

UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competence Conference

29 SEPTEMBER -2 October 2025

Rabat, Morocco

SPEAKERS:

PRE- CONFERENCE WORKSHOP FACILITATORS:



Dr. Darla K. Deardorff is the chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competence at Stellenbosch University.

In addition, she is a research fellow at Duke University and holds several other faculty appointments at universities around the world including in Japan, China, and Canada. She is also a former faculty member at Harvard University's Global Education Think Tank and Future of Learning Institute.



Werner de Wit, Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

Werner is the Senior Programme Manager of the Unit for Student Mobility at Stellenbosch University International, and the Operational Coordinator: UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competences. He is responsible for the UNESCO Chair operations and is the international liaison. He holds BComm & LLB bachelor's degrees, and an MPhil (Higher Education). His master's Thesis topic was on the Development of students' Intercultural Competences through a study abroad experience.



Dr Heidi October, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Dr Heidi October serves on Stellenbosch University's Student Affairs senior management team as Deputy Director: Centre for Student Life and Learning and Head: Frederik van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership Development (FVZS Institute). She has extensive higher education experience spanning over 25 years and international higher education stakeholder relations benchmarking at more than 30 international universities. As a student leader she has been actively involved in student leadership since the 1990s and has been awarded with Vice-Chancellor's Awards for excellent achievement as student leader and later as a staff member, and academic achievement award from the University of Pretoria where she obtained her PhD in Leadership Studies. She has also been awarded honorary membership of the international Golden Key Society for her contribution to leadership. Heidi is passionate about co-creating platforms for global participation on student leadership initiatives to engage critically as active citizen-leaders. The FVZS Institute's partnerships, local and abroad with more than 2000+ students participating in leadership programmes annually, allow her to continue her research on the "born-free student leaders' identity formation in post-apartheid South Africa".

These global engagements include, having served on the steering committee for the Stellenbosch University & KU Leuven Think Tank for academic top achievers, guest lecturing at the Association of Commonwealth Universities' summer school, a series of guest lectures at MCI Business School in Innsbruck, Austria and KU Leuven, Belgium and scholarly papers at international conferences in the USA, Europe and Africa. She is the 2025 recipient of the Susan Komives Award for inspiring research in student leadership (the first South African to receive this NASPA Global Award). Apart from her research focus area on student leadership identity in post-apartheid South Africa, she enjoys long-distance walking and solo traveling with almost 50 countries explored to date.



Ms Nosipiwo Matiwane, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Ms Nosipiwo Matiwane is a Programme Coordinator at the FVZS Institute, leading the African Leadership portfolio and passionate about education as a tool to help young people become change agents in their communities. She holds a BA (Development & Environment) and Social Anthropology Hons (Cum Laude) and completing her master's degree in Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University. Her research interests include Museum Studies (Visual and Discursive framings of anthropological exhibitions), Higher Education, and Black Feminist Praxis. Using Black Feminist epistemology as a critical lens, her current research seeks to examine the multiple and complex ways in which students of power reproduce marginality in Black students' lives through the institutional conditions propagated by university apartheid at the university of Fort Hare. Nosipiwo is passionate about developing and coordinating critical scholarship and leadership programmes that foster student development and active citizenship within the higher education landscape on the African continent. She is a fellow of the Ubuntu Dialogues which is a collaboration between Stellenbosch University and Michigan State University in producing dynamic sites for the co-creation and dissemination of knowledge and practice through local and international dialogues.



Dr. Jennice McCafferty, Missouri State University, United States

Dr. Jennice McCafferty is an associate professor in the College of Education at Missouri State University and serves as the Dean's Fellow for Global Education. She earned her PhD in learning, teaching, and curriculum from the University of Missouri. Her work focuses on how values and narratives in K -12 education influence global understanding, peace, and sustainability. Dr. McCafferty collaborates with teachers involved in NGOs, associations, and public diplomacy efforts. She also coordinates Missouri State University's Global Education Lab and leads virtual exchanges for children and educators in the United States, Morocco, Libya, Tanzania, and South Africa.



Ms Khairoonisa Foflonker, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Khairoonisa Foflonker has nearly 20 years' experience in the higher education and non-governmental sectors where she has honed her skills as a lecturer, facilitator, trainer and developer of materials for diversity, equity, inclusivity and intercultural communication interventions. She is deeply committed to equity, inclusive education and an intersectional approach to social justice, and has presented on various topics aligned to her area of interest, expertise, and passion.

She holds a MPhil in Sociology specialising in Diversity Studies from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. She conducted her masters thesis research focused on xenophobia and everyday racism in the German education system in Oldenburg, Germany in 2007 that culminated in having her thesis published as a monograph by the University of Oldenburg.

Currently, Khairoonisa serves as the Manager of the Division: Student Affairs at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. In this role, she offers strategic direction and alignment to challenges facing students in South Africa. These include psychosocial student support, student leadership and development training, and support for co-curricular programmes within the student residence and commuter student community spaces.



Dr Jean Lee Farmer, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Dr Jean Lee Farmer grew up under Apartheid in a poverty-stricken area for Black people in the rich city of Cape Town. She completed her undergraduate studies and Honors at the University of the Western Cape, a university for Black students. She completed her MPhil in Intercultural Communication and PhD at Stellenbosch University – an institution she had not been allowed to study at during apartheid. She is currently the Manager for Transformation (Staff) at the same institution. Her mission is life-long learning and contributing to a society where we realise that we cannot achieve social change and social justice without individual cognitive change.

