



40th AEAA Annual Conference
Century City Conference Centre and Hotels
Cape Town, South Africa
19-23 August 2024



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

Conference Theme: Reimagining educational assessment in the
age of multiple dimensions of learning in a global society

**COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 40th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATIONAL
ASSESSMENT IN AFRICA (AEAA)**

Introduction

The 40th Annual Conference of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA) was hosted by Umalusi, the South African Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training, from 19th to 23rd August, 2024, under the theme "Reimagining Educational Assessment in the Age of Multiple Dimensions of Learning in a Global Society." The conference theme and discussions underscored the critical role of educational reform, inclusivity, and assessment in shaping the future of Africa's education system in a global context.

The conference featured esteemed education leaders, researchers, academics, assessment and curriculum practitioners, and policymakers. It was attended by 310 delegates from 25 countries. 101 papers were presented.

Opening Ceremony

Dr Mafu Rakometsi, the AEAA Vice Chairperson and CEO of Umalusi, welcomed the delegation, acknowledging the presence of the Honourable Minister of Basic Education, Ms. Siviwe Gwarube, AEAA EXCO, Umalusi Council members, and representatives from Examination Councils. His remarks set the tone for the conference.

In his remarks the Chairperson of Umalusi Council, Prof Yunus Ballim underscored the importance of mutual recognition of assessment systems both locally and globally. He discussed the fragility of educational systems and the need for thoughtful decisions to sustain them. He also touched on the introduction of Artificial intelligence (AI) in education, questioning whose values are embedded in these technologies. Prof. Ballim introduced the Minister of Basic Education, Ms. Siviwe Gwarube.

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The Minister highlighted the diversity and complexity of the South African schooling system, emphasizing holistic learner development, including digital literacy. She said the conference theme aligned with the Government of National Unity's (GNU) priorities, including improving education quality, literacy, Early Childhood Development (ECD), teacher development, and school safety. She also stressed the importance of quality assurance in earlier phases of the education system and the role of African convergence in achieving the Africa 2060 agenda.

Dr. Njengere reflected on the historical and cultural aspects of African education. He critiqued the exclusionary nature of formal education and called for a reassessment of its purpose, especially when learners fail after 12 years of compulsory education. He advocated for an assessment regime that identifies learners' strengths rather than weaknesses. He indicated that the AEAA EXCO had established a technical committee to advance a common assessment framework across member countries.

Proceedings of the Conference

On day one, Prof. Loyiso Jita's address on "Difficult Dialogues on Assessment: Quality and Equity in Multiple Dimensions" emphasized the need for humility in educational leadership. He critiqued traditional assessment methods, which often fail to account for cultural diversity and reduce learning to categories. He called for diverse, culturally responsive assessment practices, the integration of technology, and a balanced approach that supports both formative assessments and holistic educational experiences.

On day two, Dr. Nkosinathi Sishi began by reflecting on South Africa's apartheid history, emphasizing the ongoing challenges in reframing the educational landscape post-apartheid. He highlighted the disparity between increased access to education and the quality of that education, noting the failure of various policies and frameworks to address these issues adequately.

On the same day, Dr. Heidi Bolton's presentation focused on the intersection of education policy, poverty, employment, and socio-political dynamics in South Africa. She raised critical questions about what constitutes good educational policy and its intended purpose. Dr. Bolton emphasized that effective policies

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must be forward-thinking, inclusive, and responsive to the unique challenges faced by countries.

On day three, Prof. Anil Kanjee's address underscored the multifaceted nature of quality in education, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach that considers the well-being of learners, supportive environments, and relevant content. Prof. Kanjee advocated for a shift towards results-driven governance, highlighting the need for accountability over mere support and a critical focus on assessment with measurement-driven policies. He cautioned against the inadequate emphasis on social and cognitive justice, urging stakeholders for a more equitable educational system.

On day four, Prof. Vukosi Marivate's presentation explored the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and education, particularly in preserving African languages through language-driven technologies. He highlighted the potential of AI to enhance linguistic diversity and literacy, while also addressing the challenges posed by demographic diversity. Prof. Marivate called for collaboration in the development of platforms that not only preserve African languages but also ensure their relevance in the digital age.

From the keynote presentations, other presentations and panel discussions, the conference made the following conclusions:

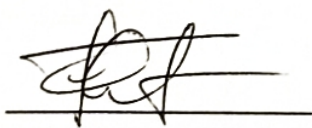
1. Teaching, learning, and educational assessments occur using standardised curricula, materials, and tools in highly diverse environments in terms of context, resources and opportunities.
2. Teaching, learning, and educational assessments have been affected by the advent of Artificial Intelligence and the extent of ICT integration in education and assessment.
3. Current education policies are focused on measuring learner performance as opposed to identifying learner competencies and their suitability for industry.
4. There is lack of capacity among teachers in interpreting competency-based curricula and conducting competency-based assessments.

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5. African languages are dying despite being crucial in the preservation of culture, identity and development.
6. There is lack of continental data which could be used by member countries to make data driven policy decisions.

Based on the conclusions, the conference made the following recommendations:

1. Member countries should develop teaching, learning and assessment practices that are inclusive and responsive to learners with disabilities, diverse environments, and cultures.
2. Member countries to engage in collaborative research in the use of AI and ICTs in education and assessments.
3. Member countries should collaborate in developing forward-looking, inclusive, and responsive national and higher education policies tailored towards the unique challenges of countries.
4. There is need for collaborative capacity building of teachers in interpreting competency-based curricula, and the use of AI and ICTs in education and assessments.
5. Member institutions to preserve African languages through assessments and language-driven technologies.
6. Member countries to develop a common assessment framework and tools to facilitate the generation and use of data for continental decision making.



Dr. Michael M. Chilala
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

22/08/2024