

UNICAF[®]

RESEARCH

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025 - FEBRUARY 2026

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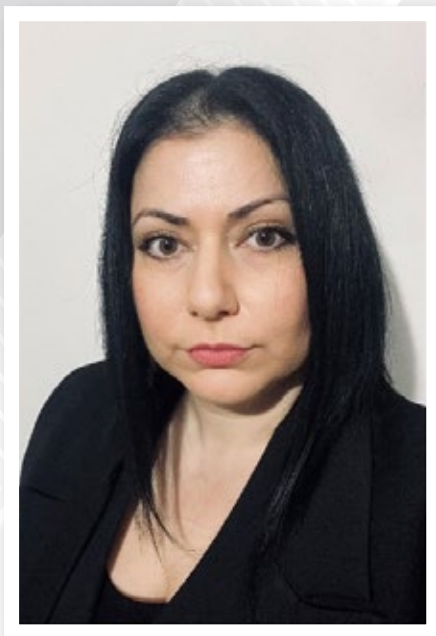
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Students and Colleagues,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Unicaf Research Newsletter. This issue reflects our continued commitment to research excellence, academic engagement, and institutional collaboration across our global network.

A central highlight of this edition is the Unicaf Master's Conference 2025, which brought together 2,368 delegates from 125 countries. The conference once again demonstrated the breadth and impact of Master's-level research across our Schools, reinforcing the transformative potential of postgraduate research in addressing global challenges and contributing to sustainable development.

This edition also features significant research activities at Unicaf Federal, including participation in the 2025 ASC AfCFTA Annual Conference and other international academic engagements addressing digital transformation, artificial intelligence, geopolitics, literature, and cultural studies. These contributions reflect Unicaf's active presence in regional and global scholarly dialogue.

At Unicaf University in Malawi, participation in the 8th ASRIC Congress and the 3rd ASRIC Bureau Meeting strengthened institutional engagement with the African Union's science, technology, and innovation agenda, highlighting opportunities for collaboration, research development, and policy contribution across the continent.

In our Students' Hub, Dr Anastasia Datsogianni offers a scholarly reflection on education as a catalyst for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasising the critical role of higher education in fostering inclusive and sustainable societies. Meanwhile, Eyes to the Future continues to showcase impactful doctoral research addressing digital financial innovation and healthcare workforce development within the African context.

As always, this edition concludes with recent publications, funding opportunities, and upcoming conferences to support your continued academic and research engagement.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to advancing research, innovation, and academic excellence across the Unicaf community.

Kind regards,

Dr Elena Papadopoulou

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning

Principal Editor, Unicaf Online Journal & Unicaf Research Newsletter

UNICAF MASTER'S CONFERENCE 2025: RESEARCH THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES AND COMMUNITIES



MASTER'S CONFERENCE

Unicaf Master's Conference (UMC) 2025 once again highlighted the significant, practice-oriented research carried out by Unicaf Master's students, reflecting global priorities such as sustainable development, digital transformation, public health, and educational innovation. As Unicaf continues to strengthen its research infrastructure through conferences, journals, and academic partnerships, the Master's Conference remains a flagship event, providing emerging scholars with a global platform to present their work, develop their academic identity, and contribute meaningfully to societal and professional advancement.

Key Highlights:

Impressive Attendance: Across five days, UMC2025 welcomed 2,368 delegates from 125 countries, creating a highly diverse academic space. Participation included 2,283 attendees and 85 panelists, reflecting strong engagement from Unicaf's global academic community.

School-Specific Participation: A total of 57 oral presentations were delivered across 27 MSc programmes, demonstrating the breadth and depth of Master's-level research at Unicaf:

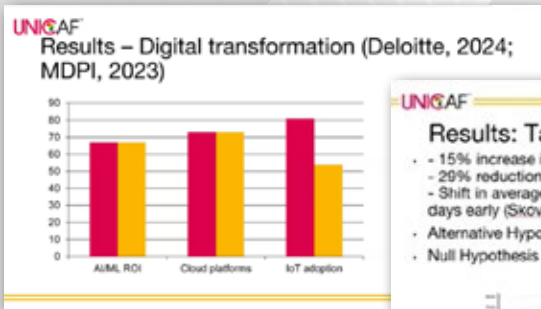
- School of Business: 20 presentations
- School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology & Engineering: 19 presentations
- School of Education, Humanities & Social Sciences: 18 presentations

Global Collaborations: UMC2025 showcased Unicaf's extensive academic partnerships, with presenters representing:

- 23 students from Liverpool John Moores University
- 23 students from the University of East London
- 2 students from the University of Suffolk
- 4 students from Unicaf University in Zambia
- 2 students from Unicaf University in Malawi
- 3 students from Unicaf Université

This year's programme also featured the first-ever French-language session, delivered by the School of Business, reflecting Unicaf's commitment to inclusivity and global accessibility.





UNIGAF Research Aim

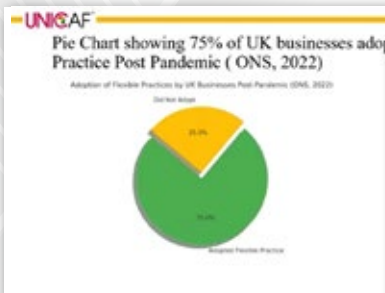
...tically investigate how spiritual intelligence (SI) informs ... and effective decision-making among senior leaders in

UNIGAF Results: Taxpayer behavior

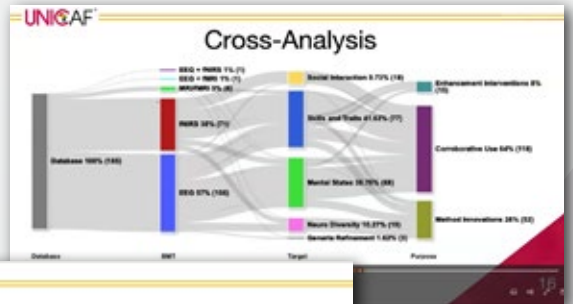
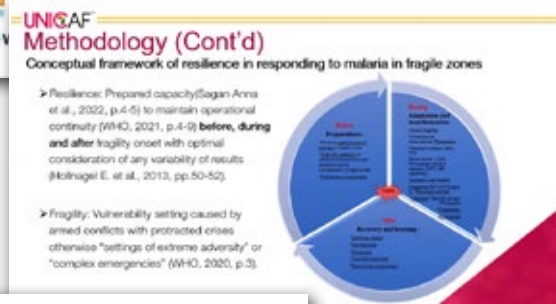
- 15% increase in early payments
- 20% reduction in late payments
- Shift in average payment timing: from 163 days late to 50 days early (Skov, 2023)
- Alternative Hypothesis 1 (H₁) is th
- Null Hypothesis (H₀) is thus reject