Jean continues to critique higher education culture for the slow pace of transformation and lack of diversification in thinking rather than expecting staff and students who continue to be “othered” to assimilate with the dominant culture. She continues to search for ways to work collaboratively towards social justice. Her PhD in Higher Education Studies reflects on her own positionality as the “other” but also highlights ways in which women who do not fit must be accommodated by higher education institutions.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:



Dr. Mohammed Elmeski is a senior advisor, educator, and international development expert in Comparative and International Education. He currently serves as Chargé de Mission Éducation at the Office of the Head of Government in Morocco, where he advises on national education policy across K–12, higher education, and vocational training. He also chairs the Governance Board of Africa Voices Dialogue, a pan-African platform dedicated to inclusive education policy dialogue.

Dr. Elmeski brings over 25 years of experience advancing equitable, learner-centered education systems across the Global South. He has led and advised education reform initiatives in more than 15 countries, including Morocco, Ethiopia, Haiti, Nepal, and Zambia. His leadership includes high-level roles at the American Institutes for Research in Washington, D.C., and as Chief of Party for USAID’s Higher Education Partnership in Morocco.

He is a member of the Executive Committee of Karanga – The Global Alliance for Social Emotional Learning and Life Skills, and a Fellow Researcher in the International Study on Teacher Leadership, contributing to the 2024 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report. His research and evaluation work has focused on social-emotional learning, teacher leadership, school transformation in marginalized communities, and intercultural partnership models.

A passionate advocate for intercultural dialogue in education, Dr. Elmeski has delivered keynote speeches in Ireland, Norway, Korea, China, and across Africa, and co-chaired the landmark ICSEI 2020 conference in Morocco under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI—expanding Global South participation in global school reform networks.

He earned his Ph.D. in Comparative International Development Education and Program Evaluation from the University of Minnesota. Fluent in Arabic, French, and English, Dr. Elmeski embodies a deep commitment to

bridging cultural divides and fostering inclusive education systems that promote belonging, dignity, and human flourishing.

PARALLEL SESSION SPEAKERS:



Dr Precious Simba, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Dr Precious Simba is a university teacher and researcher dedicated to exploring the transformative power of education. As a teacher in the Department of Education Policy Studies she convenes the Philosophy of Education module. With a foundation in gender based and after -school programming, her journey began with founding a girls' education initiative in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.



Dr Addamms Mututa, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Addamms Mututa is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Communication and Media, University of Johannesburg. He holds a joint PhD (Film Studies / African Literature) from the University of Tübingen, Germany, and the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. He researches African cinema and literature, post-apartheid cultures, critical theory, and postcolonialism.



Professor Joanne Hughes, Queen's University, Belfast Northern Ireland.

Professor Joanne Hughes, MBE, FAcSS, UNESCO Chair Joanne Hughes is Professor of Education in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, and Director of the Centre for Shared Education in the School. She also holds a UNESCO Chair in education. Her main research interests are in the role of education in divided societies, and inter -group relations in conflict and post -conflict societies.



Dr Abderrahman Hassi, Al Akhawayn University, Morocco

Abderrahman Hassi holds a Ph.D. from the University of Laval, Canada which was about a cross-cultural study among four countries, namely Canada, Germany, Morocco and Singapore. He is an Associate Professor of Management at Al Akhawayn University, Morocco. He previously taught at several higher education institutions in Canada. He has also served as a visiting professor of Management in Germany, Senegal and Spain. He has taught various topics in business and management at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. Abderrahman's research interests straddle cross-cultural management, employee training, leadership and innovative work behavior. His research has appeared in *Management & Organization Review*, *Cross-Cultural & Strategic Management*, and *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* and *International Labor Review*, among others. Abderrahman co-edited two books on cross-cultural management (Morocco/2016) and employee training (Morocco/2012). He is the winner of several national and international awards in teaching, research, and service.

Abderrahman has provided consulting services in business management to various organizations such as Pearson Education, GIZ, the German Development Agency, Public Service Canada, and Intel Corporation.



Prof Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis is a Professor and Director at the Ali Mazrui Center for Higher Education Studies (AMCHES), University of Johannesburg. He holds a PhD from the University of Bayreuth, Germany, where he also worked as a researcher between 2015 and 2019. Emnet holds a joint Master's Degree in Higher Education Studies from Oslo University (Norway), Tampere University (Finland), and Aveiro University (Portugal). He is NRF-rated researcher with a portfolio of over 30 peer-reviewed academic publications, primarily focusing on higher education research. Emnet has received advanced-level research training in higher education from the Centre for Institutional Cooperation (ICIS) at Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, as well as specialised training in Leadership and Management of Higher Education Institutions from Maastricht School of Management. Emnet is currently the Chair of the World Council for Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) Peace Education task force and the advisor board member of the Finnish Higher Education Partnership Programmer (HEP) representing the African continent. Prior to pursuing his PhD, Emnet served in various roles, including Head of the Quality Assurance Office and Department Heads of various academic entities.



Dr Norbert Ngowi, Mzumbe University, Tanzania

Norbert Ngowi is a distinguished expert in environment and natural resources management. Dr. Ngowi serves as the Head of the Department of Environment and Sustainable Development at Mzumbe University, is a Senior Lecturer, and sits on the board of the Institute of Development Studies. He holds a Ph.D. in Natural Resource Assessment and Management with a focus on Ecosystem Services and Livelihoods from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; a Master's degree in Biodiversity from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Geography from the University of Dar es Salaam; and a diploma in Global Health Leadership and Climate from Griffith University, Australia. With over 25 years of experience, Dr. Ngowi has authored numerous publications on ecosystem services and policy across Tanzania and beyond. His work includes advancing community livelihoods through natural resource management, climate change adaptation, green growth, and transboundary ecosystem initiatives. He has successfully worked with technical and policy teams to implement

projects, harmonize policies, culture in conservation, and develop guidelines for key wetlands, including the Malagarasi, Lake Natron Basin, Kilombero Floodplain, and Rufiji-Kilwa-Mafia Marine Ramsar Site.



