

UNICAF[®]

RESEARCH

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY – MARCH 2024

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Editor's Note

Dear students and colleagues,

Greetings and welcome to the latest edition of the Unicaf Research Newsletter. We're thrilled to have you on board as we embark on another exciting journey through the realms of groundbreaking research and innovation.

This issue features comprehensive coverage of the National Symposium on Focused Intervention Training and Support (FITS) on dementia care between the University of Huddersfield, UK, Kanyama General Hospital, and Unicaf University in Zambia. Further to this information on the establishment of Research Dissemination Seminars by Unicaf University in Malawi and a Statistics Camp can be found in the sections that follow. Also, a brief interview with one of our esteemed doctoral graduates emphasises the stamina required for pursuing a doctoral degree but also shows how Unicaf's flexible learning can help in completing this degree. Notably, this is complemented by the inaugural call for papers for the Unicaf Online Journal in Technology and Sciences.

In this edition, we've curated a diverse selection of articles that delve into the frontiers of knowledge, spanning disciplines from education and public health to business. Our aim is to keep you informed about the latest trends, discoveries, and debates shaping the landscape of current research.

As we navigate the vast sea of research, we're committed to bringing you content that is not only informative but also thought-provoking. Whether you're an avid researcher, a curious student, or a professional seeking to stay ahead in your field, we believe there's something for everyone within the pages of the Unicaf Research Newsletter.

We also encourage you to actively engage with us. Your insights are invaluable, and we're always eager to foster a community where ideas can be exchanged and conversations can flourish.

Thank you for being a part of the Unicaf Research community. Together, let's explore the frontiers of knowledge and ignite the spark of intellectual curiosity.

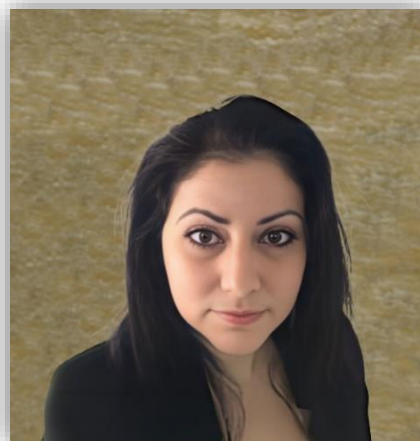
Kind regards,

Dr Elena Papadopoulou

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Doctoral Studies and Research

Principal Editor, Unicaf Online Journal

Principal Editor, Unicaf Research Newsletter



The Unicaf Research Newsletter provides information on research activities, events, publications and funding opportunities that you could apply for. If you need any support during the application stage or want to promote a funding opportunity, conference, event or a new paper in the newsletter, email the Research Office at research.office@unicaf.org.

Research activities at Unicaf University in Malawi

Monthly Research Dissemination Seminars

Unicaf University in Malawi, a pioneer in online higher education in Africa, proudly announces its Monthly Research Dissemination Seminars, a platform designed to showcase the groundbreaking doctoral studies conducted by its students and academic staff. With a recent graduation ceremony in August 2023 celebrating 444 successful students, including 22 doctoral graduates in education, finance, accounting, and administration, Unicaf University in Malawi continues its commitment to research excellence.

These seminars, scheduled every last Tuesday of the month starting January 2024, will provide a unique opportunity for both local and international audiences to delve into ongoing and completed doctoral studies. The venue for these engaging sessions will be the Unicaf University Hall/Amphitheatre, accommodating up to 100 attendees. The seminars, delivered through live presentations and research posters, will also extend to virtual platforms, allowing global participation.

With an impressive lineup of recent doctoral graduates presenting their research, Unicaf University in Malawi invites all interested parties to register and join this enlightening initiative, furthering the dissemination of knowledge and fostering a collaborative research community.

For more information and to register, please contact the Accreditation Officer, John Banda, h.banda@unicafmalawi.com

The insightful session, featuring Dr Martha Mondwa, a Unicaf University in Malawi doctoral graduate who is now a Senior Lecturer, and Director of Clinical Practice at Unicaf University, took place on Tuesday, January 30th, 2024, from 15:00 – 17:00 Malawi time. The session delved into the topic: "Quality Assurance factors that affect the delivery of quality higher education: A focus on private higher education institutions in Malawi."

Mark your calendars for upcoming sessions! Stay tuned as the names of the distinguished presenters will be announced by Unicaf University in Malawi each month.

