



REPORT ON THE LAUNCH OF THE PAN AFRICAN DEANS OF EDUCATION (PADEF)

Launched at Makerere University, Uganda
on 24 July 2023



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LAUNCH OF PADEF: PICTURE GALLERY





INAUGURAL MEETING OF PADEF: PICTURE GALLERY





1. OPENING REMARKS AND WELCOME BY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Professor Chika Sehoole

Dean of Education: University of Pretoria



Professor Sehoole welcomed the guests and thanked them for taking the time to travel to Uganda to attend this momentous occasion. He expressed that Deans have come together with a shared vision: to create a platform that transcends individual country needs and addresses the broader concerns related to teacher education in Africa.

At the Pan-African level, there is an association that unites Vice-Chancellors and there are also five regional chapters of OAU that focus on specific areas of interest. However, there is a pressing need for a dedicated forum that brings together leaders and Deans in the field of teacher education.

This gathering serves precisely this purpose. It is an opportunity for Deans to collaborate, share insights, and develop strategies that will enhance teacher education across the African continent. Together, Deans can build a stronger, more unified approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities in this critical field.

“Thank you for being here and for your commitment to advancing education in Africa. Let us make the most of this opportunity to learn from each other and to forge a path forward that benefits all our nations.”

After the introductory speech, the delegates introduced themselves as per the information below.

Delegates' Details:

Title	Name	Surname	Country	Professional designation	Institution
Prof	Hilda	Israel	South Africa	Dean of Education	University of Mpumalanga
Prof	Loyiso	Jita	South Africa	Dean	University of the Free State
Prof	Mbulungeni	Madiba	South Africa	Dean of Education	Stellenbosch University
Prof	Mpine	Makoe	South Africa	Executive Dean	UNISA
Dr	Tulsi	Morar	South Africa	Acting Executive Dean, Faculty of Education	Nelson Mandela University
Prof	Mathias	Mulumba	Uganda	School of Education: College of Education and External Studies	Makerere University
Prof	Sithabile	Ntombela	South Africa	Dean	University of Zululand
Dr	Emmanuel	Ojo	South Africa	Deputy Head of School	University of the Witwatersrand
Prof	David	Olema	Uganda	Dean of Science and Education	Busitema University
Prof	Juliet	Perumal	South Africa	Head of School	Wits School of Education
Prof	Chika	Sehoole	South Africa	Dean of Education	University of Pretoria
Dr	Theresia	Shavega	Tanzania	Dean Faculty of Education	The Open University of Tanzania

A platform of this nature has the potential to establish a comprehensive database for external examiners in Africa, as well as facilitate research conducted by Africans about Africa. Additionally, such a forum could serve as a repository for the diverse experiences of African students studying in various countries across the continent, ultimately contributing to global teacher development insights.

2. KEYNOTE: IS AFRICA'S CURRENT TEACHER EDUCATION SYSTEM FIT FOR PURPOSE?

Professor Mathias Bwanika Mulumba

School of Education: College of
Education and External Studies
(Makerere University)



2.1. Prof Mulumba

Professor Mulumba began his presentation by reflecting on the need to address the quality of education that is provided on the African continent. African educators should start to address their education system as per the prevailing needs and demands in our society and not always using the lens of colonialism. There is a need to scrutinize if the education provided to our pre-service teachers equips them with the necessary knowledge, skills and values that are applicable in the 21st century. We need to answer the question of how teacher education contributes to the national development of countries. Lord Macaulay's Address to the British Parliament was a point of debate on how colonialists influenced the education system in Africa. A discussion that continues to resonate today.

Is education regarded as a social transformative tool in our different countries? There is a need to address the discrepancy between policies and their implementation (practice) in education, such as the availability and access to universal free education in different African countries. Requirements for entrance into teacher training at the tertiary level. Do we always admit the best in our teacher training degrees? This needs to be tackled, and if we say that education is the backbone of everything in the country, then we should admit the best. There is also a need to address teacher salaries and the conditions of work for all our teachers.

A look at the content taught by the teachers is important if we are to train learners who can thrive in the present era. A move from content (theory) based curriculum to competency-based curriculum (skills). The medium of instruction in teaching and learning also needs to be addressed. If we are to teach in the mother tongue at our schools, then we should have the necessary resources. Pre-service teachers should be taught or trained by qualified teachers. We need to address the cultural norms about education so as look at some of the stereotypes about education, such as the importance of having qualified teachers teaching in our classrooms. There is also the need to know what exactly happens at the schools before we can send out our pre-service teachers to these settings during their teaching experience. There should be a discussion on the increase of time spent doing observations and later teaching at the schools for the pre-service teachers rather than the too much time spent learning theory at the institution. Deans must be involved in the formulation and implementation of education policy and at the forefront of education in their countries. Deans also need to carry out some research to know how their products (pre-service teachers and qualified teachers) are doing in the schools. PADEF is important as it will help in bringing together Deans from different parts of Africa and will help in the rejuvenation of togetherness in education on the African continent.

