

# GOODWILL MESSAGE BY THE AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (ACDE)

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29<sup>th</sup> ICDE World Conference  
Costa Rica, 2023

**Joining Hands in Peace  
for the Futures of Education**



INTERNATIONAL  
COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND  
DISTANCE EDUCATION



# About the ACDE

- Continental Educational Membership Organization
- Comprises African Universities and other Higher Education Institutions
- Focus is to expand access and quality to higher education by promoting collaborations
- African Union's lead institution for ODFeL

# Joining Hands in Peace for Futures of Education in Africa: The Context



- Africa has the youngest population in the world, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30.
- As of 2022, around 40% of the population was aged 15 years and younger, compared to a global average of 25 percent. A high number of young people is an opportunity for the continent's growth – but only if these new generations are fully empowered to realise their best potential, otherwise this opportunity could also be a threat to peace (5<sup>th</sup> UN Commence on LDCY, 2023).
- Ensuring inclusive equitable quality education for all is not merely a question of inclusion, but one that is vital for economic growth, innovation, peace and security.
- This is why the theme for this 29<sup>th</sup> IDCE World Conference is most appropriate. ACDE takes the opportunity to once again congratulate the organizers for such a strategic theme.

# Key Issues for the futures of ODFeL for Peace in Africa

- Futures of higher education - Some key questions
- Ensuring inclusivity and quality of HE (Technical, Vocational, Life-Long Learning)
- The Role of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications
- Recognition and Integration of New Pathways to HE through Prior Learning (RPL).
- AI and ODFeL in African Institutions
- Collaboration of ODFeL institutions

# Some Critical but Controversial Questions for Peace in HE

- Is it time to re-think the nature, structure and approach of higher education, which has been handed over to us since pre-colonial era?
- Should the scope of the decolonization of HE, be extended to nature and structure?
- Do students really need a 4-year undergraduate degree with about 130-140 credits, that often take the urgency and immediacy of the relevance of HE away?.
- Should higher education redefine its purpose and shift it's focus from certification to relevant Knowledge and skills?
- How does the stress of examinations contribute to mental health of students, which undermines their peace?
- Should HE education begin to reconsider examinations and explore critically **new forms of assessments that demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes without undue stress? ABOLISH EXAMINATIONS ???**



# GLOBAL CONVENTION ON THE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS



# Adoption of UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualification

- Flexibility in education can potentially reduce stress. This requires recognition of different pathways to learning .
- The GCRQ is critical for the recognition of prior learning and new pathways - micro-credentials and badges. etc
- There are about 235 million students worldwide
- 6 million are studying abroad
- More than half of the 6 million are studying outside their region. In November 2019, the [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education](#) was adopted by the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference, becoming the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global scope.
- It is open to [UNESCO Member States](#) and the Holy See. The Global Convention received its [20<sup>th</sup> ratification](#) on 5 December 2022, and [entered into force](#) on 5 March 2023. As of 15 May 2023, [23 States](#) have ratified it. Out of those only 2 are in Africa Cape Verde and [Côte d'Ivoire](#)

# The Global Convention Contd.

- The Global Convention for the recognition of qualifications is designed to facilitate international academic mobility and promote inclusive access to higher education, by ensuring the right of individuals to have their higher education qualifications evaluated through fair, transparent and non-discriminatory mechanisms. It also aims to strengthen international cooperation in higher education and contribute to raising the quality of higher education worldwide.
- To hold hands in Peace for the Futures of Education we need collaborations, and we need a common framework for mutual recognition. That is where the global convention comes in handy.



# Recognition of Prior Learning

- **Article VI.** of the Global Convention on Recognition of Qualifications deals Recognition of Partial Studies and Prior Learning.
- This is critical for new pathways like the recognition of Micro-credentials and for life-long learning.

# Micro-Credentialing & ODFeL

- There is a call to adopt **micro credentialing** to drive different pathways to higher education among ACDE member institutions and beyond. In this regard, the QAAs need to come up with strategies of factoring micro-credentialing in the Toolkits.
- For ACDE, this will make the QA Toolkit uniquely positioned in terms of responding to novel developments in higher education, which are not addressed by existing QA frameworks in African countries.

# Trans-national Education (TNE) & ODFeL

Trans-national education has been greatly transformed by technology and virtual learning. We cannot and should not continue to do distance education, the same way we have done it. We need to embrace more technology mediation while we guard against

# New TNE and ODFeL Trends that Promote Collaborations

- **Collaboration** - there is need for institutions to collaborate more to share resources, learn about emerging trends and provide more internationalization of content and engagements (E.g MIT Pathway Programs through **Micro-credentials** and University of Arizona **Micro Campus**)

“UA writes

- “We have developed a model with partner universities that serves as a platform to allow students to earn dual degrees (undergraduate and graduate) from both UA and host universities, while entirely in residence at partner universities. We call this model a “**microcampus**”

<https://microcampus.arizona.edu/> I : **UArizona International Education | The Microcampus Network by Arizona Global - Issuu**



The image features a vast, dense field of three-dimensional question marks. These question marks are rendered in a dark, metallic blue-grey color with a matte finish. They are scattered across the entire frame, creating a sense of depth and complexity. In the lower center of the image, there is a bright, glowing light source that appears to be a city skyline at sunrise or sunset, with tall buildings silhouetted against the light. This light source creates a strong contrast with the dark question marks, casting a warm, golden glow that illuminates the scene from below. The overall composition suggests a path through uncertainty towards a bright future.

Some Thoughts for the Future



# How Do We Promote ODeL and Make it More Acceptable?

- The ICDE Global Advocacy Campaigns should be supported and promoted.
- Some international universities still do not accept qualifications from ODeL institutions in Africa.
- The need to demonstrate comparability of ODeL qualification is still crucial
- More research on ODeL and traditional learning is required
- Ratification and implementation of the convention on the recognition of qualifications ought to be prioritized, supported and promoted.
- Practical steps on how to deal with Artificial Intelligence (AI) in ODeL need to be explored and supported.
- Develop a Model ACDE QA Policy for Institutions to guide ODeL
- The systems of examinations and work loads should be redefined to reduce stress and mental health issues among students for peace.
- Functional collaborations should be promoted and supported.

Congratulations ICDE  
Long Live ACDE  
Long Live ICDE



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