UNIGAF Introduction

- Importance of Sustainable Healthcare Design**
Sustainable designs support patients and staff while addressing environmental challenges in healthcare facilities.
- Environmental Impact of Traditional Construction**
Conventional construction uses hazardous materials causing climate change and resource depletion.
- Benefits of Sustainable Materials**
Sustainable materials reduce carbon emissions, conserve resources, and improve energy efficiency in healthcare buildings.
- Cost-effectiveness and Efficiency**



UNIGAF Post-harvest practices and value realization in Uganda's coffee sector.



UNIGAF Historical Context of Aid

- Marshall Plan, Post World War Aid
- Post-Colonial Development
- Structural adjustment (IMF/World Bank)
- MDGs and Results-Based Aid

Note: Aid has historically been donor-driven practice, often without and perpetuating colonial

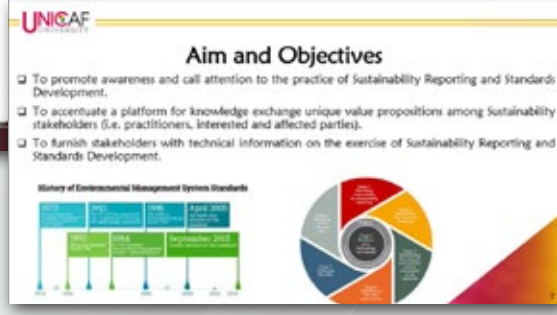
UNIGAF Table 1.0 Types of Trauma and Characters coping Mechanisms

Aspect	Celia (The Color Purple)	Seth (Beloved)
Types of Trauma	Physical abuse, sexual violence	Slavery trauma, maternal loss
Coping Mechanisms	Letters to God, supportive relationships	Isolation, reliance on memory
Resistance Strategies	Asserting independence	Violence, community building
Emotional Transformation	Self-love and assertiveness	Community understanding
Import of Relationships	Transformative connections	Complex relationships
Agency Development	From passive to active agent	Struggles for agency



UNIGAF Benefits of CSR

Innovative and Competitive Advantage
... and brand image
... loyalty and retention
... engagement, commitment and loyalty
... risks and business opportunities
... risks and compliance costs
... CSR, being largely voluntary, may be branding" than on genuine "caring" and



Diverse Programmes: Attendees were treated to a rich programme, including 4 plenary presentations, 1 interactive session, and 1 invited speaker.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OPENING ADDRESS

Opening the Third Annual Unicaf Master's Conference, **Dr Kevin Andrews, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer (Federal)**, welcomed participants to what he described as **“a celebration of innovation, research excellence, and global collaboration.”** Emphasising Unicaf's global reach, he noted that **“as we connect across continents and cultures, we embody the essence of Unicaf: accessible, high-quality education that transcends borders.”**



Dr Andrews highlighted the purpose of the conference as creating a space **“where postgraduate students could showcase their research, build confidence as emerging scholars, and engage with an international academic community.”** Reflecting on the evolution of the event, he reaffirmed that the conference continues to strengthen Master's research culture while expanding its global impact.

Central to the Vice-Chancellor's message was the transformative role of postgraduate research. He posed the guiding question of UMC2025: **“How can postgraduate research transform lives, communities, and global futures?”** He further stressed that **“research does not remain theoretical, but informs solutions to real-world challenges in health, business, education, technology, and beyond.”**

Addressing the broader mission of Unicaf, Dr Andrews underlined that the conference aligns fully with institutional priorities, including **“strengthening academic excellence, growing research capacity, and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals through higher education.”** He also emphasised that Master's research represents **“the bridge between theory and practice,”** where **“curiosity becomes contribution.”**

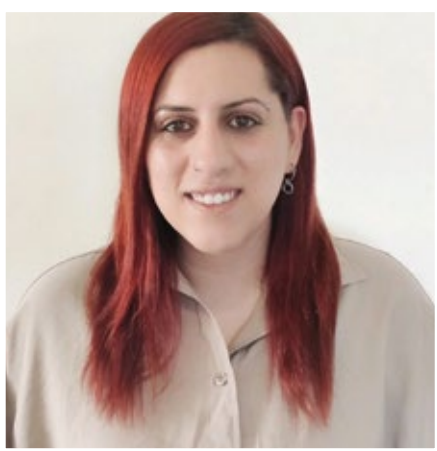
In acknowledging the significance of this newsletter's dedication to the conference, we extend a special mention to express our heartfelt gratitude to each distinguished speaker who contributed to the resounding success of this event. Your insights and expertise have truly enriched the academic tapestry of the Unicaf Master's Conference 2025.

This year's conference featured many impactful presentations by our esteemed colleagues from Unicaf University in Zambia, Unicaf Federal and University of Suffolk and Merito Universities in Poland.



Mrs Diana Abwooli Kobumanzi, Programme Leader in the School of Business at Unicaf University in Zambia, delivered a presentation titled **“Investor behavior in the age of instant news.”** Drawing on a systematic literature review, she examined how real-time financial news and social media influence investor sentiment and decision-making, highlighting the impact of cognitive and social biases such as information overload, herd behaviour, and overconfidence in contemporary financial markets.

Dr Reginald Dennis Gwisai, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Unicaf (Zimbabwe), explored the theme **“Accelerating the Transition to Net Zero Alignment, Energy and Carbon Management, Standards Development and Circularity in Developing Economies.”** His contribution emphasised the need for coordinated policies, robust standards development, and behavioural change to advance net zero and circular economy implementation, highlighting gaps in sectors such as agriculture, water, and energy within developing economies.