Save the dates for these insightful sessions:

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

Tuesday, May 28, 2024



Research activities at Unicaf University in Zambia

An Update by Dr Marirajan Thiruppathi Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation, Unicaf University in Zambia

National Symposium Unveils Ground-breaking Recommendations for Dementia Care in Zambia

After two years of dedicated collaborative training and research on Focused Intervention Training and Support (FITS) on dementia care between the University of Huddersfield, UK, Kanyama General Hospital, and Unicaf University in Zambia, the National Symposium on the outcome of FITS Training/Research Program in Dementia Care took center stage on the 19th of January 2024, in Lusaka.



The symposium, well attended by 47 participants including academics, health professionals, stakeholders, and members of the public, served as a platform for unveiling groundbreaking insights and outcomes derived from the comprehensive FITS (Focused Interventions Training & Support) program.

The event commenced with an impactful inaugural address by Dr Christine Phiri Mushibwe, Vice Chancellor of Unicaf University in Zambia, emphasising the enduring impact of collaborative efforts on person affected by dementia. Dr

Marirajan Thiruppathi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, then provided an insightful overview of the symposium's objectives, setting the stage for a day filled with enlightening sessions.

Theme I: FITS Program Implementation: Challenges and Opportunities moderated by Dr Clement Chela, Dean, School of Health and Applied Sciences of Unicaf University in Zambia, this session delved into the challenges and opportunities encountered during the implementation of the FITS program at Kanyama Hospital. Dr Rooke presented the results, offering a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved.

Theme II: Impact Assessment Case Studies by DCCs under the moderation of Masozi, Dementia Care Coaches (DCCs) presented four impactful case studies by Dr Thomson Lukisa, Dr Thando Agape Dube, Mr. Franklin Munsanje and Mr. Mills M. Mulale, covering various clinical diagnosis and management of person affected by dementia. The interactive question-and-answer session that followed allowed for engaging discussions and knowledge exchange.

Theme III: Best Practices and Innovations moderated by Dr Daniel Mpolomoka, Dean, School of Education Humanities and Social Sciences of Unicaf University in Zambia, this session showcased best practices and innovations in dementia care. Presentations by Dr Thiruppathi, Dr Albert Tambeke, Ms. Emily, and Dr Mbono Dube provided valuable insights into online focus groups, innovative approaches, and challenges faced by non-medical DCCs.

Theme IV: Panel Discussion on Policy Implications of FITS Program. The symposium concluded with a thought-provoking panel discussion moderated by Dr Lameck Mwewa, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Unicaf University in Zambia. The panel, comprising experts such as Dr Rooke, Dr Wilson Mbewe, Dr Thiruppathi, and Mr. Glan.

The panelists discussed future directions, advocating for continued research collaboration, policy advocacy, and the integration of FITS principles into broader healthcare frameworks.

Key Policy Recommendations:

- **Community Awareness and Stigma Reduction:** The symposium recognized the prevailing stigma associated with dementia, particularly in rural communities where patients are sometimes treated as victims of witchcraft. The importance of creating awareness was underscored, emphasising the need for targeted community engagement initiatives. Capacity building should extend to faith-based organisations, involving church priests and traditional healers to dispel myths and promote understanding of dementia.
- **Policy Implications:** The existing national policy on elderly persons lacks specific provisions addressing dementia care. The symposium highlighted the imperative to advocate for policy amendments or dedicated policies that comprehensively address the unique needs of dementia patients. This involves incorporating FITS principles into healthcare policies to provide a structured and supportive framework for dementia care initiatives.
- **Community-Based Care Homes:** The nature of care homes for dementia patients was discussed, emphasising the preference for community-based centres over institutional facilities. Community-based care homes offer a more personalised and inclusive environment, aligning with person-centred care principles. The symposium recommended a shift towards establishing such centres to enhance the quality of life for dementia patients.
- **Integration of FITS into Higher Education Institution Academic Curriculum:** To ensure the sustainability and widespread adoption of FITS principles, the symposium proposed the integration of the FITS curriculum into existing academic programs. This includes medical, nursing, clinical medicine, and social work curricula. By incorporating dementia care education at the academic level, future healthcare professionals would be better equipped to address the unique challenges posed.



In conclusion, the National Symposium successfully disseminated valuable insights, case studies, best practices, and policy implications.

The collaborative efforts between institutions and the active engagement of participants contributed to advancing dementia care standards and fostering a holistic understanding of challenges and opportunities in the field.

