structural transformations as critical components of the research agenda for "The Africa We Want."

Justification

The rationale behind this workshop stems from the recognition that Africa's development is intrinsically linked to both its cultural and historical context, current and ongoing developments and its future aspirations. Comparative analysis of successful practices enables scholars to draw lessons from other regions' successes and challenges, providing a framework for understanding and addressing Africa's unique circumstances. By examining these practices, African scholars, including those from the diaspora, can bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to the table, thus supporting the vision of a thriving and sustainable Africa.

Objectives

The aims of this workshop are multifaceted. Firstly, it seeks to identify and analyze comparative practices that have successfully driven structural transformations in various global contexts. By doing so, participants will gain insights into adaptable strategies that could be applied within the African context with a view to propel countries on the sustainable development path. Secondly, the workshop will focus on understanding the structural transformations necessary for achieving "The Africa We Want." This includes discussions on governance, economic reforms, social policies, and technological advancements. Finally, the workshop aims to foster collaboration among scholars from Africa and its Diasporas, leveraging their collective expertise to drive impactful research and policy recommendations.

Through engaging discussions and collaborative efforts, this workshop will contribute significantly to the broader objectives of the UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum. By aligning research agendas with practical and transformative goals, the workshop will help ensure that the vision for Africa's future is both attainable and sustainable. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how comparative practices and structural transformations can be harnessed to build a prosperous and equitable Africa for future generations.

Agenda

Parallel Session 5.1. Comparative Practices and Structural Transformations: Essential Elements of the Research Agenda for "The Africa We Want"

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

90 minutes

Moderator: **Léonard Matala-Tala**, Associate Professor (HDR Lecturer), University of Lorraine, IRENEE, France; CAP-Afriques, Canada

Welcoming remarks

Dimitri Sanga, Director, UNESCO Office in Dakar and Regional Bureau for Education and **Charlie Mballa**, Associate Professor, Faculté Saint-Jean, University of Alberta; Director of the Center for Analysis and Prospective on Africa (CEIM–UQAM), Specialist in Foreign Policy Administration, Canada

Keynotes

- **Léonard Matala-Tala**, Associate Professor (HDR Lecturer), University of Lorraine, IRENEE, France; CAP-Afriques, Canada and **Malick Sané**, Professor, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Senegal
- **Léonard Matala-Tala**, Associate Professor (HDR Lecturer), University of Lorraine, IRENEE, France; CAP-Afriques, Canada
- **Moritié Camara**, Full Professor, Alassane Ouattara University of Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire
- **Charlie Mballa**, Associate Professor, Faculté Saint-Jean, University of Alberta; Director of the Center for Analysis and Prospective on Africa (CEIM – UQAM), Specialist in Foreign Policy Administration, Canada

Rapporteur: **Charlie Mballa**, University of Alberta, Canada

Parallel Session 5.2. Decolonizing the Training of the Next Generation of African Researchers: The African Knowledge for Change Centre

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: PRIA

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

In the early 1970s, researchers in Tanzania (working within the vision of the late President, Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere, and encouraged by similar thinking by Brazil's Paulo Freire) developed what they called 'participatory research', as an Afro-centric non-colonial approach to knowledge curation. The goal of this new knowledge discourse was to recognize the value of the knowledge being created in the lived experiences of coast women, nomadic herds people, rural farmers and more.

It was a challenge to the colonial research paradigms of the period which were framed within an assumption of objectivity and 'arms-length' methods with control of the research content and methods tightly held by Western trained scholars. This early work pre-dates the appearance of a decolonial discourse even while drawing on some of the same intellectual roots such as Fanon, Freire, Nyerere and more. However, as the 21st century has moved forward, the interest in a decolonized approach to research has grown. The ideas of Afro centric approaches to knowledge production and the value of locally contextualized actionable knowledge have both expanded.

With the support of the [UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education](#), an African network, the African Knowledge for Change network has emerged and is now looking to expand across Africa. Currently there are Knowledge for Change training hubs based at Gulu University (Uganda), Nelson Mandela University of Science and Technology (Tanzania), Rhodes University (Makanda, South Africa), Northwest University, Free State University and Central University of Technology (Bloemfontein, South Africa), African Rural University (Uganda), Pasteur Institute (Tunisia) with plans for establishing training centres in Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast and more.