Dr Ioanna Koliandri, Academic Coordinator and Programme Leader in the School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences at Unicaf (Federal), addressed **“Perinatal mental health: A public health approach.”** Drawing on data from the INTERSECT programme in Cyprus, her contribution highlighted the prevalence and serious consequences of perinatal mental health conditions, underscoring the importance of respectful communication, informed choice, partner support, and continuity of care. The findings reinforced the need to embed perinatal mental health at the core of maternity services to improve outcomes for mothers, infants, and families.

Dr David James, Associate Professor in Sociology and Head of Law and Social Sciences at the University of Suffolk, explored **“Screentoria: Rethinking learning in screen-saturated classrooms.”** Drawing on the concept of screen-mediated learning spaces, his contribution examined how digital technologies shape attention and cognition in higher education, emphasising thoughtful classroom design, metacognitive strategies, and student self-efficacy as practical ways to harness the benefits of screen-rich learning environments.





Mrs Barbara Maluszynska, Learning Manager, Project Manager, and AI Education Manager at Merito Universities (Poland), examined **“Embracing AI for an effective workplace.”** Using a case study from the Merito Universities Group, her contribution highlighted the human and cultural dimensions of AI adoption in higher education, emphasising the importance of AI literacy, ethical awareness, and supportive learning environments in enabling faculty to move from initial scepticism to confident, transformative use of AI in academic practice.

Following the conference, the committee organised a ceremony awarding the best presentation from each school. Winners received a \$150 voucher, and the ceremony, held online on December 3rd, witnessed high participation. The winners were:

School of Business: Mrs Omotola Akande from Unicaf University in Zambia.

Omotola Akande is a Health and Safety Consultant with a strong background in public health and data science, dedicated to improving workplace safety through innovative, evidence-based approaches. She holds an MBA in Health Management from Unicaf University and focuses on integrating public health principles, data science, and construction safety practices. Her award-winning research, **“Use of Sustainable Materials in the Construction of Healthcare Facilities,”** examined the cost-effectiveness and environmental impact of eco-friendly building materials, highlighting energy efficiency, sustainability frameworks such as LEED and BREEAM, and practical applications within healthcare infrastructure.



School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering: Mrs Irene Wangechi Munene from Liverpool John Moores University.



Mrs Irene Wangechi Munene is a Water Engineer with over ten years of experience delivering large-scale water and drainage infrastructure projects across Kenya. Her expertise includes the design and implementation of innovative water and sanitation systems, leading multidisciplinary teams, and managing projects from concept to commissioning in compliance with regulatory and quality standards. Her award-winning research on Kenya’s progress towards SDG 6 examined achievements and persistent challenges in access to safe water and sanitation, highlighting the need for strengthened governance, sustainable financing, and climate-resilient systems to achieve universal access by 2030.



School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences: Mrs Rania Ayman Zein Hala Khaled from Unicaf in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University.

Rania Ayman Zein Hala Khaled is an experienced educator with over 20 years of teaching and academic leadership experience across Egypt, Norway, and the wider international education sector. Holding a background in Languages and Translation and a TEFL certification, she has taught students from Grade 3 to Grade 12 within the American, British, and International Baccalaureate systems. A UNICEF scholarship recipient and graduate of Liverpool John Moores University, her award-winning research focuses on inclusive

education, examining how quality teaching and teacher training impact the performance of SEN and low-achieving students. Her work identifies key school-based practices that promote equity, student well-being, and improved learning outcomes globally.

We extend our sincere appreciation to each speaker for their valuable contributions, making the Unicaf Master's Conference 2025 an intellectually stimulating and enriching experience.

Stay tuned for more insights and updates on upcoming academic endeavours!

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT UNICAF UNIVERSITY IN ZAMBIA

RESEARCH CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

Dr Daniel L. Mpolomoka (DVC Academic) represented Unicaf University in Zambia at the National Conference on **“What Works in Girls’ Education”**, held in Kampala, Uganda, from 1–3 October 2025. The conference was organised by Uwezo Uganda in partnership with Kyambogo University, the University of Cambridge’s REAL Centre, and RELI-Africa, and brought together researchers, policymakers, civil society actors, and education practitioners from over 22 countries.



The conference focused on evidence-based strategies for advancing girls’ education, addressing themes such as gender-responsive pedagogies, socio-economic and cultural barriers, digital inclusion, health and well-being, policy and financing, leadership and life skills, transitions to work, and the use of data and evidence to inform scalable interventions.

Across keynote addresses, panel discussions, and over 100 paper presentations, participants examined approaches to improving educational access, retention, and learning outcomes for girls in Uganda and the wider region.



Dr Mpolomoka presented two papers examining gender disparities in education in Zambia, contributing to comparative discussions on access to schooling and long-term educational outcomes. The conference also facilitated academic networking and institutional engagement, including preliminary discussions on future collaboration in research, community-based initiatives, and potential staff and student exchanges with regional universities.

Overall, participation in the conference supported scholarly exchange on girls’ education, strengthened regional research networks, and informed future research and institutional initiatives aligned with gender equity and quality education goals.



CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING IN DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

Unicaf University, in collaboration with Chisquares, hosted a two-day Capacity Building Training in Data Analysis and Research on 8–9 October 2025 via Zoom. The training aimed to strengthen research skills among postgraduate students and faculty through practical instruction in data analysis, scientific writing, and research dissemination.

The programme was facilitated by Dr Israel Agaku, Adjunct Clinical Professor at the University of California San Francisco and CEO of Chisquares, and Ms Lungile Nkosi, PhD Candidate at the University of Pretoria and COO of Chisquares. Sessions combined expert-led guidance with live demonstrations, covering data collection and cleaning, automated reporting, manuscript structuring, ethical use of AI in writing, reference management, and journal selection.

The training attracted strong engagement, with approximately 50 participants on Day 1 and 90 on Day 2. By the end of the programme, participants reported increased confidence in managing research projects, analysing data, and preparing manuscripts suitable for peer-reviewed publication. The initiative reflects Unicaf University's ongoing commitment to building research capacity and supporting high-quality academic output.



ICDE GLOBAL DOCTORAL SYMPOSIUM

Mrs Morenike Iyinjesu Onaolapo, a doctoral student at Unicaf University in Zambia, participated in the ICDE Global Doctoral Symposium and the 30th ICDE World Conference, held in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, from 10 to 13 November 2025. The event was hosted by the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and Massey University and brought together approximately 500 delegates from over 50 countries, including higher education leaders, researchers, and innovators in open and distance education.

