

CALL FOR PROPOSALS • 2026

A Call to Host the HERI Africa Research Chair on African Perspectives and Theories for Education

The Commission for University Education, in collaboration with Mizizi Elimu Afrika, invites eligible Kenyan universities to submit proposals to host a continental centre of excellence repositioning African perspectives, theories and knowledge systems as legitimate foundations for teaching, learning, curriculum, policy and innovation.

Harnessing Education Research for Impact in Africa (HERI Africa)

MAXIMUM BUDGET

US\$1 million

Covering 2027–2029

APPLICATIONS CLOSE

31 October 2026

23:59 East Africa Time

PUBLIC LAUNCH

February 2027

Of the Research Chair

Universities are encouraged to nominate women Research Chairs.

10

Priority research
themes

14

Required application
documents

2

Applicant webinars
ahead of the deadline

10_{yr}

Institutional research
programme horizon

AN INITIATIVE DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

1 Purpose of the Research Chair

The Commission for University Education (CUE), in collaboration with Mizizi Elimu Afrika, under the Harnessing Education Research for Impact in Africa (HERI Africa) initiative, invites eligible Kenyan universities to submit proposals to host the HERI Africa Research Chair in African Perspectives and Theories for Education.

The Research Chair seeks to establish a continental centre of excellence dedicated to generating high-quality research that repositions African perspectives, theories and knowledge systems as legitimate foundations for teaching, learning, curriculum development, teacher education, educational leadership, policy and innovation.

The Research Chair will contribute to transforming African education systems through evidence-based research that integrates African perspectives, philosophies and locally grounded pedagogies into education policy and practice.

Consistent with HERI Africa's long-term outcomes — including improved learner outcomes, expanded opportunities for youth, and operationalization of a continental network to support research in the education sector — the Research Chair will be awarded to the host institution, with the proposed Research Chair Holder leading a long-term institutional research programme.

2 • VISION

To become Africa's leading research hub advancing African perspectives and theories for an equitable, relevant and transformative education ecosystem.

3 • MISSION

To advance internationally recognized research excellence in African perspectives and theories for education by generating, validating and applying African-centred educational knowledge that transforms teaching, learning, curriculum, educational leadership and policy, while developing the next generation of scholars and strengthening Africa's intellectual leadership in education research and innovation.

4 Strategic Objectives

The Research Chair will, among others:

1. Advance African-centred theories and perspectives that explain and improve educational policy, practice, leadership and learning.
2. Generate high-quality, internationally recognized research addressing Africa's educational priorities and contemporary challenges based on Africa's unique socio-cultural and political circumstances.
3. Strengthen theoretical and methodological scholarship on African philosophies, pedagogies, indigenous knowledge systems, multilingualism and culturally responsive education.

4. Inform national, regional and continental education policies through robust evidence and sustained policy engagement, taking cognisance of Africa's environment.
5. Transform curriculum, teacher education and educational leadership by integrating African perspectives into teaching, learning and assessment.
6. Build a critical mass of African education researchers through postgraduate supervision, postdoctoral mentorship and research leadership development.
7. Promote equitable partnerships among universities, governments, schools, communities, and regional and international research networks.
8. Increase Africa's visibility and influence in global educational research, theory development, epistemology and scholarly discourse.

5 Priority Research Themes

A Research Chair on African Perspectives and Theories for Education should focus on research areas that both deepen African educational thought and address pressing educational challenges across Kenya and the continent. The priorities should ideally balance theory development, knowledge generation, capacity building and societal impact. The following are recommended priority research areas, among others: **African educational philosophies and theories.**

- | | |
|---|---|
| i. Contextualization and transformation of education | vi. Equity, inclusion and social justice |
| ii. Indigenous knowledge systems and community-based learning | vii. Education policy, leadership and governance |
| iii. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment | viii. Technology, innovation and future learning |
| iv. Teacher education and professional learning | ix. Education, sustainable and inclusive development, and societal transformation |
| v. Language, literacy and multilingual education | x. Research methodologies, knowledge production/access and ownership |