Research Day event: Research discussion on the Identification Research Gaps and Opportunities in Dementia Care Research in Africa

On January 12, 2024, Unicaf University in Zambia held a significant Research Day event, where Dr Rooke, Senior Lecturer in School of Nursing Science, Huddersfield University, UK, delivered an enlightening presentation on the critical gaps in dementia care research specific to Zambia and Africa. Dr Rooke's presentation focused on identifying key research gaps, shedding light on critical areas that need attention within the context of dementia care in Africa. Some of the highlighted gaps included the limited policy framework, an emphasis on communicable diseases, insufficient resources, issues of stigma and awareness, workforce capacity, integration into general health systems, caregiver support, and challenges related to research and data collection.

The interactive session, attended by 12 faculty members representing diverse disciplines such as the School of Health and Applied Sciences, Management, and Social Sciences, provided a platform for fruitful discussions. Dr Rooke not only outlined the existing gaps but also underscored potential areas of opportunity for collaborative research and publication among faculty members.

The engagement featured brainstorming exercises related to the presentation's theme, fostering a collaborative environment for addressing the identified gaps and advancing research in dementia care within the academic community.

Unicaf University is committed to promoting impactful research that addresses real-world challenges, and this event exemplifies our dedication to advancing knowledge and making a positive impact in the field of healthcare.

For more information about the National Symposium, please contact: Dr Thiruppathi at m.thiruppathi@zambia.unicaf.org and/or research.innovation.centre@zambia.unicaf.org



Doctoral Insights: A Conversation with Our Accomplished Graduate

Mini interview with our doctoral graduate Dr Edward Kalisa

Dr Edward Kalisa brings over two decades of extensive expertise encompassing policy formulation, strategic planning, research, and project management. Currently serving as the Secretary General of Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) since April 2016, he oversees the effective implementation and monitoring of RGB's programs, ensuring excellence in service delivery and promoting good governance principles. As the Chief Accounting Officer, (CAO) Dr Kalisa actively engages in fund raising and resource optimization. His prior roles include serving as Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Sports and Culture and the Ministry of Youth. A recent PhD in Business Administration from the Unicaf University in Zambia complements his academic



achievements, including a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership and degrees in Management from esteemed institutions.

Q: Reflecting on your doctoral journey, what key insights or lessons did you gain throughout the completion of your PhD, and how have these experiences shaped your perspective as a researcher?

EK: Given the nature of my work, I was initially skeptical that I would not get time to study PhD but later, I realised that, everything we do in life is a matter of choice. The flexible nature of Unicaf University PhD program also allowed me to keep hope that the journey was worth taking. I have realised that, there are always ways to achieve what we want as long as we make a decision and devise strategies to put the decision into action. The PhD journey has changed the way I manage time and I will never say that I cannot do this or that, because I am busy. I learnt that everything we do or fail to do depends on the importance we attach to it.

Q: As a recent doctoral graduate, can you share specific challenges you faced during your research and the strategies you employed to overcome them, ultimately leading to the successful completion of your PhD?

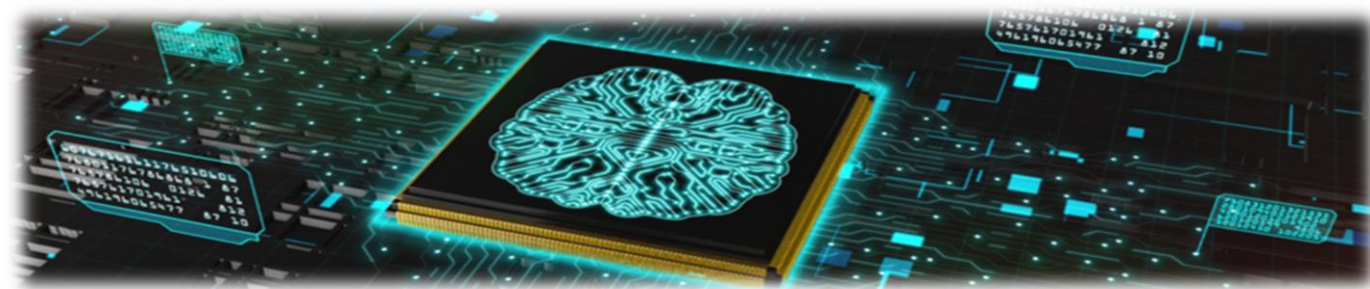
EK: Undertaking a project like a PhD is not something easy; it requires total re-organisation of one's lifestyle. The first thing I had to do was to be more organised than I had been and to be very strict in managing time. So, this necessitated re-organising my life to ensure that I manage work, studies and get time for my family. Part of the re-organisation also demanded that I make exercising part of my life schedule. Regular workout made a very big difference; it helped me remain healthy and fit in the midst of the extremely busy schedule. I also came to learn that every situation however bad it may be leaves something positive both to individuals and collectively. COVID-19 was one of the most tragic pandemics the world has ever had; it consumed many lives, threatened everyone and changed the world order. With all the challenges that came with COVID-19, I took advantage of the numerous lockdowns where work was almost at a standstill to do a big part of my thesis. I completed the parts that required a lot of reading and writing that would otherwise have been difficult during the normal situation.