The conference was organised around the theme **“Ako: Exchanging Ideas for Inclusive, Scalable and Sustainable Education”** and explored four key dimensions: accessibility and resilience, context and quality, indigeneity, and innovation and openness. The Global Doctoral Symposium provided a dedicated platform for doctoral candidates to present their research, receive expert feedback, and engage in scholarly exchange on emerging issues in inclusive and sustainable education.

During the symposium, Ms Onalapo presented her doctoral research and received constructive feedback from international experts, strengthening the methodological alignment and scholarly rigour of her study. The subsequent World Conference featured keynote addresses, panel discussions, poster sessions, and thematic presentations addressing the future of open, distance, and digitally mediated higher education, including the ethical and pedagogical implications of artificial intelligence and open learning practices

Overall, participation in the symposium and conference contributed to doctoral research development, enhanced Unicaf University's international visibility within the ICDE community, and supported ongoing engagement with global debates on inclusive, scalable, and sustainable higher education.



NSTC CONFERENCE

The Zambia Science Conference 2025 was held from 26 to 28 November 2025 at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka under the theme **“Harnessing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for a Resilient Zambia: Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Growth and Inclusive Development.”** The conference convened researchers, academics, policymakers, industry representatives, and development partners to examine the role of STI in addressing Zambia's socio-economic challenges.

Unicaf University was represented at the conference by Dr Clement Chela, Dean of the School of Health and Applied Sciences; Ms Emily Kamizi, Research Assistant and Programme Leader in Research and Innovation; and Ms Masozi Bweupe, Nursing Coordinator in the School of Health and Applied Sciences. Their participation contributed to engagement with national discussions on applied research, innovation, and knowledge transfer.

Key discussions at the conference focused on the importance of translating academic research into commercially viable, scalable, and patentable innovations, particularly in sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture, health, climate resilience, and industrial development. Emphasis was placed on strengthening innovation ecosystems, technology transfer mechanisms, and intellectual property management within higher education and research institutions.

During the awards ceremony, Ms Emily Kamizi received the 2025 Female Emerging Researcher Award in recognition of her contributions to research and innovation, particularly in areas with strong community impact and commercialisation potential. In addition, Unicaf University was awarded the R&D Institution of the Year 2025, acknowledging its growing role in applied research, innovation, and support for scalable and patentable research outputs.

Overall, the conference reinforced national priorities for innovation-led development and highlighted the contribution of Unicaf University and its researchers to Zambia's evolving science, technology, and innovation landscape.



RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT UNICAF UNIVERSITY IN MALAWI

8TH ASRIC CONGRESS

Dr Robert Ridley, Vice-Chancellor, participated in the 8th ASRIC Congress, organised by the African Union–Scientific, Technical and Research Commission (AU-STRC) and the African Scientific, Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC) Secretariat, held in Mombasa, Kenya, from 4 to 6 November 2025.

The Congress brought together representatives from approximately 30 African countries and served as a key forum for scientific advice to the African Union, with participation largely drawn from national academies of science across the continent. The meeting reviewed ASRIC's activities over the preceding year, including the establishment of ASRIC scientific journals, progress on the African Technology Transfer Framework, initiatives of the African Disaster Mitigation Research Centre in Egypt, developments in adaptation metrics for Africa's environmental landscape, and recent activities related to artificial intelligence research and ethics.

Held under the theme **“Inclusive and Community-Based Innovation for STI-driven Prosperity in Africa”**, the Congress featured keynote addresses on traditional medicine and science–policy integration. Participants engaged in several thematic working groups focusing on scaling inclusive innovations, strengthening learning institutions, financing innovation and small and medium-sized enterprises, and addressing cross-cutting issues relevant to community-based innovation. One working group specifically examined policy frameworks, monitoring and evaluation, gender considerations, environmental sustainability, ethics, and intellectual property.

Overall, the Congress facilitated high-level academic and policy dialogue on inclusive innovation in Africa, strengthened connections with senior scholars and African Union administrators, and contributed to ongoing discussions on aligning science, technology, and innovation with sustainable and community-focused development across the continent.

3RD ASRIC III BUREAU MEETING

The 3rd Bureau Meeting of the African Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC) was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 4 to 6 December, with Unicaf University represented by Dr Robert Ridley, Vice-Chancellor of Unicaf University in Malawi. ASRIC was established by the African Union in 2016 as a specialised technical advisory body following the adoption of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA). Its mandate is to promote scientific research and innovation in support of Africa's socio-economic development.

The meeting convened the newly elected ASRIC Bureau, in place since November 2024, to consider a number of substantive agenda items. These included the development of a revised ASRIC Strategic Plan aligned with the recently endorsed STISA 2034 framework, the accreditation of Obour University of Science and Technology as an AU–ASRIC Centre of Excellence in Technology Transfer, and the operationalisation and financing of an ASRIC Fund intended to support pan-African research and development activities.

Participation in the meeting was in the capacity of a resource person. Contributions were made across all agenda items, including the presentation of a short paper on possible approaches to the establishment and financing of the ASRIC Fund. Further engagement with the Bureau on this matter has been requested.

Discussions also highlighted potential opportunities for African higher education institutions to engage more closely with ASRIC, particularly through the Centres of Excellence framework. In addition, the Bureau indicated that ASRIC is expected to sign an agreement with the Chinese Academy of Sciences to support short-term specialist training in artificial intelligence for early-career African academics.

The meeting provided a valuable opportunity to engage with senior members of the African scientific community and the ASRIC Secretariat, and to remain informed of future developments in ASRIC's strategic and research-related activities.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT UNICAF FEDERAL

2025 ASC AfCFTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dr Reginald Dennis Gwisai, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for Science, Health Sciences, Engineering and Technology, participated in the 2025 ASC AfCFTA Annual Conference organised by the Africa Change Development Studies Institute. The conference was held from 1–2 October 2025 at the Museum of African Liberation and the Institute of African Knowledge (INSTAK) in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The conference brought together academics and practitioners from several countries to examine AfCFTA-driven investment, growth, and development in marginalised rural, urban, and resettled communities. Discussions focused on the role of higher and tertiary education in supporting the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area, with particular emphasis on entrepreneurship, sustainable development, digital inclusion, and continental collaboration.

