



**High-level report on the multidisciplinary
dialogue on Africa-US city relations**

**ANEW Hotel Parktonian, Johannesburg,
South Africa**

15-17 February 2023



Foreword

The University of the Witwatersrand established the African Centre for the United States (ACSUS) in March 2018 to provide African perspectives on the US as a nation and global influence. Given the multiple interactions between Africa and the US, capturing these systematically has opened up opportunities for partnerships between US institutions working on US-Africa relations and African institutions working with the US. ACSUS is one such initiative accomplishing this objective through research, teaching, and policy engagement.

The Cities and Internationalization project has been one of the flagship programs in which ACSUS has established its presence as a centre of knowledge production and policy outreach. ACSUS has been able to highlight the vital role of cities in advancing cultural interactions, diplomacy, and development. Hosting a leading academic conference on US-African city partnerships and co-hosting the first African conference of the Sister Cities International (SCI) in early 2023 have been momentous events for ACSUS. These accomplishments would not have been possible without the assistance of a wide range of US and African cities, the generosity of public and private donors, and scholars.

This report captures some key developments leading to the conference, the accomplishments, and the proposed way forward.

ACSUS aims to continue to broaden the partnerships in advancing the role of cities as global actors.

Sincerely,

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Director

African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS), Wits University

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1. Africa-US Cities Conference 15-17 February 2023

1.1 Background

The Africa-US Cities Conference is a culmination of multiple activities and partnerships around the concepts and practices of city diplomacy, including citizen and digital diplomacy and the international dimensions of African cities. The project promotes Africa-US city partnerships by generating research-based public engagements and knowledge production. It seeks to identify areas of cooperation, share best practices, and draw lessons from existing interactions between cities in Africa and the US. The project seeks to enhance academic knowledge of interactions between cities in Africa and the US and the theoretical and practical implications of these interactions.

The Africa-US Cities project and conference aim to:

- Produce knowledge on the ways and means in which African and US cities can strategically engage as international actors.
- Engage in knowledge production through research articles and edited journal articles and books.
- Avail the knowledge produced during the project to continental, regional, and national policy-makers.
- Connect African and US scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and professionals interested in city relations, diplomacy, and development.
- Provide knowledge and information on past, current, and potential areas of partnership.
- Explore means and ways of strengthening Africa-US city partnerships and research.

Various activities and events, which led to the 2023 conference, include:

- April 2019: A conference in partnership with the cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane, Brand South Africa, and various research organizations.
- March 2020: The establishment of relations between ACSUS and Sister Cities International (SCI) culminated in a memorandum of understanding. ACSUS was co-opted as an academic partner for the SCI US-Africa.
- August and October 2020: A virtual “COVID-19-19 and Cities Forums” series.
- October 22-23, 2020: Participating in a BRICS + Urban Governance Forum with ACSUS as co-host.

- 2020 – 2023 (various dates): A series of virtual meetings between ACSUS and various SCI southern African sister cities.
- April 2021: An academic symposium and networking forum with Sister Cities International, Wayne State University, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- September 2022: A virtual meeting with scholars from historically black colleges and universities facilitated through SCI and the North Carolina Central University.

2. Conference Summary

2.1 Opening Sessions, Days 1 and 2

Dr Bob Wekesa, ACSUS's deputy director and conference program director, opened the conference by outlining its core role of boosting, enhancing and advancing Africa-US relations through research-driven city partnerships.

Notably, Professor Mucha Musemwa, Wits University's Dean of the Humanities Faculty, offered that city-to-city partnerships offer potentially new avenues for foreign policy and international relations. Instead, the latter is directed towards managing conflict, security, war, uneven access to economic and political power levers, and increasing multi-polarity in the geo-political terrain. However, new megacities, argued Professor Musemwa, are sites for multiple interactions that deepen understanding among people from across countries, regions, and cultures. Cities and city partnerships are important for formulating progressive policies and sharing best practices between public officials, governance structures, industry, and civil society organizations. Professor Musemwa added that city-to-city relations are a curtain raiser for an Africa-US cities knowledge production consortium. Indeed, this is the first Africa-US cities conference to tackle issues around cities as international actors. In conclusion, he highlighted many issues that African and US scholars can work on to advance knowledge production in this area. The conference could be a catalyst for these issues.

Councillor Thapelo Amad, the former Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg, commended ACSUS for having facilitated this critical dialogue on Africa-US city relations because it is at this conference where academia, together with corporate and government officials will be exploring ways to enhance meaning to intercity engagements and the international space. Cllr Amad acknowledged that we live in a global village where the culture and values of the cities are transmitted around the globe. He went on to stress the significance of cities, affirming that they are living organs of the country for various reasons. It is in cities where economic and demographic influence are felt the most. Meanwhile, innovations are most likely to take place in cities. However, abject poverty means that cities must combat inequality and poverty. Cllr Amad acknowledged the importance of platforms such as the conference because they create a base for academia, government, and business to explore ways of addressing challenges and opportunities confronting cities. Cllr Amad concluded:

“We are here because we understand that in the next four decades, the world's population growth is expected to occur in urban areas. We are here because we know that wealth and services are centred in cities. Many businesses are found in urban areas, and foreign money flows into the country through its cities. Therefore, cities are central to the state's survival.”

Cllr Jongizwe Dlabathi, South African Local Government Association (SALGA) executive committee member, noted that the local government is the first contact between citizens and

government, making municipalities the frontline service delivery mechanism. Therefore, for SALGA, the conference dialogue should assist in building effective inter-governmental stakeholder relations and citizen action. This could eliminate government fragmentation and ensure well-coordinated service delivery and development planning.

In his address, Cllr Dlabathi highlighted the crucial role of local government in fostering an environment that attracts and nurtures potential investments, leading to inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development in cities. Cllr Dlabathi expressed his optimism that this dialogue would enable local government to streamline its processes and enhance investor confidence, particularly in infrastructure development. He stressed that such efforts would help accelerate economic empowerment and create more robust and prosperous city communities. In closing, he noted that the conference will aid practical solutions to improve citizens' lives and governance and make it easier to do business for an improved economy.

Mr Vincent Spera, Consul General from the Johannesburg Consulate, US Mission in South Africa, noted that the US has long considered South Africa a strategic partner.

“All of us here today, whether American, South African, Kenyan, or wherever we are from, have a shared interest in South Africa's prosperity. It is important to remember though, that promoting shared prosperity relies heavily on the notion that we are all in it together. The problems we face are beyond the capacity of any one nation to solve on its own. What happens in any one country impacts its neighbours and further afield.”

Spera noted that US-South Africa relations have grown, and that the US remains South Africa's 3rd bilateral trading partner. The US has more than 600 companies active in South Africa, most of which have operations in Gauteng. Those 600 companies have revenues equivalent to 10% of South Africa's GDP and employ 220,000 South Africans. The consulate has worked closely with the Gauteng Province to drive trade and investment in critical growth sectors. These areas include energy and climate, ICT, transportation logistics, and the creative sector. Mr Spera expressed gratitude to the South African people for heeding former President Mandela's call to not conduct the country's affairs in isolation. The consulate would serve as a resource to help facilitate and accelerate Africa-US relations.

Conference delegates were virtually welcomed by the Member of the Executive Council of the Gauteng Province, Mr Mzikayifani Khumalo, on behalf of the Premier, Mr Panyaza Lesufi. In his welcoming remarks, Mr Khumalo said the conference is a viable platform to accelerate the city's economic development, with partnership as a critical enabler. The Gauteng province is on an irreversible path to a knowledge-based economy. This has been done to assist the province in improving its capacity to deliver on the latest innovations. This will further improve technology deployment to advance the province's critical priorities on effective service delivery. This conference is a platform for a closer policy discussion of infrastructure development initiatives, particularly those which leverage smart technologies. Therefore, the premier looks forward to fruitful public-private partnerships in response to economic challenges in African and US cities on infrastructure, climate financing, innovative city partnerships, and investments.

2.1.1 Keynote address - Ms Lorna K. Johnson, Sister Cities International, Africa Region Representative

Ms Johnson's address followed the theme 'honoring traditions, creating new partnerships'. Firstly, her address gave a detailed background on the establishment of Sister Cities International, founded in 1956 by President Eisenhower. Sister Cities International is said to be the oldest and largest global network of volunteer citizen diplomats. Its mission is to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation under the slogan 'one individual, one community at a time.' The Sister Cities initiative aims to create resilient cities, academic and education opportunities, municipal, youth, and sports exchanges, economic development projects, arts, cultural and heritage activities, medical, emergency response, and environmental programs. Part of Ms Johnson's address touched on the Sister Cities Africa Summit held in Cape Town in February 2023. The summit launched the SCI 500/5 initiative, creating 500 new sister cities throughout Africa over the next five years.

2.1.2 Day 2 Keynote Address – Professor Kefa Otiso, Bowling Green State University

Professor Kefa Otiso's presentation, 'Africa–US cities in a global setting: research agendas, practice nexuses, future trends,' highlighted cities in a global multipolar setting. Professor Otiso looked at the appropriate multidisciplinary theoretical, methodological, and conceptual approaches to studying Africa-US city relationships. Understanding the historical, socio-cultural, and economic ties between African and US cities and what enables these ties is vital. Professor Otiso asked whether Africa and the US are true partners and, if unequal, how to fix this. The address also included security ties and the importance of being aware of the military/security ties embedded in Africa-US city ties. Whose security is at stake? In closing, Professor Otiso explored the role of old and new diaspora in Africa-US city ties, arguing that the diaspora should be educated to play a greater role in these city ties. He concluded that African diasporans can help create these relationships.