The goal of the African K4C Consortium includes a commitment to a decolonising approach to knowledge creation in education systems still dominated by a Euro-centric epistemology that stipulates what knowledge is and how it is produced and validated, based on conventions and practices. The Eurocentric perspective proclaims that its scientific truths are universal and "valid across all of time and space" (Wallerstein 1997).

A decolonising approach, on the contrary, builds the capabilities of knowledge workers within and outside academia by inducting them effectively into different approaches to knowledge production and their underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions. The goal is to equip African community-based researchers with historical, cultural and scientific understanding to interpret past and present, and to cultivate in them the expertise, competencies and skills required to contribute productively to economic, social and technological change at local/regional level (Badat 2017).

Within the African Regional K4C Centre, this is achieved by giving attention and support to the visibility and use of Indigenous and African traditional knowledge systems, subaltern knowledges of excluded and marginalised groups and use of Mother Tongue languages. The emphasis on locally contextualised and participatory community-led knowledge creation is a means to challenge the hegemonic dominance of Eurocentric and other dominant knowledge systems (Hall and Tandon 2017).

Agenda

Parallel Session 5.2. Decolonizing the Training of the Next Generation of African Researchers: The African Knowledge for Change Centre

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

90 minutes	<p>Moderator: Rene Oosthuizen, Coordinator, K4C Hub and Academic Lead, Rhodes University, Makanda, South Africa</p> <p>Background: Rajesh Tandon, Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, PRIA, India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• David Monk, Co-Coordinator, African K4C Centre, Gulu University, Uganda• Alois Porokwa, Maasai Elder, Executive Director, NALEPPO, Manyara, United Republic of Tanzania• Robert Juuko, Co-Coordinator, African K4C Centre, Gulu University, Uganda <p>Rapporteur: Rajesh Tandon, Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, PRIA, India</p>
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Badat, S. 2017. "Trepidation, Longing, and Belonging: Liberating the Curriculum at Universities in South Africa." In Public Lecture Series on Curriculum Transformation Matters: The Decolonial Turn, 108–141. University of Pretoria. doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.31255.57765.

Hall, B. L., and R. Tandon. 2017. "Decolonization of Knowledge, Epistemicide, Participatory Research and Higher Education." *Research for All* 1 (1): 6–19.

Wallerstein, I. 1997. "Eurocentrism and its Avatars." *New Left Review* 226: 93–107.

Parallel Session 5.3. Transforming Future African Education through Responsible and Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence in Education

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: UNESCO/Future of Learning and Innovation Division

Co-organizers: UNESCO Chair on AI in Education, Beijing Normal University

CONCEPT NOTE

Context and Background

The United Nations, through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly [SDG 4 \(Quality Education\)](#), has underscored the significance of elevating education as a cornerstone for achieving inclusive and sustainable development. UNESCO has been resolute in its commitment to enhancing education as a central pillar for fostering sustainable development, particularly within the African context. Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities that the African continent presents, UNESCO has channeled its efforts to support initiatives that address educational gaps, promote cultural preservation, and empower youth.

[Africa's Vision 2063](#), a visionary blueprint for Africa's development over the next half century, underscores the transformative potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in reshaping education across the continent. This strategic framework envisions a future where education becomes a powerful catalyst for economic growth, social cohesion, and sustainable development. By strategically leveraging ICTs, Vision 2063 seeks to overcome historical barriers, democratize access to quality education, and empower learners with skills that are essential in an interconnected and rapidly evolving global landscape.

Digital transformation has emerged as a transformative force with the potential to reshape societies and economies. It offers a promising avenue to address longstanding challenges and inequities in African education. By harnessing the capabilities of digital technologies such as online learning platforms, interactive content, artificial intelligence, and data analytics, education systems can transcend traditional boundaries and limitations. This transformative potential extends to remote and underserved areas, where access to quality education has often been restricted. Through digital transformation, educational resources can be disseminated widely, bridging gaps and creating opportunities for lifelong learning.