A keynote presentation addressed how higher education institutions can align curricula, research, and skills development with AfCFTA priorities, promoting innovation, trade readiness, and inclusive economic growth. The conference also highlighted opportunities for short courses, capacity building for small and medium enterprises, and collaborative research initiatives in areas such as sustainable development, governance, and innovation.

Overall, participation in the conference strengthened academic dialogue on AfCFTA-related development, supported networking with regional institutions, and contributed to identifying future opportunities for research collaboration, joint publications, and capacity-building initiatives aligned with Africa's development agenda.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BY THE LACLIB RESEARCH GROUP

Dr Marine Meunier, Academic Training Provision Officer in the Academic Training Provision department, participated in the international conference **“Heureux qui comme Ulysse...Mémoires d'exil dans les littératures et les arts du Liban”**; organised by the LACLlib Research Group and held on 7–8 October 2025 at the University of Parma and online.

The conference examined exile as a central theme in Lebanese literature, cinema, and the arts, bringing together interdisciplinary perspectives on displacement, memory, identity, and cultural continuity. Scholars and writers from Europe, the Middle East, and North America explored exile as both a condition of trauma and a catalyst for creativity, highlighting the role of artistic expression in preserving memory and negotiating fragmented identities.

Key discussions addressed multilingualism, translingual expression, and the concept of the **“non-place”** as analytical frameworks for understanding diasporic belonging. Contributions on accented cinema, gendered exile, and postcolonial narratives enriched ongoing research on cultural hybridity and memory transmission, with relevance for comparative literature, intercultural studies, and curriculum development.

Overall, participation in the conference supported scholarly engagement with contemporary debates on exile and cultural identity and contributed valuable perspectives for research and teaching in transnational, multilingual, and intercultural contexts.

8TH ANNUAL DIGITAL AGENDA CYPRUS SUMMIT 2025

Mrs Despo Nicolaidou, Manager in the Instructional Design department, participated in the 8th Annual Digital Agenda Cyprus Summit 2025, organised by IMH Cyprus and Digital Agenda Cyprus and held on 9 October 2025 at the Nicosia Municipal Theatre.

The summit, themed “**Beyond AI**”, brought together regional and international experts to examine the societal, institutional, and educational implications of artificial intelligence and digital transformation. Discussions focused on areas such as digital governance, entrepreneurship, creative industries, unmanned systems, and the integration of AI across multiple sectors, with particular emphasis on ethical and human-centred approaches to technological innovation.

The event offered insights relevant to research and practice in online higher education, highlighting the growing importance of digital literacy, data analytics, and automation in educational design and learner support. These discussions informed ongoing research on AI-powered ecosystems for personalised and scaffolded learning, particularly in relation to ethical implementation and evidence-based instructional design.

Overall, participation in the summit supported continued engagement with current debates on AI and digital innovation and contributed to the refinement of AI-enhanced pedagogical approaches within online and digitally mediated learning environments.

IVTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE ROMANIAN CENTRE FOR RUSSIAN STUDIES

Dr Argyrios Tasoulas, Head of the Department of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences at the School of Doctoral Studies, participated in the IVth Annual International Conference of the Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, held at the University of Bucharest from 13 to 15 November 2025.

The conference focused on the war in Ukraine and its implications for the evolving international order, with particular attention to the European Union and NATO in the context of Russian offensive strategies. It brought together academics, diplomats, policymakers, and experts from universities and research centres across Europe, fostering dialogue between scholarly research and policy-oriented perspectives.



Participation in the conference provided an opportunity to present and discuss ongoing research on Russian foreign policy, receive critical feedback from international specialists, and engage with diplomats and policymakers on contemporary security and geopolitical challenges. The event also facilitated discussions on potential future academic collaborations, including research projects, doctoral supervision, and participation in joint publications.

Overall, the conference contributed to strengthening research networks, enhancing scholarly exchange, and supporting further academic engagement in the fields of international relations, security studies, and Russian foreign policy.

2025 NATIONAL ANNUAL QUALITY AWARDS (NAQA)

The 2025 National Annual Quality Awards (NAQA), organised by the Standards Association of Zimbabwe, were held on 25 November 2025 at the Hyatt Regency – The Meikles in Harare, Zimbabwe. The awards recognise organisations and individuals that demonstrate excellence in quality management, continuous improvement, and the application of standards across public and private sectors.

Dr Reginald Dennis Gwisai, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for Science, Health Sciences, Engineering and Technology, represented Unicaf University at the event. His participation reflected Unicaf's institutional engagement with national quality, sustainability, and standards-development initiatives.

The awards highlighted best practices in quality assurance, management systems, and performance excellence across multiple categories, including enterprise performance, products and services, exports, and individual contributions to quality advancement. National award recipients automatically qualify for consideration at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Annual Quality Awards.



Unicaf University was represented through a nomination in the Individual Quality Contributor of the Year category, recognising contributions in environmental management systems, sustainability and resilience frameworks, eco-labelling, net-zero aligned organisational practices, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. Although no final award was conferred, the nomination reflected the growing impact of Unicaf's work in quality, sustainability, and standards-related initiatives within Zimbabwe.

The event also facilitated engagement with industry leaders, standards developers, and quality professionals, reinforcing links between academia and industry in areas such as quality management, environmental sustainability, and trade-related standards. These interactions highlighted opportunities for future collaboration, knowledge exchange, and professional development, supporting Unicaf's broader objectives in research, teaching, and industry engagement related to sustainable development and quality assurance.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY INALCO

Dr Marine Meunier, Academic Training Provision Officer in the Academic Training Provision department, participated in the international conference « **La littérature grecque de Chypre au XXI^e siècle – identités, frontières, insularités en Méditerranée orientale** », organised by Stéphane Sawas (INALCO) and held on 27 November 2025 at INALCO – Maison de la Recherche, Paris.



The poster features logos for INALCO (Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique), CHYPRE CULTURE, CENTRE CULTUREL HELLENIQUE, CERLOM (Centre d'études et de recherches sur les littératures et les oralités du monde), and FONDATION inalco. A vertical blue bar on the left contains the word 'recherche'. The central image shows the ruins of the Arch of Titus in Jerusalem under a cloudy sky. Text on the poster includes the title, date (Jeudi 27 novembre 2025, 9h45-17h), location (Auditorium Dumézil), and contact information for Stéphane Sawas.

