TC
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20
23

#REC2023

Reth**i**nking
Education
CONFERENCE
Reimagining Education

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T C
Teach Connect
ENERGISSING LEARNING

2023
RETHINKING
EDUCATION
CONFERENCE
REIMAGING EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

July 2023

CONNECT WITH US

JULY 21-22
2023
FROM 9.00 AM TO 4.00 PM

NATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

MINISTRY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, YAOUNDE, CAMEROON

REPORT PREPARED BY

Teach Connect

Yaounde, Cameroon

Contents

Forward

I am pleased to present to you the outcome of the Rethinking Education Conference (#REC 2023) which took place in July 2023, under the theme: "**Reimagining Education in the 21st Century**"- inviting us to rethink how we are building a nation of creative Learners who are confident and competent to face the challenges of today and those of the future. This year's event brought together diverse participants (researchers, educators, activists in both the public and private sectors) from different parts of the country, as well as international experts who gathered to explore how we are preparing learners for a future full of tremendous potential and uncertainty.

The main theme of the conference was anchored on one major concern; how we can strengthen the education ecosystem of Cameroon to step confidently into this evolving technological-centric world, given that it has become more critical than ever that our education systems adapt and grow, to prepare our future generations not only to survive in this new reality but to excel, thrive and innovate within it.

Education today is more than imparting knowledge, and it is our responsibility to ensure that this social right is accessible, relevant and localised to equip learners with tools to handle and address their immediate social challenges. Education should be about developing a growth mindset, fostering creativity, and instilling values of resilience, empathy, and collaboration. It is about helping learners imagine limitless potential, encouraging them to dream, and equipping them with the skills to turn those dreams into reality.

The purpose of the conference was to continue to explore novel ideas, engage in stimulating discourse and share best practices from around the world, with a shared mission of reimagining education. Through the different thought-provoking sessions, panel discussions, and workshops led by national and global experts in the field, we were able to gather ideas on how we can best equip learners for a future that is being constantly shaped by rapid technological advancements, sociocultural shifts, and global challenges.

We are particularly grateful to our host, the National Centre for Education, at the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation, and particularly to the Director Prof. Mforteh Stephen for providing their premises and supporting this event with contributions from the diverse team of researchers at the centre. We also want to thank wholeheartedly all the presenters, contributors, and participants who made the conference the success it was.

As we continue to reimagine and negotiate new paradigm shifts that can foster lifelong learning, nurture creativity, encourage curiosity, and empower every learner to achieve their full potential, we hope to see you all in July 2024 for the next edition of the Rethinking Education Conference (Theme: "Transforming Education: Empowering teachers and leaders") to explore and discuss case studies of schools, school leaders and teacher promoting and championing positive transformation and innovations in our education system.

On behalf of TC and partners, I would like to express our gratitude to you all and hope that you can all join us next year, to continue to rethink how we can reshape our education into a more dynamic, inclusive, and forward-thinking entity. Together, we can empower every learner to become an architect of their future and a change-maker in society.

I look forward to your valuable participation in the upcoming dialogues on rethinking our education and wish you a fulfilling and inspiring season as we approach the end of the year 2023.

Dr. Henry Koge
Head of Operations
Teach Connect

About the Conference

The 4th Edition of the TC Rethinking Education Conference (REC) was guided by the theme of **Re-imagining Education for the 21st Century**. This was a follow-up of previous editions of REC *2020 "Supporting Schools in the Post-COVID Era"*, REC *2021 "Reframing the New Normal for Education"* and REC *2022 "Enabling Student Success"*. This year's event allowed education stakeholders to deliberate on the future of education in Cameroon; one which is reflective of innovative learning, with the capacity to address the learning and development needs of the 21st-century learner.

It brought together innovative academics, practitioners, researchers, school principals and teachers, students, parents, NGOs, and industry experts to deliberate on the future of education. Presentations at the conference were guided by the following sub-themes: a blend of interdisciplinary subjects with a focus on education.