Cross-Cutting Themes

Across all priority areas, the Chair may consider mainstreaming:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • African-centred theoretical development | • Policy translation and knowledge mobilization |
| • Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research | • Pan-African collaboration and comparative research |
| • Youth and learner voices | • Postgraduate and early-career researcher development |
| • Digital transformation | |
| • Climate resilience and sustainability | |

6 Institutional Eligibility

Applicants should demonstrate:

Research Capacity

- i. A strong school or faculty focusing on African perspectives and theories for education, or related fields.
- ii. Established postgraduate education programmes relevant to African perspectives and theories.
- iii. Active education research centres.
- iv. Proven publication record in African perspectives and theories for education.
- v. Capacity to manage national and international research grants.

Institutional Commitment

The university and collaborating institutions should provide:

- i. Dedicated office space for the proposed Research Chair.
- ii. Administrative support.
- iii. Research infrastructure.
- iv. ICT facilities.
- v. Institutional co-investment.
- vi. Reduced teaching load and, where possible, protected time for the Research Chair Holder.
- vii. Sustainability beyond HERI Africa funding.

7 Proposed Chair Holder

The proposed Chair Holder should:

- i. Hold a PhD in a relevant area.
- ii. Be an Associate Professor or Professor in education or a related field.
- iii. Be an internationally recognized education researcher.
- iv. Have experience in curriculum studies, teacher education, educational policy, comparative education, educational leadership, indigenous education or related fields.
- v. Demonstrate strong postgraduate supervision and should have supervised at least **5 PhD students** to completion.
- vi. Show evidence of research leadership.
- vii. Have an established international publication record of at least **500 citations** and an **h-index of at least 12**.
- viii. Have secured at least **three competitive grants worth US\$100,000** in the last five to ten years.
- ix. Have a proven publication record in high-impact journals indexed in Scimago, Web of Science or Scopus, including at least **10 publications as lead author**.

8 Ten-Year Institutional Research Programme — Strategic Positioning

THE DISTINGUISHING AMBITION

To distinguish itself internationally, the Chair should aspire to become Africa's leading hub for theory building in education. Rather than primarily testing theories developed elsewhere, it should focus on generating original, contextually relevant and authentic African perspectives, theories, concepts and models for education that emerge from African histories, cultures, languages and educational experiences, while contributing to global debates on teaching, learning, curriculum, educational leadership and educational transformation.

This emphasis on African theory development alongside practical educational innovation would position the Chair as a flagship initiative for advancing Africa's intellectual leadership in education research from an African perspective. It is recommended that the university develops a phased strategic plan (**Phase 1: 2027–2029; Phase 2: 2030–2037**).

9 Human Capital Development

The Chair should become a national, regional and continental training platform. Applicants should include annual targets for:

- i. PhD students in education with a focus on African perspectives and theories for education.
- ii. Master's students in relevant areas — African philosophy and educational thought, indigenous knowledge systems, African languages and multilingual education, African pedagogies and teaching approaches, and curriculum transformation and contextualization, among others.
- iii. Postdoctoral fellows.
- iv. Early career researchers.
- v. Visiting African scholars.
- vi. Teacher educators.
- vii. Curriculum specialists.
- viii. Education policy fellows.

10 Education System Impact Strategy

Applicants should demonstrate how the research will improve:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| i. Classroom teaching and learning outcomes | iv. Learning assessment |
| ii. Curriculum development | v. Educational leadership |
| iii. Teacher professional development | vi. National education policy |

- vii. Teacher education institutions

11 Knowledge Mobilization Strategy

The Chair should produce the following, bearing in mind the African perspectives and theories:

- i. Curriculum frameworks
- ii. Teacher training manuals
- iii. Policy briefs to stimulate policy strengthening
- iv. Open educational resources
- v. Podcasts — science communication and engaged research
- vi. Policy dialogues
- vii. An annual African Education Research Forum
- viii. A digital knowledge repository

12 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

DOMAIN	INDICATORS
Research excellence	Publications, books, citations, grants.
Human capital	PhD, master's and postdoctoral graduates, succession.
Education impact	Curriculum reforms, teacher education innovations, improved learning outcomes.
Policy influence	Adoption of policy recommendations, curriculum standards informed by research, national and regional education reforms.
Institutional development	New research programmes, interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthened education research infrastructure.
Sustainability	External funding leveraged, particularly from Africa-based sources; institutional co-investment; long-term partnerships and continuation beyond HERI Africa funding.