Sara Gregson, Antioch University, USA - Currently living in Saudi Arabia

Sara Gregson has been an educator in international schools for over a decade. She has experienced life as an expatriate across multiple countries and continents. She served as the Service -Learning Coordinator at the International School of Kigali while living in Rwanda for three years and focused on building opportunities for ethical intercultural engagement. She is deeply interested in critical approaches to global citizenship education within international schools and believes in building sustainable and reciprocal community partnerships. Sara is a doctoral candidate at Antioch University with a specialization in Critical Pedagogy. Her research focuses on how expatriate educators can build intercultural competence to counter Western imperialism in transnational contexts.



Dr. Bernard Kitheka, Kenyan-born Scholar, Missouri State University, USA

Dr. Bernard Kitheka is a Kenyan-born scholar specializing in sustainable tourism, urban regeneration, and community development. He serves as an Associate Professor in the School of Earth, Environment and Sustainability at Missouri State University. Dr. Kitheka's academic journey includes master's and doctoral degrees earned in the United States. His research interests encompass sustainable tourism, ecotourism, urban sustainability, and the human dimensions of parks and recreation. He has published extensively on topics such as tourism policy in Kenya and urban regeneration in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In recognition of his work, Dr. Kitheka was awarded the 2025 Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship. This fellowship will enable him to with Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania, where he will engage in research on tourism governance, mentor students, and assist in curriculum development. Dr. Kitheka has lived and worked in multiple

countries, including Kenya, the South Sudan, Malawi, Kazakhstan, and the United States, contributing to sustainable tourism initiatives and community development projects. His dedication to education and sustainability has earned him several accolades, including the Bonner Foundation Community Engaged-Learning Initiative Award (2022–2023) and the Outstanding Mentee Award from Missouri State University's Bear Bridge Faculty Program in 2022.



Ms Philina Wittke, University of the Free State, South Africa

Philina has been working in development cooperation contexts for the last ten years. Between 2013-2017, she was the director of the DAAD Information Center in Johannesburg, South Africa, for Southern Africa. In that capacity, she promoted international student and research exchange as well as funding opportunities for students to study in South Africa, Africa and Germany.

During her time in the DAAD Headquarter in Bonn, Germany, she wrote the African-German network for research, innovation and transfer for the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF). She also founded a working group for partnerships on eye-level with the Global South, especially with Africa and was actively involved in the so-called development forum, a platform to discuss and challenge current concepts of "development".

From 2022-2025, she was the expert for cooperation and third-party funding for the 15 Goethe-Instituts in Sub-Saharan Africa where she advised on EU-funding opportunities as well as local and regional sponsorships. Since May 2025, she is the project director of four EU projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, facilitating cultural exchange between Africa and Europe.



Mr Leolyn Jackson, Central University of Technology, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Mr Leolyn Jackson has over 30 years' experience in higher education, serving in senior academic and leadership roles at UWC and CUT. A past president of IEASA, he has been active in global networks including AIEA, ANIE, APAIE, EAIE, FAUBAI, and NAFSA. His work has focused on comprehensive internationalisation, and he has led initiatives in teaching, learning, research, and cultural exchange. Now retired, he consults on higher education internationalisation worldwide.



Ms Chevon Slambee, University of Free State, South Africa

Chevon Slambee has been working in the higher education sector since May 2004. She first started her career in the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare, where she was a key stakeholder in the accreditation of the master's by dissertation qualification.

Chevon holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree with majors in Psychology and Industrial Sociology from Rhodes University and an Honours degree in Sociology (cum laude) from the University of the Free State.

She currently occupies the position of Chief Officer at the University of the Free State, responsible for Virtual Engagement and Select Strategic Projects and is responsible for the project management of the iKudu project which is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) project. The iKudu project focuses on transforming curricular through internationalization and virtual exchanges. Through this portfolio, she aims to highlight the importance of internationalisation in enhancing the quality and societal relevance of research and education.



Dr. Divinia Jithoo, Durban University of Technology (DUT), South Africa

Divinia Jithoo is a Specialist in International Education at the Durban University of Technology. She has experience in higher education internationalisation with a keen focus on internationalisation of the curriculum. She has developed expertise in International Virtual Engagement (IVE), specifically, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) as an approach to inclusive internationalisation. She also serves as the Co-Chair for the UNESCO Chair on intercultural competence, which is housed at Stellenbosch University. She holds a PhD in Higher Education Studies from the University of Western Cape. Her research has highlighted global structural dynamics of academic cross border collaboration.



Ms Eva Haug, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands

Eva Haug is Educational Advisor for Curriculum Internationalization and COIL/virtual exchange at the Amsterdam UAS. She's a senior lecturer of Intercultural Communication and research fellow at the University of the Free State, South Africa. Eva's is an elected member of the EAIE steering group that focuses on Teaching, Learning and Curriculum. As educational advisor she's responsible for professional development for IoC and COIL. and develops internationalization policy and strategies. Eva led the iKudu working group focused on COIL professional development. As senior lecturer Intercultural Communication she trains students and lecturers to work in multicultural and virtual teams.

Eva is often invited by universities to support capacity building in IoC and COIL and has presented about these topics at international conferences such as NAFSA, EAIE, IVEC, AAC&U and others.