2.2 Panel discussions

2.2.1 Public-private partnerships in response to economic challenges in Africa-US cities

Moderator: *Ms Koketso Tamale, Head, InvestSA Gauteng*

Panelists: *Mr James Donovan, Co-founder and CEO, ADEC Innovations*

Dr Jamie Green, National Institute for Inclusive Competitiveness

Mr Mxolisi Mchunu, Specialist, Economic Development, SALGA

Mr Brinton Bohling, Managing Director, Prosper Africa

In moderator Ms Tamale’s opening, she noted that cities require significant investment to place them on a sustainable path. She cited an International Finance Corporation study revealing that Africa alone requires about 1,6 trillion between now and 2030 to achieve this. These are investments that rest on green buildings, new construction and retrofits, climate resilience and public transportation, infrastructure, electric vehicles, improved management of water resources, renewable energy, and better waste handling. Government alone cannot address the scale of investments required, and other avenues include private-public partnerships.

Panelist Mr Bohling responded to how Africa can address the considerable investment gaps required to develop its cities sustainably. Mr. Bohling affirmed that Africa is poised to grow and needs investment capital. As such, he identified ways cities could secure investments and noted that Prosper Africa is looking at bringing in investments to support projects in areas such as roads, transportation networks, energy, and water. He identified entities that can help at different stages, including the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA). USTDA assists with pre-project planning, grant-based training and grant-based feasibility. USTDA’s grants range from \$10 to \$15 million.

Mr Donovan outlined enabling conditions for innovation to boost cities' economic growth and job creation. Importantly, it is vital to deploy capital more intelligently. “Innovation is there, but innovative vehicles are missing. By vehicles, I refer to inclusive frameworks representing the city's needs and areas of opportunity. Civil society inclusion, for example, is one of the integral factors in creating innovative public-private partnerships that drive sustainable development in cities.”

Mr Mchunu highlighted that cities are at the epicenter of the global economy (where 80% of GDP is generated) and that more people live in cities than rural areas. Mr Mchunu said that public finance management can be improved to attract private sector investment in cities.

“We need to ensure that we institutionalize and tighten our systems and controls in so far as public finance management is concerned because when systems are in place, we can curb irregular expenditure and corruption. Efficient infrastructure was also identified as a crucial factor to attract investment. It is unlikely that investors will invest where there is no energy or water security. Political stability was also identified as a key element of investment attraction. Ultimately, the duty lies with the government to act efficiently on service delivery.”

Dr Green outlined how policymakers could improve city competitiveness to achieve inclusive growth. She proposed a community economic development strategy to increase the GDP of marginalized communities so that civil unrest and the knock-on economic repercussions are avoided. The strategy can also be used in communities to increase access to infrastructure that enables them to produce food, energy, and water.

2.2.2 Infrastructure Climate Financing

Moderator: *Mr Seana Nkhahle, Portfolio Head: Built Environment and Planning, SALGA*

Panelists: *Mr Will Pearson, Power Africa*

Prof Rodney Genga, Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, Wits University

Mr Nkhahle asserted that one cannot plan for the future without considering various risks; climate change is the most significant risk. When investing in infrastructure, climate resilience must be top of mind.

Mr Pearson acknowledged South Africa's infrastructural challenges, which have impacted power supply, transport and water provision. The second thing we should acknowledge is that the cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town are the financial centres of Sub-Saharan Africa. Prosper Africa and the US government focus on identifying investment-worthy, bankable projects. The organization and its US government partners are evaluating close to 100 projects based in South Africa. There is abundant interest in energy projects such as energy procurement for grid-connected power, aligning with the US government's Just Energy Transition commitments.

"Given how low-cost solar power batteries are, I think it can be a very robust private sector activity in financing and developing these projects in many different ways."

Professor Genga provided insights on how government could work with the private sector around planning for infrastructure climate financing. He identified representation as an imperative because the different ideas of individuals ranging from the government and corporations can come to light.

2.2.3 Innovative city partnerships and investment landscape for African and US Cities

Presenter: *Mr James Donovan, Co-founder and CEO of ADEC Innovations*

Mr Donovan identified the Sustainable Development Goals as an excellent roadmap for innovative city partnerships and investments in his address. Partnerships are established in response to common predicaments and pave the way for innovation. Special economic zones, for example, could be more innovative in addressing job creation and environmental challenges.

"We live in a disruptive decade. Every business model will be disrupted. Partnerships can be catalytic and assist us to get through the disruption."

2.2.4 Sister City Relationships

Moderator: *Dr Lorna Johnson, Sister Cities International, Africa Region Representative*

Panelists: *Mr Michael Robinson, Sister Cities International*

Prof Kefa Otiso, Bowling Green University

This session focused on the practical ways the sister city partnerships are formed. In Africa, particularly South Africa, most of these partnerships are managed by the international relations office of that specific metropolitan or municipality. Dr Johnson noted that while there is no prescribed context for the partnerships, six different models can be used in setting them up. She detailed four in her presentation. The first is an international/economic development office model tied to economic development. Big cities usually follow this. The second model is that of establishing sister city non-profit and non-governmental organizations. However, these partnerships require intense and sustainable fundraising. The third is that of committees, which are loosely established outside the mayor's office but supported by the city. Commission-based models are an extension of councilors and city counsels, making recommendations on an advisory basis.

Sometimes, partnerships such as Chicago and Russia dissolve, while others become dormant, such as the Lusaka-Los Angeles arrangement. Encouragingly, cities can have as many as 10 sister city partnerships.

Mr Robinson's study explored three US-Africa sister city programs providing educational opportunities. The goal was to present the program's best practices so that they could be replicated in other locations. The paper provided an overview of a sister cities program in two cities, Salem in the US and Kumasi in Ghana, detailing partnerships, individuals impacted, program deliverables, costs, and educational opportunities. One of the partnership initiatives was a youth summit in 2016 entitled 'Peace through People'. The aim was to reimagine education in Africa.

Professor Otiso called for greater coverage and profiling of the sister city partnership programs so that knowledge (data collection, case studies, and lessons learned) could be shared to strengthen future work. Practical information should also be made into guidelines and fact sheets. This could include the cost of a partnership and the granular details of setting them up.

2.2.5 Strategies for City Resilience and Investment: Health, Environment, Migration, Security

Moderator: *Dr Bob Wekesa, Deputy Director, African Centre for the Study of the United States*

Panelists: *Ms Nozibele Makanda, Portfolio Head, Inclusive Communities, SALGA*

Ms Nosipho Hlatshwayo, Executive Programmes, South African Cities Network

Ms Makanda acknowledged that local government, following the Constitution's chapter seven imperatives, is meant to promote a safe and healthy environment and overall social and economic development. Section 153 of the same chapter states that municipalities must

structure and manage their administration, budgeting, and planning processes to prioritise a community's basic needs. Meanwhile, Section 23 of the Municipal Systems Act states that a municipality must undertake developmental-orientated planning to ensure that it strives to achieve the objectives of local government. Strategies for city resilience must include the areas of health, employment, migration, safety and security. A crucial aspect of a resilient city is a sustainable, equitable, and adaptable health system that adequately addresses individual and community health needs. The changing climate and weather patterns increase a community's vulnerability. Therefore, municipalities and SALGA are working to strengthen the delivery of municipal health services.

In addition to extreme weather events, Ms Makanda noted that health is heavily impacted by the high volume of waste pollutants, which has increased exponentially in all cities and smaller municipalities. Municipalities have directed resources to procure waste management equipment and services to mitigate this. In addition, public-private partnerships to reuse and re-purpose waste have been explored. Ms Makanda stressed the importance of waste management education and awareness in communities to enhance their health and well-being.

Meanwhile, Ms Makanda identified illegal migration as an impediment to city resilience, arguing that housing immigrants impacts an already stretched and limited budget. This affects service provision for those entitled to receive those services. She also noted a correlation between the increased migration in the city and crime and violence in the city. Thirdly, she expressed concern about the level of unemployment in cities and illegal immigrants searching for jobs. To address this issue of illegal immigration, SALGA has decided to host a summit working with the national government. Ms Makanda noted that the government alone cannot solve the socio-economic issues that impede city resilience. Establishing partnerships with the private sector is mandatory.

Ms Hlatshwayo argued that resilience is difficult to compartmentalize into water, health, or migration because resilience is a system-wide process. When there is an energy crisis, as South Africa is currently experiencing, tourism, economic growth, and safety are affected. She refers to resilience as facing and navigating through problems that do not change core values and principles. South African legislation speaks a lot about resilience; however, practice is the true test of whether our cities are resilient. Ms Hlatshwayo notes that chronic include inequality, poverty, inadequate public transport systems, and endemic violence. There are also acute shocks, including floods, drought, and load-shedding.

She commends the South African Cities Network, and particularly the city of Cape Town, which responded to the water crisis. One of the city's strategies was asking businesses to supply water instead of solely relying on government delivery. Day Zero did not arrive. Ms Hlatshwayo spoke of the power of innovation in responding to current and future problems.

She urged cities to consider transversal management and timeous communication. In closing, Ms Hlatshwayo emphasised the significance of partnerships (academia, the private sector, and communities) in creating resilient cities.