- **Stream one:** Effective Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century
- **Stream two:** Inclusive Leadership
- **Stream three:** Innovation in Education
- **Stream four:** Technology in Education

Conference Details

Event Name	Rethinking Education Conference
Theme	Re-imagining Education for the 21 st Century
Date	21 st - 22 nd July 2023
Venue	Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation - CNE/NEC Yaounde
Participants	Educators,. researchers, school proprietors, pedagogic inspectors, government officials
Speakers	Prof. Nforteh Stephen, Prof. Nkwenti Michael Dr. Tanju F. Shafak, Mrs. Elmarie Potgieter, Mrs. Pamela Njinga, Mr. Ryan Philips, Mr. Bechem Ayuk and Dr. Koge Henry
Organisers	Organiser Teach Connect in collaboration with National Centre for Education, at the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation
Website	https://www.teachconnect.org/edconference

School Performance

Student Achievement and Success

Leadership and Management

Professional Learning

Instructional Quality

Using Technology and Data

ENERGISING LEARNING

WHY WE EXIST

We exist because we believe that every human in every community (regardless of their orientation) can be self-determined to achieve greatness and can operate at their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their community if presented with the right information, knowledge, tools and conditions to nurture their talents and gifts to flourish.

WHO WE ARE

We are an independent non-governmental organisation with a focus on research and practice to promote active learning, capacity building, and skills development.

We identify ourselves as a learning and development-oriented independent Non-Governmental Organization, that is neither political nor religious, with a focus on research and practice that promotes active learning, capacity building, and skills development.

TRANSFORMAING EDUCATION

WHAT WE DO

Our mission is to transform lives and communities through learning

We do this by facilitating access to information and creating opportunities for collaborative and participatory learning activities where we provide resources to inspire learning, agency, and capacity for collective success for individuals, teams, and institutions.

OUR LEGAL STATUS

TC is duly registered as a Common Group Initiative- Association in Yaoundé with Registration Number: 001363/ARDA/JO6/APPBD.

Programme

Day 1: 21 July, 2023

09:00-9:15 **Opening Ceremony**
Teach Connect
Conference Hall

9:15-9:45 **Keynote Address and Conference Launch**
Prof Stephen Mforteh
Head of the National Centre for Education
Conference Hall

10:00 - 10:45 1st Presentation (S2: Inclusive Leadership)
Leveraging Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity-Building for Sustainable Education Transformation: Insights from Impact Data
Elmarie Potgieter
Conference Hall

10:50 - 11:35 2nd Presentation (S1: Teaching and Learning in the 21stCentury)
Effective Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century: Schooling in the 21st Century (Integrative education)
Pamela Njinga
Conference Hall

11:40-11:50 Break

11:50-12:35 3rd Presentation (S3 Innovation in Education)
Metacognitive Instructional Strategies for a Blended Learning Environment
Dr Tanju F. Shafak
Conference Hall

12:40 -13:30 4th Presentation (S2 Inclusive leadership)
Leading and managing Innovative Practices in Education: Evidence from the EmpowerED programme
Dr Henry Koge. M
Conference Hall

13:35-14:00 Break

14:0 -15:30 **Panel Discussion**
Questions from the Day
Teach Connect
Conference Hall

15:30-16:00 **Closing Ceremony**
Teach Connect
Conference Hall

Day 2: 22 July, 2023

09:00-9:30 **Opening Ceremony**
Teach Connect
Conference Hall

9:30-10:15 **Keynote Address**
Prof. Sir Nkwenti Michael
Lead Insoector of Pedagogy (EdTech) Ministry of Basic Education
Conference Hall

10:20 - 11:00 5th Presentation
The EmpowerED Programme -Reimagining education around the topics and themes that truly matters to our context and learners
Dr Henry Koge. M
Conference Hall

11:00- 11:15 Break

11:20-12:20
Workshop: Stream 3
Innovative Professional Development Practices
Ryan Phillips
Banquet Hall

Workshop: Stream 4
Using Technology for Teaching and Learning
Bechem Ayuk
Library

12:20-13:20
Workshop:Stream 2
Inclusive Leadership for Impact
Elmarie Potgieter
Conference Hall

