

UNESCO Chairs Seminar Series Transforming Knowledge for Africa's Future

Reinforcing Higher Education in Africa - Campus Africa

Date and time: Thursday 21 September 2023, 14:00 to 15:30 (Paris time)

Languages: English and French

Format: Zoom – [Please click here to register](#)

Context

Higher education is a determining factor for sustainable development, contributing to socio-economic growth and poverty reduction, and enhanced societal well-being. In 2020, enrolment in higher education in Africa was only 15 million of the 236 million enrolments globally ([UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#) data). In terms of enrolment ratios, Africa stood at only 9%, whereas the average world enrolment ratio was 40%. Furthermore, while Africa has the fastest growing scientific output in the world, it generates less than 1% of global research and invests 0.6% of GDP in research and development, compared to a world average of 1.79% (UNESCO, 2021). Today, Africa remains a continent of opportunity, with the youngest population on the planet, as well as growing innovation and economic power. At the same time, the continent experiences some of the greatest migration waves in history and academic mobility is increasing.

The African Union's [Agenda 2063](#) aspires to build shared prosperity through the social and economic transformation of the continent, by developing human and social capital to elevate the continent's standard of living to achieve "[Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation](#)". Reducing poverty, increasing equity, improving gender parity and socioeconomic development, and making Africa a continent where the talents of children and youth will be fully developed, rewarded and protected, will depend on the capacities of its universities to produce adequate and broad-based experts in technology, research and development, as well as leadership in innovation policies ([UNECA, 2022](#)). A consensus has emerged on the need to enable equitable access to a transformed higher education, and to enhance capacities for integrated inter- and transdisciplinary research and knowledge production to achieve the SDGs ([UNESCO, 2022](#)). This was also articulated by the report [Reimagining our Futures Together](#) from the International Commission on the Futures of Education and [UNESCO's Higher Education Roadmap 2030](#) (World Higher Education Conference, UNESCO, 2022).

Within the overall framework of UNESCO's [Operational Strategy for Priority Africa](#) adopted in 2021, the flagship programme "Campus Africa: Reinforcing Higher Education in Africa" aims to build integrated, inclusive, and quality tertiary education systems and institutions for the development of inclusive and equitable societies. It is implemented along three interrelated lines of action through which UNESCO, jointly with its partners, aims to strengthen and enhance equity and quality of higher education systems: (i) enhance research and data production capacities, (ii) connect Africa's tertiary education systems, institutions, researchers, and communities, and (iii) promote mobility and employability of higher education students.

Seminar objective

To examine critical issues for transforming higher education in Africa and identify strategic opportunities for collaboration, including for the Campus Africa flagship programme.

Expected result

A deepened understanding of challenges and opportunities for transforming higher education that could be prioritized by the Campus Africa flagship programme.

Key questions

- Which are the challenges and opportunities to transform higher education in Africa under a new social contract for education aiming to promote equitable, inclusive, just, and sustainable development?
- What have been or can be the contributions of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks to advancing relevant research and teaching, inclusive quality, recognition of qualifications and informed decision making in Africa's higher education systems and institutions?
- How can the UNESCO Campus Africa Programme contribute to transforming of higher education in Africa?
- Which stakeholders (local to global) need to engage in transforming higher education (including TVET tertiary provision) in Africa, which are their corresponding roles and their capacities?

Provisional Agenda

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14:00-14:10	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Borhene Chakroun, Director, Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems Division at UNESCO, HQ and interim Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany ▪ Dr. Rita Bissoonauth, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office to the African Union and UNECA and UNESCO Representative to Ethiopia
14:10-14:50	Panel discussion: Transforming Higher Education and Opportunities for Collaboration in the framework of the Campus Africa flagship programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderator: Dr. Abdoulaye Salifou, Chief Education Sector, Specialist Higher Education & ICT, UNESCO Liaison Office to AU & ECA (<i>Introduction - 2 minutes</i>) ▪ Prof. Mpine Makoe, University of South Africa (UNISA) (5 min) ▪ Prof. Ouidad Tebbaa, Regional Director of AUF for West Africa (5 min) ▪ Prof. Olusola Oyewole, Secretary General of AAU (5 min) ▪ Prof. Souleymane Konaté, Secretary General of CAMES (5 min) ▪ Prof. Jean Koulidiati, Rector of Pan-African University (5 min) ▪ Prof. Patricia Pallavicini, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Inclusion in Higher Education, Universidad de Santiago de Chile (5 min)
15:00-15:25	Comments and reflections All participants
15:25-15:30	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Sobhi Tawil, Director, Future of Learning and Innovation, UNESCO.

**** [Register here](#) ****