2.2.6 Africa-US City Governance Across Crisis Issues

Moderator: *Dr Sam Koma, North West University*

Panelists: *Dr Godfrey Isiye, University of Nairobi*

This session followed day one's conversations, emphasising the importance of forging city-to-city partnerships to ensure regional economic development, good city governance, and development planning. Dr Koma referenced Sustainable Development Goal #17, which promotes effective public-private and civil society to mobilize resources to realise a city's full potential. That is the reason governments across the globe increasingly speak about social compacts, and SALGA aims to build inclusive governance. Until recently, crises have triggered remarkable partnerships between government and non-state actors.

“We observed this during lockdown restrictions in 2020/2021, with the establishment of the Solidarity Fund and the generation of R2,5 billion within two weeks of its formation. This bears testimony to the work done by ordinary citizens to manage, mitigate, and respond to crises. Therefore, indisputably, partnerships are integral to cultivating sustainable development.”

Dr Isiye shared insights from his academic paper, which explored city governance amid complex emergencies. He compared Kenya's and the US's COVID-19 responses. The paper explored the background, key issues, emerging vulnerabilities, and challenges based on three cities: Nairobi, New York, and Los Angeles. The question became how key economic hubs manage a crisis through to the recovery stage. A vital determinant was political will. This entails decisions about how resources are distributed.

However, politics manifested in people becoming discontented with lockdowns. In Nairobi, people became rebellious against restrictions and curfews. In Europe, people protested against the curfew, which impacted businesses and curtailed freedom of movement. Therefore, a clear response to a crisis is needed so that it does not cause further societal fractures. Dr Isiye further identified strategic communication as crucial to maintaining order in a crisis. During COVID-19, for example, unemployment rose, homelessness increased, and price hikes on essential commodities occurred. This fuelled public unrest. It is in such moments where communication is integral because the government needs to explain how and why such measures were put in place and acknowledge the challenges these may bring. In closing, Dr Isiye acknowledged partnerships as a crucial element in crisis monitoring.

2.2.7 Smart Cities and Urban Development

Panelists: *Mr Collen Masango, Team Task Lead, Urban Resilience, the World Bank Group*

Mr Lawrence Boya, Smart City Leader, City of Johannesburg

Smart cities have become the buzzword in city governance, with many frameworks centered around digital transformation and innovation. Mr Masango highlighted four cities identified as smart cities: the City of Johannesburg, the City of Ekurhuleni, the City of eThekweni, and the City of Tshwane. The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) had contracted the World Bank to help DBSA and the cities with smart city solutions.

Smart cities are testing out information communications technology such as data integration, data solutions, and data-driven development. Mr Masango said smart cities are sustainable because he understands them as cities that use data and integrated technology to deliver sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive cities. But, for smart cities to be less abstract, they need to be people-centered. Children were excluded from accessing online schooling during COVID-19 if they could not afford data. This is not what an inclusive, people-centered smart city stands for.

Mr Masango referred to a World Bank report on regenerating urban labs. The report was broadly related to smart cities and referred to the Global Smart City Partnership Unit's four principles as the planning baseline for smart cities. The first principle is defining what matters most in a smart city, such as its focus first on people. The second principle – partnership – ensures that the private sector is actively involved in service delivery. The third looks at implementation. In the South African context, this is underpinned by building the leadership capacity of municipalities. In closing, Mr Masango reiterated that people are critical in the smart cities' framework; technology should be understood as an enabler and not the central factor.

Mr Boya shared some of the City of Johannesburg's smart city work and lessons. He claims that for the City of Johannesburg, smart cities are about laying a foundation for the future city defined by innovation. He notes that the country and the city face the so-called triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Climate change is also a concern, and the transition to clean energy must be upscaled. In addition, the digital divide must be narrowed. Overcoming these challenges requires bold and decisive implementation.

Initially, the City of Johannesburg's smart cities approach focused on ICT. However, it has evolved into a human-centric model enabled by technology.

“Now, in this approach, we look at addressing the legacy of apartheid and underdevelopment, reconstructing, retrofitting, and remodeling our city back to its former glory and into the modern age, providing an effective response to climate change, combating the spread of diseases and pandemics and future-proofing the city. The city's definition of smart cities looks at Johannesburg as a digitally transforming, citizen-centric, and inclusive city. This will enhance socio-economic development and efficient service delivery, making a safe, sustainable, liveable, and resilient city. Mr Boya identified pillars that guide their smart city framework:

- people as the centre
- safe cities
- ensuring smartness within the city as an institution to govern smartly.

- creating sustainable, liveable, and resilient cities
- ensuring the availability of services on a 24/7 basis through smart platforms
- creating a digital economy that is knowledge-based and can provide opportunities in terms of the fourth industrial revolution.
- establishing a connected and intelligent city

Mr Boya also shared some catalytic programs that have helped define the initiatives needed to implement a smart city. The first program digitally connected every part of Johannesburg so people could access the internet in their homes, on buses, in taxis, or public spaces. The second program is the empowering\capacity-building program to provide citizens with the skills needed to operate in a smart city. The third program is making Johannesburg safe and applying co-production systems and innovation. In this way, citizens take ownership of service provision and development.

Mr Boya noted that the 2011 Growth and Development Strategy mentioned smart cities, and several projects were piloted from there. These included e-learning, e-health, and the smart meter project. These are now being upscaled and ramped up. A maturity assessment done by the World Bank indicated that these had achieved competency.

In conclusion, Mr Boya highlighted the challenges of building a smart city in South Africa. The first is the absence of a legal framework for smart cities. Secondly, the existing Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs policy that published the Smart City Framework is a mere guideline document and not a government policy.

2.2.8 Comparative, theoretical, methodological, and Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Africa-US city relations

Presenter: *Prof Nnamdi Elleh, Head of School, School of Architecture and Planning, Wits University*

Professor Nmadi opened his address by quoting the Chicago urbanist Robert Bookman, who said, 'Cities are businesses.' He questioned what cities offer citizens. Is it safety, education, or recreation? Those with more job opportunities, cheaper housing, and lower tax rates will attract more people. Professor Nmadi compared Detroit, Chicago and Johannesburg. He argues that all three cities have a common factor: they are commercial cities. However, China as a leading industrial power with cheap labour, decimated Detroit (which was the automobile industry capital in the world before the 1980s). Prof Nmadi explained that Chicago's city center shifted towards O'Hare's northwest areas between 1970 and 1980. However, in the late 1980s, the then mayor Deli Junior, resuscitated the city by connecting industry and investors. In closing, he emphasised that cities are business entities; therefore, all city governance frameworks must be chracterized around this conception.

2.2.9 Africa – US University-based City Partnerships

Moderator: *Prof Nnamdi Elleh, Head of School, School of Architecture and Planning, Wits*

Panelists: *Dr Sonya Ricks, North Carolina Agriculture, and Technical State University*

Prof Kefa M. Otiso, Bowling Green State University

Dr Manna Duah, North Carolina Central University

Mr Tebogo Matlou, Project Manager, SALGA

Mr Lawrence DaQuan, Howard University

Dr Larrisha McGill-Youngblood and Dr Christopher Paul, North Carolina Central University

The panel for the Africa-US University-based city partnerships was among the most diverse at the three-day conference. Mr Matlou shared insights on the partnerships that SALGA has established with cities from other countries. Universities have been the beneficiaries of such partnerships. Some universities that have benefited from the city partnerships include the University of Lund in Sweden, the University of Pretoria, Walter Sisulu University (both in South Africa), and Simon Fraser University in the US. In addition, municipal councilors from South Africa participated in a leadership summit facilitated by the University of California, Ridley. These universities play a pivotal role in inter-city engagements because the university students can assist municipalities with project planning, data collection, and research analysis.

Professor Otiso shared insights on the Canadian-Africa Diaspora Fellowship Program administered in Washington, of which he was a fellow in 2015. Professor Otiso then brokered a memorandum of understanding between Kisii University, Kenya and Bowling Green State University. From the Kissi and the Bowling Green University partnership, 579 fellows have been funded, and the fellowship is active in six sub-Saharan African countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Drs Youngblood and Paul outlined the programs offered through their North Carolina Central University exchange program. North Carolina Central University is a historically black university, and historically black universities (HBCUs) have partnered with African cities and universities. Dr Paul explained that the Master of Public Administration program in their Department of Public Administration has robust partnerships with universities in Jamaica, Ghana and Liberia. Dr Youngblood noted that the exchange program allows young professionals to imagine cross-cultural public service values and principles. Through the program, students from Liberia have received internships from the Budget and Finance Department for the City of Durham. In exchange, a student from Durham in North Carolina Central University received an internship at the mayor's office in Monrovia. Universities are essential in relationship building and the commitment to educational and public service values.

In conclusion, Mr DaQuan from Howard University in Washington provided insights on historically black and African universities as incubators for economic development. In the context of his presentation, he identified universities as economic drivers for marginalized populations, with HBCUs boosting the local economies. Considering the significant increase in the global youth population, unemployment, underdevelopment, and economic inequality are also issues. Therefore, higher education institutions' entrepreneurial programs and professional development opportunities are critical interventions. However, considering the socio-economic history of most African countries, few young African people meet the requirements for entry to institutions of higher learning. The cycle of exclusion persists. Those who eventually reach university and obtain their degrees struggle to secure a post-graduation job.