Q: Looking ahead, how do you envision applying the knowledge and skills acquired during your doctoral studies in your future career or within your academic pursuits? What areas or projects are you particularly passionate about exploring?

EK: What I do in my current role involves a lot of research and the skills gained from my PhD program have enabled me to make contribution to the research we do. I believe the skills gained will continue to help me make significant contribution to the research work we do in the institution I work for. Skills gained will also help me continue doing publications on a number of areas especially those related to service quality and Rwanda's home grown solutions.

*** We are extremely pleased and grateful to Dr Kalisa for sharing his experience of obtaining a PhD from Unicaf University in our latest research newsletter. We express our heartfelt thanks to Dr Kalisa for taking the time to contribute to our publication and for being a valuable part of it. We truly appreciate his willingness to share his experience with our readers.*

Unicaf Online Journal of Technology and Sciences – 1st Call for Papers



It is with great pleasure that we announce the launch of the inaugural call for papers for the Unicaf Online Journal – Technology and Sciences.



Our special issue, titled "Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) Applications in Research, Innovation, Science and Technology (RIST) to attain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a changing Industrial Landscape", explores the intricate relationship between AI as a catalyst, augmenting intelligence and as a problem-solving approach while enhancing incorporation of AI, adoption of AI technologies, and the partnership nexus to deliver AI driven technologies and outcomes, massive data sets and improvement of products and processes, data siloes and disciplines, improving operational efficiency of complex scientific issues, emphasizing their pivotal role in advancing all aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The issue aims to showcase research and insights that illuminate how embracing Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in higher education and industrial settings can effectively align with and contribute to each of the SDGs.

To learn more and submit your work, kindly access the call here:
UNICAF Online Journal in Technology and Sciences Call for Papers

Questions may be directed to the Special Volume Editor-in-Chief Dr Reginald Dennis Gwisai: info@uoj.unicaf.org

Deadline for paper submission: April 1st, 2024

For guidelines on submissions please visit [Author Resources](#), [UoJ Paper Template](#) and [Submissions](#).

We thank you for joining us on this editorial adventure, and we look forward to receiving your submissions.

RECENT UNICAF PUBLICATIONS

New peer-reviewed publications by our students and faculty



STUDENTS

Kayange, N.; Hau, D.K.; Pain, K.; Mshana, S.E.; Peck, R.; Gehring, S.; Groendahl, B.; Koliopoulos, P.; Revocatus, B.; Msaki, E.B.; et al. Seroprevalence of Dengue and Chikungunya Virus Infections in Children Living in Sub-Saharan Africa: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Children* 2023, 10, 1662. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10101662>

Tang, W. C. (2023). Motivation and secondary school teachers' job satisfaction in Hong Kong. *Jilin Daxue Xuebao (Gongxueban)/Journal of Jilin University (Engineering and Technology Edition)*, 42(3), 274. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/QZS5U>

Umute, O. M., & Adegbite, W. M. (2023). Mitigating the impact of cross-culture on project team effectiveness in the Nigerian oil and gas industry: The mediating role of organizational culture and project leadership. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 8(1), 100653. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100653>

FACULTY

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Selvarajah, S., Kenar, N., Shaw, I. S., & Dhakal, P. (Eds.). (2024). *Xenophobia in the Media: Critical Global Perspectives* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Xenophobia-in-the-Media-Critical-Global-Perspectives/Selvarajah-Kenar-Shaw-Dhakal/p/book/9781032557038>

