

AFRICAN UNION

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INNOVATING EDUCATION IN AFRICA EXPO
4th – 6th October 2018
Dakar, Senegal

Meeting Report

1. INTRODUCTION

The Innovating in Education Expo, organised by the African Union Commission in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Senegal and several partner organisations and agencies across Africa, was held from 4th – 6th October 2018 in Dakar, Senegal. The Expo was to show case technical and social innovations in education and training across Africa, with the main objective of establishing a multisectoral platform for experience sharing on relevant innovations that provide solutions to education challenges in Africa. The event also aimed at raising the visibility of education innovators and innovative practices so that they can be supported, upscaled, replicated or further developed. The format of the event included demonstrations, presentation of technical papers on innovation and exhibitions by the Academia, practitioners and policy makers.

The following Member States were represented by Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Education: Senegal, Botswana, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Algeria, Malawi, South Africa, Chad, the Gambia, Guinea, and Madagascar. A range of agencies including UN agencies, international and national government and non-state organisations, private sector and individual experts were present. There was a total of 300 participants.

2. OPENING SESSION

i) Opening Remarks by Director UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar

Mr. Sanga Dimitri congratulated the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Republic of Senegal for organising this important event. He recalled the Pan African Conference on Education (PACE) that adopted the Nairobi Declaration which reaffirmed the engagement of UNESCO and the AUC to collaborate for a better harmonisation of the SDG 4 on Education agenda 2030 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25), and stated that Africa and its youth constitute a major priority of UNESCO.

Mr. Sanga reiterated that the vision for individuals to be able to identify opportunities, exploit every situation, innovate, enrich knowledge and fit in the world can only be achieved if they acquire new skills to innovate and adapt to the needs of the rapidly changing world and particularly Africa. The Director concluded by highlighting some of the innovations by UNESCO in collaboration with African countries in the area of teacher education and e-learning.

ii) Welcome Remarks by Commissioner for Human Resources, Sciences and Technology of the African Union Commission

On behalf the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor welcomed all in attendance to the first ever Innovating Education in Africa Expo and expressed her gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Senegal for hosting the historic event.

The Commissioner stated that education is undoubtedly the most important tool to realize Africa's destiny of a prosperous, integrated and peaceful continent that takes its rightful place in the global community of people. She reiterated the need to focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics and utilise Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for ensuring quality, access and equitable opportunities for all.

The Commissioner further noted that the transformative role that education plays is recognised in the African Union Agenda 2063 which reiterates that Africa's sustained growth, competitiveness and economic transformation will require investments in new technologies and innovations. She emphasized that greater and more strategic investments are needed in education, science and technology if Africa is to reap the benefits of research and innovation. She also highlighted the urgent need for innovative flexible approaches to deliver quality education to young people, leaving no one behind, and commended the innovations and innovative ideas from African governments, institutions and individual innovators, including young innovators from 40 African countries.

The Commissioner concluded by urging all African governments, the private sector and all agencies to identify innovation that could be scaled up and replicated and wished all participants fruitful deliberations.

iii) Opening Address by the Prime Minister of Senegal

H.E. Mahammed Dione, the Prime Minister of Senegal, welcomed all participants to Senegal. His Excellency recognized the efforts taken by the African Union Member States to pull together skills and knowledge to support the continent in the fields of education and innovation, and he shed light on the efforts undertaken by Senegal in the education, training and innovation sector to enhance education outcomes in Africa.

The Prime Minister called upon African economies to upscale investments that would spur innovation in order to achieve objectives of Agenda 2063 in economic and social development. He underlined the importance of innovation as it is pivotal in bridging development gaps and enhancing structural transformation for Africa.

His Excellency further enumerated some issues for participants to brainstorm during their sessions, including the kind of education systems that can support Africa in the context of globalization and market integration, and highlighted that the discussions at the Expo would provide part of the solutions. The Prime Minister encouraged African Union Member States to host Centres of Excellence and bring together international institutions in education to contribute to the development of Education in Africa. He concluded by commending the initiative to convene an expo on Innovation in Education that shall respond to Africa's aspirations in education and training.

3. MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND TVET

The round table chaired by Dr. Kilemi Mwiria involved the Ministers responsible for Education in Senegal, Botswana and Central African Republic, as well as the AUC Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology. The ministers shared key experiences on innovation from their respective countries. The session also discussed the AUC policy frameworks and key challenges and opportunities that Member States face in enhancing innovation.

