

HADIP x AAU x ACBF x UNCF present

From Dialogue to Action Conference Briefing

Global Partnerships Virtual Symposium

Conference Date and Time: Wednesday, September 17, 2025

Time: 10:00AM EST (Eastern Standard Time)| 15:00 WAT (West African Time)| 16:00 CAT (Central African Time)

Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/1gTt_dKrQv2QfbW_CBuajw

Executive Summary

Recent trends show a growing interest among HBCUs and African higher education institutions (HEIs) to forge meaningful partnerships that transcend borders while advancing the capacity and long-term sustainability of both networks of institutions. Initiatives such as joint research and centers of excellence initiatives, faculty exchanges, offshore campuses, joint curriculum projects, twinning programs, executive leadership development, quality assurance and accreditation, technical and vocational education and training, and collaborative community engagement are emerging, but there is a pressing need for a structured platform to facilitate these efforts for the mutual benefit of both HBCUs and African HEIs to support areas of common challenge and opportunity (including financing models, digital infrastructure, enrollment management and faculty development). Against this background, the Historic African Diaspora Placement Program (HADIP) is partnering with the Association of African Universities (AAU), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), and the UNCF Institute for Capacity Building (UNCF) to organize around the theme: ***"From Dialogue to Action: Advancing Partnerships between Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and African Higher Education Institutions in Alignment with the Diaspora as Africa's Sixth Region,"*** which aims to move the dialogue to actionable strategies.

Event Moderator



Julian Thompson
Senior Director, Strategy
Development, UNCF ICB

Welcome Address and Remarks by Dignitaries

Session Description | 10:00am EST | 15:00 WAT | 16:00 CAT

This opening session convenes institutional leaders and partners to launch the symposium and affirm the shared mission of advancing Africa–diaspora collaboration. Speakers will frame the strategic vision, highlight the stakes for HBCUs and African institutions, and introduce the core pillars guiding the day’s work. The plenary sets a tone of urgency, possibility, and collective commitment. It is both a welcome and a call to action: to build legacy, capacity, and global leadership through sustainable partnerships.

Keynote Speakers

- ☐ Mr. Mamadou Biteye, Executive Secretary of Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)
- ☐ Professor Olusola Oyewole, Secretary General, Association of African Universities (AAU)
- ☐ Dr. Walter Kimbrough, Executive Vice President, Research and Member Engagement, United Negro College Fund (UNCF)
- ☐ Ms. Sophia Ndemutla Ashipala, African Union Commission, Head of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AUC-ESTI)
- ☐ **Moderator:** Julian Thompson, Senior Director, Strategy Development, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building (UNCF)



Mamadou Biteye
Executive Secretary
Africa Capacity Building Foundation



Professor Olusola Oyewole
Secretary General
Association of African Universities



Dr. Walter Kimbrough
Executive VP, Research/Engagement
United Negro College



Sophila Ashipala
Section Head, Education, Science,
Technology & Innovation,
African Union Commission

Panel 1: Promising Practices for a New Era of Collaboration – HBCU Leaders

Session Description | 10:25am EST | 15:25 WAT | 16:25 CAT

Presidents and senior leaders from Historically Black Colleges and Universities convene to explore the transformative power of cross-continental collaboration. This session offers firsthand perspectives on the strategic imperatives, institutional priorities, and promising practices already underway to bridge HBCUs with African higher education systems. From enrollment innovation to diaspora engagement, panelists will illuminate how HBCUs can be catalysts for global impact, equity, and legacy-building across the Atlantic.

