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International Institute  
for Capacity Building  
in Africa

# UNESCO IICBA

*Empowering teachers for all learners to thrive*

Course **2023-2**

IICBA Executive Education and Policy Academy

# Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Teachers in Africa



In partnership with



UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa

# About IICBA

The International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), a category 1 UNESCO institute, is based in Addis Ababa. Founded in 1999, it aims to inform education policies, strengthen teacher professional development, and build capacity in education institutions, including Ministries of Education. To provide innovative solutions and scale-up efforts to improve educational outcomes in Africa, IICBA works with a range of partners, including the African Union, UN agencies, other international organizations, development banks, bilateral donors, foundations, teacher organizations, school networks, and non-profits. IICBA's strategic plan for 2023-25 is built around three main lines of action: (i) Research and knowledge; (ii) Policy dialogue and advocacy; and (iii) Capacity enhancement.

## About the Executive Education and Policy Academy

Education systems in Africa are in crisis. Learning poverty, defined as the inability for 10-year-old children to read and understand an age-appropriate text, affects nine out of ten children in sub-Saharan Africa. Teachers are key to improve educational outcomes, but many lack the training they need to ensure that children learn. Beyond the current learning crisis, education systems face a range of medium- and long-term challenges, including changing labor markets that require individuals to acquire new skills, climate change, and conflicts. Education systems have a fundamental role to play for sustainable development, but often fall short. IICBA's aim is to empower teachers for all learners to thrive. Through a range of courses of various lengths, the Executive Education and Policy Academy targets officials in Ministries of Education and other education and civil society leaders to equip them with the knowledge they need to improve teacher policies and education systems in Africa.

## About this Course

Since 2020, IICBA has been partnering with the Regional Office for Southern Africa to build resilience and strengthen psychosocial support for Teachers and Teacher Educators in selected Sub-Saharan Africa countries. The project is anchored within the framing of UNESCO's Africa program which focuses on "Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future" (O3). It has supported (i) an assessment of the psychosocial impacts on teachers of the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) the development of a contextualized sub-regional strategy on strengthening mental health and psychosocial support (MH-PSS) for teachers in Africa; (iii) the development of an evidence-based psychosocial support manual, school-based training manual and tools for teachers and Teacher educators; and pilot training for teachers, educators and education experts in four countries i.e. Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya and Malawi (iv) a self-paced e-learning course for teachers will be developed. This course aims to capacitate expert trainers (Master Trainers) with the skills and techniques to use the MHPSS guide, and further cascade and institutionalize MHPSS services in the pre- and in-service teacher programs in Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda.

# Learning Journey

This is a four-day face-to-face workshop from May 8 to 11, 2023 that aims at strengthening mental health and psychosocial support for teachers and teacher educators in Africa for resilience building, risk mitigation and institutionalization of preventative and support systems on MH-PSS in the education sector. The training is facilitated by expert trainers blended with learner-centred participatory approaches.

**Day One: Theoretical Basis, Models, and Principles of MHPSS.** The first day of the training focuses on the theoretical background, principles, and models of MHPSS and its responsiveness to the context of teachers in Africa. The day's session includes identifying the psychosocial needs of teachers and how the existing models address the needs respective of the country's context; ascertaining the consequences of emergencies on the well-being of teachers; recognizing, understanding, and responding to the psychosocial problems and reactions of teachers. Each session uses different approaches including presentation, role play, group work, mind mapping and case studies.

**Day One:**  
Theoretical Basis,  
Models, and Princi-  
ples of MHPSS

**Day Two: Advanced Psychosocial Support and Counselling Skills.** The second session focuses on coping mechanisms, management, psychological first aids and advanced psychosocial support, and counselling skills for teachers. The sessions use participatory approaches mainly brainstorming, demonstration, self-reflection, case studies and role plays on counselling techniques such as abdominal breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, grounding, as well as creating a safe place, active listening, questioning, and probing skills.

**Day Two:**  
Advanced Psycho-  
social Support and  
Counselling Skills

**Day Three: Techniques to Support Teachers with Anxiety and Depression.** Using demonstration, individual exercise, visualization, and self-reflection techniques the third day become more practical to address the advanced psychosocial and counselling needs of teachers in times of anxiety and depression. The day has six sessions two extended from day two on how to demonstrate paraphrasing skills, and refection of feeling skills. The other four sessions are: (1) coping technique to manage anxiety (2) activating own behaviour to relieve tension, anxiety, and depression (3) reframing thought for recovery; facing fear and worries and (4) reprocessing of trauma memories to avoid re-victimizing self.

**Day Three:**  
Techniques to  
Support Teachers  
with Anxiety and  
Depression

**Day Four: Mapping Social Capital and Integrating MHPSS in the Education System.** Day four is mainly for country level discussion and planning on how to cascade the training, on mapping the existing social capital and community resources for MHPSS as well as identifying approaches and planning for mainstreaming PSS in the education system. The day also covers topics such as tapping resources in helping teachers; working with parents and communities; engaging the education workforce.

**Day Four:**  
Mapping Social  
Capital and Integra-  
ting MHPSS in the  
Education System

# Course Coordinators

**Dr. Patricia Machawira**



Patricia Machawira is Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Advisor on Education for Health and Wellbeing. Patricia has extensive experience working and providing technical expertise for policy and programme development for the health and education sectors, including on school health, HIV and AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and comprehensive sexuality education. In recent years, her work has focused on supporting the scale up of comprehensive sexuality education in the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region. She currently works as UNESCO's Regional Advisor on Education for Health and Wellbeing for ESA and where she has been the lead person on the ESA Ministerial Commitment Process, which secured political commitment to scaling up sexual and reproductive health education and services for young people in ESA. She holds a doctorate in Education Policy from the University of Pretoria, South Africa and an MSc degree in Education and Training Systems Design from the University of Twente in the Netherlands. To date, she has published, co-authored or led the coordination of over 20 publications on various subject areas including education policy, curriculum design, HIV and AIDS, CSE and SRH.

**Dr. Victoria Kisaakye Kanobe**



Victoria is a Senior Program Specialist in Education at UNESCO IICBA. She has 26 years of experience supporting Member States and Regional Economic Bodies (such as AUC, EAC, IGAD & SADC) in Africa. Her technical areas include curricula/instruction design for formal and non-formal education; pre-service & in-service teacher education, use of ICTs in education, designing of quality assurance programs, education for health and wellbeing, education in emergencies, and inclusive education. Victoria holds a PhD in Education, a Med, and a BS in chemistry from Makerere University, Uganda, and a MSc. in Public Health from Jomo Kenyatta University, Kenya. She is a member of several education associations, the UNAIDS interagency task team on education, and the Global technical team for balanced and inclusive education at the Education Relief Foundation in Geneva.

**Dr. Eyerusalem Azmeraw**



Eyerusalem is a Program Officer with UNESCO IICBA where she recently coordinated a peace education project on preventing violent extremism implemented in 24 African countries. She also supports work on girls' education and teacher professional development, among others. Before joining IICBA, she worked in several non-governmental organizations including Save the Children International as Education Cluster Coordinator. She holds a PhD in International and Comparative Education from Addis Ababa University. Her main research interests are in peace education and multicultural education.