Workshop:Stream 1
Effective Teaching and Learning for Metacognition
Dr Tanju F. Shafak
Banquet Hall

113:30 - 14:00 **Reviews from Rapporteurs**
Presentations of workshop Summaries
Group Rapporteur

14:00 -15:30 **Round Table Discussion**
Panelist

15:30-16:00 **Closing Ceremony**
Teach Connect

Buffet/Networking/interviews/Pictures

Speakers

Prof. Sir. Michael N. Nkwenti
Professor of Educational Technology
HTTC, University of Yaounde 1
KeyNote Speaker

Prof Stephen Mforteh. A
Head of NEC
National Centre for Education
KeyNote Speaker

Mrs. Elmarie Potgieter
Founder
RITE International Inc
KeyNote Speaker

Dr. Tanju F. Shafak
Head of School
Mfah-Mfah Academy
Speaker

Dr Henry Koge
Head of Operations
Teach Connect
Speaker

Mrs. Pamela Njinga
Academic and Professional Coach
The ICT University
Speaker

Mr. Ryan Phillips
Assistant Head of Primary
Britannica International School
Speaker

Mr. Bechem Ayuk
EDTech Consultant
YouthxYouth
Speaker

Introduction
Day 1: 21 July 2023

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The conference started at 10:15 a.m. with the National anthem and a welcome note from the event moderator Makebe Gertrude.

Prof. Mforteh Stephen gave an enriching and thought-provoking keynote address to set the stage for deliberations on day one. In his opening remarks, he welcomed all the distinguished guests, including representatives from the Ministries of Education, NEC, speakers, and participants to the conference. He expressed his joy for hosting the 4th Edition of the Rethinking Education Conference (#REC 2023) and invited everyone to actively engage in the conversations and sessions. He ended the opening session by wishing the participants a fulfilling and inspiring conference experience at the centre.

Prof Stephen Mforteh. A
Head of NEC
National Centre for Education
KeyNote Speaker

Abstracts
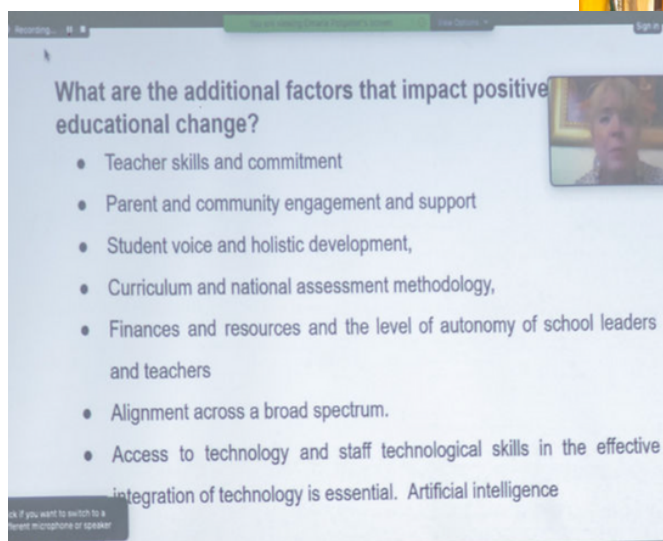
Mrs. Elmarie Potgieter
Founder
RITE International Inc
KeyNote Speaker

Education transformation initiatives are often resource-intensive and fail to achieve sustained change. To achieve sustainable transformation, this paper argues for extensive stakeholder engagement and co-construction, embedded capacity-building systems, effective planning, communication, self-reflection, and monitoring, and emotionally intelligent leadership.

Drawing from impact data from education development and transformation projects in Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, this paper identifies key levers for sustained change. The paper presents case studies of successful and sustained practice, as well as low-impact initiatives, to illustrate the importance of alignment, communication, monitoring mechanisms, and the use of relevant data to inform decision-making.

The paper also offers recommendations for accelerating school transformation in developing countries, especially in the context of exponential technological advancement and the growth of Artificial Intelligence.