2.2.10 Black History Month: Black Resistance and Innovation in US and African Cities

Moderator: *Ms Eshanda Fennell-Letoaba, Global Diaspora Network*

Panelists: *Dr Asad Malik, Research Associate, Wits University*

Ms Ashley Cleveland, Founder, Afrika Investors Academy

Dr Jamie Green, National Institute for Inclusive Competitiveness

In commemorating black history month, the panel explored black resistance and innovation in African and US cities. Dr Malik identified black history month as an African American attempt to research and write themselves back into history. Any discussion of black history is a discussion of resistance. He used the example of New Orleans – the ‘Walmart’ of enslaved people (Halloo Mohammed) – which had unique cultural practices such as Hangar Square, created by enslaved Africans. The first ship to arrive in New Orleans carrying enslaved Africans was between 1717 and 1719. New Orleans was at the time under French control, where there was an insatiable demand for slave labour. This swiftly and permanently changed the racial composition of the city. By 1741, enslaved Africans from Mali, Burkino Faso, Senegal and the Congo outnumbered the French. As the practice of slavery continued to grow, the number of enslaved people between 1790 and 1860 grew from 700,000 to over four million. Within 50 years, enslaved Africans in New Orleans and the rest of Louisiana produced 25% of the world's sugar cane supply. This made Louisiana the second wealthiest state in the Union.

Dr Malik claims that New Orleans became the largest retail slave market in the country. One could find artisans, cooks and cleaners. Africans were sold as products. Despite the brutality of the Cold New War in Louisiana's set codes, Africans were allowed to maintain their cultural and spiritual practices. Sunday became a day off for worship and led to the establishment of Congo Square in New Orleans. Enslaved people could move around the square without supervision to trade goods, dance, and drum. In contemporary times, many African Americans in New Orleans meet at Congo Square.

In closing, Dr Cleveland detailed various African American innovations. The community's most valuable resources are not minerals nor food, but skills and knowledge. On talent and innovation, she identified African hair product creator SJ Walker, the first African millionaire in America. Another African American, Gilbert Solomon, sold her first technology to Amazon and is heading the first batch of Google startups. On synergies of creative and technical infrastructure, Dr Cleveland referenced software developer Lisa Jelopeter, who worked as the head of the US Department of Education under the Obama administration. She is among the first African women to release over \$1000 000 in seed capital. Dr Cleveland affirmed that Africans are innovators and problem solvers. Therefore, Africans need to invest capital in African founders and creators and continue to promote African creators. Africa does not need innovation. Innovation needs Africa.

2.2.11 Pathways for economics, trade, investments, and entrepreneurship

Panelists: *Dr Rayna Henderson, RICO Consulting*

Ms Arina Muresan, Institute for Global Dialogue

Dr Henderson shared insights on the private sector partnership and education for employability. In her opening statement, she asserted the following. "I chose not to call it the PPP (Private, Public Partnership) because in education, the PPP has morphed into charter schools, and I am not talking about charter schools. I therefore changed it to Private Sector Partnership in Education (PSPE) because I am talking about a partnership where corporations will work with the educational institutions." The PSPE is meant to provide a bridge to employability post studying. Dr Henderson drew on the example of the Governor of Georgia, Nathan Deal, who in 2014, allowed employers to voice their workforce needs. In 2014/15 the state interviewed more than 120 companies, including Xerox BM and UPS. Encouragingly, Caterpillar opened a factory employing 1800 people after conducting a skills and knowledge assessment in the area. The study identified 162 unique high-demand careers and 96 high-demand skills and attributes. A report was generated looking at all the demands across the state as well as looking at what the needed skills were. This report was part of the curriculum planning document by the Georgian university and technical college system. In closing, Dr Henderson used the example of Georgia as a template for how cities can strengthen educational and economic pathways.

2.2.12 Cities as International Diplomatic Actors

Panelists: *Prof Maria Nzomo, University of Nairobi*

Mr Mutinda Mutisya, University of Nairobi

Mr Mutisya gave an overview of the role of digital diplomacy in creating smart cities in Africa. He noted in his address that a conceptual understanding of smart cities is imperative. A clear understanding of the characteristics of smart economies and smart transport systems is necessary, too. The objective of his study was to establish the effect of globalization as a trigger of immigration in smart cities and to determine the impact of technology in these endeavours. The economic nationalism theory underpinned Mr Mutisya's study as a guiding theory. He argues that the concept of smart cities in Africa has not been pinned down. In Nairobi, there are no guiding principles or smart city frameworks. Even though some work is being done about making Nairobi a smart city, there is no legal framework at national level. He believes that the smart cities phenomenon needs a commitment from all stakeholders so that its importance can be realised. According to him, cities are important actors in international relations and diplomacy; smart cities will play a critical role in developing nations in regional integration and global development. Thus, all African nations must implement the practice of smart cities. Lessons can be borrowed from countries like Singapore, which have established smart cities. In closing, Mr Mutisya noted that smart cities can institute welfare measures through digital technology.

2.2.13 Africa-US Businesses and Investments in Cities: Opportunities and Challenges

Moderator: *Mr Ezekiel Odiogo, African Development Bank\US Business in Africa Awards*

Panelists: *Mr Derain Pillay, General Manager, Honeywell International Inc.*

Ms Koketso Tamale, Head, InvestSA Gauteng

Ms Cynthia Griffin, Minister Counselor for Commercial Affairs, US Consulate

Ms Griffin affirmed that the mission of the US Consulate is to assist companies who would like to venture into South African markets. Part of their work involves hosting several US cities interested in establishing relationships with South African cities. So far, they have worked with the City of Houston, the State of Maryland, and the State of Illinois. The Consulate then brokers a relationship with the Gauteng government to promote partnerships and linkages. Ms Griffin notes that it is essential when we talk about sister cities and delegations to be mindful of the intention and prospects for the market.

Furthermore, it is vital to draw on the expertise of the US embassies and consulates across the continent. Strategic planning usually takes a year or at least six months, but the Consulate is there to help strategize. Ms Griffin says the private sector would like to invest more in cities, but the mechanism is absent. Companies can invest in renewables, basic services and education. For this, government must provide an enabling environment. The private sector cannot wait, however, there can be work done in the education space, particularly in historically black universities and colleges.

Ms Tamale explained that Invest South Africa is a one-stop shop assisting companies with regulatory challenges they may be facing. Invest South Africa has relationships with national and provincial government departments and municipalities. Municipalities are critical

stakeholders in addressing city challenges. Invest South Africa also works with the US Embassy to help companies explore opportunities in Gauteng. Honest conversations are had about the economic and regulatory landscape. But solutions are found together. A visa issue may be perceived as a minor issue, but for a multinational company, this may be a hindrance to investment.

In closing, Mr Pillay highlighted Honeywell's work. With 110 000 employees worldwide, the company serves almost every industrial nation. Their scope of work stretches from aviation to multidisciplinary technology, software, hardware, manufacturing vehicles, and battery technology. They have partnerships with institutions of higher learning at Wits University. Honeywell also has a host of skills development, and skills transfer programmes where students within the information communications technology space are provided with internships.

2.3 Group Discussion

Before the conference's closing, delegates broke away into various groups to discuss some of the themes covered in the three days. The ample interactions among the delegates enabled members to voice their thoughts.

2.4 Conference Closing

The delegates commented on how the quality of future conferences could be enhanced. Second, it was agreed that the next conference would be held in March 2024 in Johannesburg. Third, an organizing committee to plan for the next conference was created with the following members.

- **Mr Moshe Kao, Senior Program and Country Manager, ADEC Innovations**
- **Dr Rayna Henderson, Raykor Consulting**
- **Dr Jamie Green, National Institute for Inclusive Competitiveness**
- **Mr Derain Pillay, General Manager, Honeywell International Inc.**
- **Dr Larrisha McGill-Youngblood, North Carolina Central University**
- **Dr Christopher Paul, North Carolina Central University**
- **Ms Ashley Cleveland, Afrika Investors Academy**
- **Mr Mutinda Mutisya, University of Nairobi**

3. Conference outcomes

- ❖ Knowledge production around how African and US cities can strategically engage as international actors and strengthen their sister-city partnerships. A call for the resuscitation of the Johannesburg and New York sister city partnership was explicitly singled out. However, there were suggestions of pairing Johannesburg with Los Angeles due to commonalities between the two cities.
- ❖ Engaging in knowledge production that involved scholars and academics from across Africa and several historically black colleges and universities from the US, practitioners from government and the corporate sector.
- ❖ Connecting African and US scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and professionals interested in city relations, and related sustainable development goals.
- ❖ Promoting collaborations that will lead to concrete partnerships amongst universities, notably Wits University, the University of Nairobi, and North Carolina Central University. Furthermore, conversations of specific interest were initiated among government and private entities.
- ❖ Providing knowledge on potential areas of partnership around city relations. Prosper Africa highlighted potential areas of investment it could assist cities in securing.
- ❖ The creation of a platform for continued engagement and collaboration among stakeholders.
- ❖ The identification and development of best practices and lessons learned from city partnerships between Africa and the US

4. Recommendations

- ✓ Host the conference annually.
- ✓ Inclusion of the youth.
- ✓ Inclusion of the business fraternity from the US and Africa.
- ✓ Inclusion of Gauteng Tourism.