Keynote Speakers

- ☐ President Brenda Allen, Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, USA
- ☐ President Valerie Kinloch, Johnson C. Smith University, North Carolina, USA
- ☐ President Koffi Akakpo, Kentucky State University, Kentucky, USA
- ☐ **Moderator:** Ed Smith-Lewis, Senior Vice President, Strategic Partnerships & Institutional Programs, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building



President Brenda Allen
President, Lincoln University
Pennsylvania, USA



President Valerie Kinloch
President, Johnson C. Smith University
North Carolina, USA



President Koffi Akakpo
President, Kentucky State University
Kentucky, USA



Mr. Ed Smith-Lewis
Senior VP, Strategic Partnerships &
Institutional Programs, UNCF Institute
for Capacity Building

Panel 2: Promising Practices for a New Era of Collaboration – African Higher Education Leaders

Session Description | 11:00am EST | 16:00 WAT | 17:00 CAT

Esteemed vice chancellors and key decision-makers from African higher education institutions take center stage to reflect on emerging opportunities for partnership with HBCUs. This dialogue centers on Africa's Sixth Region—the diaspora—and how shared leadership, academic innovation, and reciprocal exchanges can foster a new era of global education. Leaders will share models for scaling collaboration, enhancing capacity, and deepening ties with institutions rooted in the Black experience and committed to transformative international engagement.

Keynote Speakers

- ☐ Professor Sunungurai D. Chingarade, Vice Chancellor, Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe
- ☐ Professor Francisca O. Oladipo, Vice-Chancellor, Thomas Adewumi University, Nigeria
- ☐ **Moderator:** Mr. Bob Wekesa, Acting Director, African Centre for the Study of the United States, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa



Prof Sunungurai Chingarade
Vice Chancellor,
Women's University in Africa,
Zimbabwe



Prof Francisca O. Oladipo
Vice-Chancellor,
Thomas Adewumi University,
Nigeria



Mr. Bob Wekesa,
Acting Director, African Centre for
the Study of the USA, University of
the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Breakout Sessions

Session Descriptions | 11:35am EST | 16:35 WAT | 17:35 CAT

Breakout Session A: Cross-Atlantic Student Enrollment & Financing

Reimagining access and mobility for a new generation of globally engaged learners

Over 6 million students studied abroad in 2023, with projections reaching 10 million by 2030 - yet African and HBCU student mobility remains disproportionately low. This pillar explores bold strategies to unlock access: reciprocal tuition models and regional scholarship funds to visa harmonization and digital credentialing. Participants are invited to co-design scalable financing mechanisms and mobility pathways that reflect equity, innovation, and the lived realities of today's learners. How might we build systems that not only move students, but transform institutions?

Moderator(s): **Dr. Lydia Bosire** (8B Education Investments) and **Julian Thompson** (Senior Director, Strategy Development, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building)

Breakout Session B: Curriculum Co-Design, Joint Research & Academic Innovation

Creating joint programs that reflect cultural relevance and international rigor

Global curriculum reform is shifting from rote knowledge transmission to problem-solving, interdisciplinary learning, and cultural contextualization. This pillar invites participants to imagine joint degree programs, co-taught courses, and research collaborations that center African and Diasporic knowledge systems while meeting global standards. How can we design curricula that prepare students for the world—and shape the world they inherit? This session will ideate around prototype models that are inclusive, future-facing, and rooted in shared intellectual heritage.

Moderators(s): **Dr. Agyemang Darko** (Programs Officer, Research & Programs, Association of African Universities), **Dr. Letoyia Starr-Irving** (Director of International Programs, Clark Atlanta University), and **Dr. Chimdimma Esimai** (Strategy Fellow, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building and Programs Manager, Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences Program, Bowie State University)

Breakout Session C: Institutional Capacity & Business Model Development

Building scalable, sustainable infrastructure for partnership success

According to the World Bank, institutional capacity is one of the most critical determinants of long-term development outcomes—yet many HBCUs and African institutions face structural constraints in scaling global partnerships. This pillar focuses on building the backbone: governance models, revenue diversification, digital infrastructure, and partnership management systems. Participants will engage in solution mapping around sustainable business models and capacity-building strategies that ensure partnerships are not just launched, but institutionalized.

Moderators(s): **Victoria Smith, Esq.** (Senior Strategy Analyst, Strategy Development, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building) and **Aja Johnson** (Senior Program Manager, Executive Leadership, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building)

Breakout Session D: Diaspora Empowerment & Global Leadership

Elevating shared heritage into shared impact across both continents

Diaspora communities contribute over \$600 billion annually in remittances and investments globally—but their leadership potential remains underleveraged. This pillar explores how to activate Diaspora networks as strategic partners in education, innovation, and policy. Participants will co-create pathways for diaspora engagement that go beyond storytelling to systems change: leadership pipelines, advisory boards, and transnational innovation hubs. How do we move from symbolic inclusion to structural empowerment?