2.2. Prof Sehoole gave the concluding remarks and opened the floor for the delegates to respond:	Prof Sehoole emphasized that Deans should remember the strategic role they have assigned to the Heads of Department (HoDs). He highlighted the importance of equipping teachers with competencies as global citizens and advocated for training teachers in their mother tongue, along with developing the necessary materials. This, he noted, is crucial for the safety of pre-service teachers. Prof. Sehoole also stressed that the schools where student teachers are sent for teaching practice should be nearby, and mentor teachers must clearly communicate the assessment criteria. He called for training for mentor teachers and scrutinizing the calibre of students entering the teaching profession, acknowledging that many students choose education only after being rejected by other faculties. He pointed out the need to integrate technology into teaching and learning, recognizing its permanence. Additionally, There is also a need to look at the quality of teacher education, as there is a high demand for teachers, therefore, teacher training institutions must find a way of catering for this. There is also the issue of the implementation of innovation in education, such as the shift from content-based to competency-based curriculum. Countries like Kenya and Uganda are good examples, as they have already embarked on this. There is also a need to look at the lack of control of the monies raised by higher institutions of learning as it is controlled by the central government in the case of Uganda. There is a need to see to it that 8-10 weeks of Teaching practice are adhered to regardless of financial constraints. Important to note is that no faculty exists without a faculty of education; its destruction would impact all faculties. He called for adaptive, flexible teachers who are lifelong learners and urged a thorough examination of education funding in Africa. Teacher training institutions need to ask and answer these questions. Who is a teacher educator? Who teaches the teacher educator? The training of those who teach teachers and their qualifications is very important to investigate. Basically, teachers should be trained by qualified teachers, and the student teachers need to do their teaching practice in the phase that they have been trained, and even when they graduate, they should teach in the phase they were trained. Tanzania is a good case study in this regard. Teachers should spend more time doing practical learning than spending so many years at university dealing with the theory that they find so difficult to apply when they go to schools after graduation.
2.3. Inputs from Dr Shavega: Teacher competency	The curriculum needs to transition from being content-based to competency-based. Additionally, there should be support systems in place to help teachers develop their competencies through professional development programs.
2.4. Professor Perumal: Status of teachers	We must address the declining status of teachers by breaking down the international barriers and boundaries that have contributed to this issue.
2.5. Prof Mulumba's key points after the delegates' contributions to his keynote speech	Suggested that within the next decade, learners in Uganda who have been educated through the competency-based curriculum, introduced in 2023, could potentially drive the country towards achieving middle-income status. • Translation of Educational Material: Emphasizing the importance of writing and translating educational content into local languages, such as Lugubarati and Luganda in Uganda. This can help make science concepts more accessible and understandable to a wider audience. • Challenges of Deanship: Highlighting the significant time commitment required for deanship roles, which can often lead to neglecting personal growth. This is seen as a potentially dangerous issue, as it can impact both personal and professional development. These points underscore the need for balancing administrative responsibilities with personal and professional growth, as well as the importance of making education inclusive and accessible.

3. PADEF TERMS OF REFERENCE

Prof Sehoole
introduced the discussion
about PADEF



Sehoole introduced the discussion about PADEF

3.1. Prof. Mbulungeni Prof. Madiba's document review	Prof. Mbulungeni Madiba from Stellenbosch University reviewed the document shared with all the deans present. After presenting the terms of reference, the delegates discussed the way forward. PADEF, conceptualised by the University of Pretoria and specifically by Prof. Sehoole, aims to organize deans of education regionally, nationally, and continentally, with all these efforts feeding into PADEF.
3.2. Prof. Sehoole	Prof. Sehoole emphasized the importance of different countries having their own forums while ensuring that members share common issues, challenges, and opportunities for the forum's sustainability. To avoid South Africa dominating the forum, there is a need for more robust virtual meetings. The forum should assist with fundraising and projects to support members financially in attending conferences and similar events. The committee to be chosen should represent the entire African continent, reflecting the diversity of the delegates who attended the meeting. This approach will help attract members from across Africa. Prof. Sehoole also highlighted the importance of voting for candidates who have several years remaining in their tenure as deans to ensure continuity.

4. ELECTION OF PADEF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND KEY OBJECTIVES

4.1. PADEF Executive Committee

The delegates below were seconded and elected as part of the PADEG Executive committee.

1. Dr Shavega Theresia (University of Tanzania)
2. Prof Mathias Bwanika Mulumba (Makerere University)
3. Prof Chika Sehoole (University of Pretoria)
4. Prof Mpine Makoe (UNISA)
5. Prof Juliet Perumal (Wits School of Education)
6. Prof Mbulungeni Madiba (Stellenbosch University)

Key objectives of PADEF

Following the election of the Executive Committee, several key objectives were highlighted:

• Virtual PADEF:	PADEF will operate virtually, distinguishing it from DETA, though Face2Face interactions will also be organized.
• Voice for African Deans:	PADEF aims to represent African deans, providing opportunities for all deans across the continent.
• Inclusive Opportunities:	The forum should create opportunities for everyone, not just the committee members.
• Enabling Platform:	PADEF will serve as a platform to help deans positively impact education in their countries and across Africa.
• Policy Influence:	Deans should strive to attend meetings organized by Education Ministers to inform and influence educational policy. There is a need to create a conducive environment for education in Africa to thrive.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

Professor Hilda Israel

Dean of Education: University of Mpumalanga



Professor Israel warmly welcomed the newly elected steering committee of the Dean's panel. She metaphorically described the initiative as a mustard seed that, despite its small beginnings, holds great potential. She emphasized the pride members of PADEF should feel for establishing a platform that enables deans across the African continent to collaborate, share experiences, best practices, and support one another.

Prof Israel posed thought-provoking questions to the deans present:

1. What steps will you take to promote collaboration now that you are part of this initiative?
2. How will you create an enabling platform for this collaboration?
3. How will you address the challenges facing Africa's education systems?

She concluded with a biblical quote: "To whom much is given, much is expected." She challenged everyone to consider how they will create a flourishing educational environment in Africa.

Professor Sehoole thanked the delegates for their engagement and contributions and then closed the PADEF meeting.



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