Colloque international
La littérature grecque de Chypre au XXI^e siècle : identités, frontières, insularités en Méditerranée orientale

Jeudi 27 novembre 2025
 9h45-17h
 Auditorium Dumézil

Inalco
 Maison de la recherche
 2, rue de Lille
 75007 Paris

Organisation : Stéphane Sawas
 contact : cristina.birsan@inalco.fr

The conference examined contemporary Greek-language literature from Cyprus through interdisciplinary perspectives, focusing on themes of identity, borders, memory, trauma, and insularity in the Eastern Mediterranean. Scholars from France, Cyprus, Greece, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Cyprus analysed recent literary developments alongside interactions with photography, music, archival practices, and other media, highlighting the growing international interest, particularly in France, in Cypriot cultural production.

Key discussions addressed the use of dialect, archival and forensic narrative approaches, polyphonic storytelling, and intermediality as strategies for representing displacement and contested memory. Contributions also explored postcolonial and ethical dimensions of narrative reconstruction, situating Cypriot literature within broader Mediterranean and global frameworks.

Participation in the conference facilitated scholarly exchange with international researchers and opened opportunities for future collaboration, including joint publications and participation in

forthcoming colloquia. Overall, the event contributed to advancing research on contemporary Cypriot literature and reinforced its relevance within Mediterranean, postcolonial, and cultural studies.

STUDENTS' HUB



In this issue, Dr Anastasia Datsogiani, Dean of the School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences at Unicaf Federal, offers a scholarly reflection on the transformative role of education in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The article situates education at the core of sustainable development, examining how inclusive and quality learning systems contribute to social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic resilience. Drawing on contemporary research and international policy frameworks, it further highlights the responsibility of higher education institutions in cultivating critical thinking, ethical leadership, and innovation in support of a more sustainable and inclusive future.

EDUCATION AS A CATALYST FOR ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In a world undergoing rapid social, economic, and environmental transformation, education stands as one of humanity's most powerful instruments for shaping a sustainable future. In 2015, the global community adopted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a shared blueprint for advancing social justice, environmental stewardship, and economic well-being by 2030. Guided by the United Nations, the SDGs highlight that meaningful progress relies on interconnected action and at the center of this global agenda lies education (United Nations, 2015).

Education is far more than the transfer of knowledge; it is a transformative force enabling individuals and communities to envision, create, and sustain better futures. SDG 4 calls for inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all, reflecting the recognition that education is both a human right and the foundation for sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2016). When learners are equipped with critical thinking, ethical awareness, and adaptability, they are better prepared to navigate the uncertainties of a rapidly evolving world (González-Salamanca, Agudelo & Salinas, 2020).

Building on this principle, quality education nurtures resilience and innovation. It empowers learners not only to access opportunities but also to generate them, cultivating curiosity, creativity, and flexibility -qualities essential in societies shaped by technological change and global interdependence (UNESCO, 2017). Beyond fostering individual growth, education strengthens social cohesion by equipping citizens to engage meaningfully in democratic processes and advocate for equity. Exposure to diverse perspectives promotes dialogue, empathy, and mutual respect, all of which are crucial for peaceful and thriving communities (Leicht, Heiss & Byun, 2018).



Furthermore, the influence of education extends well beyond the classroom. Communities with greater educational access often experience reduced poverty, improved health outcomes, and increased gender equality, supporting inclusion and well-being at scale (Asadullah, Webb & Islam, 2024; UNESCO, 2020).

Educated individuals are more likely to make informed decisions, participate in civic life, and champion inclusive policies. For women and girls in particular, access to quality education correlates strongly with economic empowerment and social agency. At the same time, education plays a pivotal role in promoting environmental sustainability. When learners understand the interconnections between human and natural systems, they are more inclined to adopt responsible practices and advocate for policies that safeguard ecosystems (Cai & Wolff, 2023).

Education also drives economic growth by equipping individuals with the skills necessary to thrive in modern labour markets. Competencies such as digital literacy, problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking not only enhance employability but also foster innovation and entrepreneurship (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2016). By bridging knowledge and practical application, education enables societies to respond effectively to emerging challenges while seizing new opportunities.

Equally significant is the role of higher education institutions, which occupy a unique position in advancing the SDGs. Universities and colleges serve as hubs of knowledge creation, research, and community engagement. Whole-institution approaches to sustainability demonstrate that embedding sustainability across institutional culture, governance, and teaching strengthens learners' capacity for systems thinking, adaptability, and responsible action while contributing to broader societal transformation (Holst, Grund & Brock, 2024). By integrating sustainability principles into curricula and institutional practice, higher education prepares graduates to address complex societal challenges with creativity, ethical judgment, and social responsibility (Angelaki et al., 2023; De la Poza et al., 2021). Teacher education further amplifies this impact, as educators trained in inclusive and forward-looking pedagogical approaches carry knowledge, values, and sustainable practices into classrooms, shaping future generations. Partnerships between universities, schools, and community organisations ensure that global goals are translated into meaningful local action (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2021).

Ultimately, sustainable development is a shared human endeavour, and education remains one of its most potent catalysts. When learners are empowered with knowledge, skills, and ethical awareness, they become agents of change capable of fostering equitable, resilient, and thriving societies (Leicht, Heiss & Byun, 2018). Investing in education is therefore an investment in possibility: it strengthens communities, nurtures innovation, and cultivates leadership for a sustainable future. Achieving the SDGs relies not only on international policy frameworks but also on the everyday contributions of educators, institutions, and learners alike. Education is not merely one goal among many - it is the foundation upon which all other aspirations for sustainable development rest (United Nations, 2015; UNESCO, 2016; UNESCO, 2017).

At Unicaf, we view education as a catalyst for transformation, shaping both individuals and societies. Through our Scholarship Programme, cutting-edge asynchronous and blended learning models, and partnerships with globally recognised universities, we equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking needed to navigate the complexities of the 21st century. In advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4, we are committed to fostering academic excellence, inclusivity, and lifelong learning. This commitment empowers students to become informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders capable of driving meaningful change within their communities and beyond.