Ms Marleen Henny, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS), The Netherlands

Marleen Henny is an advisor on internationalisation at the R&D department of the Faculty of Digital Media & Creative Industries at AUAS. She has expertise in D&I, internationalisation, internationalisation of the curriculum

including COIL/BIP/IaH, part of the coordination team at AUAS for the NEB Stewardship Lab and of the iKudu project. She is a work package lead in the European University Alliance, U!REKA SHIFT responsible for the work package: "inclusive & connected campus". With over 8 years working experience (teaching and head of internationalisation) in Morocco, 2 years at the research university: the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and now 4,5 years of experience at AUAS, she brings in over 14 years of experience in internationalisation.



Prof Pia Stalder, University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland

Pia Stalder is Professor for Intercultural Management at Bern University of Applied Sciences' Business School, Institute for Marketing & Global Management.



Dr Malika Abentak, UIZ, Agadir, Morocco

Malika Abentak has PhD in information and communication sciences. She is Head of the Cross -Disciplinary Teaching Department, based in the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences of UIZ in Agadir.



Nanga Désiré Coulibaly, Université Félix Houphouët -Boigny, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Nanga Désiré Coulibaly is Deputy Director of the Department of Communication Sciences and teacher - researcher at the Information, Communication and Arts Training and Research Unit (UFRICA), Université Félix Houphouët -Boigny, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.



Amani Charles Yokoli, NGO Agir, Côte d'Ivoire

Amani Charles Yokoli is a consultant-trainer and teacher-researcher. Amani runs the NGO Agir, Innover pour le Développement Durable (AIDD) in Côte d'Ivoire.



Dr Colette Djadeu Nguemedyam, Ecole Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information et de la Communication (ESSTIC - University of Yaoundé II), Cameroon

Colette Djadeu Nguemedyam holds a doctorate in Information and Communication Sciences. She is a lecturer at the Ecole Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information et de la Communication (ESSTIC - University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon).



Ms Huba Boshoff, The Knowledge Collab, South Africa

For more than two decades, Huba Boshoff has built a career in the higher education sector with a strong focus on fostering global partnerships that create meaningful impact. Her professional expertise spans student development, leadership development, project and programme development, resource mobilisation, academic accreditation, quality assurance, and in particular internationalisation of higher education.

Huba was the Director of Nuffic Southern Africa (2020–2024), where she advanced innovative models of collaboration in internationalisation and international development, with a particular focus on partnerships between South Africa, other African countries, and the Netherlands, while also driving the localisation agenda.

Earlier in her career, she held senior roles at Stellenbosch University, including Manager of the Centre for Partnerships and Internationalisation, where she led partnership management, strategy development, and information management. She also coordinated internal and external programme accreditation processes in her role as Quality Assurance Coordinator.

Beyond her institutional roles, Huba has been deeply engaged in the international higher education community. She served as a Council Member of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) from 2013 to 2019 and contributed as Editor of StudySA and chair of the IEASA Publications Committee for two years. She currently serves as a Board Member of the African Network for International Education (ANIE) (since January 2025).

Huba is the founder and director of TheKnowledgeCollab, an entity dedicated to designing customised and impactful interventions in the knowledge sector. Rooted in the principles of trust, creativity, and experiential learning, TheKnowledgeCollab is driven by the belief that collaboration is a powerful catalyst for sustainable impact. Currently her activities within TheKnowledgeCollab includes technical assistance to the Erasmus+ Support programme in South Africa, strategic support and training to MOBAF programming and bespoke training interventions on grantwriting, strategy development, partnership development and leadership.



Ms Helin Bäckman Kartal, Uppsala University, Sweden

Helin Bäckman Kartal is based at Uppsala University, Sweden, where she works at the Unit for Research and Partnership Support. Her work focuses on building strategic international collaborations, with particular engagement in South Africa–Sweden university cooperation through the South Africa–Sweden University Forum (SASUF), as well as supporting broader trilateral and multilateral academic partnerships involving African, European, and Asian partners.

She has extensive experience in facilitating cross-institutional networks, coordinating international funding opportunities, and developing global partnership platforms that strengthen research, education, and capacity building. With a background in international relations and higher education management, she is passionate about fostering inclusive and sustainable global academic cooperations in the higher education sector.



Dr Kevin Ncube, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa

Dr Kevin Ncube is a Senior Lecturer in the Marketing Department at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. He specialises in Consumer Behaviour & Marketing Research and is currently working on a project on Language-in-Use in Multilingual Classrooms, which reimagines how African students learn and communicate in linguistically diverse learning spaces. His work focuses on how multilingualism can enhance teaching, learning, and student engagement in higher education by embracing students' linguistic resources and cultural identities.



Mr Nidal Benali, International University of Rabat, Morocco

Nidal Benali is a Moroccan youth leader and international affairs professional. He works at the International University of Rabat, coordinating exchange programs, student mobility, and international partnerships. Recognized by the United Nations Secretary -General as one of the world's top 20 young leaders making an impact in their communities, he actively contributes to youth engagement initiatives at the global level. He also serves as an ICESCO Peace Ambassador, promoting intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding. Alongside his international work, he is engaged in local participation, with a strong focus on civic participation and development.



Maysa Abuzant, An-Najah National University, West Bank, Palestine

Maysa Abuzant is an English Language instructor at An- Najah National University. She teaches all levels of learners, trains EFL teachers, and co -develops COIL/VE programs that promote cross -cultural dialogue, equity in education, and digital global engagement for Palestinian students.



