

AFRICAN UNION

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INNOVATING EDUCATION IN AFRICA DIALOGUE 2020

Building Innovative Education and Training Ecosystems to Create Impact at Scale

1. Background

Across the world over 1.9 billion learners were out of school due to nationwide shutdown of school as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This shutdown further excluded learners in rural communities from accessing education. Considering that

Africa is home to the world's youngest population, which also constitutes more than 65% of the continent's population, inadequate infrastructure, skills mismatch, digital divide, issues of relevance, school to work transition continue to plague not just the education system but also the youth. Furthermore, the adverse effect of this is an increase in youth unemployment, underemployment and vulnerability.

The inability of young people to gain proper education and adequate training eventually limits their access to quality job opportunities. Therefore, initiatives like the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) addresses this through its youth employment orientation by bringing together representatives from the public and private sectors, development partners and civil society in Africa in a discussion towards reorienting education and skills development in Africa. Tackling this challenge requires sharing lessons learned and good practice between Member States to improve access to quality and relevant skills development projects.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is committed to supporting the innovation of young people and harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth, through youth-led innovation and solutions for the Africa we want. With this commitment, in 2019, the AUC Chairperson launched the "1 Million By 2021 Initiative" to concretely reach millions of African youth from across the continent with opportunities and interventions in the key areas of Employment, Entrepreneurship, Education and Engagement (4E's). This dialogue serves as part of the activities to reach 1 million young people through the Innovation Education in Africa Expo by supporting and promoting concrete innovations aimed at addressing education challenges in Africa.

2. Rationale

This dialogue will enable and enhance interactions with actors and entities towards creating an ecosystem. Innovation is a crucial factor for development. Innovation addresses social challenges, employment opportunities. It shall bring together innovators, content creators, SIFA ecosystems and youth to share experiences and discuss three key themes:

- Digitizing Education In Africa (Enabling Innovation in Education & Existing and Prospective opportunities for Education Stakeholders)
- SIFA - Best practices and policies for employment oriented education and skills development
- Driving Skills and Innovation Ecosystems in Africa

The discussions will centre on what has worked, possibility for upscaling and adoption in other Member States. The session is also aimed at discussing how to address the skills mismatch, TVET attractiveness, enhancing school to work transition and towards enabling an active innovation ecosystem. The dialogue will further aim to discuss the existing policies that support and/or challenge innovation while finding solutions and initiatives to support innovators, policies that drive innovation and financing mechanisms, infrastructure and human resource development for innovation.

3. Objectives

- ✧ Highlight the realities and personalized experiences from speakers in the education ecosystem, job specific skills development and innovation of young people across the continent
- ✧ Showcase the education, job specific skills development and innovation best practices and existing policies that support and/or challenge innovation across the continent.
- ✧ Inform strategies on how education, job specific skills development and innovation can thrive in Africa with the use of the best practices and existing policies shared
- ✧ Bringing onboard government agents and agencies who are responsible for meeting key areas of social need through innovation and collaboration
- ✧ Establishing funds and technical assistance for skills development needs
- ✧ Generate and Scale-up innovation using market approaches
- ✧ Establishing a hub of academics and researchers that are proficient in innovation
- ✧ Create a network of hubs

4. Format:

Dialogue will be set in a presentation and moderated panel discussion format with participation from audiences and panelists from across the continent in order to ensure regional and linguistic balance for the sake of participants' engagement.

5. Proposed Participants:

- AUC/ AUC Organs and technical offices
- Development Partners
- Youth/Innovators
- Private/Public Sector actors
- Member States

6. Proposed Agenda

Date: 24th November, 2020

Duration: 2 hours

Time	Agenda	Detailed	Moderator
5 mins	Introduction	Inviting all guests to the dialogue and house rules	
45 mins	Initial Discussions	Moderated Dialogue/roundtable discussion based on broad topics	
60 mins	Q&A with Innovators	Panelists respond to pre recorded questions from Innovators across Africa.	
10 mins	Wrap-up and Closing	Summary, way forward and closing remarks by moderator	
END			