Recommendations

- (i) Policies must promote innovation in education and culture in Member States as this will enhance the economic development. In addition, the governments must translate their commitment into tangible and inclusive actions;
- (ii) There is need to engage and collaborate with key stakeholders in education including the private sector and development partners to spur and leverage innovation in education for development;
- (iii) Learners must be stimulated and encouraged to take on STEM at an early age as this is an enabler for transformation and provision of cost effective solutions; Curricula should be tailored to encourage STEM and spur the continent towards producing job creators rather than job seekers;
- (iv) Knowledge sharing platforms and innovation fairs need to be regularly held to promote development and review of policies, thereby catering for the changing needs of Member States and taking on board advances in technology.

4. PANEL DISCUSSION ON INNOVATING TO MEET OBJECTIVES OF CESA

This panel sought to highlight the key innovations developed or promoted by various agencies that respond to the goals of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25).

Recommendations:

- i. To ensure gender equity, there is a need for innovative initiatives targeting boys' empowerment to avert neglecting this demographic group, even as we focus on the girl child;
- ii. The efforts in developing innovation in education not only for government, but must include partnership between public and private sector;
- iii. There is need for innovative solutions in entrepreneurship, fellowship and scholarships. The AUC, has initiated various educational empowerment platforms including the entrepreneurial studies offered at Pan-African University, the Mwalimu Nyerere Scholarship and the young researchers program;
- iv. There is need for attitude change towards the role of teachers and TVET institutions. There is need for self-reflection among the teachers in order to restore dignity and improved service delivery to their core clientele, the students. This is in line with the first objective of the CESA 16-25;

- v. It is imperative to establish strategic mutually supportive linkages across sectors in order to enhance relevance in education and training, and in order to promote innovation ecosystems.

5. PRESENTATIONS BY AU MEMBER STATE SENIOR OFFICIALS ON NATIONAL EDUCATION INNOVATIONS

In this session, Senior Officials from the AU Member States presented some key innovations in education.

Recommendations:

- i. There is need for assessment studies on curriculum reforms and refurbishment of schools to ensure responsiveness of the education system to existent and emerging issues such as disability facilities, infrastructure and ICT. This includes building resource centers that can be shared among schools.
- ii. Telecommunications companies can be obligated to support connectivity in schools in order to enhance ICT in Education.
- iii. Use of Local languages as medium of instruction, particularly in the first three years of education.
- iv. It is useful to digitize education content into form that are easily accessible both online and offline.
- v. Teachers need to be empowered with the necessary ICT skills.

6. FEATURED INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION

This was the highlight of the expo where the top 50 innovations identified through a Call for Submissions of innovations in education were presented. The innovations were in three sessions. The top ten Innovators were invited to present their work in 5 minute 'pitches', and they were judged by a multi-partner jury for awards. The other top innovations were presented in plenary and parallel sessions. The innovations presented had to demonstrate impact and potential for wide dissemination. They included both technical inventions and social innovations that are enhancing access, quality, relevance, school security, learning achievement, financing, employability, school management among others.

Recommendations:

- i. Innovations in education contribute to creating a sustainable future, and they must continuously evolve to meet the challenges of the fast-changing and unpredictable globalized world.
- ii. There is need for Member States and the Global Education Partners including the Private Sector to create enabling environments where innovations in education can thrive. Innovations must be recognized, deliberately promoted and supported by policy, and all other members of society who act either as implementers or consumers of the innovation.

- iii. Innovators must be supported to effectively package and present their innovations so that they can attract the support necessary for their up-scaling, replication or further development in order to enhance education outcomes.

7. WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES ON INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

A number of plenary as well as parallel sessions were held, featuring presentations and discussions by prominent academics, policy makers, business actors and emerging education innovators, as well as representatives from development partner organizations. These included innovative approaches at all levels of education. Among the themes featured in the workshops were innovations in Employment oriented TVET with strong involvement of the private sector, early childhood education, education in conflict affected areas, ICT in education, public and private partnership models, tertiary and higher education, teacher development, enhancing access for women and girls in education, making learning fun, and education policy and research.