Abdalkarim Zawawi, An-Najah National University, West Bank, Palestine

Dr. Abdalkarim Zawawi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine. He specializes in syntax, language acquisition, and early reading instruction in the mother tongue. Dr. Zawawi holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from Lancaster University, where his research focused on syntactic priming in oral production among L1 and L2 English speakers. His academic interests encompass applied linguistics, including task-based dialogue, language learning, and the interplay between language and identity. He has significant expertise in employing virtual exchanges as a tool to enhance language teaching and has contributed to studies on digital citizenship and Arabic learning.



Alia Gilbrecht, An-Najah National University, West Bank, Palestine

Alia Gilbrecht recently joined the University of Houston as Assistant Director of University Partnerships. She is also a specialist in Virtual Exchange (VE) and the founder of the VE Collaborative at An -Najah National University.



Francesca Helm, University of Padova, Italy

Francesca Helm is Associate Professor at the University of Padova, specializing in English language and virtual exchange. A founding member of UNICollaboration, she researches decolonial approaches to international education and co-leads Erasmus+ VE projects fostering equity, dialogue, and global engagement.



Rene Anita Chombeng, Pepperdine University, USA & Cameroon

Rene Anita Chombeng is a Change Management Specialist, educator, and intercultural leadership scholar with over 25 years' experience working across the public, nonprofit, and international development sectors. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Global Leadership and Change at Pepperdine University. Her research focuses on empowering African immigrant women through digital and intercultural leadership. Rene founded Rene Anita Impact Consulting and is a faculty member teaching organizational development and ethics. Her work integrates African indigenous knowledge, decolonial thought, and intercultural frameworks to promote inclusive, ethical leadership in Africa and the diaspora. As a passionate advocate for epistemic justice, she engages communities and institutions in reclaiming culturally grounded leadership models.



Dr Prim-Rose Makhosazane Shabane (Dudu), Durban University of Technology, South Africa

Dr. Prim-Rose Dudu Shabane is a professional high schoolteacher who taught for 14 years at JG Zuma, a school with the historically disadvantaged background in the INK area (Inanda, Ntuzuma, KwaMashu). She taught grade 12 English First Additional Language for 12 years.

Currently she is working as a lecturer at the Durban University of Technology, working based at the International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON). Dudu holds a Bachelor of Education (Further Education and Training), Bachelor of Education Honours (Gender Education), Master in Education (Gender Education) and Doctor of Philosophy from the University of KwaZulu-Natal within the Curriculum Studies. The title of her doctoral thesis is: Negotiating Identity: The experiences of black self-identified lesbian youth in rural and township contexts of KwaZuluNatal.

For the past 19 years she been a member of the Community Development Association (CDA), a student driven organisation that focuses on giving back to black historically disadvantaged communities, mostly in KwaZulu-Natal. Currently she is serving as a CDA Foundation member, an alumni structure made up of the CDA postgraduates. Dudu has also taught grade 10 and 11 for five years as an Access Lead English Teacher (a Micro-scholarship English Programme funded by the Department of States of America from the years 2017-2018 and 2020-2022) within KwaZulu-Natal secondary schools.

Her area of interest includes conflict reconciliation, nation-building, peacebuilding, social justice and gender. As a teacher, her passion comes from a life-long obsession with working with youth. From a young age, she has realised the potential and the contribution of the youth in social change. She believes that through education, young people can profoundly impact their communities. If they are provided with relevant skills, knowledge and support they can be empathetic citizens who could potentially continue to work passionately and give back to their communities.



Dr. Seun Bello Olamosu, Dartmouth College, USA & Nigeria

Dr. Seun Bello Olamosu has worked in international education and higher education administration for over two decades. Seun is passionate about creating and providing access to transformative spaces where people can thrive and grow. Seun has been at the forefront of inclusive learning and internationalization efforts, supporting the adjustment of students to academic environments and increasing the awareness and growth of staff, faculty, and administrators to their roles as change agents. Her own personal journey of navigating spaces, having been raised in Nigeria but living in the U.S for most of her life, makes her passionate about intercultural awareness and development.

Seun earned her Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development with a focus on Leadership in Intercultural and International Education from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She obtained both her M.A. and B.A. from NC State University with a focus on cross-cultural communication and mass communication respectively.



Dr Msakha Mona, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Dr Msakha Mona is a decolonial scholar, artist, and social justice activist from Mzansi Afrika with expertise in African Studies, Cultural and Heritage Studies, Media Studies, and Theatre. He uses storytelling and music to advance decoloniality and social justice in education. A translanguaging practitioner fluent in over eight South African languages, he lectures at the University of Cape Town and serves on the South African National Commission for UNESCO's Culture Sector Committee. His PhD research explores social justice and curriculum decoloniality. Through global engagements and the Kulani Arts Project, he promotes indigenous knowledge and language justice across borders.



Carey Stewart, Virginia Tech, USA

Assistant Director for Intercultural Learning, Cranwell International Center Program Director, Mozaiko Living-Learning Community, Virginia Tech Carey.

Stewart is the Assistant Director for Intercultural Learning at Cranwell International Center and Program Director for the Mozaiko Living-Learning Community at Virginia Tech. A Ph.D. student in Curriculum and Instruction, her research focuses on fostering intercultural learning and belonging among undergraduate students.

A life-long learner, she holds advanced degrees in Educational Leadership and Educational Psychology, along with multiple graduate certificates. Carey has conducted research across Europe on global perspectives in higher education.

An experienced educator, presenter, and published scholar, Carey has a background in instructional design, educational administration, and supervision. She has mentored students and faculty and has supported the student experience across K–12 public education and higher education. Her passions include instructional strategies, inclusive pedagogy, intercultural learning, and fostering belonging in living-learning communities.



