

The 2nd AFRICE International Conference took place at the University of Nairobi, Kenya Science Campus on 18th and 19th June 2015. The conference was organized by **AFRICE** in close collaboration with the **Department of Educational Foundation; College of Education and External Studies, University of Nairobi**. The steering committee was headed by Dr. Lewis Ngesu, Dr. **Daniel Gakunga**, the newly elected President of AFRICE was the conference convener.

This year, the main theme of the conference was **'EDUCATION IN AFRICA: REFLECTIONS BEYOND 2015 MDGs-COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE'**. This is in light of the fact that the world educational agenda in the last decade was geared toward the attainment of *Education For All (EFA)* as well as the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The conference brought together over 120 participants from around the world to share their experience, knowledge and debate on issues affecting education in Africa. Countries represented in the conference include; Kenya, Nigeria, United States of America, Canada, Australia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Norway, India and Sierra Leone. The Participants were mostly researchers, educators and scholars.

The 2- day conference was structured around 2 Keynote plenary presentations and about 20 facilitated sessions held in separate break away rooms. A total of 65 papers were presented and discussed.

Day 1 of the Conference, 18th June 2015 saw about 40 papers presented. The opening ceremony was attended by top management of the University of Nairobi led by **Prof. Henry Mutoro**; Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs who read a speech on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi. In his speech, the VC expressed the honor and privilege of hosting the 2nd AFRICE International Conference at the University of Nairobi, Kenya Science Campus. The Vice chancellor echoed the objectives of the MDGs and exuded hope that discussions during the 2 day conference will go a long way to contribute to the debate of Comparative Education in Africa. The second speech was delivered by President-elect AFRICE Dr. Gakunga on behalf of his predecessor Dr. Willbroad Dze Ngwa. His speech mainly highlighted the need for universities around the world to network and wished participants a great time as they interact with one another during the conference **Prof. Isaac Jumba**; The Principal College of Education and External Studies expressed the honor of hosting an international conference and said that such conferences are a great opportunity for the University of Nairobi to strengthen relationships with other like-minded institutions. He pointed out that such events are the best platforms to build capacity of practitioners in the field of education. **Prof Ochanda**, the Deputy Principal, CEES and Host of the conference also gave welcome remarks and wished all participants fruitful and enjoyable deliberations. Also speaking at the event, **Prof. Akala**; Dean School of Education was positive that participants would greatly benefit from the deliberations on emerging issues in Comparative Education. He thanked the organizers from bringing together a variety of presenters from different countries to share the experiences and knowledge. The Dean assured presenters that some of the best papers presented will be published in the School of Education Journal, *The Fountain*. Dr. Lewis Ngesu; Chairman of the Department of Educational Foundations, in his welcome note took time to remind everyone of the need to take every opportunity to discuss ways to sustain Africa beyond the 2015 MDGs. He was of the opinion that this can only be achieved through concerted effort and special collaboration between academic institutions, government, private sector and the business world. He was confident the conference would present the experts with renewed energy and content to address the challenges facing the Education sector beyond 2015.

The first plenary session was led by guest speaker Prof. **Heidi Biseth**; Buskerud and Vestfold University College, Norway and treasurer; World Council of Comparative Education Societies (**WCCES**). Her presentation titled **"Comparative Reflections beyond the 2015 MDGs-Educating for Democracy in a Multi-cultural environment"**. In her presentation Prof. Heidi highlighted 3 key concepts, Education, Politics and Social change and their influence on the quality of education and the end users of this education-the students. In her presentation, she engaged participants in a comparative reflection on the financial investments various countries set aside for education. Prof. Heidi further spoke on multicultural education, Democracy Education, social diversity and Cultural diversity. In her presentation she stressed "the need to influence the way knowledge is constructed, reduce prejudice by focusing on the unique characteristics of students in terms of their race, attitude and values."

After the plenary session, participants had the opportunity to participate in 12 thematically focused sessions. Some key themes covered on the first day include; Education Administration, Inclusive Education, Technology and Education, Community Development and Educational Governance.

Day 2 of the conference, 19th June 2015, about 25 papers were presented. The Guest speaker of the day was Prof. Ali Abdi, a professor at the University of British Columbia in Canada.

Prof. Ali Presented a paper titled **"Reconstructing Educational Policy in Africa: Beyond the MDGs"**. The main theme was Education for Social Development. He started by sharing his formula (E=SD) Education=Social Development. "The role of Education in Social Development, the assumption is that Education leads to Social development. " In his presentation, he offered a critique on the position of education as a platform for social development more so, in an African context. He was quick to add that most of the educational policies in Africa

are largely borrowed from the West and he went on to state these policies are not working. To drive the point home he elaborated on the theories of Education by bringing out the relationship between education and Politics. Prof. Ali gave a spirited presentation outlining education policy and how these policies dictate distribution and management of education resources. His discussion also highlighted education expenditure, he was sad to note that Africa countries spend a significant amount to finance the education sector but the outcome does not correspond with the expenditure. He pointed out that "majority of the African youth do not complete primary school and over 50% of youth that actually complete secondary and tertiary and in many cases under employed." These facts necessitate "the need to rethink, reanalyze, critic and reconstruct education policy". He called on researchers to find out why there is such a huge disconnect between the money spent on education and youth unemployment. In conclusion he presented 3 ideas that could address the many challenges plaguing education in Africa. His first idea is to develop a *sovereign education policy* that recognizes indigenous ways of knowing. The second idea is invest in *relevant education for Africa*, the current education policies are still based on colonial systems and there is data to show that the systems are not working. The third idea is to *decolonize policy into decolonized knowledge*. The schools must be responsive to African values and needs. He concluded by stating learners must see something of themselves in education.

After the plenary session, participants had the opportunity to participate in 8 thematically focused sessions. Some key themes covered on the second day include; Adult Education, Higher Education, Gender and Education among others.

The Conference ended on 19th June 2015, during the Closing ceremony, Dr. Daniel Gakunga was introduced as the President for AFRICE. He will serve as president for the next 2 years.