Key Insights
- Programmes are designed without considering local context and 'imposed' without collaboration and discussion with teachers and the local community.
- School leaders are unwilling to delegate authority and fail to promote teacher leadership, thus creating a top-down approach with lack of ownership and broad engagement by the staff.
- School leaders focus on management and administration duties instead of putting learning as the key objective.
- There is a lack of accountability across stakeholder levels - often the result of inefficient performance management practices, which in turn, is often caused by larger government policies.
- Lack of community and parent engagement is another key factor.
- The lack of alignment between curriculum, policy and university/tertiary education institutions

Abstracts
Day 1: 21 July 2023

Mrs. Pamela Njinga
Academic and Professional Coach
The ICT University
Speaker

In an era where dogmas, paradigms, and vernacular beliefs have propelled the school to the top, making it the Master of Education for both children and adult learners, it has played a significant role in the human mind to date. To help harness or to civilize the latter, school through teaching, has always been known as the place for knowledge transmission and even know-how, which over time has proven to be conducive for the transfer of abstract concepts and thoughts that are difficult to develop and even to implement. Nevertheless, it has been given the opportunity for some to get a privileged place in society and enjoy the knowledge and social benefits it may provide. As society keeps evolving, through discoveries, innovations, and technologies in line with the pristine academic knowledge and theories of previous years, but also characterised by an increase in the costs of living and factors of environmental pollution, now is the time to question the role of the school in an era marked by innovation and the development of sustainable and economic solutions of New Information and Communication Technologies in the 21st century. Have the frameworks, stereotypes, and guidelines that each eager learner has always been required to follow become obsolete, or is this not rather the era of growth of talents through a redefinition of what school is, especially with the freedom of knowledge and skills through hidden gifts concealed in each individual?

However, a major challenge to achieving this objective is changing mentalities on this topic. Using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches, this research would provide a new vision of the school in the 21st century. No longer globalised, the school would forge talents, enabling each pupil to develop his or her skills with the help of proper and detailed knowledge in his or her field. Hence, this will meet the needs of the present era.

Key Insights
- Schools need to work on their innovative capacity to ensure they are relevant to reflect the contextual realities of the learners.
- There is a need to rethink and challenge existing traditions, dogmas, philosophical foundations of education and child development
- Knowledge needs to be democratised and accessible to all learners
- The need for localised education and talent development can no longer be ignored

#REC2023

Dr. Tanju F. Shafak
Head of School
Mfah-Mfah Academy
Speaker

This paper gives form to the thought that a Blended Learning Environment uniquely occasions the harnessing of the effective development and deployment of metacognition by means of a strategic instructional design. The rather facetious designation "android generation" speaks of both a blessing and a curse. A peculiar event of the puzzle is the feverish increase in currency and adoption of the Blended Learning model; and this has become even more undeniable in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to ensure effective learning, focusing on the learner's self-awareness of the learning process is critical; and this is where metacognitive strategies prove their pertinence.

Within the theoretical framework of the Tyler's Rationale, this paper proposes various practical metacognitive strategies that could be used in designing instruction in a blending learning environment; and herein lies the originality of the paper. This is built from a very careful hybridization of literature review and interpretive phenomenology. Instead of engaging in the unfortunately 'comfortable' whining about the evils of blended learning, this paper engages the principles of an effective and efficient deployment of the same. This lays the foundation for a futuristic perspective and practice of instructional design.

Key Insights
- Teachers need to develop their practice, especially in the area of metacognition, and how they think about their thinking in order to help develop the metacognitive capacity of their learners.
- We must drive the notion of learning and how it actually happens, as well as how we become aware of the learning using appropriate frameworks.
- Instructional design should account for critical thinking and reflection on learning.

Dr Henry Koge
Head of Operations
Teach Connect
Speaker

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This article explores the role of leadership (system leadership, school, and teacher leadership) and innovation in redefining contemporary educational practices. It discusses the growing importance of incorporating technological advancements, creative teaching methodologies, alternative learning and flexible learning environments, and collaborative platforms in the modern classroom. The role of educators as change agents and facilitators of innovation was emphasized, highlighting the need for constant professional learning and upskilling. References to the EmpowerED programme case study were presented to illustrate the successful pilot of innovative practices across different educational domains- school performance management, teaching and learning, and staff development.