However, Africa faces a series of challenges in the process of digital transformation in education and implementation of AIED, including limited technology infrastructure, socio-economic disparities, concerns about data privacy, the need for pedagogical paradigm shifts and comprehensive educator digital literacy training, deeply entrenched cultural barriers, resource constraints, awareness gaps, and the encompassing influence of broader economic and political factors. These multifaceted obstacles present barriers that hinder the integration of AI and other technologies within the educational landscape across the continent. Therefore, it is important to establish a dedicated platform for recognizing and addressing these challenges while also promoting collaborative discourse, facilitating the exchange of innovative methodologies, and seeking actionable strategies that can overcome these obstacles.

Challenges associated with AIED

UNESCO, through its international conferences, highlighted the opportunities as well as the challenges of AIED. For instance, in 2019, the conference was concluded with a report entitled '[The Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence and Education](#),' where UNESCO reaffirmed the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a key focus on education (SDG 4). Fifty government ministers and vice ministers, as well as around 500 international representatives, discussed the challenges facing education worldwide and initiated actions to put forward policy responses for the systematic integration of AI and education for innovative approaches. On the other hand, how AI can be used to protect human rights and equip people with relevant skills required for effective learning and work, collaboration, and sustainable development were major issues of concern. Targeting these concerns, UNESCO put forward a set of suggestions, some of which included establishing an 'AI for Education' platform and developing guidelines and resources in consultation with Member States to support policies and strategies for the equitable use of AI in education.

Within the framework of the Beijing Consensus, UNESCO released a report in 2021 entitled '[Artificial Intelligence and Education: Guidance for Policy-makers](#)'. This report helped to achieve a common understanding of the opportunities and challenges that AI offers for education. In addition, emerging national policies and best practices for leveraging AI to enhance education and learning were also summarized, calling for further investigation using appropriate methods.

UNESCO has further emphasized the importance of developing and adopting human-centered AIED. It aims to put humans at the center of attention instead of the technology (AI) itself. UNESCO highlighted the need for a shift in the conversation to include *AI's role in addressing current inequalities regarding access to knowledge, research and the diversity of cultural expressions and to ensure AI does not widen the technological divides within and between countries*. The promise of "AI for all" must be that everyone can take advantage of the technological revolution under way and access its fruits, notably in terms of innovation and knowledge.

On November 21, 2023, the UNESCO Chair on AI in Education at [Beijing Normal University](#) and the UNESCO Eastern Africa Multisectoral Regional Office organized a *policy dialogue about AIED in Africa*, where the need for more international collaborations to support the integration and adoption of AIED in African universities was highlighted. Accordingly, the forum launched the "China-Africa AI in Education Community of Practice" and aimed to foster dialogue, policy formulation, and innovative solutions for revolutionizing African education through AI-powered technologies.

Aims and objectives

This session, organized by the *UNESCO Chair on AI in Education at Beijing Normal University (BNU)*, China, in collaboration with the *UNESCO Nairobi office*, aims to deepen the understanding of the challenges associated with AIED, including ethics, as well as promote interdisciplinary collaboration for a safe and responsible development of AI in education in Africa.

The session endeavors to facilitate meaningful interactions and knowledge exchange among educators, policymakers, technologists, and stakeholders, fostering collaboration to harness the power of AIED for improving education quality, accessibility, and inclusivity. Furthermore, it aims to identify actionable policy recommendations and innovative approaches that can drive the effective integration of AIED into diverse education systems throughout Africa. Through these interconnected objectives, the session seeks to make a contribution to the broader vision of enhancing educational outcomes and nurturing a digitally empowered generation capable of shaping Africa's future.

This session will be structured around the following **sub-themes**:

1. The benefits, challenges, and risks of applying AI to transform education in Africa;
2. The distinctive and collaborative roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders (e.g., leaders, policymakers, researchers, practitioners, technology, and service providers) to promote the development and adoption of the safe and responsible AIED in Africa;
3. Preparations and guidelines for a safe adoption and use of generative AI and large language models in African education;
4. Required AI literacy for the safe use of AIED in Africa;
5. Cross-country collaborations, through UNESCO Chairs entities, to promote the human-centered AIED approach in Africa.