5. Next Steps

- Launch of the 2024 conference theme: August 2023
- Urban month activation: October 02, 2023
- Due date for full papers for the 2024 conference: December 2023
- 2024 Conference: March 2024

6. Appendix 1

Name and Surname	Organization
1. Aaron Maluleka	City of Tshwane
2. Andrew Smith	Independent
3. Andries Oosthuizen	DIRCO
4. Anthea Leitch	City of Johannesburg
5. Anda Mbikwana	City of Johannesburg
6. Arina Muresan	Institute for Global Dialogue
7. Ashley Cleveland	Independent
8. Asad Malik	ACSUS
9. Bhaso Ndzendze	University of Johannesburg
10. Brinton Bohling	Prosper Africa
11. Bongo Maqungo	Wits University
12. Carol Segaloe	SALGA
13. Christine Nwaobia	Integrative Wellness Counselling Services
14. Christine Putsoane	SALGA
15. Christopher Paul	North Carolina Central University
16. Collen Lethu Masango	World Bank
17. Darion Barclay	COGTA
18. Derain Pillay	Honeywell International Inc.
19. Ezekiel Odiogo	African Development Bank
20. Gaethijwe Letlhaku	SALGA
21. Hlomphe Mphanje	City of Johannesburg
22. James Donovan	ADEC-Innovations
23. Jamie Green	National Institute for Inclusive Competitiveness
24. Joanne Parker	Open Cities Lab
25. Jongizizwe Dlabathi	SALGA
26. Jullie Beya	City of Ekurhuleni
27. Junior Koyana	Ebony & Ivory
28. Karabo Mokoena	SA Cities Network
29. Kefa Otiso	Bowling Green State University
30. Kgothatso Semela	CLEAR AA
31. Koketso Tamale	InvestSA Gauteng
32. Kosheek Maharaj	GGDA
33. Larrisha McGill-Youngblood	North Carolina Central University
34. Lebo Moloji	CLEAR AA
35. Leroy Wilson	Maryland\KwaZulu-Natal Sister State Committee
36. Lesego Tshuwa	World Bank

37. Lesego Mphefo	Mogale City
38. Lindokuhle Matshika	Wits University
39. Lindo Phungwayo	City of Johannesburg
40. Lorna K. Johnson	Sister Cities International
41. Lwazi Sikiti	SA Cities Network
42. Manna Duah	North Carolina Central University
43. Margaret Arnolds	City of Johannesburg
44. Marcus Baliso	City of Johannesburg
45. Mbali Mahlobo	Office of the Premier
46. Mduduzi Mahlambi	Office of the Premier
47. Michael Robinson	Sister Cities International
48. Moshe Kao	ADEC-Innovations
49. Monique D. Griffith	City of Johannesburg
50. Mpho Ndaba	Wits University
51. Mpumelelo Phakathi	City of Johannesburg
52. Mutinda Mutisya	University of Nairobi
53. Neo Maluleke	DBSA
54. Nkosikhona Moyo	University of Johannesburg
55. Nmadi Elleh	Wits University
56. Nomkhitha Fani	Mogale City
57. Nomhle Botile	Wits University
58. Nomoya Mnisi	Independent
59. Nosipho Hlatshwayo	SA Cities Network
60. Nozibele Makanda	SALGA
61. Owethu Kwesa	CLEAR AA
62. Paul Mukoki	Wits University
63. Patrick Ntsime	DBSA
64. Peter Teixeira	MLM
65. Pilisiwe Twala-Tau	SALGA
66. Prince Mudau	Wits University
67. Rayna Henderson	Raykor Consulting
68. Refilwe Matebesi	GGDA
69. Rodney Genga	Wits University
70. Rony Moloji	Mogale City
71. Ruby Mathang	SALGA
72. Sam Koma	North West University
73. Seana Nkhahle	SALGA
74. Shimi Shimi	Mogale City
75. Siphon Radebe	Emfuleni Local Municipality
76. Siyabonga Sibiya	CLEAR AA
77. Solly Mosidi	Midvaal Local Municipality
78. Stanley Nyanyirai	City of Tshwane

79. Taki Sithagu	Wits University
80. Tanushka Ramdayal	Honeywell International Inc.
81. Tebogo Matlou	SALGA
82. Thando Madonsela	World Bank
83. Thabo Maisela	City of Johannesburg
84. Thapelo Amad	City of Johannesburg
85. Trevor Mantshoane	Wits University
86. Thusani Mulaudzi	City of Johannesburg
87. Tshepo Moopeloa	SALGA
88. Vincent Spera	US Consulate
89. Vivian Smith	Honeywell International Inc.
90. Will Pearson	Power Africa
91. Wisani Ngwenya	Ebony & Ivory

7. Appendix 2: Conference Abstracts

1. Aneesa Moolla

Reframing mentorship models to strengthen collaborative research, teaching and academic exchanges between African and US universities: A synthesis of mentorship frameworks.

Nazira Hoosen and Aneesa Moolla

Mentorship models are crucial yet overlooked resources that augment collaborative learning, teaching, and research practices across multiple disciplines in university settings. As a cultural practice, it supplements learning habits and relationships towards academic and collaborative reflexivity by developing inspirational, directional, and informative capital for resiliency and success. However, mentoring scholars in both developed and developing countries is challenging on either side of the divide. A framework to promote critical mentoring skills (beyond the traditional conceptualization of what mentorship means) as an interrelated process that ignites new perspectives on research reform through academic exchanges between African and US universities would be core to the development of diverse, indigenous, and inclusive, yet critical mentorship practices to benefit developing and developed contexts. Both Africa and the US have similarities in their histories and the language diversity is an indication that the *African* culture appreciates diversity just like the *American* culture. Thus, there are convergences of learning points, especially within academic settings which can be shared through collaborations between these countries.

By emphasizing the need for institutions to create enabling environments that encourage mentorship, we thus propose to devise an Africa/US mentorship framework after synthesizing all mentorship frameworks currently published through a systematic literature review. This systematic review of the literature will aim to first result in an organized, historical framework of theories of mentoring in academic contexts from the years 2000 to 2022. Secondly, it will provide information regarding the recognized barriers and facilitators in traditional mentoring endeavors. Thirdly, it will serve as a foundation for a revised framework that promotes critical mentoring skills as an interrelated process between African and US universities that spans all disciplines.

2. Arina Muresan

City diplomacy for viable economic diplomacy through logistical points of interest: a case study on South African-US partnerships.

City diplomacy can act as an ultimate equalizer to bilateral diplomacy and international organizing. Formal agreements to twin cities or align cities shape global discourse, but what does such a commitment take to become operationalized and what kind of edge do logistical hubs provide? City diplomacy objectives may be to raise investment profiles and economic productivity and can easily be linked to economic diplomacy but where does this expand to the

broader diplomatic ecosystem in achieving national interest? This proposed conference paper seeks to share outcomes around these fundamental questions from a closed workshop on city diplomacy that will be held by the Institute for Global Dialogue's (IGD's) flagship program on South Africa in the World in October 2022. The methodology includes focus group observations and interviews with the provincial government, think tanks, diplomatic communities (especially African countries), and South African government officials.

While the workshop itself will focus on the broader spectrum of South African sister-city agreements and economic and commercial diplomacy, special attention will be paid to cases that can give insight into logistical points of interest, like ports and border posts because of their strategic commercial importance. Therefore, cases like Cape Town and Miami-Dade County; Durban, Chicago, and New Orleans; iLembe and Mobile; and King Cetshwayo and Milwaukee, will be actively reflected upon in the respective workshop and set out to explore lessons from successful city diplomacy agreements, complementing bureaucratic institutions and what is required to optimize sister city agreements for better logistical outcome.

3. Godfrey Isiye

City diplomacy as a tool of climate change in the developing world: a case study of the collaboration between US cities and Nairobi, Kenya

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The impact of global challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19-19 pandemic is most visible in urban areas, making cities critical players on the global stage. Cities are significant contributors to climate change as they consume 78% of the world's energy and produce more than 60% of greenhouse gas emissions according to UN-Habitat. As a result, local governments around the world must collaborate to invest in resources, expertise, and capacity to manage their relationships and responsibilities to effectively conduct city diplomacy. This paper investigates city diplomacy practices in light of the current climate crisis. Even when cities disagree with their central governments, they continue to implement the global climate agenda. Nonetheless, how should cities' autonomous activities be framed in the global governance agenda? The paper seeks to determine whether the framework of hybrid multilateralism provides a niche for cities to assume the role of the central government in defending common global values such as environmental preservation when the state fails to do so. Based on a dataset of various subnational initiatives responding to climate change, we propose a significant increase in pledges to international climate agreement commitments involving many subnational actors. Cities enter international negotiations with various partners under hybrid policy architecture through these pledges. Cities have enormous potential to influence the global conversation on the climate action goal. Further to that, we conclude that cities are assuming the role of the state in global issues when they identify the inadequacy of

central governments' actions. Their conflicting position forces them to engage in autonomous activities, fostering the new phenomenon of hybrid multilateralism.

Keywords: City Diplomacy, collaboration, climate change, governance.

4. Hluma Luvo Ralane

Project Coordinator: Africa-US Cities

African Centre for the Study of the United States

University of the Witwatersrand

Cities and Urban Resilience

Urban resilience has rapidly risen in prominence to become a central concept in spatial and urban planning, urban governance as well as in academic discourse. City resilience describes the "capacity of cities to function so that people living and working in cities-especially the poor and vulnerable, survive and thrive no matter what shocks and stresses they encounter." (Philip Harrison 2014, 2) Furthermore, urban resilience is understood to refer to the ability to adjust to changing conditions.

Cities in South Africa and the United States have deemed urban resilience an integral factor for sustainable development. This is evident, as many South African municipalities have incorporated the theme in their policy frameworks. For example, the City of Johannesburg (2011) has made urban resilience one of the key themes in its new Growth and Development Strategy, which refers to social resilience, environmental resilience, economic resilience, and more. EThekweni municipality successfully bid to the Rockefeller Foundation for recognition of Durban as one of the initial 33 participants worldwide in a resilient cities program. The City of Cape Town uses ideas of urban resilience in several policies and plans including, for example, the Low Carbon Central City Strategy. In the US cities like New York, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Boston, and San Francisco are active advocates of urban resilience who have established practical policies on how resilience can be cultivated and sustained in cities. The following are some of the city departments in the US that have been involved in resilience issues: planning, city public health, community development, emergency management, and economic development.