The session underscores the need for an inclusive leadership approach that integrates these innovations into the mainstream education, curriculum, ensuring every learner benefits from these advancements. By exploring existing trends and forecasting future directions, this article offers insight for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders into leading innovative practices in education, demonstrating their impact on enhancing teaching and learning outcomes.

Key Insights
- The leadership infrastructure in the school (senior management, middle leaders, and teacher leaders) is critical for the transformation of beliefs, practices, behaviours, systems, and output.
- Leadership should also focus on building the school's collective capacity for leadership and innovation
- Education generally needs an inclusive and community approach for it to be relevant in the community with a sustained focus on learning quality.

Introduction
Day 2: 22 July 2023
Opening of the Conference

#REC2023

Prof. Sir. Michael N. Nkwenti
Professor of Educational Technology
HTTC, University of Yaounde 1
KeyNote Speaker

Prof. Michael's keynote provided valuable insights into the evolving trends in educational technology, emphasising how it continues to transform contemporary pedagogical practices and the challenges and opportunities for Cameroon's education technology strategy.

His opening keynote -C*ameroon Educational System: Prospective Pathways in the context of AI Disruption* paved a clear picture of the shifts required to ensure that our education system can provide learners with the skills to thrive in the future economy.

Emphasis was made on the need to align the curriculum and the labour market, with a focus on global and digital skills. His talk also highlighted the need to exploit and harness the power of AI, to empower personalized, and self-paced learning in classrooms, as well as some of the barriers and challenges plaguing the education system.

Workshops
Day 2: 22 July 2023

Using AI For Teaching and Learning
During this session, participants were engaged in a hands-on exploration of the application of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in teaching and learning. The workshop delved into the significance of AI in education, highlighting various examples, and the ethical implications associated with integrating AI into educational practices were also thoroughly discussed. During the session, attendees were introduced to Bing AI, a powerful large language model(LLM), and had a chance to test this AI tool to accomplish several tasks, including simplifying complex concepts and designing multiple-choice questions (MCQs) for specific subjects. The overall experience of utilizing Bing AI was both enjoyable and enlightening, providing valuable insights into the potential capabilities of AI in education.

Bechem Ayuk
Facilitator

Innovating Professional Development
This workshop explored the paradigm shift required in professional learning and development, advocating a transition from a culture primarily focused on judgment and performance to one that encourages ongoing self-directed learning and development. During the session, participants were invited to delve into the traditional culture of professional development prevalent in schools and workplaces, where individuals are constantly assessed and ranked based on their performance by a supervisor. It was noted that while this approach has its merits in certain scenarios, it often creates high-stress environments and can stifle creativity, prevent experimentation, and discourage risk-taking due to the fear of failure.

Ryan Phillips
Facilitator

Developing Students Metacognition
The workshop drew on research evidence around the practices and benefits of developing student metacognition and self-regulated learning. It explored how theories and evidence can be translated into impactful, sustainable classroom practices for students to learn and acquire higher-order thinking skills. Exercises during the session included;
-participants' conceptual frames of metacognition.
-key metacognitive tools and strategies which can be utilised in the classroom and across the whole school to develop student metacognition.
Throughout the workshop, the participants were invited to reflect on their understanding of metacognition and how they can apply this knowledge to benefit students in their class, and across their school.

Dr Tanju Fidel
Facilitator

Summary and Highlights

REC 2023: "Reimagining Education for the 21st Century" brought together educators, researchers, policymakers, and thought leaders from around the world to explore innovative approaches and strategies for transforming education to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving world.

Highlights from the conference include:

An Emphasis on Future-ready Skills: Emphasis was placed on equipping students with future-ready skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. Participants discussed the importance of shifting from a content-based curriculum to one that focuses on developing these essential skills.

