

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Date: 21 October 2024

### MEDIA ADVISORY

#### The Third Global Partnership for Education's (GPE's) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Continental Symposium

**What:** Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Continental Research Symposium 2024.

**Theme:** *"Building Resilient Systems for Increased Access to Inclusive Quality and Relevant Education in Africa"*

**When:** 20<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024, starting from 9:00 am (EAT).

**Where:** African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The conference will be in-person and also virtually live-streamed on Zoom.

#### Why:

The year 2024 has been designated as the "Year of Education in Africa," providing a unique opportunity for the African Union (AU) to reignite commitment among its member states towards achieving the targets of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). This initiative follows several key declarations and calls to action, including the STC-EST4, AU-HLSE Declarations, the Urgent Call for Action by the SDG4 High-level Steering Committee, and the UN Secretary General's Vision Statement on Transforming Education. It dovetails with the AU Commission's proposed framework to urge governments and development partners to reevaluate educational and skills development models to create the future Africa desires in the 21st century.

The African Union underscores the crucial role of education and training in fostering personal, national, and global development. It warns that failures in Africa's education system could severely impact the continent's social and economic growth, with broader global repercussions. With Africa's youth projected to comprise 40% of the global youth population by 2030, it is imperative to equip them with knowledge and skills that meet the demands of the changing world, enhancing Africa's inclusive prosperity.

Significant progress has been made in improving educational access in Africa, with primary school enrolment rising to nearly 100% by 2022 and many governments mandating up to 12 years of free education. However, challenges persist, including rising numbers of out-of-school children, inadequate learning outcomes, and a shortage of 17 million teachers. To address these issues, efforts have shifted towards enhancing educational quality and inclusivity, aligning with SDG 4 and other frameworks. The COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasized the need for quality education and adaptive learning environments. Consequently, there's a critical demand for targeted research and better dissemination of findings to optimize educational practices across the continent, supported by initiatives like webinars and symposia. To bridge the divide between research, policy, and practice, and to underscore the importance of data in improving student learning outcomes, the KIX Africa 19 and 21 Hubs are convening a 3rd joint research symposium dedicated to this mission within their member states.

**Who:**

The symposium is being organised by the African Union Commission Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI) in cooperation with the consortium partners managing the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE's) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Africa 19 and 21 Hubs. The consortium partners are:

- KIX Africa 19 Hub: UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (UNESCO IICBA); UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (UNICEF ESARO); and the African Union Pan-African Institute of Education for Development (IPED).
- KIX Africa 21 Hub: Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation (IFEFF-OIF); Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États et gouvernements de la Francophonie (CONFEMEN); and Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF).

**Objectives:**

1. Give increased visibility to recent and emerging national research, innovations, and good practices in raising learning outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa;
2. Promote inter-hub learning and discussion between national policy actors, researchers, and practitioners within and between the KIX Africa 19 and 21 Hubs, about evidence, research, and strategies to raise children's learning outcomes;
3. Promote the use of regional and national research in policymaking by national policy actors;
4. Strengthen the research, knowledge, and evidence bases of the KIX Africa 19 and 21 Hubs with research and knowledge from within and across countries, to bridge knowledge gaps; and
5. Envision possibilities for raising learning outcomes in the face of contextual challenges, including but not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic, in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Expected Outcomes**

As a result of the research symposium, it is expected that:

1. National and international education stakeholders will use KIX-supported research to frame debates about sustainable, inclusive, and equitable scaling in education in developing contexts;
2. Country representatives will strengthen their knowledge and skills, including those that consider (gender equity and social inclusion) GESI to strengthen national education systems;
3. Country representatives will actively participate in the hub, contributing to its governance and agenda, and share relevant knowledge from their context with their hub and other country representatives in the region, including GESI-related challenges.

**Participants:**

The invited in-person presenters and participants will be Ministry of Education focal points, local educational researchers, local education group policy actors, and GPE KIX researchers from the regions of the KIX Africa 19 and 21 Hubs. The total number of in-person participants will be under 150. An unlimited number of guests from the countries of the two hubs will be welcome to join virtually. In line with KIX's goal of mainstreaming gender equity and parity in education, women researchers and leaders will be particularly encouraged to participate.

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