Stefanidis, Abraham & Banai, Moshe & Newbury, William & Fainshmidt, Stav & Richter, Henning & Schinzel, Ursula & Kong, Yin & Erkus, Ahmet & Shakirova, Svetlana & Ozbek, Mehmet & Goelzner, Herbert & Shetach, Ana & Sigri, Unsal. (2023). Managers' dispositions toward formal contracts: A cross-country examination. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(23\)00629-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(23)00629-X)

Waseem, F., Sohail, M., Lone, S.A., Chambashi, G. (2023). Numerical simulations of heat generation, thermal radiation and thermal transport in water-based nanoparticles: OHAM study. *Sci Rep* 13, 15650 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-42582-4>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

If you have the idea; We can help you with funding opportunities



[Bringing Research Home 2024 – 2025](#) (for Young Researchers)

Deadline: 7 March

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Humanities and Social Sciences in eastern Africa

[UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\) - Funding for early stage development of new healthcare interventions](#)

Deadline: 13 March

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Global Health

[IBRO Parenthood Grants](#) (for early-career Principal Investigators who are approaching parental leave)

Deadline: 15 March

Area/Disciplines/Themes: any discipline

[International Human Frontier Science Program Organization](#) (for Researchers) (check [guidelines](#))

Deadline: 19 March

Area/Disciplines/Themes: basic research studying fundamental problems on all organizational and trophic levels of life sciences

[Public Health Intervention Development \(PHIND\)](#) (for Researchers)

Deadline: 19 March

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Global Public Health Challenges

[FONDATION FYSSSEN - Post-doctoral study grants: Aim & award](#) (for post-doctoral researchers)

Deadline: 29 March

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Ethology, Paleontology, Archaeology, Anthropology, Psychology, Epistemology, Logic and Sciences of nervous system

[IBRO Collaborative Research Grants](#) (for researchers)

Deadline: 31 March

Area/Disciplines/Themes: to foster international scientific collaboration and development of human resources within and between IBRO regions

[Small Research Grants Program](#) (for Researchers)

Deadline: 30 April

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Education

[Nestlé Foundation for the study of problems of nutrition in the world](#) (for young researchers)

Deadline: 10 May

Area/Disciplines/Themes: human nutrition research issues

FELLOWSHIPS / AWARDS / COURSES
List of fellowships, awards and courses



[Associate Directors of Studies \(DEA\) program](#) (for Researchers)

Deadline: 18 March

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Humanities and Social Sciences

[CAS President's International Fellowship Initiative \(PIFI\)](#) (for PhD students, Postdoctoral Researchers, Scientists)

Deadline: 31 March / 1 September

Area/Disciplines/Themes: any discipline. For Postdoctoral researchers to hold a PhD in natural or technological sciences

[Wellcome Career Development Awards](#) (for mid-career researchers)

Deadline: 11 April

Area/Disciplines/Themes: any discipline as long as it has the potential to improve human life, health and wellbeing, and aligns with their funding remit.

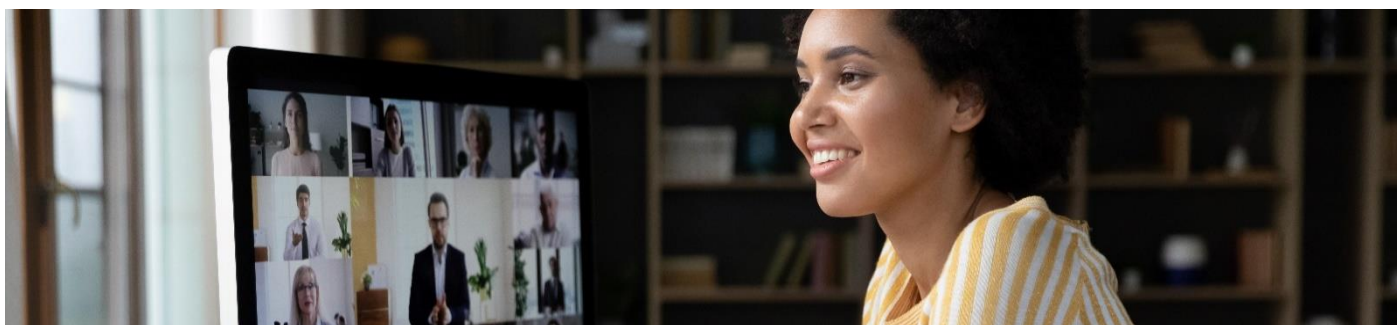
[Wellcome Discovery Awards](#) (for established researchers)

Deadline: 16 April

Area/Disciplines/Themes: any discipline as long as it has the potential to improve human life, health and wellbeing, and aligns with their funding remit.

