

Education for life in Africa

Call for panels, papers and posters



When: 19 + 20 May 2017

Where: Johanna Westerdijkplein 75, Den Haag

Info: www.afrikastudies.nl



International Conference: EDUCATION FOR LIFE IN AFRICA

Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world
– Nelson Mandela

Date of the conference:	Friday 19th May 2017 and Saturday 20th May 2017 [when NVAS celebrates its 20 th anniversary]
Venue:	De Haagse Hogeschool / The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Johanna Westerdijkplein 75, The Hague, Netherlands (5 minutes walking from train station Den Haag HS)
Organizing committee:	Anneke Breedveld (NVAS), Jos Walenkamp (De Haagse Hogeschool (HHS), Jan Jansen (NVAS), Marlies van der Wee-Bedeker (NVAS), Beer Schröder (EP-NUFFIC)
Partners:	NVAS, HHS, EP-NUFFIC
Language:	English (French and Dutch on demand)
Outcome conference:	1. Reviewed book with selected contributions on the theme of the conference 2. Communiqué on the conference for policy makers, practitioners and consumers of education in Africa.

The present international community is striving for “Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education” (Sustainable Development Goal 4). This target has replaced the endeavor of “Universal Primary Education” (Millennium Development Goal 2). To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Netherlands Association for Africa Studies (NVAS), the three partners NVAS, EP-NUFFIC and HHS are organizing a two-day conference on the theme “Education for life in Africa” (May 19-20, 2017), assuming that quality education will indeed equip students better for life, but wondering about what constitutes good quality education. The aim of this conference is to provide a forum for stakeholders of education in Africa: researchers, practitioners, teachers, policy makers, sponsors and consumers, to exchange ideas about how to attain and sustain quality at all levels of education in Africa, from the basic to the tertiary level, from academic to vocational training.

Sustainable development can only be attained when individuals and groups have the tools to adapt to local circumstances and make them work for the wider community. Education should provide these tools. The focus of the conference is on the quality of education, where the goal of good quality education is understood to be education that prepares its participants for both civil and professional life by equipping them with appropriate attitude, knowledge and skills. We hope that through the conference, our understanding of this process will be enhanced by asking and answering questions such as: How can we attain an efficient transmission and acquisition of knowledge through the whole educational system from preschool to university level teaching? How can knowledge acquired at research centers be used to improve forms and contents of all types of education? Where can theoreticians and practitioners meet to exchange information? Is it necessary to redefine standards of education, to change forms of cooperation in order to enable children and students to better address present and future problems of life? What forms of knowledge will lead to more employment?

These and many more questions can be discussed and debated around four themes that are, next to the political and economic context, the main prerequisites for good quality education: curriculum, teachers, infrastructure and resources.

CALL FOR PANELS, PAPERS AND POSTERS

Logistics and dates

The conference will consist of keynote lectures, poster presentations and oral paper presentations organised in thematic panels on the questions of education in Africa. The plenary sessions are one hour long while the parallel panels and general sessions are in two-hour blocks. Each session is two hours and consists of four twenty minute presentations each followed by ten minutes discussion.

We invite individuals, institutions and NGO's studying or working in the field of education in Africa to send in abstracts for panels, papers and posters. The proposals should be written in English and will be peer-reviewed by the Conference Scientific Committee.

Panels

Participants are invited to propose specific panels on a coherent theme on education in Africa. Please send in your proposals for panels, with a maximum of 500 words indicating the relevance and coherence of the individual contributions to the theme before 1 September 2016. Abstracts of the individual papers within the panel with a maximum of 250 words each should be added to the proposal. Individual papers in a panel that are not accepted can be resubmitted for general sessions or for another panel.

Papers

Individual participants are invited to send in abstracts of their paper on a theme related to education in Africa with a maximum of 250 words before 1 November 2016.

Posters

Posters will be displayed throughout the conference and will be presented during lunch and coffee breaks. Bachelor and master students of applied sciences, but also PhD and senior researchers are encouraged to participate. We invite abstracts of no more than 100 words for posters on issues in education in Africa. Graduate students and NGO's working in the field of education in Africa are especially encouraged to submit poster proposals before 1 November 2016.

Contact

Your proposals for posters, papers and panels (including abstracts of papers) can be sent to educationforlifeafrica@fsw.leidenuniv.nl. Title of contribution, name, e-mail address, affiliation of the authors should be provided in the e-mail, title and abstract should be included in an attachment so that it can be sent anonymously to the scientific committee. More information can be found on the website of the NVAAS: www.afrikastudies.nl.

Important dates

- 1 September 2016: Panel proposals
- 1 October 2016: Notice of acceptance of panels
- 1 November 2016: Submission of abstracts for general sessions and posters
- 15 December 2016: Notification of acceptance of papers and posters
- 1 January 2017: Opening registration
- 19-20 May 2017: Conference

Registration

The conference registration fee is 100 EUR. Registration starts 1 January 2017.

Early Bird registration: 80 EUR when you have registered by 15 February 2017

90 EUR when you have registered between 15 February and 15 March 2017

Background questions on the themes

1. Curriculum

What curriculum content prepares African pupils and students for life on the continent? What competencies, what attitudes, knowledge and skills are needed to function well in all spheres of life? How well adapted are the lessons to the cultural and economic settings of the African regions and who is to decide the answers to these questions? Africa has experienced and will face enormous demographic changes. A rapidly growing, young population may be an asset for social and economic development, but massive unemployment is a real threat to personal and social wellbeing. How can education contribute to (self) employment and achieve social transformations. How is education to fit both local and regional circumstances and cultures and can it be connected to developments elsewhere in the world. How can we promote inclusive education and attain cognitive and linguistic justice in schools? What kind of curriculum would stimulate and nurture the natural creativity and curiosity of children? What role can the different actors in the educational field play in the improvement of the curriculum?

2. Teachers

The quality of teachers has proven to be a major factor determining the quality of education everywhere. What should be done to motivate and enable African teachers to execute their profession optimally? How can Teacher Training be improved? How could a better cooperation between academic, vocational, high-school and primary school educational institutes improve the quality of teachers? How can problem-solving skills be transmitted? What can teachers do to stimulate creativity and curiosity of children?

3. Infrastructure

What infrastructure is needed to adapt the African educational systems for 21st century skills, such as an innovative, entrepreneurial and investigative attitude? School buildings, pens, books and notebooks are not sufficient anymore. Electronic learning opens new vistas; it could enable better exchange of knowledge between North and South and between South and South. Electronic teaching requires investments that might widen the gap between the rich and the poor. Given the enormous changes brought about by developments in digital communication, the topic of e-learning deserves special attention. What infrastructural answers are to be given to predictable developments, such as the ever increasing number of students wanting access to informal education?

4. Resources

In the past two decades attention for education in Africa has suffered setbacks in the development agenda of the global North, as well as in local public funding. As a result, citizens, private entrepreneurs and NGO's have shown increasing interest in filling this gap in the development of education in Africa. What are the consequences of sometimes insufficient public funding and the rise of private educators and institutes, including religiously motivated funders? What are the advantages and threats of private vs. publicly funded education?