The African Union (AU) Continental Teacher Award 2022

Theme: “The Transformation Education; begins with Teachers”

Event Report
30 November 2022 (2pm-5pm EAT) Online
+70 Participants

Introduction

Wednesday, 30 November 2022, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (UNESCO IICBA), the coordinator of the Teacher Development CESA cluster, participated in the 4th Continental Teacher Award Ceremony hosted by the African Union. The AU Teacher Prize was established as a means for demonstrating respect for teachers and the teaching profession, by encouraging and celebrating the committed teachers in Africa. According to the AU, the Award raises the status of teaching, facilitates sharing of best practices in teacher excellence, and inspires the best possible candidates to join the teaching profession. Furthermore, the AU Teacher Award is meant to serve as a catalyst for similar programs at regional and national levels.

The Teacher Award is an important and valuable instrument that contributes to the success of Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 16-25, with the following objectives:

1. Enhance visibility and status of the Teacher in Africa at all levels - Pre-primary, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary including TVET.
2. Promote Teaching as a profession at all levels.
3. Celebrate and encourage outstanding teachers.

This event was organized by the African Union with the support of its key partners, including the European Union (EU), and the CESA Teacher Development Cluster (CESA TDC) which is coordinated by UNESCO IICBA and chaired by Education International (EI) and the Africa Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (AFTRA).

Dr. Hambani Masheleli, Director, ESTI, Moderated the ceremony.

Opening Session

The opening remarks were delivered by H. E. Prof. Mohammed Belhocine, Commissioner, Education, Science, Technology & Innovation (ESTI); Mr. Riccardo Mosca, Deputy Ambassador to EU mission to AU; and Mr. Saliou Sall, Director a.i, UNESCO IICBA, respectively.

In his opening address, H. E. Prof. Mohammed Belhocine congratulated all the winners and thanked the organizers and partners. He underlined the crucial importance of the teaching profession in society as well as the importance of this continental award. “The award mechanism shines a light on great teachers and facilitates the sharing of their remarkable stories to raise the status of teaching and inspire the best candidates to join the teaching profession.” He said.
HE. Prof. Mohammed shared that at the AU High Level Side Event of the Education Transformation Summit, African Heads of State and Government adopted a declaration by which all Member States should reform the teaching profession with a focus on quality teacher education, including the use of new technologies in teaching and development programs at all levels, this includes teacher recruitment and management as well as policies that improve learner outcomes and improve teacher retention.

“Realizing Africa's aspirations depends on the investments that are made today to improve teacher development in Africa, because teachers are at the heart of the education of the Africa we want. We encourage Member States, education partners and policy makers to continue working with the AU to fully implement the Teacher Qualification Frameworks, Guidelines, Continental Teacher Mobility Protocol and to always respond positively to the AU continental teacher award appeal.” H.E. Prof. Mohammed mentioned.

Subsequently, Mr. Riccardo Mosca, in turn, congratulated all the winners and expressed his gratitude to the AUC, UNESCO and other EU partners. He echoed the commissioner in saying that teachers are at the heart of education and that quality education ultimately depends on quality teachers.

He underlined how Education is a joint priority of both EU and AU and shared a couple of Education initiatives of the EU on Africa including collaboration with the African Union on the Continental Teacher Qualifications Framework.

Finally, Mr. Riccardo emphasized that the role of teachers is globally evolving and that there is need to invest in teachers so they can face the challenges of new skills requirements. He also mentioned the need to improve resilience of Africa’s education systems.

In his address, Mr. Saliou Sall introduced UNESCO-IICBA and its aspirations to improve the teaching profession in Africa and echoed the need to support, motivate and empower teachers, to transform education. He congratulated the winners for their outstanding achievements.

Mr. Saliou mentioned some of the activities carried out by UNESCO IICBA in collaboration with AUC and members of the CESAR TDC, including:

1. Facilitate the completion of the Continental Teacher Mobility Protocol adopted by Member States during the STC EST4 meeting in August 2022.
2. Work on a strategy to promote mental health and psychosocial support for teachers and teacher trainers in Africa.
3. Conduct research on the effects of the covid-19 pandemic on teaching as well as school leadership and governance, and the research results informed debate on strategies of how best to support teachers to continue conducting their work during the pandemic.

“IICBA and the CESAR Teacher Development cluster as a whole will continue to make every effort to contribute to the improvement of the teaching profession in Africa, including by supporting policy development, improving the working conditions of teachers and developing teachers’ ability to adapt to change.” He mentioned.
Testimony from three winners of 2021 AU Teacher Award

Three of the 2021 winners were invited to the panel by the moderator to share how the award has impacted their teaching profession.

Mrs. Agnes Segaka Rasesemola, South Africa

"It's when you receive the award that you really know that now is when the work begins because everyone will start looking to you as a role model," she said. After being awarded, she had many opportunities to connect with high profile education specialists across Africa. She encouraged the new winners to continue their good work.

Mr. Hamza Ghodbane, Tunisia, North Africa

He said the award changed his life and the way he teaches. After receiving the award, he aimed to do more to inspire other teachers. He encouraged the new winners to do well and to work for the benefit of Africa.

Mrs. Hanan Ibrahim Hafez, Egypt, North Africa

She shared good practices and efforts she has made after receiving the award, especially to advance digital teaching and learning, saying the award has inspired her to do even more. She also encouraged the new winners to keep working hard.

Award Ceremony

Before recognizing the winners, Dr. Hambani Masheleni expressed AUC’s gratitude to EU and the CESA TDC for their support to fully implement this program. Then she announced one by one the ten winners of the AU Teachers Award 2022 and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

The 2022 AU Awarded Teachers are:

1. Mr. Innocent Masanja, Uganda – East Africa
3. Ms. Pride Nomvula Magiga, Zimbabwe – Southern Africa
4. Mr. Mkhonta Mfanimpela Eric, Swaziland – Southern Africa
5. Mr. Moussa Sore, Burkina Faso – West Africa
7. Ms. Jacinta Vinel Abeso, Equatoria Guinea – Central Africa
8. Mr. Alexandre Arnaud Abomo Abomo, Cameroon – Central Africa
9. Mr. Yahya Sidi Sarr, Mauritania – North Africa
10. Ms. Samia Briki, Tunisia – North Africa

Roundtable discussion with the Awarded Teachers

During this session, Dr. Njora Hungi, Senior Project Officer, UNESCO-IICBA, invited the 2022 awardees to discuss on the theme “The Transformation of Education, Begins with Teachers”. They all shared a brief background of themselves, their achievements and a perspective on the theme.

In their presentations, most award winners said what motivated them to join the teaching profession was a passion for teaching, a desire to impart knowledge, and a way of giving back to the
community. The transformation they see in their learners has been highlighted as their daily motivation.

All winners agreed with the topic and added that for teachers to transform education, they should be provided with adequate school materials to enable them to reach every child in school, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities, and digital and ICT skills.

Closing remarks

Dr. Hambani Masheleni delivered his closing remarks appreciating what everyone is doing to advance education transformation and thanking all organizers and participants.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this event Report, please do not hesitate to contact Uwingabiye Immaculée Kevine at ik.uwingabiye@unesco.org. You can also see updates and resources from a variety of IICBA events and programs on its website: http://www.iicba.unesco.org/ and on our social media pages.