These institutional efforts reflect the broader transformative power of education. By nurturing informed, engaged, and socially responsible citizens, education brings the world closer to a vision of equity, sustainability, and hope for all.

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EYES TO THE FUTURE



In this edition of Eyes to the Future, we continue to highlight the research contributions of our graduate students. This series showcases thesis projects that address pressing academic and societal challenges, providing insights into the motivations behind the research and its potential impact. Each month, we feature responses from selected graduates to three key questions:

What was your research about?

What inspired you to choose this topic?

How might your findings benefit Africa?

Recent graduates who wish to share their research are invited to contribute by responding to these questions at the provided [link](#).

In this edition of Eyes to the Future, we continue to showcase doctoral research that addresses critical institutional and societal challenges, highlighting both the motivation behind the research and its potential impact within Africa.

DR CHRISTOPHER OLOMUKORO

Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Information Technology
Unicaf University in Malawi



Christopher Olomukoro is a seasoned information technology professional with over 31 years of experience in the Information Technology and Payments Departments of the Central Bank of Nigeria, from which he recently retired as Deputy Director. He holds a first degree in Computer Science and a second degree in Advanced Information Technology and Business Management. His doctoral research reflects his long-standing engagement with financial systems, cybersecurity, and digital transformation.

Doctoral Thesis:

The Effects of Implementing Blockchain Technology in the Central Bank of Nigeria

Abstract:

This study examined the effects of implementing blockchain technology within the Central Bank of Nigeria, focusing on improving payment system efficiency, cybersecurity, and regulatory processes. The research addressed challenges associated with inefficient payment systems, including slow and insecure fund transfers, reliance on manual and semi-

automated processes, and regulatory constraints affecting the Nigerian financial system. A triangulation research approach was adopted, combining primary quantitative data and secondary qualitative analysis. Online surveys were administered using digital platforms, with data analysed using Jamovi and qualitative data analysis software. Findings confirmed that blockchain technology can enhance payment system performance, strengthen cybersecurity, and support effective regulatory oversight. The study contributed to the launch of Nigeria's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) and provides a foundation for future research and policy development in blockchain-based financial systems.

What was your research about?

CO: My research focused on the adoption of blockchain technology by the Central Bank of Nigeria, particularly through the implementation of a central bank digital currency. It examined how blockchain could address inefficiencies in payment systems, improve cybersecurity resilience, and strengthen regulatory mechanisms within central banking operations.

What led you to choose this topic for your PhD research?

CO: The topic was inspired by my professional experience at the Central Bank of Nigeria, where I observed persistent challenges in payment processing, security vulnerabilities, and regulatory limitations. These experiences motivated me to explore blockchain technology as a practical and transformative solution.

How do you think the findings of your research could be useful in Africa's context?

CO: The findings offer valuable insights for African central banks and financial institutions seeking to modernise payment systems. By adopting blockchain-based solutions, African economies can improve transaction security, enhance regulatory compliance, promote financial inclusion, and support the growth of digital currencies across the continent.

DR MUHAMMAD KAI IBRAHIM ERGO BIN MOHAMAD AZMI

Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Public Health

Unicaf University in Zambia



Muhammad Kai Ibrahim Ergo Bin Mohamad Azmi is a Public Health graduate and nursing educator currently teaching online in the Master of Nursing programme at Victoria University. His doctoral research reflects a strong commitment to workforce development, patient safety, and improving professional preparedness within specialised healthcare settings.

Doctoral Thesis:

The Impacts of Nursing Induction Programmes on Newly-Joined Nurses in Singapore Operating Rooms: A Mixed-Methods Study

Abstract:

This mixed-methods study explored the impacts of operating room nursing induction programmes on newly-joined nurses in Singapore. Current induction programmes often attempt to compress complex perioperative knowledge and skills into short timeframes, despite such competencies requiring extended clinical experience. Guided by Benner's From Novice to Expert theory and Warren and Mills's Conceptual Model of Nursing Motivation, the study adopted an explanatory sequential design. The quantitative phase involved a

cohort study of 91 newly-joined nurses, while the qualitative phase used a phenomenological approach with eight participants. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS and Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis. Findings revealed significant challenges affecting nurses' confidence, competence, and ability to deliver safe operating room care. The study provides evidence-based recommendations for improving induction programme structure, strengthening perioperative education, and addressing staff retention challenges.

What was your research about?

MK: My research examined how operating room induction programmes affect newly-joined nurses' ability to adapt, perform effectively, and provide safe patient care. It explored both the measurable outcomes of induction experiences and the lived experiences of nurses transitioning into high-pressure clinical environments.

What led you to choose this topic for your PhD research?

MK: The topic was driven by my interest in improving nurse induction systems and supporting early-career nurses. Observing the difficulties faced by newly-joined nurses in operating room settings motivated me to investigate how induction programmes could be redesigned to better support competence, confidence, and well-being.

How do you think the findings of your research could be useful in Africa's context?

MK: The findings provide important lessons for African healthcare systems, particularly in designing realistic and supportive induction programmes. Applying these insights can help improve nurse preparedness, reduce early-career burnout, strengthen retention, and enhance patient safety across healthcare institutions in Africa.

RECENT UNICAF PUBLICATIONS

NEW PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS BY OUR STUDENTS AND FACULTY



STUDENTS:

Adetunji K. Ilori, Adebisi Michael, Fatunsin L. Modupe, Olaiya O. O, and Toyosi Adebambo, **“Modelling Lagos State, Nigeria Rainfall using Real Life Data: An application of SARIMA Model,”** International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Publications (IJMRAP), Volume 7, Issue 10, pp. 122-127, 2025

Ilori, A. K., Adeyeye, A. C., Oladimeji, D., Adebambo, T., Michael, A. (2025). On the Weighted 2-Parameter Rayleigh Distribution. International Journal of Statistical Distributions and Applications, 11(2), 56-65.