Technology Integration: The role of technology in education was a prominent theme. Presenters shared insights on leveraging digital tools, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence to enhance learning experiences and create more personalized and engaging educational pathways.

Learner-Centered Approaches: The conference explored various learner-centered pedagogies, such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and personalized learning. These approaches empower students to take an active role in their education, promoting deeper understanding and fostering a love for lifelong learning.

Equity and Inclusion: The conference highlighted the importance of equity and inclusion in education. Discussions revolved around strategies to bridge the skills gap and digital divide, ensure access to quality education for marginalized communities, and promote diversity and inclusivity within educational institutions.

Local-global Citizenship Education: There was a general awareness and agreement for the need to cultivate global citizenship skills among students starting from the realities of the local context. The discussions around talent development explored ways to foster cultural understanding, empathy, and a sense of responsibility towards global challenges, ensuring that students are prepared to thrive in an interconnected world.

Teacher Professional Development: The conference shed light on the significance of ongoing professional development for teachers. Presenters shared effective strategies and models to support teachers in updating their pedagogical skills, integrating technology, and adopting innovative teaching practices.

Education Policy and Governance: The keynotes addressed the importance of aligning education policies and governance structures with the changing requirements of the 21st-century world. Participants emphasized the need for collaborative efforts between government agencies, educational institutions, and stakeholders to drive meaningful education reform with more scope for bottom-up policy development pathways.

Overall, the conference offered an idea melting pot and a platform for participants to share insights and collaboratively reimagine education for the 21st century. The discussions and outcomes of the conference will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on shaping the future of education, ensuring that it remains responsive, inclusive, and equipped to prepare learners for the challenges of the modern era.
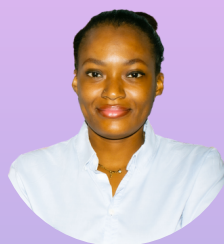
REC in Pictures

INNOVATE EUCATION

ONE FOCUS.. IMPROVING EDUCATION

LEARNING... WE CAN ACHIEVE MORE TOGETHER
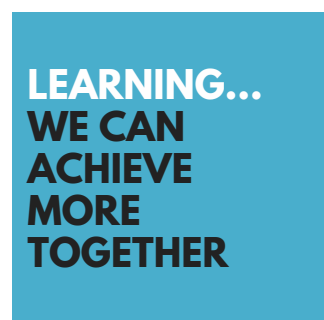
Organising Team

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Makebe Gertrude
MC

Shana Solee
Assistant Financial Officer

Tracy Abit
Director-Learning Studioz

Closing Remarks

On behalf of the TC organizing team, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to all the invaluable support and contributions to the success of the 2023 edition of the Rethinking Education Conference, especially to our Host Prof Stephen Mforteh.

We hereby acknowledge the support of the National Centre for Education in partnership with TC for hosting the event at their premises at no cost. We are also grateful to the ICT University for providing the sound system that was used during the conference. We also want to acknowledge and appreciate Quality Intentional for purchasing a silver pack for the conference.
Collectively your generosity, whether in the form of moral, seat sponsorships, or in-kind contributions, played a significant role in helping us create a memorable and impactful event. Your belief in our mission and commitment to promoting knowledge-sharing and collaboration within the education community is truly commendable.

The 2023 Rethinking Education Conference was fully funded by the Head of Operations, with an overall, conference budget of one million six hundred and forty-seven thousand three hundred and fifty francs (1 647 350) CFA.

As we reflect on the achievements of this conference, we acknowledge the vital role that each supporter has played in helping us reach new heights. Your involvement has gone far beyond the conference itself; it has helped foster growth, innovation, and collaboration within our education ecosystem and for that, we are sincerely grateful. As we begin to plan for next year's edition, we are happy to welcome collaborations, partnerships, and support for the success of the 2024 edition.

Thank you once again for your valuable support. We look forward to continuing our partnership and making even greater strides together in the future to reshape education positively.

Teach Connect Organising Team

RETHINKING EDUCATION

CONFERENCE

"Transforming Education: Empowering teachers and leaders"

2024

20-21 JULY