



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

AUC International Conference on Research in African Challenges (ICRAC)

Track G: Combating Poverty through education

SUB-TRACK G1: SOCIAL MOBILITY

Chair: Thomas DeVere Wolsey

Co-chair: Safaa Elkogali

Economic growth in Africa continues to improve, but at a slow and irregular pace (World Bank, 2018), and it does not reach every sector of the population. Social mobility, the nature and rate of change between economic strata and demographic classes, is stagnant in many ways. Children tend to stay in the same occupations held by their parents, for example. The sons of subsistence farmers tend to remain farmers. Approximately 10 percent of the population can make the transition from agricultural work to other non-farm jobs (Bossuroy, 2013). Women have a more difficult time entering the labor force or moving to jobs that offer increased economic opportunity, in part because women in Africa are often not as well-educated, and they face additional challenges to upward mobility due to social expectations, child-rearing, and marriage at a young age.

Education is a path upward, but in many African contexts the quality of education varies greatly in quality. Parents who are themselves poorly educated lack the knowledge required to overcome obstacles such as poor schooling, social barriers, or internal conflicts. Though efforts are underway in some countries to improve public education opportunities and access, these efforts are often vulnerable to political influences that tend to change rapidly. This strand focuses on exploring what is known about upward social mobility in Africa and discovering possible innovative solutions to stagnant social mobility through improved education.

The ICRAC organizers encourage academics and professionals to share their research and their relevant experiences at the conference. An abstract of [insert word count] proposing a session or workshop should be submitted to [insert contact] no later than [insert date] for possible inclusion in the Conference. Submissions will be peer reviewed and full papers will be considered for publication in Conference proceedings.

Biographies

Thomas DeVere Wolsey, Ed. D., teaches graduate courses in research and literacy in the Graduate School of Education at The American University in Cairo. He leads professional development for teachers in Guatemala, Mexico, China, on the Hopi Reservation and throughout the United States, among other



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places. He is the author or co-author of seven books for teachers and teacher educators with two more in development. Dr. Wolsey has developed training materials for the California Department of Education, Text Project, San Diego State University and North County (San Diego) Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program. His specialties include exploring intersections of literacy and technology, middle grades and secondary literacy practices, teacher preparation, and green school design.

Ms Safaa El Tayeb El-Kogali is the Education Practice Manager for the Middle East and North Africa region at the World Bank based in Washington DC. She is a leading expert with 20 years of experience in international development. In her 13 years at the World Bank, Ms El-Kogali has occupied a number of positions including Lead Specialist at the Education Global Practice, Sector Leader in Human Development for the Caribbean in the Latin America and Caribbean region, Senior Economist at the Human Development department, Chief Economist at the Middle East and North Africa region office, and Economist at the Education department of the Sub-Saharan Africa region. In addition to the World Bank, Ms El-Kogali has also worked with the Population Council as Regional Director for West Asia and North Africa based in Cairo, Egypt. She has also worked previously as a researcher with the Population Council and the Economic Research Forum (ERF) in Egypt. Her experience includes management, policy dialogue, research, and project design in over 15 countries. She authored a number of studies and recently published a book entitled: *Expanding Opportunities for the Next Generation: Early Childhood Development in the Middle East and North Africa*. Ms El-Kogali is a Sudanese national and has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania, USA and a Master of Philosophy degree with distinction in Development Studies from the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, UK.