Prof Kat Yassim, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

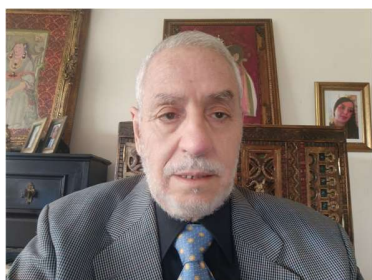
Prof Kat Yassim is an Associate Professor in the Department of Education Leadership and Management in the University of Johannesburg's Faculty of Education. She leads the green pedagogy community of practice where the integration of sustainability into existing and new modules, programs and curriculum is a core focus of the COP. In addition she has led a number of Green Pedagogy COIL projects and is a strong proponent of education for sustainable futures.



Prof Oumaima Elghazali, Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco

Oumaima Elghazali is currently a University Professor Assistant of English Communication and Soft skills at ENSIAS school affiliated with Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco. She previously worked as the Youth Development Programming and Training Specialist at the US governmental agency, Peace Corps Morocco. Oumaima earned her doctorate in the field of Educational and Intercultural Exchange and Skills Development in Youth from the 'Language, Culture and Society' Doctoral Program at the Faculty of Letters at Mohammed V University.

Professor Elghazali has more than ten years of experience, both as a researcher and a practitioner, in the fields of intercultural exchange, youth development, and volunteerism. Her research interests include: Intercultural Competence and Cultural Intelligence Development, Active Learning, Education and Multicultural Curricula, Soft Skills in Classroom Teaching, Training Design and Assessment, and Virtual Exchange.



Dr. Mohamed Chtatou, International education consultant & political analyst for the MENA region, Morocco

Dr. Mohamed Chtatou is a Professor of “MENA region area studies” at Université Internationale de Rabat -UIR- and of “Education” at Université Mohammed V in Rabat, as well. Besides, he is currently a political analyst with Moroccan, American, Gulf, French, Italian and British media on politics and culture in the Middle East, Islamism and religious violence and terrorism. He is, also, a specialist on political Islam in the MENA region with interest in the roots of terrorism and religious extremism. During 2015 he worked as Program Director with the USAID/CHEMONICS educational project entitled: “Reading for Success: A Small Scale Experimentation” in cooperation with the Moroccan Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MENFP). He recently taught cultural studies to Semester abroad students with AMIDEAST, IES and CIEE study abroad programs in Morocco insuring such courses as: “Introduction to Moroccan Culture,” “Contemporary North African History,” “Arab Spring,” “Amazigh Culture,” “Moroccan Jewish Legacy,” “Community-Based Learning” (internship with civil society organizations). He is, also, currently teaching “Communication Skills” and “Translation and Interpreting” to master students at The Institute for Leadership and Communication Studies -ILCS- in Rabat, Morocco and supervising several Fulbright students in areas of religion and culture in Morocco. He has taught in the past some courses in universities in the USA, Spain, France, Italy, England and Greece.



Dr. Amber Howard, Missouri State University, USA

Dr. Amber Kay Howard is a teacher educator, researcher, and advocate for equity-centered teaching practices. As an Assistant Professor in the School of Teaching, Learning, and Developmental Sciences at Missouri State University, she brings over a decade of experience in the K–12 setting to her work in higher education. Amber's research, teaching, and service allow her to enact her values of community, justice, and wellness through exploring the intersections of educator wellness, equity-centered trauma-informed relational pedagogy, social-emotional learning, navigating secondary trauma, and alternative forms of assessment such as competency-based education. She is a certified Mental Health First Aid trainer and regularly facilitates sessions for future teachers to support student and educator wellbeing.



Ms. Fatima Drifi, USA

Ms. Fatima Drifi is a professional teacher trainer at CRMEF-SM. She is an alumna of the Fulbright DAT exchange program held by the University of Maryland in 2011. She is currently a doctoral student at the University of Carolina, in the School of Leadership and Innovation. She also graduated from the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP), organized online by the Institute of Teacher Education, International Languages Campus, Ministry of Education, Malaysia (IPGKBA) in 2022. She serves as an advisor in the virtual Global Teacher Education Exchange, hosted by the College of Education at Missouri State University in the United States. She holds both a national certificate in English Language Teaching, awarded by ENS in 2004, and an international certificate (PCEL), issued by World Learning, AMIDEAST, and the US Embassy in Rabat in 2019. She completed the Train the Trainer course organized by the British Council in Rabat in 2009. She participated as a guest speaker in a YouTube TESOL video titled "Coping with Low-Bandwidth EFL Classes" as part of the 'A Cup of Coffee with TESOL Experts' series. Her research interests include the integration of intercultural competence in EFL, instructional design, and the use of technology in EFL teaching.



Sidi Mohamed Oubit, Rabat, Morocco

Sidi Mohamed Oubit was a teacher of English from 2000 to 2012 when he joined CFI, in Rabat. He worked as an EFL teachers supervisor from 2014 to 2018 in the southern regions of Morocco. From 18 up to now he has been the director of Dakhla CRMEF. He has participated in a number of international programs such IELP 2007. He is the coordinator of a number of local, regional, national and international conferences in the field of education such as Dakhla TESOL Conference. His main interest of teacher pre and in- service training.



Lwandisile Mhlanga, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Lwandisile Mhlanga is a Master's student in Industrial Engineering at Stellenbosch University, specialising in Logistics and Supply Chain Systems. He is the current SLS Cluster Convener and interns at the University's Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) division. Across five terms of student leadership, Lwandisile has helped shape day-to-day life in residence communities that are multilingual and multicultural, giving him practical insight into how intercultural competence is built beyond policy through routines, peer accountability, and shared spaces. He is a Ripples of Hope Fellow and a 2025 Rector's Award recipient for Excellence in Leadership, to be awarded on 15 October. Today he brings a Youth Perspective grounded in South African campus life to our conversation on Intercultural Competence.