CALLS FOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS (WORKSHOP / WEBINARS)

Upcoming conferences and events



[BIEA Annual Conference 2024 – Call for Abstracts](#) : A Changing World

Deadline: 20 February

Dates: 20 – 21 March 2024

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Humanities and Social Sciences in Africa

[Unicaf Graduate Conference](#) (for Doctoral Students) - Reminder

Dates: 15 – 19 April 2024

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Education, Social Sciences, Law and Politics, Business, Humanities, Public Health, Technology

[Webinar for Statistics - Unlock the Power of Data: Statistics Series Camp](#)

Embark on a transformative journey into the world of statistics with our exclusive Statistics Series Camp that will run through 2024. In the realm of research, statistics serves as the indispensable compass, guiding us through the intricacies of data interpretation, drawing meaningful conclusions, and unlocking the true potential of information.

Our camp curriculum is crafted to cater to both Master's and Doctoral levels, from beginners to seasoned researchers. Topics range from fundamental statistical concepts to advanced methodologies. More specifically, the series will include numerous webinars/workshops on defining variables and entering data into SPSS and R, measurements and descriptive and inferential statistics, descriptions of Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM) and correlations and linear regressions to coding in qualitative research and transcription, and many more.

Whether you are a Master's or a Doctoral student, or you are studying public health, business, education, or any other field, statistics is a universal language. It transcends disciplinary boundaries, fostering collaboration and enhancing the credibility of research outcomes. As such, even faculty members who wish to expand their knowledge in the field can attend and participate.

Don't miss this opportunity to sharpen your statistical acumen and become a more effective and confident researcher. The detailed programme and log in information will be provided shortly.

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:

Dates: 1 February 2024

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Education

Dates: 15 February 2024

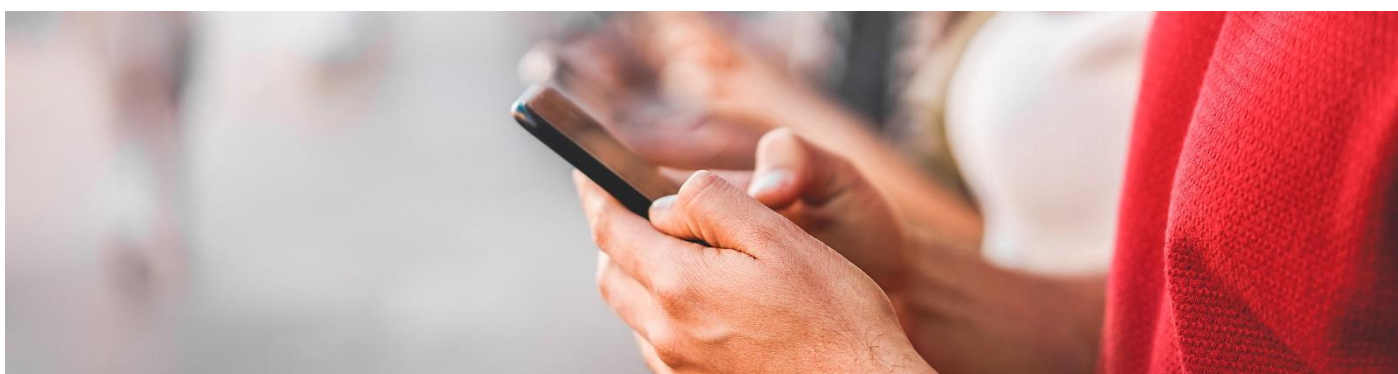
Area/Disciplines/Themes: Public Health

Dates: 21 March 2024

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Business

More information regarding the Doctoral Research Groups can be found via the [Unicaf University in Zambia Help Centre](#) and the [Unicaf University in Malawi Help Center](#).

OTHER NEWS - What we think might interest you



We would like to take this opportunity to kindly remind everyone that we welcome doctoral and Master's students (or graduate) who have already published, or are in the process of publishing their work to share their peer-reviewed publications with us by utilizing the following link: <https://forms.gle/u6jyfopDaCyUfvyY8>. Additionally, please mention whether the publication is affiliated with Unicaf / Unicaf University or not.

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 or not as this information will assist us in accurately registering your publications in our database.

Connect with us on social media

