2nd KIX Continental Symposium on Educational Research in Africa: Call for Papers

Strengthening Data Generation and Analysis for Resilient, Inclusive, and Better Performing Education Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa

October 3 – 5, 2023
Dakar, Senegal

Organized by

KIX Africa 19 Hub

UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (UNESCO IICBA)

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (UNICEF ESARO)

The African Union (AU)

KIX Africa 21 Hub

Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États et gouvernements de la Francophonie (CONFEMEN)

Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)

Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation (IFEF)

Context and Theme of the Symposium

Sub-Saharan Africa is affected by a massive learning crisis with nine out of ten children not able to read and understand an age-appropriate text by age 10[1]. Evidence-based policymaking can contribute to improving the performance of education systems, while also making those systems more resilient and inclusive. But for this to be the case, data must be available and analyzed. Efforts are need for both data generation/availability and data analysis.

1. <u>Data generation/availability</u>: Data departments in Ministries of Education are often underfunded and understaffed. Existing data systems are geared towards measuring enrollment rather than learning, equity, and inclusion.[2] Most systems only track data at the aggregate level, rather than at the level of the child, which makes it difficult to assess how vulnerable children are doing. Improving national Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) can help in generating data to inform policy, as called for by member states of the African Union, including to improve monitoring and reporting of SDG 4 indicator 4.1 and the Continental Education Strategy objective 4[3]. But other types of data are also crucial. This includes data from household surveys, international student assessments, program beneficiary assessments, and impact evaluations. Labor market data also matter to assess the demand for skills on the part of employers. And beyond quantitative data, qualitative data can help understand the constraints faced by students, parents, teachers, and administrators in improving education systems.

2. <u>Data analysis:</u> Even when data are collected, they are often not analyzed and disseminated well for school- or national-level reforms. School-level data especially tend to be incomplete. Data analysis, when it is performed, tends to focus on descriptive statistics as opposed to analysis that could reveal causal effects, or at least correlations that control for various factors that may affect educational outcomes. Furthermore, for policy purposes, data are also needed on the cost of interventions, and potential difficulties in scaling-up successful pilots. There is a need to strengthen the ability of Ministries and other education stakeholders in using data for policy, and to provide for a for researchers and policy makers to explore [policy options together[4].

The first KIX Continental Research Symposium was held in October 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with 285 participants from 51 countries (including 41 African countries). This second Symposium will be held on October 3-5, 2023, in Dakar, Senegal, ahead of 2024 as the African Union's Year of Education. The theme of the Symposium will be **"Strengthening Data Generation and Analysis for Resilient, Inclusive, and Better Performing Education Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa."** It will aim to: (1) Give an opportunity for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share findings from their respective work; (2) Promote learning and dialogue

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[1] World Bank et al. 2022. *The State of Global Learning Poverty: 2022 Update.* Washington, DC: The World Bank.

[2] GPE. 2019. *Meeting the Data Challenge in Education.* Discussion Paper. Washington, DC: GPE.

[3] For example, African Union member states support a migration to EMIS 2.0, which is a more integrated and learner-focused EMIS aimed at improving policy formulation and implementation processes.

[4] UNESCO IICBA. 2020. *Thematic Priorities in GPE Member States Within the KIX Africa 19 Hub Region*. Summary report, Addis Ababa: UNESCO IICBA.

among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers on how to use data to improve educational outcomes; and (3) Promote evidence-based policymaking at the country level.

Logistics and Target Audience

The Symposium will be held at the King Fahd Palace Hotel in person as well as online through livestreaming via Zoom. It will include plenaries, panel discussions, breakaway sessions, synthesis discussions, and poster presentations. Presentations will be in English or French with simultaneous interpretation (Portuguese will be available for selected sessions). The target audience includes Ministry of Education officials, education researchers, and other local stakeholders, and representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) and other organizations. Researchers from KIX countries are especially encouraged to attend. In line with KIX's goals of mainstreaming gender equity and achieving gender parity in education, women researchers and leaders are particularly encouraged to attend, as are early career researchers.

To express interest in the Symposium and to sign up to receive updates and news, prospective participants may **register here** (URL: https://forms.gle/84uNXHhMhsXMre67A).

Call for Papers

Papers submitted for presentation at the Symposium should provide original content, whether in the form of empirical research, case studies of interventions, policy discussions, or reviews of the literature. Submissions may be individual papers or sessions of multiple papers. Submissions from government representatives, CSOs, and researchers are all encouraged to submit, especially nationals of KIX countries. The call for papers opens on May 9, 2023, and papers must be submitted by **July 31, 2023**, by email to both **programmekix@francophonie.org** and **kix.iicba@unesco.org**. Submission of full papers is encouraged, but abstracts will also be considered. Applicants will be notified if their paper has been selected by August 31, 2023. Scholarships will be awarded on a needs-based and competitive basis to researchers from KIX countries to be able to attend the Symposium.

Papers should include an abstract with the following information: (i) title of the paper; (ii) author(s) with their title and institutional affiliation; (iii) identification of the presenting author; (iv) email address and contact details of the presenting author; (v) abstract of 250-300 words providing background, the research question, the methodology, key results, and potential policy implications. Papers should ideally be between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length. Footnotes should be used sparingly. References should follow the Harvard citation style. Papers should be typeset in font Calibri 12 and single-spaced with margins of 1 inch. **Papers are welcome on various topics, especially research/experiences on:**

A. Data generation/availability: Topics include (i) Creating robust data systems for policy and for monitoring & evaluation; (ii) Building capacity in using education system data; (iii) Understanding emerging trends and technologies including artificial intelligence and predictive analytics; (iv) Ensuring resilience in data practices for education in emergencies and other challenges; (v) Ensuring data protection and privacy, including legal aspects on the use of data;

(vi) Understanding or demonstrating the value of a wide range of quantitative or qualitative data to inform policy, including among others household surveys, student assessments, beneficiary assessments, evaluations, labor market data, tracer and employer data, and data on the political economy of reforms. Also of interest are data on different types of schools (e.g., public, private, faith-based).

B. Data analysis: Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data are welcome, as are papers on issues of data analysis and utilization themselves, e.g., capacities to analyze and use data. Topics of interest include teachers and their professional development (e.g., teacher MIS, motivation surveys, working conditions and deployment, efficiency of training programs, teacher shortages, budget costing, etc.); gender equality, equity, and inclusion (integrating marginalized learners in data generation and utilization; ensuring data integrity, quality and availability, assessing the impacts of interventions, conducting cost-benefit analysis, etc.); and early childhood education (strengthening data for early childhood education, assessing gaps in service delivery, etc.).

Background on KIX

The Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) project aims to meet the needs of national education systems for evidence-based policy. KIX creates spaces for GPE partner countries to share information, innovations, and good practices. Knowledge exchange is facilitated by four regional hubs, including two for Africa: the KIX Africa 21 Hub which covers francophone and lusophone GPE-eligible countries and the KIX Africa 19 Hub which covers anglophone countries. Both hubs function as regional fora within the framework of the KIX project to bring together countries with similar educational, socio-economic and linguistic characteristics for exchanges of experiences.

Geographic Coverage of the KIX Africa 21 and KIX Africa 19 Hubs

The KIX Africa 21 Hub includes the following 21 partner countries in Francophone Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Togo, Sao Tome and Principe.

The KIX Africa 19 Hub comprises the following 19 partner countries in Anglophone Africa: Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland), South Sudan, Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.