13 Evaluation Framework

EVALUATION CRITERION	WEIGHT (%)
Institutional education research excellence	20
Quality of the education research programme	20
Track record of the proposed Chair Holder	15
Human capital development and succession planning	15
Institutional commitment and sustainability	10
Curriculum, teacher education and education systems transformation	10
Partnerships and collaboration	5
Policy impact and knowledge mobilization	5
Total	100

14 Required Application Documents

IMPORTANT

Applicants should submit a comprehensive proposal **through the portal**. Any proposal submitted outside the portal will not be considered.

APPLICATION PORTAL — CLOSING 31 OCTOBER 2026

<https://herirecruitment.mizizielimu.org>

- i. Cover page — proposal title, logo of institution(s) submitting the proposal.
- ii. Executive Summary.
- iii. Institutional Profile (attach institutional publications, research strategy and other awards since 2020 as **Appendix 1**).
- iv. Chair Holder and Associate Chair Holder CV (detailed CV of the Chair, the Associate Chair and team members to be attached as **Appendix 2**).

- v. Research Programme (5–10 years).
- vi. Human Capital Development Plan.
- vii. Institutional Transformation Strategy.
- viii. Partnership Plan.
- ix. Theory of Change.
- x. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (detailed results framework to be attached as **Appendix 3** – Monitoring and Performance Indicators; see Section 12).
- xi. Sustainability Plan.
- xii. Summary Budget (detailed budget attached as **Appendix 4**).
- xiii. Letters of Institutional Commitment and support (to be signed by the Vice Chancellor or Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of research and impact, to be attached as **Appendix 5**).
- xiv. Risk Management Plan.

15 Funding Model

The Research Chair budget should be utilized as follows:



Covering:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| i. Investments in research outcome areas | viii. Chair Holder |
| ii. International collaboration | ix. Associate Chair |
| iii. Conferences | x. Research Fellows |
| iv. Knowledge dissemination | xi. Postdoctoral Fellows |
| v. Equipment | xii. Postgraduate scholarships |
| vi. Institutional capacity strengthening | xiii. Research assistants |
| vii. Monitoring and evaluation | |

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Selection Process

Open call for applications, closing on **31 October 2026**, followed by:

- 1 Eligibility screening
- 2 Independent peer review
- 3 Institutional capacity assessment
- 4 Interviews and presentations (where necessary)
- 5 HERI Africa Steering Committee approval
- 6 Funding negotiations
- 7 Signing of the host agreement
- 8 Public launch of the Research Chair in **February 2027**

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Additional Information

To distinguish this Research Chair from conventional research chairs in university ecosystems, applicants should demonstrate how they will:

- i. Position the Chair as a national, regional and continental centre of excellence on African Perspectives and Theories for Education.
- ii. Produce actionable evidence that informs policy and practice in Kenya and across Africa.
- iii. Integrate intersectional approaches that connect African Perspectives and Theories with other dimensions of education transformation.
- iv. Build sustainable research ecosystems by mentoring early-career scholars and strengthening institutional capacity.
- v. Foster South–South and North–South partnerships while promoting African-led scholarship.
- vi. Engage governments, regional bodies, civil society and development partners to maximize research uptake.
- vii. Leverage digital technologies, data science and artificial intelligence in a responsible and ethical manner to advance inclusive education.
- viii. Ensure long-term sustainability through diversified funding, institutional commitment and regional networks.

APPLICANT SUPPORT

The Commission for University Education, in collaboration with Mizizi Elimu Afrika, will run **two webinars** to present the details of this call and respond to applicants' questions. Potential applicants may consider **joint applications**, with a clear demonstration of the responsibilities of each partner institution.

ENQUIRIES

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SUBMISSION PORTAL

herirecruitment.mizizielimu.org

Outside the portal, proposals are
not considered

MAXIMUM BUDGET

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One million US dollars, covering 2027–2029

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East Africa Time

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