Key Questions for the Session

1. How could AI enhance education quality and ensure inclusiveness in your country context?
2. What are the challenges faced when adopting AI in education, in your country context, and what strategies or policies should be considered to promote the safe and effective use of AI in education?
3. How cross-country collaboration could promote the safe and effective adoption of AI in education?
4. From your perspective, what should be prioritized by a Community of Practice (CoP), in your country context, to promote the safe and effective adoption of AI in education?

Outcome

The outcome of the session will consist in the development of the China-Africa Community of Practice (CoP). This CoP will be the foundation to launch several events and activities related to the theme of AIED (teacher training, resources exchange, etc.) involving China and Africa and catalyze working on AIED.

Agenda

Parallel Session 5.3. Transforming Future African Education through Responsible and Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence in Education	
2 October 2024 14:30 - 16:00	
10 minutes (5 minutes each speaker)	Opening speech Facilitator: Ahmed Tlili , Associate Professor, Beijing Normal University, China Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changwei Qin, Secretary-General of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO • Quentin Wodon, Director of UNESCO IICBA
30 minutes (15 minutes each speaker)	Keynote Speeches Facilitator: Huanhuan Wang, Assistant Professor, Beijing Normal University, China Speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dharm Singh, UNESCO Chairholder on Secure High-performance Computing for Higher Education and Research, Namibia

Parallel Session 5.3. Transforming Future African Education through Responsible and Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence in Education

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gong Wang, Director of the Analytical Testing and Supercomputing Center, Shanghai Normal University, China
40 minutes	<p>Round Table Discussion (Q&A)</p> <p>Facilitator: Ahmed Tlili, Associate Professor, Beijing Normal University, China</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dorothy Laubscher, UNESCO Chairholder on Multimodal Learning and Open Educational Resources, South Africa• Admasu Tsegaye, Professor & Former President of Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia• Marleen Temmerman, UNESCO Chair on Youth Leadership in Science, Health, Gender and Education, Kenya• Qian Zhang, representative from DFRobot, China• Jipeng Ruan, Founder/Chairman of Beijing Jinsha River Technology Co., Ltd. <p><i>Questions</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How could AI enhance education quality and ensure inclusiveness in your country context?2. What are the challenges faced when adopting AI in education, in your country context, and what strategies or policies should be considered to promote the safe and effective use of AI in education?3. How could cross-country collaboration promote the safe and effective adoption of AI in education?4. From your perspective, what should be prioritized by a Community of Practice (CoP), in your country context, to promote the safe and effective adoption of AI in education?
10 minutes	<p>Closing remarks and announcement of the China-Africa Community of Practice (CoP) and AIED case study collection</p> <p>Facilitator: Huanhuan Wang, Assistant Professor, Beijing Normal University, China</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Haijun Zeng, Co-Dean of the Smart Learning institute of Beijing Normal University, China

Parallel Session 5.3. Transforming Future African Education through Responsible and Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence in Education

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

- **Ahmed Tlili**, Associate Professor, Beijing Normal University, China

Parallel Session 5.4. Producing and Using Data to Strengthen Higher Education Policies and Practices

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: UNESCO/FLI

CONCEPT NOTE

Context and Background

Transforming knowledge in Africa requires contribution of higher education institutions and systems, which need to be rooted on a three-fold mission articulating knowledge production through scientific research, a holistic education of people with a lifelong perspective as well as social responsibility through engagement with the community and society at large (UNESCO, 2022). Stakeholders engaged in higher education institutions and systems require sound data and evidence to strengthen policy and programme/project development and organizational capacities. In line with this view, one of the ten main themes of the World Higher Education Conference ([WHEC2022](#)) was: “Data and Knowledge Production” (see [background document](#)).

Based on their background, the [UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks](#) from Africa (and beyond) have the challenge and opportunity to benefit from and contribute to the discussion on producing and using of data to enhance relevance, responsiveness and impact of higher education in Africa (and globally).