The new US Strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa has seen the incorporation of Cities for the first time in the history of the US foreign policy towards Africa. The policy has proposed an approach to sustainable development and resilience in Africa-US city relations, emphasizing the importance of institutional resilience and sustainable development. This paper is therefore interested in exploring the dynamics and mechanisms that are mandatory for urban resilience to sustain smart cities drawing from a comparative analysis between Africa-US cities.

Keyword: urban resilience

**5. Ph.D. Candidate: Jeremia Moloji
(WBS) Faculty of Commerce, Law, and Management**

The moderating role of implicit person theories on gender-role orientation and entrepreneurial intentions

Previous research on entrepreneurship relied on biological sex as a predictor of entrepreneurial intentions, and the results were mixed and sometimes inconclusive, especially among university students. As a turning point, this study examined entrepreneurial intentions (EI) through gender role orientation (GRO) and implicit person theories (IPT), also known as mindsets. There appears to be little research explaining this interaction. To complement this research, this study also captured participants' preferred entrepreneurial path, i.e., commercial or social, which is often omitted from entrepreneurship studies.

The study was cross-sectional and followed a quantitative approach. Primary data were collected from a sample of 415 individuals. Data analysis included Pearson correlation, t-tests, and structural equation modeling (SEM) as statistical techniques. The results showed that the antecedents of entrepreneurship had a positive influence on the relationship between a feminine gender role orientation and entrepreneurial intentions. This was also true for the moderating role of mindset on the relationship between GRO and EI. However, the observed relationships were not significant. Surprisingly, participants with a feminine gender role orientation showed a significant preference for a commercial entrepreneurial path.

These findings not only challenge persistent gender stereotypes that claim entrepreneurial intentions are negatively associated with femininity but also debunk the preliminary discriminatory discourse that categorizes all other gender groups as fundamentally more inclined toward social rather than commercial entrepreneurship. Moreover, the findings call on educational institutions and policymakers to develop support initiatives that place feminine gender roles at the centre of the entrepreneurial image, thereby addressing the problem of few role models. This is significant because attributing feminine attributes to entrepreneurship increases the number and visibility of symbolic role models for individuals with feminine gender roles, ultimately creating a perceived congruence between femininity and entrepreneurship that is critical to fostering aspirations to become entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Gender Role Orientation (GRO), Implicit Person Theories (Mindsets), Entrepreneurial Intention, South Africa.

6. Johnny D. Jones, Ed.D., Ph.D. and Joseph M. Stevenson, Ph.D.

“Self-Reflection and Action Research for Inventiveness in Urban and Rural Educational Settings of the U.S Deep South”

Responsive translational research is often distant between universities and the school district surrounding them. Although many, if not most, universities collaborate with local schools or

districts in the US, very seldom is the success of students enrolled in K-12 examined against the translational research of the education faculty at the university. This proposed research will investigate how translational (action) research is applied in two separate settings in the Deep South of Mississippi – a state that continues to be challenged, troubled, and plagued by educational inequity and social justice. The proposed research will, first, be conducted in an urban setting with a publicly subsidized and tax-supported university located in a public school district; and, second, in a rural setting with a public university and a public school system. The proposed research will include qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data on the extent to which the faculty at these two universities are conducting “self-reflective” and action-anchored research on the specific needs and demands of the local district concerning the academic, personal, family, and social development of the local students – many of whom come from impoverished, lower-income, and marginalized communities. The authors will apply for previously published work on the self-reflection process in action research as part of the study’s approach to capturing the essence of possible educational “inventiveness.” The study’s results will not only inform the school district and the university about distance, gaps, voids, and disconnects between higher education and K-12, it will inform both sectors on how to possibly address systemic problems and distance between possible impactful collaboration for future progress

7. Ph.D. Candidate: Jeremia Moloji
(WBS) Faculty of Commerce, Law, and Management

The moderating role of implicit person theories on gender-role orientation and entrepreneurial intentions

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Keywords: Gender Role Orientation (GRO), Implicit Person Theories (Mindsets), Entrepreneurial Intention, South Africa

8. Drs. Larrisha McGill-Youngblood and Christopher Paul
North Carolina Central University
Department of Public
Administration Durham, NC,
USA

Global Municipal Leadership: Activating the Links between an HBCU and Monrovia, Republic of Liberia

North Carolina Central University (NCCU), a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) located in Durham, North Carolina has partnered with government agencies in other cities and countries, including Monrovia, Liberia, Accra, Ghana, Kingston, Jamaica, to build networks with our Executive Masters of Public Administration (EMPA) students. The Master of Public Administration program is one of the largest graduate programs at NCCU, and the largest of any HBCU. MPA students have demonstrated interest in public service leadership, and EMPA students are professionals with at least five years of relevant work experience. The EMPA offers a traditional MPA delivered in an accelerated hybrid (in-person and online) format, concluding with an international experience. A hallmark of our EMPA program, these international partnerships involve the placement and short-term international internship (or "externship") of students who are working professionals targeting the public sector. The externship creates invaluable experiences for the students, who observe public service in an international setting, as well as creates the opportunity for dialog between professionals in different countries. This paper will explore the bidirectional sustainable development that occurs through a professional partnership such as we implement between NCCU and our governmental partners in Monrovia, Liberia. In prior years, students with municipal government experience have worked in Liberian Agencies including in information technology, public transportation, and water systems, drawing on their experiences working in local government in North Carolina, USA. The externship and corresponding for-credit course use a carefully designed experiential learning approach involving professional alignment,

preparation, and reflection. The program also involves intercultural training and experiences. NCCU is also reactivating the program in Accra, Ghana with plans to expand the reach and relationships of this effort. NCCU EMPA's partnerships empower both students and host partners to strengthen international relationships in public administration and generate a shared understanding of public service.

9. Cities & Academic Diplomacy

HBCUs & African Universities as Incubators for Minority Economic Development

Prepared by: DaQuan Lawrence, Ph.D. Student, African Studies, Howard University

Considering the significant and increasing youth population in Africa and challenges brought by the global economy such as unemployment, underdevelopment, and economic inequality, higher education institutions, entrepreneurial programs, and professional development opportunities are critical for the global youth population. Whereas many youths located in both Africa and the US desire to attend higher education institutions, only a few have the privilege of matriculating, graduating, and obtaining employment. Therefore, international minority-serving institutions with moderate and high rates of matriculating and graduating African diaspora students are also critical. Many of these establishments are located in urban areas. As a result, this research paper focuses on the potential of urban localities that contain Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and African universities to serve as incubators of economic growth and international development.

Cities are the site of many HBCUs and African universities, with sister cities serving as the host of several of these minority-serving institutions. Washington D.C. – which is the location of Howard University, a leading institution in African Studies and African language studies that have the most students in America studying African languages and sister cities with Pretoria, South Africa; Dakar, Senegal; and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – Atlanta, GA, New Orleans, LA, and Raleigh and Winston-Salem, NC, are all US municipalities that are simultaneously sister cities with African municipalities and areas that host HBCUs. Furthermore, African states that simultaneously contain sister cities and high numbers of universities, such as Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, and Egypt deserve further investigation as such locations can spur economic growth and international collaboration.

Whereas Washington D.C. is the global epicenter of public policy and international relations, this paper proposes an investigation of the capacity of academic diplomacy, private-public and city partnerships, and institutional collaboration among international minority-serving institutions located in Africa and the US

10. Entrepreneurship and Land Reform in South Africa: A Review, Model, and Research Agenda.

Mainford Toga (Ph.D. candidate) and Boris Urban

Wits Business School.

Even though entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as the catalyst for increased productivity, the creation of jobs, and economic development, many African nations still struggle to stimulate it. Through its land reform initiative, South Africa is producing a large number of potential agricultural entrepreneurs as the new farmers who are awarded the land become preoccupied with the duties of developing new, competitive farming operations. Based on the firm (farm) unit of analysis or the entrepreneur (farmer) unit of analysis, research to examine their experiences could take a two-pronged approach. One theme takes the firm as a unit of analysis and investigates how the entrepreneurial ecosystem supports and encourages agricultural entrepreneurship among new farmers. Though most scholars and policymakers now acknowledge the value of the "entrepreneurship ecosystem" in fostering entrepreneurship, the concept is still highly under-theorized and lacks the framework to explain how it underpins entrepreneurship. The resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theories could therefore be employed to explicate how the new farmers mobilize, accumulate resources, and develop capabilities that accentuate competitive advantage on their new farms, ensuring their survival and growth. On the other hand, the attributes or characteristics of the farmer (entrepreneur) and the liabilities of poorness from another research theme based on the entrepreneur as the unit of analysis exploring how they influence the performance and sustainability of new farming ventures. The majority of the land reform beneficiaries suffer from the liabilities of poorness rooted in their experience with poverty, which also contribute to the high failure rate of the new farmers. The liability of the poverty construct has the underlying dimensions of low literacy levels, scarcity mentality, non-business pressures, and a lack of a safety net that confronts most land reform beneficiaries. The study could be grounded in trait theory and disadvantage theory.

11. Mahad Moti

Applicability to the conference: The paper looks at diversity by focusing on Pakistani immigrant entrepreneurs, as it empirically investigates the extent to which entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social networks are operationalized to improve their entrepreneurial performance inside the negative regulatory environment of South Africa.