Recommendations:

- i. Build the capacity for scaling up of innovations through supportive policy, financial and technical structures that create a conducive environment.
- ii. Member states and partners in education must be committed to establishing innovative ecosystems and approaches that support identification and large scale deployment and adoption of promising innovations.
- iii. Regular exchange of knowledge and experience between policy makers, private sector and development partners on all issues linked to innovation in education is encouraged as countries learn from each other and develop appropriate policies.
- iv. It is essential that policy recommendations are evidence based and that innovative bridges are established between policies and practice.
- v. There is need to leverage on emerging digital technologies including digital media and social networks to spur innovative educational approaches and opportunities for collaboration.
- vi. Training objectives must closely mirror community needs to ensure that the appropriate knowledge and skills are learned so as to effectively perform the job required.
- vii. Multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation is required to address the growing numbers of unemployed youth. There is therefore a need to bring the private sector into the conversation about analysing the challenges, understanding the diverse expectations and defining sustainable solutions.

8. EXHIBITIONS

The event had a diverse range of interactive, creative exhibitions sessions by organizations and innovators. Participants were offered numerous opportunities to share their innovations and to network and collaborate. Exhibitions included documentation, software, hardware, video and audio clips and demonstrations on education innovation.

9. INNOVATION AWARDS

Following the 'pitching' session, 8 top innovations were ranked for prizes. The awards included cash prizes, AU plaques, and training fellowships. Cash prizes were contributed by the African union, GIZ, One Campaign, Ford Foundation, Ashoka and UNESCO. The listing of winners is attached.

In appreciation remarks, the First Place Innovator expressed his delight about receiving this valuable award and thanked the African Union Commission and other partners for organising the Innovating Education in Africa Expo. He underlined that the award will help him to scale-up his innovation and encourage him to do more in the future.

Certificate of recognition of innovation was issued to all selected innovators.

10. WAY FORWARD

In order to sustain momentum and maximise the impact of the current initiative, the following was agreed as the way forward:

- i. Produce proceedings of the event, where all presentations and discussions will be captured, beyond the brief report and communicate
- ii. Produce a handbook of Education Innovations in Africa. This will capture all submitted innovations, together with contacts of innovators. It will be an avenue for publicity for education innovators and innovations; and a resource for education development.
- iii. Establish a Network of Education Innovators, for which an IT Platform will be built. The platform will enable networking, experience sharing and mutual support and encouragement among education innovators. It will also be used to help in linking innovators with supportive frameworks and environments.
- iv. Establish an annual Innovating Education in Africa event. This one is therefore IEA-2018. Member States are called upon to offer to host future editions.

11. CLOSING SESSION

The Minister of Basic Education of Botswana offered to host the IEA 2019.

In her closing remarks, the AUC Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) expressed her appreciation to the host government and partners including GIZ, ONE Campaign, Ford Foundation, UNESCO, USAID, Plan International, ADEA, FAWE, UNESCO-IICBA, Ashoka and Save the Children who generously contributed to the success of the event. She also thanked Innovators and all participants for their participation in the event.

The Senegal Minister for Higher Education said that the discussions were fruitful and important recommendations have been made. He congratulated all the winners and thanked the AUC Commissioner for HRST and her team for their input for the successful accomplishment of the event.



**LIST OF TOP 10 INNOVATORS
 RECEIPIENTS OF AU EDUCATION INNOVATION PRIZE 2018**

	Name	Country	Organisation	Description
1	Charles Ofori Antipem	Ghana	Dext Technology Limited	Portable Science Set for students capable of performing over 25 experiments
2	Dodzi Aglago	Togo	MobileLabo	Mobile laboratory for schools without access to laboratories
3	Zinhle Zamokuhle Nkosi	South Africa	Nal'ibali Trust	Promoting the the culture of reading though fun stories in native language
4	Messa Blandine Angele	Cameroun	Kamer Big Bang (EduClick)	Integrated learning management system providing supplement to school work, also provides courses on entrepreneurship and targets refugees and dsiplaced
5	Angelin Marius Rafidisaonina	Madagascar	SEEDS LearnShare	Teaching soft skills in an innovative way
6	Hamidou Soukouna	Senegal	Grandmother Project - Change through Culture	Conservation of culture through education by engaging community in the
7	Nkosana Butholenkosi Dexter Masuku	Zimbabwe	Phenomenom Technologies	Providing low cost excursions to schools in Zimbabwe through the use of Virtual Reality
8	Doreen Kessy	Tanzania	Ubongo Learning Ltd	Deliver fun and animated learning content across platforms including radio, TV, SMS and smartphones, adapting it to local context and languages.
9	Chizaram Ucheaga	Nigeria	Mavis Computel Limited	Using "Talking Book" technology to deliver educational content

10	Effry Kuyum Kibalabala	DR Congo	Société de Prestations Educatives	A complimentary approach for teaching entrepreneurial skills to students
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