Professor Patrice Kabeya Mwepu, Rhodes University, South Africa

Patrice Kabeya Mwepu is a literature professor at Rhodes University in South Africa, where he serves as Deputy-Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, in charge of research and postgraduate affairs. He is a member of Rhodes University Council, and Chair of Senate Nominations Committee. A former Head of the School of Languages and Literatures, he holds a PhD in French Language and Literature and has extensive experience in teaching and researching Francophone literature from Africa. He is the former editor-in-chief of the journal *French Studies in Southern Africa* (the only accredited journal for French studies in Southern Africa). Patrice Mwepu is the Director of the Confucius Institute at Rhodes University and a member of several international associations, including the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, the American Association of Teachers of French, French Studies in Southern Africa, the African Studies Association of Africa, the Australian Society for French Studies, etc.



A. Myriam Abdelhak, Université Paris Cité, France

A. Myriam Abdelhak is a final year PhD candidate in anthropology at the Université Paris Cité, part of URMIS research unit. Her thesis investigates street arts in the urban centers of Rabat, Salé, and Casablanca, with a particular focus on circus arts and acrobatics. Drawing on ethnography and qualitative methods, she examines what these performances reveal about artists' relationships to historical street practices in Morocco, the significance of bodily expression and ways of life, and, more broadly, the dynamics of urban change in contemporary Morocco.

She holds an MA in ethnology and anthropology from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris, where she researched amazigh music festivals in rural Morocco and their links to local development, and a BA in political science and liberal arts from Concordia University, Montreal. Based in Rabat, she combines her academic research with work as an independent consultant in development project evaluation and

communication, and is a founding board member of Sala Doc, a community organization in Salé dedicated to youth training in creative documentary filmmaking.



Dr. Mbadi Olila

Dr. Olila holds a Bachelor of Commerce, a Master of Science in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration from the University of Nairobi. He is a corporate and management consultant and scholar with over 10 years of postgraduate experience spanning industry, research, and university teaching. He is currently completing a postdoctoral fellowship at Mines Paris – PSL University, focusing on university–industry collaboration in developing design-oriented graduates.

Previously, Dr. Olila led research on high-growth firms and SMEs in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Rwanda under the RISA Fund (UK), implemented by GrowthAfrica Foundation and Systemic Innovation (UK). He has also consulted for global organizations, including the ILO, UNEP, UNDP, and HYBR UK, as well as leading local institutions.

Dr. Olila has participated in numerous international workshops and conferences, presenting research papers in Kenya, Morocco, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. In line with his commitment to corporate social responsibility, he is a licensed business trainer under the SMEs Founders Association, providing advisory and business coaching services to numerous SMEs across Kenya. He also serves as a Youth Advisor and Mentor for the Inspiring Hope Group's New Beginning Program (NGO), supporting the development and empowerment of young people.

POSTER PRESENTERS:



Bert Wastijn, Erasmushogeschool Brussel, Brussels

Bert Wastijn is a researcher and educator at Erasmushogeschool Brussel (EhB), specializing in pedagogical innovation, collaborative learning, and sustainable participation in higher education. His work focuses on developing inclusive and future-oriented learning environments through narrative and systemic approaches. Bert is actively involved in European and international research projects, including UNESCO and EU-funded initiatives, aimed at fostering multivocality, social justice, and co-creation in education.



Kaat Verhaeghe, Erasmushogeschool Brussel, Brussels

Kaat Verhaeghe is researcher Centre for Social and Spatial Justice and course director for the bachelor in Early Childhood Education and Care. In her research she focuses on the voices of (young) children, children rights from an intergenerational perspective and the ethical dimensions of participation. (Personal and professional) Identity and how it develops in interaction with others is the central theme in her work. In her research she explores the role of narratives in professionalization in this regard a narrative coaching method was developed.



Lieselotte Vaneeckhaute, Erasmushogeschool Brussel, Brussels

Lieselotte Eva Vaneeckhaute is Head of the Associate Degree in Social-Cultural Work at Erasmushogeschool Brussel, where she also lectures in personal and professional development, educational and social practice. She holds a PhD in Educational Sciences from Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), where she previously worked as a researcher on community resilience, sustainable development and participatory research methods. Beyond academia, she coordinated Pilar, VUB's house for arts and science, combining artistic programming with cultural leadership.



Aya Anzouk, Al Akhawayn University, Morocco

My name is Aya Anzouk and I am a psychology undergraduate student at Al Akhawayn University. I'm also an opinion writer for Arabic Post and Al Tanweeri magazine, and an Arabic fiction writer for ida2at and The New Arab.



Dr Timea Németh, University of Pécs, Hungary

Timea Németh, PhD, is an associate professor at the Department of Languages for Biomedical Purposes and Communication, University of Pécs Medical School, Hungary. She has experience in teaching and research related to intercultural communication and language learning in medical education. Her research interests include the development of intercultural competence, intercultural language learning, internationalisation of higher education, study abroad programmes, and the integration of online and AI-based tools in educational settings. She is actively involved in curriculum development and international collaborations aimed at enhancing the global competencies of students and staff.



Omid Aazami, Globi. The Netherlands

Omid Aazami (1978) is trainer and facilitator specialised in multi-cultural collaborative environments. He presently focuses on intercultural competences applying multiple methodologies for dialogue and meaningful conversations. He has worked extensively with youth, young professionals and educators. His past professional experience includes strategy consultancy, airline operations management and programme development for professional collaboration.