One key recent reference for data production, dissemination and use is the [Conference on Education Data and Statistics](#) (Paris, 7-9 February 2024), a major global milestone advanced by the UIS, with active involvement of UNESCO Member States and organizations linked to education data. The conference was an opportunity to develop guidelines and recommendations for advancing international standards to improve comparability (including concepts, methodologies and operational aspects for measuring SDG4 indicators) and to discuss the impact of technological development on statistics (for instance, the impact and use of big data and artificial intelligence). Previous to the conference, an engagement day was focused on “[data-driven approaches to lifelong learning](#)” and included a session on higher education data production to “address the collection and use of relevant, internationally comparable and quality data to support effective policymaking and practices in higher education” (UIS, 2024, p. 4).

Africa is one of UNESCO’s two¹⁶ Global Priorities, re-emphasized within its [Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029](#), which frames the ‘[41 C/5 programme and budget 2022-2025: first biennium 2022-2023](#)’, approved by the General Assembly in 2021. Described in Annex 7 (UNESCO, 2021, pp. 309-311) of the 41 C/5 approved programme, ‘[Campus Africa: Reinforcing Higher Education in Africa](#)’ is a flagship initiative seeking to **develop a more connected, inclusive and quality-driven Tertiary Education in Africa**. It is a mechanism to advance the [Education 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#), and the [African Union \(AU\) 2063 Agenda](#) (*Commission de l’Union Africaine*, 2015). One of the objectives of Campus Africa is to “improve the **availability and quality of data on tertiary education** in Africa to inform evidence-based decision-making”. As shown in the box below, the African Union Commission

¹⁶ The other Global Priority is gender equality.

(AUC) has given importance to support information sharing within higher education and agree on key indicators measuring progress.

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25): data production and monitoring

Under the African Union 2063 Agenda, the Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) “capitalizes on numerous, and active, players ready to mobilize financial, human and technical resources within national, regional and continental coalitions for education, science and technology... During the CESA planning meeting held in Addis Ababa at the premises of the African Union Commission in June 2016, it was agreed that a Higher Education Cluster be created in support of the realization of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa’... **Two of the eight objectives of the cluster are: facilitate and support information sharing, communication, and interaction within the cluster and beyond; and agree on key indicators for measuring progress”**

Source. See: <https://aau.org/current-projects/continental-education-strategy-for-africa/>

Diverse stakeholders are developing efforts regarding or relevant to higher education data or information systems in/on Africa. Some examples include the African Union Institute for Statistics ([STATAFRIC](#)), the Harmonization and Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa ([HAQAA3](#))¹⁷, which includes a component on higher education data for policy, and the UNESCO’s [Campus Africa Flagship programme](#) (above mentioned). Relevant for Africa, there are global initiatives and resources for higher education data developed, for example, by the World Bank, the [Global Education Monitoring \(GEM\) Report](#), and the UN Refugee Agency (see: [UNHCR Data](#) and further details below). A relevant initiative is also the Higher Education Special Interest Group of the [Building Evidence in Education \(BE2\)](#), advanced by USAID and other donors.

At a global level – including the African region-, the International Association of Universities ([IAU](#)) has developed the World Higher Education Database ([WHED](#)), an online resource providing information on (a) 19,800 accredited HEIs and (b) higher education systems and credentials in 196 countries and territories. The former includes basic and in-depth information as well as contacts in HEIs; the latter contains descriptions on national higher education structures, quality assurance systems and credentials and admission criteria.

Noting that the continent of Africa is host to approximately 30% of the world’s refugees, ensuring data driven higher education initiatives are informed by and can reach the vast number of refugee youth on the continent is critical. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are roughly 8 million refugees in Africa, which includes millions of refugee youth across the continent. To achieve global and Africa-focused development agendas outlined in the SDGs, Education 2030, the AU 2063 Agenda and the individual development plans of major refugee-hosting countries such as Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia and others, improved approaches are needed to collect and integrate refugee higher education data into systems strengthening efforts.

A significant initiative for the African region developed by Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA) is the [African Education Research Database \(AERD\)](#), a curated collection of research conducted over the past decade by scholars based in Sub-Saharan Africa. It includes social science research with implications for educational policy and practice that can be relevant for achieving SDG4, Africa’s Agenda 2063 and CESA 16-25. The AERD provides a geographical visualization and a search tool on ‘peer-reviewed articles, chapters, PhD theses and working papers identified through structured searches of academic and grey literature, databases, expert consultation, and pearl-growing

¹⁷ As a reference, see HAQAA2 (2022).

techniques.’