<https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdsda.20251102.14>

Iluyomade N.O., Afxentiou G. (2025). Embedding innovative strategic practices (ISPS) into Nigeria’s agrarian MSMEs: A conceptual exploration of challenges and opportunities. Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual EuroMed (EMRBI), Porto, PORTUGAL

Mkombo, A. & Wahua, L. (2024). Review of Behavioural Intention to use Mobile Financial Services. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science. 8(1). 520-1538. 10.47772/IJRISS.2024.801113

Munyua, D. O. & Mulero, A. W.(2025). Integrative and Collaborative Civil-Military Relations: A Comparative Assessment of Military Support to Civil Institutions in Uganda. East African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 8(1), 226-250.

<https://doi.org/10.37284/eajis.8.1.2927>

FACULTY:

Fiorito, L and Selvarajah, S (2025). **‘Media’s Responsibility to Report (R2R): The Case for An International Legal Obligation’** in Sahin, S, Insights on Journalism and Human Rights, London, Routledge, p. 106-119, doi:

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Mpolomoka, D.L. (2025). Impact of Academic Capitalism on Quality Higher Education: A Utilitarian View. In M. Kayyali (Ed.), Navigating Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Global Higher Education (pp. 393-406). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.

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<https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v16i3.21864>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES IF YOU HAVE THE IDEA; WE CAN HELP YOU WITH FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



Research Grants on Education: Small

Area/Disciplines/Themes: The Small Research Grants on Education Program supports education research projects that will contribute to the improvement of education

Deadline: 15 April

FELLOWSHIPS / AWARDS / COURSES LIST OF FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS AND COURSES



[Caroline Goldman - Cassagnol Fellowship](#)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: supports conservation researchers and academic professionals committed to advancing biodiversity conservation and sustainable development worldwide.

Deadline: 15 April

[Elizabeth Casson Trust Doctoral Studies Award 2026: Funding to Advance Occupational Therapy Research.](#)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: supports doctoral-level research aimed at strengthening the evidence base of occupational therapy.

Deadline: 15 April

CALLS FOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS (WORKSHOP / WEBINARS) UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

UNICAF UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL RESEARCH GROUPS (FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS)

The Doctoral Research Groups DRGs's aim is to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange and feedback provision between doctoral researchers and faculty, with a view of advancing original and rigorous research. The initiative is aimed at Unicaf University doctoral researchers and faculty, during which doctoral researchers present ideas and share expertise that can enhance their research. The open dialogue between doctoral researchers working on similar subjects will facilitate information exchange and will be a vibrant forum in which students can receive feedback on their work.

The next Doctoral Research Groups are held on:

Date and Time: 2 April 2026, 14:00 - 16:00 (Cyprus time, UTC+03:00)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Law and politics

Presenters: To Be Announced

Date and Time: 16 April 2026, 14:00 - 16:00 (Cyprus time, UTC+03:00)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Public Health

Presenters: To Be Announced

Date and Time: 7 May 2026, 14:00 - 16:00 (Cyprus time, UTC+03:00)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Business

Presenters: To Be Announced

Date and Time: 21 May 2026, 14:00 - 16:00 (Cyprus time, UTC+03:00)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Information Technology

Presenters: To Be Announced

Date and Time: 11 June 2026, 14:00 - 16:00 (Cyprus time, UTC+03:00)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Business

Presenters: To Be Announced

Date and Time: 25 June 2026, 14:00 - 16:00 (Cyprus time, UTC+03:00)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Education

Presenters: To Be Announced

More information regarding the Doctoral Research Groups can be found on our [webpage](#).

OTHER NEWS - WHAT WE THINK MIGHT INTEREST YOU



DON'T MISS OUT: OPEN CALL FOR PAPERS: UNICAF ONLINE JOURNAL!

Special Issue in Education: “Teaching and Learning in Modern Multilingual and Multicultural Classrooms”

This issue explores the vital role of multilingualism and multiculturalism in education, highlighting how these themes support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We invite research that demonstrates the transformative power of cultural and linguistic diversity in educational settings.

Special Issue in Technology and Sciences: “AI and ML Applications in RIST to Attain SDGs in a Changing Industrial Landscape”

This issue focuses on the impact of AI and Machine Learning in enhancing industrial practices, problem-solving, and operational efficiencies, showcasing their alignment with the SDGs.

The Unicaf Online Journal accepts diverse research topics, promoting interdisciplinary approaches within the educational field. We encourage researchers worldwide to contribute and join this collaborative scholarly endeavour. This open-access journal is published bi-annually, with issues released in July and December.

For more information and submission guidelines, please visit our [webpage](#).

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The Unicaf Online Journal (UOJ) is inviting scholars and professionals to join our team of volunteer peer reviewers across any of our five disciplines. By serving as a reviewer, you'll help ensure the quality and rigour of our publications while providing constructive feedback to support authors. UOJ is dedicated to a double-blind peer review process and timely, thorough assessments.

We welcome applications from those with a doctoral degree, relevant professional experience, or active research in a related field.

If you are interested, please complete our [Google form](#) with details of your research specialisations. For more information, including guidelines for submitting a paper or becoming a reviewer, visit the [UOJ website](#) and refer to the Call in a [previous edition of the Unicaf Research Newsletter](#). We look forward to your contributions!

REMINDER: SHARE YOUR PUBLICATIONS AND GET FEATURED!



We would like to take this opportunity to kindly remind everyone that we welcome doctoral and Master's students (or graduates) who have already published, or are in the process of publishing their work to share their peer-reviewed publications with us by utilising the following link: <https://forms.gle/u6jyfopDaCyUfvbY8>. Additionally, please mention whether the publication is affiliated with Unicaf / Unicaf University.

This issue focuses on the impact of AI and Machine Moreover, we extend the same invitation to faculty members who have publications to share. If you are a faculty member, please send us your publications (with correct reference or DOI) to research.office@unicaf.org. Kindly indicate whether the publication is affiliated with Unicaf / Unicaf University, as this information will assist us in accurately registering your publications in our database.

Please note that only Unicaf-affiliated publications will be featured in the "Recent Unicaf Publications" section of our Unicaf Research Newsletter. By sharing your publication, whether as a student or faculty member, you will also have your work registered in our database, which is accessible to all via the following links

For student publications: <https://www.unicaf.org/research/publications/students-alumni/>

For faculty publications: <https://www.unicaf.org/research/publications/faculty/>

The guidelines for institutional affiliations for academic submissions can be found [here](#).

We look forward to receiving your valuable contributions!



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