Omid is driven by the beliefs that each human being is noble by nature and carries forward an ever-advancing civilization. Having been raised in a multicultural environment with roots in Iran, The Netherlands and Niger, it is his life-long mission to learn from the challenges of cross-cultural exposure and bring to practice its potential benefits.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Aeronautical Engineering and a Master's degree in Engineering & Policy Analysis at Delft Technical University.



Rosanne Severs, Globi, The Netherlands

Rosanne Severs (1985) is the founder and director of Globi, a Dutch organization dedicated to promoting cultural diversity, intercultural development, and global citizenship in education. She holds degrees in Language & Cultural Studies and a Master's in Intercultural Communication from Utrecht University.

Rosanne specializes in translating complex academic approaches into practical educational interventions. Her work focuses on creating accessible frameworks that help educators foster meaningful intercultural understanding in diverse learning environments. With over a decade of experience bridging theory and practice, she has developed innovative methodologies for cultural exchange emphasizing collaborative growth and mutual connection.



Dr. Sandy Marshall, Elon University, USA

Dr. Sandy Marshall is an Associate Professor of Geography at Elon University, where he also contributes to the International and Global Studies and Peace and Conflict Studies programs. His work focuses on migration, youth geographies, and intergenerational memory, particularly in contexts of conflict and displacement such as Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and BosniaHerzegovina. Dr. Marshall employs creative visual methods, including digital storytelling and photovoice, to explore themes of trauma, resilience, and belonging. At Elon, he helps lead the Power+Place Collaborative, which documents local histories through oral storytelling, and has facilitated Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) exchanges to foster critical intercultural dialogue.



Dr. Abdalkarim Zawawi, An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine

Dr. Abdalkarim Zawawi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine. He specializes in syntax, language acquisition, and early reading instruction in the mother tongue. Dr. Zawawi holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from Lancaster University, where his research focused on syntactic priming in oral production among L1 and L2 English speakers. His academic interests encompass applied linguistics, including task-based dialogue, language learning, and the interplay between language and identity. He has significant expertise in employing virtual exchanges as a tool to enhance language teaching and has contributed to studies on digital citizenship and Arabic learning



Dr. Maureen Vandermaas -Peeler, Elon University, USA

Dr. Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler is Director of the Center for Research on Global Engagement (CRGE) and a professor of psychology at Elon University. A developmental psychologist, Maureen studies sociocultural and global contexts of learning, including mentoring relationships in high-impact practices such as undergraduate research and global learning. Maureen is a co-editor of the AAC&U publication *Mentored Undergraduate Research in Global Contexts: Integrated High-Impact Practices for Student Success* (2024) and the volume *Excellence in Mentoring Undergraduate Research* (2018). As CRGE director, she facilitates innovative, interdisciplinary, inter-institutional collaborations and research on global engagement.



Dr. Waseem-Ahmed Bin-Kasim, Elon University, USA

Dr. Waseem -Ahmed Bin- Kasim is an Assistant Professor of History at Elon University, specializing in African history. His research focuses particularly on the political economy of urban health in Ghana and Kenya. Dr. Kasim's book, titled *Urban Saniscapes: Slums, Housing, and Everyday Sanitation in Accra and Nairobi, 1908 – 1963*, is set to be published in November 2025 as part of the Michigan State University African History and Culture series.



Dr Divinia Jithoo, Durban University of Technology, South Africa

Divinia Jithoo is a Specialist in International Education at the Durban University of Technology. She has experience in higher education internationalisation with a keen focus on internationalisation of the curriculum. She has developed expertise in International Virtual Engagement (IVE), specifically, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) as an approach to inclusive internationalisation. She also serves as the Co-Chair for the UNESCO Chair on intercultural competence, which is housed at Stellenbosch University. She holds a PhD in Higher Education Studies from the University of Western Cape. Her research has highlighted global structural dynamics of academic cross border collaboration.



Normah Zondo, University of KwaZulu -Natal (UKZN), South Africa

Normah Zondo is the Executive Director of the Corporate Relations Division at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), where she leads strategic communications, internationalisation efforts, and stakeholder engagement. With over 15 years' experience in higher education leadership, she is currently pursuing a PhD focused on the international student mobility and lived experiences. She is a President of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) and serves on various national and international advisory bodies. Her work champions Africa-centred internationalisation, youth mobility, and inclusive global engagement.



Sameha Bouhalhoul, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (HvA), The Netherlands

Sameha Bouhalhoul, with 15 years of experience in the Social Work program at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (HvA), is dedicated to promoting inclusion, gender equality, and social justice. In her roles as lecturer, academic advisor, and project manager, she has initiated innovative projects such as SeSi Community Center and a women-focused module titled Womxn: Social Change and Social Justice, while developing impactful, curriculum-embedded programs on diversity and emancipation.

Her educational vision merges feminist pedagogy with social engagement, focusing on preparing students as future leaders.



Dr. Amelia Dietrich, The Forum on Education Abroad, USA

Dr. Amelia Dietrich is the Senior Director for Research and Publications at The Forum on Education Abroad and Managing Editor of *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*. She leads original research initiatives and supports the publication of scholarship on best practices in education abroad, maximizing the impact of education abroad for students, institutions and communities, and identifying promising practices on the leading edge. As an educator, Dr. Dietrich co-leads the Future Nobel Laureates Scholarship Program each year and has also taught undergraduate Spanish and linguistics courses and mentored undergraduate research abroad. Dr. Dietrich serves on the IIE Open Doors Study Abroad Working Group and the Advisory Board for the Center for Research on Abroad and International Student Engagement at Wake Forest University.