Aim: To determine the extent to which entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social networking influence the performance of Pakistani immigrant entrepreneurs in South Africa while accounting for the regulatory environment as a moderator in this relationship.

Methodology: This study employs a quantitative research method, as it measures the relationship between quantifiable variables. The positivist paradigm is implemented, which enables scientific testing of the relationships, as there are various variables under consideration and positivism allows the study to be conducted more efficiently.

Contribution: The contribution of the study is the growth achieved by immigrant entrepreneurs when the South African economy is struggling, which can help academics and policymakers in determining the facets that need to change to allow for increased productive entrepreneurial activity. This adds to the theoretical framework of immigrant entrepreneurship, as around the world, scholars have studied immigrant entrepreneurial activity and found that the negative experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs are because of the anti-immigrant sentiment.

Implication for policy and practice: South Africa has a dedicated department for the benefit of SMMEs in the form of the Department of Small Business Development. They can use this study to better assist SMMEs and entrepreneurs by using the antecedents of entrepreneurial self-efficacy as tools to increase the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of the entrepreneurs in various SMMEs. This study provides a better understanding of how certain immigrant entrepreneurs can be more entrepreneurial and this enables the creation of more effective and efficient policies for any government and related policymakers that can be implemented in all communities to enhance entrepreneurial propensity.

12. Dr. Manna Duah

Assistant Professor

Department of History

North Carolina Central University

Beginning in 1951, the US government gave aid for Ethiopian education projects through the Point 4 program and its successor, the Mutual Security Program (MSP). Through the MSP, the US agreed to fund and staff the building of a national university for Ethiopia, named Haile Selassie I University (HSIU). The US hired the University of Utah to develop the program for HSIU. Under the terms of the partnership, US academics went to teach in Addis Ababa while advanced Ethiopian students went to Salt Lake City.

My paper engages with several of the conference themes. Under the terms of the partnership, UofU, HSIU, and their surrounding areas became sites of US/Ethiopian diplomatic relations even as staff, students, and residents became international actors in Cold War foreign relations. The head of the partnership program, Harold Bentley, understood that his mandate was not merely to build an education program. His assignment was to support US foreign policy goals, writing that he was tasked to meet US needs and “the Emperor’s wants.” Haile Selassie wanted an education program to produce a civil service corps that would modernize and professionalize the administration of the imperial government. On the US side, as John E. Murphy, the Inspector General and Comptroller of the MSP testified to Congress in 1960, the goal of American education partnerships with Africa was to successfully teach African elites to adopt the ideas and practices of American political economy – that is adherence to capitalism and the

general trappings of liberal democracy. The US wanted to produce a network of civil servants and potential allies around the world.

The UofU and HSIU partnership in the 1960s became part of the long history of Africa-US city linkages and university-based city partnerships; the triumphs and failures of which are instructive for today.

13. Prof. Amb. Maria Nzomo

The Role and Impact of Inter-City Diplomacy on the African Integration Agenda

City diplomacy is not new but rather part of diplomatic evolution dating back to the Greek city-states. According to Leira and Carvalho, an account of diplomacy is incomplete if it does not include cities, since inter-city and city-to-state relations have been in existence since the 11th century.

The concept of city diplomacy has been defined differently by various scholars including Roger Pluijm, who defines it as “*institutions and processes by which cities or local governments in general, engage in relations with actors on an international political stage to represent themselves and their interests to one another*”. In this context, capital cities have served as seats of state-led governments, hosting key actors of diplomacy including centers of multilateral and bilateral organizations, ministries of foreign affairs, embassies, and high commissions. They also act as centers for state-led negotiation and mediation which are the cornerstones of diplomacy.

Adam Watson saw diplomacy as a function of the modern state. But since the end of the Cold world war, there has been an increasing consensus that international relations and diplomacy are populated by numerous non-state actors who continue to challenge the state-centric approaches to diplomacy. These non-state actors have created new ways of responding to global issues of concern including environmental protection, food, health, and personal security, and the protection of human rights.

The 21st-century globalization forces continue to erode state sovereignty and expand the space for influential non-state actors who have become key players in the conduct of public diplomacy. Regardless of the emerging approaches to the conduct of diplomacy, and in particular inter-city diplomacy, there is a need to stay guided by the fact that the core purpose of diplomacy is to serve as an instrument for advancing key stakeholders’ interests at all levels. For post-colonial Africa, regional integration has been the instrument of choice to attain development, security, and human rights. To that extent, the efficiency of diplomacy is judged by its capacity to serve as an enabler for attaining African integration, and in turn, the core Continental interests.

The paper will seek to examine the efficacy of this inter-city approach to diplomacy and governance in a continent like Africa with enormous challenges to regional integration while resolving issues undermining the attainment of Continental interests.

14. Dr. Meleckidzedek Khayesi and Prof. Francis Wegulo

Innovative urban development knowledge production and dissemination

Experience from the journey of “The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Development Planning in Africa”

This panel will share the experiences of about 40 researchers from diverse academic and policy fields, based in Africa, the United States of America, and Europe, who collaborated to prepare a book entitled "The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Development Planning in Africa". Having identified a gap in knowledge of a lack of a synthesis of existing research on urban development planning in Africa and no academic institution or group undertaking this synthesis, the group innovated in the following ways. First, it informally constituted and grew itself without any MOU or officially designated terms of reference or structure by any academic and policy organization. Starting with two researchers who identified the gap, the group self-organized itself, identifying and recruiting interested scholars. It has an interactive and consultative and largely horizontal organizational structure. Second, without funding from a donor, the group relied on the knowledge databases at the disposal of its members who helped each other to access publications identified by colleagues for review but which they could not readily access. Colleagues who were based in the United States of America and Europe had excellent access to databases and they played a critical role in supporting their counterparts to secure the needed literature. In addition, the group had a library expert who initially helped members in looking up publications but dropped off after a while. Third, the group collectively contributed small amounts of money to the tune of USD 500 to pay for the services of an editor to ensure that the final text was thoroughly edited before submitting it to the publisher. This effort reduced the number of queries from the publisher on inspecting the draft that was submitted. Fourth, the group continuously looked out for opportunities to move the book ahead. Two such explorations were the launch of the book writing by Egerton University and the launch of the published book at the Africa-USA Cities conference.

15. Mutinda Mutisya

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN THE CREATION OF SMART CITIES IN AFRICA

Abstract

As a product of globalization and as a fruit of new public diplomacy, digital diplomacy is considered to be one of the major trends of twenty-first-century diplomatic communication. It is heavily influenced by the extraordinary advances in ICT, the internet, and social media. The

manner of realization and presentation of diplomacy has been radically changed and is increasingly removed from the traditional diplomatic elements. The prudent usage of digital diplomacy is critical in the strengthening of diplomatic relations and the creation of smart cities, particularly in the developing world e.g. Africa. Therefore, knowledge about the role and importance of digital diplomacy is indispensable. This article addresses the role of digital diplomacy in the creation of smart cities, as the role of the city is becoming increasingly important. Hence, aspects of digital diplomacy become antecedents of the competitiveness of the city. A city has more power and authority in creating wealth and prosperity in society by utilizing technology. The smart city, in addition to the importance of technology, is an enabler of societal development. We argue that the possession of sophisticated technology is not enough. The smart city needs to build digital diplomacy at the subnational level. In this article, we extend the discussion about smart cities by proposing a new framework of smart city diplomacy within the sister cities internationally, as one way to integrate information technology, public policy, and international relations which will be the main contribution to Diplomatic literature and practice.

Keywords: Digital Diplomacy, Smart Cities, Sister Cities International, ICT, Internet

16. Dr. Patrick Maluki & Ndeto Rabecca

Nairobi City as a Diplomacy Hub for Africa

The city of Nairobi is one of the three United Nations cities. The other two are New York and Geneva. These are cities that host the United Nations Headquarters offices. In 1972 the UN General Assembly established the headquarters of the United Nations Environmental Programme Office in Nairobi. In 1977 the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) established its office in Nairobi. In 1996 the UN General Assembly established the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), the UN headquarters in Africa to provide administrative and other support services to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

Kenya has also signed Host Country Agreements with several international organizations including Shelter Afrique and the Rockefeller Foundation which maintained their Africa regional offices in Nairobi. Nairobi city hosts other numerous institutions ranging from the local, regional, and international levels. Thus the city of Nairobi perfectly facilitates the practice of track 1 and track 2 as well as multi-track diplomacy with both state and non-state organizations that are based in Nairobi. This qualifies Nairobi city as the diplomacy hub for Africa.

The ambiance in the Gigiri area, where the UNEP, UN-Habitat, and the United Nations are located attracts international delegates to live and perform their duties in Nairobi. Cities such as Nairobi have taken a position in acknowledging the presence and impact of city diplomacy. City diplomacy, though not thoroughly ventured into in terms of research, the practice, and implementation of city diplomacy currently felt at higher degrees. The presence of

internationally recognized institutions positions Nairobi City as an attraction center for scholars, both local and international.

Nairobi city hosts international civil servants who frequently interact either among themselves or with Kenyans perfecting the practice of citizen's diplomacy. Additionally, the presence of environmental features such as Nairobi National Park and Karura Forest create space for environmental diplomacy within the city. This paper will attempt to analyze the various factors that qualify the city of Nairobi as the diplomacy hub for Africa.