Moderators(s): **Dr. Cecily Barker-McDaniel** (Strategist, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building) and **Dralen Lee** (Program Manager, Operations, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building), and **Lydia Nyame** (Programmes Coordinator, Research and Innovation, Association of African Universities)

Breakout Session E: Student Perspectives

Student Visionaries: Bridging Continents, Building Legacy

This breakout session centers the voices of students as co-creators in shaping the future of HBCU–Africa partnerships. Participants will engage in open dialogue and collaborative ideation across the conference’s strategic pillars, offering insights grounded in lived experience and global aspiration. The session invites bold thinking and fresh perspectives to inform institutional strategy and cross-continental innovation.

Moderators(s): **Dr. Kendra Sharp Deas** (Director, Strategy Development, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building) and **Devin McAllister** (Strategy Analyst, Strategy Development, UNCF Institute for Capacity Building)

Strategic Recommendations & Collective Synthesis from Breakout Sessions

Session Description | 12:00pm EST | 17:00 WAT | 18:00 CAT

This session brings the full group back together to share key insights, bold ideas, and actionable recommendations generated during the breakout discussions. Facilitators will highlight cross-cutting themes, strategic opportunities, and areas for continued collaboration. The synthesis will inform next steps and help shape a shared roadmap for partnership activation and institutional alignment.

Panel 3: From Ideation to Implementation: Innovations for Policy & Practice

Session Description | 12:20pm EST | 17:20 WAT | 18:20 CAT

This closing plenary brings together global experts, institutional leaders, and policy innovators to translate the day's ideas into actionable frameworks for change. Panelists will explore how bold concepts from the breakout sessions can be scaled into sustainable models for institutional transformation, policy reform, and cross-continental collaboration. This session will spotlight innovations in governance, financing, and partnership design—offering pathways to move from vision to measurable impact. Participants will leave with strategic insights and implementation tools to activate change within their own institutions and networks.



Dr. Lydiah Bosire
Founder & Executive Director
8B Education Investments



Dr. Beverly Booker-Ammah
Executive Director
HBCU African Education Coalition



Professor Reginald Nnazor
Executive Director
Historic Africa Diaspora
Placement Program



Dr. Chimdimnma Esimai
Strategy Fellow
UNCF Institute for Capacity Building

Calls to Action and Next Steps

Session Time | 12:55pm EST | 17:55 WAT | 18:55 CAT

Closing and Reflection

Session Time | 1:00pm EST | 18:00 WAT | 19:00 CAT



About UNCF ICB: UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building (ICB) is a registered subsidiary of the United Negro College Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization. UNCF ICB partners with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to drive institutional transformation, student success, and community advancement. Its mission centers on equipping these institutions with the tools, strategies, and partnerships needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape.



About HADIP: The Historic African Diaspora Placement Program (HADIP) aims to reconnect African diaspora professionals in the U.S. with the continent through immersive cultural and professional experiences that foster sustainable development and strengthen transnational ties in alignment with the African Union's Agenda 2063.



About AAU: The Association of African Universities (AAU) is an international non-governmental organization set up by universities in Africa to promote cooperation among themselves and with the international academic community. Its mission is to enhance the quality and relevance of higher education in Africa and strengthen its contribution to Africa's development. Founded with an initial membership of 34 public universities on November 12, 1967, in Rabat, Morocco, the AAU's membership has grown to over 450.



About ACBF: The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) is the leading institution for capacity building on the African continent. As a specialized agency of the African Union, we enable transformative human and institutional development by effectively implementing impactful programs throughout Africa. From 12 founding nations to now a network of 40 member states, we mobilize expertise, resources, and strategic partnerships to strengthen African institutions and advance sustainable growth – aligned with the AU's 2063 Agenda and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030.