This session will bring together the knowledge and experience of experts linked to higher education data production, and it expects to actively enable a discussion with the participants of session. The session will combine short contributions of the speakers to facilitate thinking and dialogue around two guiding questions: (1) What would be the main outcomes, challenges and opportunities in producing and using HE data and information to improve Africa’s Higher Education? (2) What can be done to strengthen partnerships and synergies among regional and global stakeholders engaged in improving higher education data production and use in the African region? Given the approach of day 3 of the Addis Ababa Forum, question 2 will be central to this session.

Objectives

- Identify key challenges, opportunities and routes of action to enhance production and use of higher education data and statistics in Africa.
- Stimulate interest in research and analysis leading to enhanced production and use of higher education data in African countries.
- Promote collaboration, partnerships and synergies among stakeholders aiming to produce high-quality to enable its use for informed decision making, project development and organizational capacities in Africa’s higher education.

Agenda

Parallel Session 5.4. Producing and Using Data to Strengthen Higher Education Policies and Practices	
2 October 2024 14:30 - 16:00	
10 minutes	Introduction Moderator: Jose L. Guzman, UNESCO/Futures of Learning and Innovation
60 minutes	<i>Brief presentations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>HE data and knowledge production: a global approach.</i> Cesar Guadalupe, Professor of Social and Political Sciences; Universidad del Pacífico, Peru• <i>Experience and perspectives of the World Higher Education Data (WHED).</i> Hillegje van’t Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU)• <i>Experience and perspective of the AERD/ESSA.</i> Daniel Omanyó, Research Policy Manager for East Africa, Education, ESSA <i>Methodology</i> <p>Depending on the number of participants (and the facilities of the room), seats will be arranged in a circle. No formal presentations are expected; however, speakers may use slides as a resource to highlight key points or to facilitate visualization of illustrations (for example: graphs, diagrams, conceptual maps, or other illustrations to facilitate active engagement of participants). Each speaker presents for approximately 10 minutes (distributed in 2 or 3 turns). The rest of the time will be allocated to questions or comments of participants. In their first</p>

Parallel Session 5.4. Producing and Using Data to Strengthen Higher Education Policies and Practices

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

	<p>interventions, speakers will introduce their themes. In the rest of their interventions, they will focus on the questions below.</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions for Discussion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What would be the main outcomes, challenges and opportunities in producing and using HE data and information to improve Africa’s Higher Education?• What can be done to strengthen partnerships and synergies among regional and global stakeholders engaged in improving higher education data production and use in the African region?
20 minutes	<p>Wrap-Up and Closing Remarks</p> <p>Before the meeting, a participant of the session will be invited to prepare a wrap-up of the discussion. The speakers will be invited to share brief closing remarks.</p>

References

Commission de l’Union Africaine. (2015). *Agenda 2063. L’Afrique que nous voulons*. Version Populaire. Retrieved on November 11, 2022 from: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36204-doc-agenda2063_popular_version_fr.pdf

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UNESCO (2022). *Beyond Limits. New Ways to Reinvent Higher Education. Roadmap proposed for the WHEC2022*. Paris: UNESCO Education Sector. Retrieved on 15 January 2023 from: <https://www.whec2022.org/EN/homepage/Roadmap2030>

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UIS (2024). *Data-Driven Approaches to Lifelong Learning*. Engagement Day (6 February). Paris. https://ces.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2024/01/EducationStatisticsConference_EngagementDAY_EN.pdf

Resources

- UIS: [Conference on Education Data and Statistics](#),
- UIS: [Sustainable Development Goal 4 \(SDG 4\) data](#)
- UN Agency for Refugees: [UNHCR Data | UNHCR](#)

- UNESCO: [Global Education Monitoring \(GEM\) Report](#)
- World Bank: [World Development Indicators](#)
- IAU: World Higher Education Database ([WHED](#))
- AERD/ESSA: [African Education Research Database \(AERD\)](#) (<https://essa-africa.org/AERD>)
- African Union Institute for Statistics ([STATAFRIC](#))
- Harmonization and Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa ([HAQAA3](#))

THEMATIC MEETINGS II

Code 72

Thematic Meeting 2.5. UNESCO Chairs on Higher Education: South-South University Cooperation Network

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: UNESCO/IESALC

Background

South-South cooperation is increasingly recognized as a crucial framework for promoting sustainable development and addressing shared challenges among countries in the Global South. By fostering mutual support and collaboration, nations can capitalize on their collective strengths, share valuable experiences, and pool resources to combat issues such as poverty, inequality, and educational disparities.