Keywords: *City diplomacy, diplomacy hub, citizen diplomacy, Nairobi city.*

17. Professor Boris Urban

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Radomalala Ratsimanetrimanana, MA, MM

Graduate School of Business Administration

University of Witwatersrand,

Keywords: Human capital, business performance, perceived behavioral control, transaction cost, trade exchanges, economic development.

Human Capital and Business Performance of Malagasy Entrepreneurs: The Influence of Perceived Behavioural Control and Transaction Costs

Background – Fifth largest island in the world, Madagascar plays an important socio-economic role in Africa with its vast array of natural resources (minerals, forests, and arable land to name a few). Nonetheless, with stunted perceived behavioral control and exorbitant transaction costs, Malagasy SMEs submit inadequate business performance and are not equipped to help foster a sustainable economy and induce poverty reduction.

Purpose – This study is an empirical investigation into the influence of perceived behavioral control and transaction costs on the relationship between human capital and the business performance of Malagasy entrepreneurs.

Design / Methodology / Approach – A cluster sampling method will be used to collect data from a minimum of 449 SMEs who will be interviewed utilizing a structured questionnaire.

The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) will be applied to test research hypotheses.

Prior findings – Prior studies have established a significant correlation between human capital and transaction costs and suggested direct and indirect effects of perceived behavioral control on transaction costs through the mediation of negotiation skills. Similarly, others demonstrate a positive contribution of human capital efficiency on firm performance and have confirmed a statistically significant relationship between transaction cost levels and business SME performance.

Research implications – The research extends human capital theories. It sheds light on the possible impact of perceived behavioral control on the established reciprocity between the human capital and transaction costs carried by Malagasy entrepreneurs. The possible mediation effect of transaction costs on the human capital–business performance relationship will then be explored. Testing each hypothesis will reveal the nature and degree of influence exhibited by the moderator and mediator variables (i.e., perceived behavioral control and transaction costs) on the expected relationships.

Originality – This is a novel study, first, *vis-a-vis* the empirical investigation of the influence of transaction costs (mediator) and that of perceived behavioral control (moderator) on the relationship between human capital and business performance. It will also be run in an under-researched country, i.e., Madagascar.

18. Dr. Rayna Henderson

Abstract For “Africa-US Cities 2023”

Title: Private Sector Partnership in Education to Address Employability

The global pandemic has forced a mass re-appraisal of work and the skills required to be successful in the 21st century. To develop a sustainable workforce ready for the rigorous demands of today's and tomorrow's workplace we must determine the competence (knowledge, skills & abilities (KSA)) required to perform the necessary job functions. Why is this important? For Africa - US competitive growth the workforce must have 21st-century competence required by worldwide employers.

I am proposing an effective gap analysis as a way to assess the KSA needed in the workforce and to evaluate educational curricula to meet employment objectives. By defining and analysing these gaps, we can create an action plan to address job readiness and transform the associated educational and training systems to meet job performance requirements.

- **GAP Analysis (Job):** assessment of workforce capability gaps to determine what new KSAs are necessary and required by worldwide employers (e.g. Creativity, critical thinking, innovation, and the ability to pivot as necessary.)

- **GAP Analysis (Education):** to determine the necessary updating of the educational curriculum (at all levels) to meet cutting-edge job requirements.
- **Private Sector Partnership:** to address job readiness for employment in high-demand and skilled occupations. Typical approaches include apprenticeship programs, on-the-job training, and job co-op programs to meet job-specific skills requirements.

I propose the use of Public-Sector Partnerships (PSP) in response to workforce challenges facing African and US cities while addressing current skills gaps. Without substantial change in academic preparation unemployment will remain high and the workforce will continue to be unprepared for today's realities. (Benson, 2022). Many governments, international organizations, and other key education stakeholders consider that, by partnering with the private sector, countries can expand their education systems in a more efficient, flexible, and effective way (Robertson et al., 2012). Utilizing PSPs citizens will be able to meet their basic needs, access economic opportunities, build strong communities, and move toward prosperity. (Asch, et al, 2019).

To meet the competency requirements of worldwide employers, the creation of PSPs in Education serves as a viable solution to provide new educational opportunities while addressing employment needs.

19. Sonya E Ricks

Building Bridges to Overcome Barriers: Developing Innovative Study Abroad and Student Exchange Programs to Improve Perceptions and Improve US-Africa Relations in High Education

The impetus for the project stems from an awareness of post-secondary US students in the area of arts, humanities, and social science having misunderstandings. Many students have relied on historical myths about African culture and society to inform their perceptions of the African continent. It is reasonable to believe similar misunderstandings and stereotypes are held by college students in Africa as well.

Research supports the claim that study abroad opportunities for black students influences students' understanding of their Black identity, and increased their knowledge of the communities they studied. Research has discovered that Black students studying abroad gain a new understanding and sense of connection that helps to combat the misunderstanding that many Black students have regarding their relationship with Africa. North Carolina A&T State University's College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) seeks to establish a US-Africa Study Abroad Program in CAHSS to improve college student's learning experiences and understanding of culture, arts, humanities, and social sciences through hands-on learning within African regions. Such experiences will allow these students to gain competencies and educational insights that will dispel myths and improve their understanding of the other's culture, which can improve relations in the future. This is the experience we also would provide

for African students who would have the opportunity to study abroad within our disciplines in CAHSS. This effort aligns to create pathways for strengthening collaborative research, teaching, and academic exchanges between African and US cities and universities

Therefore, improving relations between US and Africa in the future will require the next generation of scholars to have an authentic understanding of each other's values, and strengths, and be more invested in learning how they can better collaborate to improve international relations and, ultimately, ameliorate each other's global status.

20. Tawanda Nyikadzino (Ph.D.) Public Management and Governance

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS IN ZIMBABWE'S LOCAL AUTHORITY

Africa University

Decentralization reforms in Zimbabwe vertically diffused governing powers and responsibilities to local authorities thereby creating the agency problem. Information asymmetry, which characterizes decentralization reforms, resulted in the local abuse and misuse of public funds and resources. To address the agent problem, the Auditor General, among other mechanisms, was established under the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) section 308 to safeguard public funds and properties. The Audit Office Act (Chapter 22:18) further details the Auditor General's mandate. Notwithstanding operational challenges, the Auditor General has unearthed several financial irregularities and abuse of public monies in local authorities. It further proffered comprehensive accountability-enhancing recommendations, which, if implemented, can ensure financial prudence and safeguarding of the hard-earned taxpayer's money. However, the 2018 and 2019 Auditor General's reports revealed that 74% and 75% of the Auditor General's recommendations were not adequately implemented in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Local authorities' non-implementation of audit recommendations resulted in the recurrence of financial irregularities and corporate governance scandals to the detriment of effective local service delivery. This raises two questions that this paper seeks to address: 1) what are the factors influencing local authorities' failure to implement Auditor General's recommendation? and 2) What can be done to facilitate local authorities' implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations to safeguard the taxpayer's money? The paper's central argument is that if the factors influencing the non-implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations are not explored, financial irregularities and scandals will persist in the process hampering the performance of local authorities, which are strategic players in the development discourse.

21. Dr. Zaneta Brown Ingles

“Africa-US Cities 2023”

Catapulting Primary and Higher Education Students from Passive to Engaged Learners, who are prepared to exceed the demands of small business owners and the 22nd century workforce?

The public education system we currently know has been around for more than 150 years, however, the basic school model remains the same. Developing robust students who will be ready for the rigorous demands in primary and higher education and even the workforce will depend heavily on the student's ability to grasp the 22nd Century Skills that are sought after by employers worldwide. One might ask what are 22nd Century Skills and why are they important. The 22nd Century Skills that all students should possess are as follows:

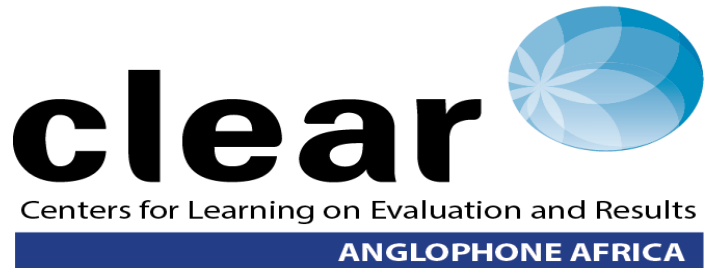
- **Learning and innovation skills:** critical thinking and problem-solving, business communications, collaboration, creativity, and innovation
- **Digital literacy skills:** information literacy, media literacy, information and communication technologies literacy
- **Career and life skills:** flexibility and adaptability, social-emotional intelligence, initiative and self-direction social and cross-cultural interaction, productivity, and accountability

The importance of these skills will be crucial to the future preparedness of the employment sectors around the world. The education/workforce skills gap is based on an outdated curriculum with limited possibilities for students to be able to compete globally. For example, in Canada, 38% of employers have reported that they have been unable to hire the skilled workers that they need (CFIB, [2021](#)). In the USA also, there is a serious shortage, especially in computer-related fields (Envoy Global, [2021](#)). A similar situation has been reported in Europe, where 40% of employers noted skill shortages (European MOOC Consortium, [2020](#)). What we are proposing is a total overhaul of the education system and practices as we know it to be prepared for the impending increase in workforce shortages. A possible solution to this problem is two-fold, implement the 21st Century Skills training at the primary level of education and Micro-credentials at the higher education level. Micro-credentials are based on small, well-designed courses that target specific skills within a smaller window of time to complete, typically over a few weeks or months, and cost less than the traditional credentials.

If we are to meet the ever-changing needs of the global workforce, we must be creative in our approach to finding and implementing viable solutions.



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