The South-South University Cooperation Network (SUCN) – an initiative co-launched by UNESCO IESALC and UNOSSC – aims to strengthen international collaboration among universities in the Global South, thereby enhancing educational opportunities for young people. Founded on principles of multilateralism, open science, and sustainability, the network focuses on capacity building through training programs and knowledge exchange. It advocates for policies that address the unique challenges faced by member institutions and promotes collaborative research to tackle both regional and global issues. The network also prioritizes technology and innovation transfer, resource sharing, and the establishment of partnerships to facilitate networking and funding opportunities. By empowering Global South universities through mentorship and capacity-building initiatives, it aspires to create a more equitable and inclusive educational landscape in the Global South.

This thematic working group embodies the same spirit of South-South cooperation. We will organize participants into four themed groups based on the core functions of higher education: teaching and learning, research, community engagement, and management. Each group will work together to identify three key challenges within their respective areas and propose potential projects that incorporate the principles of South-South cooperation as solutions, in alignment with the theme of *Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future*.

Objectives

- *Foster Collaboration*: Create a collaborative environment where participants can share experiences and best practices related to South-South cooperation in higher education.
- *Identify Challenges*: Enable participants to identify and articulate shared challenges faced in teaching and learning, research, community engagement, and management among the Global South contexts.

- *Understand Transferability of Actionable Projects*: Guide participants in understanding the transferability issue in relation concrete projects and/or solution that utilize South-South cooperation principles to address the identified challenges, focusing on innovative and sustainable solutions.
- *Enhance Networking Opportunities*: Facilitate the establishment of connections among universities and institutions in the Global South, promoting resource sharing and collaboration beyond the workshop setting.

Code 57

Thematic Meeting 2.6. Network for the Culture of Peace Chairs

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: Fundación Cultura de Paz

Code 70

Thematic Meeting 2.7. Information Session: How to establish a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network?

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: UNESCO/Futures of Learning and Innovation (FLI)

Code 59

Thematic Meeting 2.8. UNESCO Chairs on Open Educational Resources

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: Universidade de Brasilia

Speakers

- **Tel Amiel, Chairholder**, UNESCO Chair in Open Education and Technologies for the Common Good, Universidade de Brasilia, Brazil
- **Glenda Cox**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Open Education and Social Justice, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- **Rory McGreal**, Chairholder, UNESCO-COL Chair in Open Educational Resources, Athabasca University, Canada
- **María Soledad Ramírez Montoya**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Open Educational Movement for Latin America, Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education, Mexico

Code 62

Thematic Meeting 2.9. UNESCO Chairs on African Cultural Expression and Heritage

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: UNESCO

Code 68

Thematic Meeting 2.10. Rethinking the Curriculum: The Need for Endogenous Education in the 21st Century (Part B)

2 October 2024 | 14:30 - 16:00

Organizer: African Curriculum Association (ACA)

(Go to Parallel Session 2.8)

Closing Plenary

Summary of Main Messages from the Forum and Closing Remarks

2 October 2024 | 16:30 - 18:00

AGENDA

30 minutes	<p>Moderator: Mr. Dimitri Sanga, Director, UNESCO Office in Dakar and Regional Bureau for Education</p> <p><i>Words of Appreciation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexandre Navarro, Secretary General, French National Commission for UNESCO • Dorcas Beryl Otieno, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development, Kenyatta University, Kenya <p><i>Summary of main messages from the Forum</i></p> <p>Mr. Sobhi Tawil, Director, Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO</p> <p><i>Closing remarks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Rita Bissoonauth, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office to the African Union and Representative to Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia • H.E. Prof. Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. African Union Commission
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