

UNICAF[®]

**RESEARCH
NEWSLETTER**

APRIL – MAY 2024

**A YEAR IN REVIEW:
CELEBRATING MILESTONES
& MEMORIES**

CONTENTS

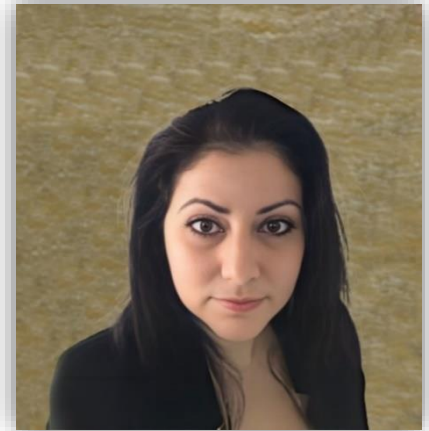
CEO & Founder Dr Nicos Nicolaou	Editor's Note	2
Principal Editor Dr Elena Papadopoulou	2024: Year of Education in Africa – A Response from Research Scholars	4
Editor-in-chief Dr Athanasia Kavadia	Unicaf University Doctoral Research Award	9
Production Assistant Mr Sebastian Heller	Significance of the Unicaf University Doctoral Research Award	10
Design Mr Kyriakos Kouzapa	Monthly Research Dissemination Seminars at Unicaf University in Malawi	13
Student Registration info@unicaf.org	Call for Papers – updates on deadlines	15
Student Support support@unicaf.org	RECENT UNICAF PUBLICATIONS New peer-reviewed publications by our students and faculty	16
Alumni Support alumni@unicaf.org	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES If you have the idea; We can help you with funding opportunities	17
Cyprus Administrative Office Old International Airport 7130, Larnaca, Cyprus PO BOX 42572, 6500 Larnaca, Cyprus Tel: +35724747500	FELLOWSHIPS / AWARDS / COURSES List of fellowships, awards and courses	18
	CALLS FOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS (WORKSHOP / WEBINARS) Upcoming conferences and events	19
Email research.office@unicaf.org	OTHER NEWS - What we think might interest you	21
Website www.unicaf.org		

Editor's Note

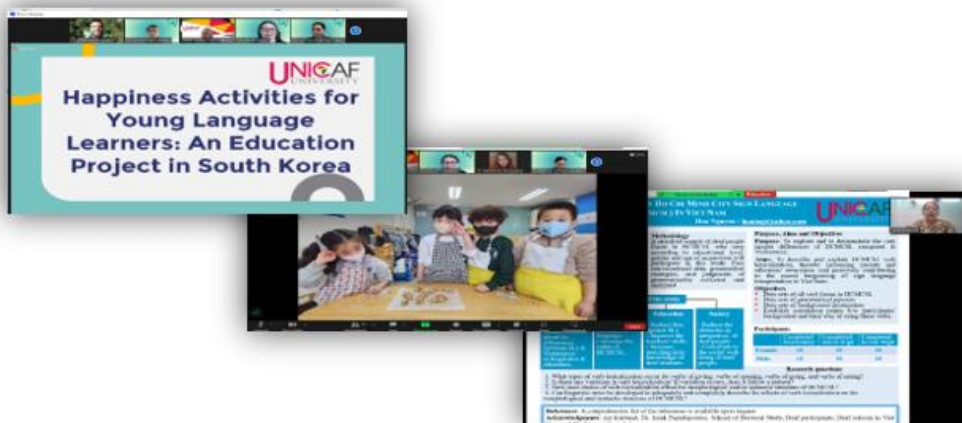
Dear Esteemed Students and Colleagues,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Unicaf Research Newsletter, where we celebrate the completion of a remarkable year since the inception of our publication. As we embark on this journey of reflection, we are thrilled to highlight the numerous events and achievements that have shaped the research landscape of Unicaf and Unicaf University, over the past year.

In our inaugural newsletter in **June - July 2023**, we proudly featured the participation of our esteemed colleague, Dr Isak Papadopoulos, Associate Dean of the School of Doctoral Studies, at the International Students' Forum hosted by Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University. Dr Papadopoulos delivered a captivating plenary address on "Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Education," igniting discussions on language teaching and cultural diversity among students. His participation at the conference was accompanied by two Unicaf University



doctoral students' presentations namely, Pieter Jansen offering a presentation on "Happiness Activities for Young Language Learners: An education project in South Korea" and Hoa Nguyen presenting on "Verb lexicalization in Ho Chi Minh City Sign Language (HCMCSL).



Throughout the year, Unicaf University in Zambia has demonstrated unwavering commitment to promoting research excellence and collaboration through initiatives such as the Research and Innovation Centre (UUZM – RIC). Our dedication was prominently showcased through the organisation of research days, as highlighted in our second issue of **August - September 2023**. These research days served as pivotal moments for faculty members to converge, exchange knowledge, and showcase their research endeavours. Moreover, they provided a conducive environment for networking and offered invaluable training sessions on various research-related topics, thereby enriching the research capabilities of our esteemed faculty members. One standout presentation during these research days was delivered by Dr Daniel L. Mpolomoka, the Dean of the School of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Dr Mpolomoka's insightful discussion on "Predatory vs Credible Journals and Publications: Pitfalls for Unsuspecting Publishers in Zambia" shed light on the importance of discerning reputable journal publications in academic pursuits, further emphasizing our commitment to upholding research integrity.



In subsequent issues, we spotlighted significant milestones, including the announcement of the inaugural edition of the [Unicaf Graduate Student Papers \(UGraSP\)](#) and the organization of a Research Day event aimed at fostering collaboration and innovation in research endeavours.

The first [Unicaf Master's Conference](#) was at the centre of our **December 2023 – January 2024** issue. This event has attracted 1,360 delegates and 32 oral presentations from three Schools namely, from the School of Business, the School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology, and Engineering, and the School of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences. The conference showcased the international collaboration that defines Unicaf, with 15 presenters from Unicaf in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University, 7 from Unicaf University in Zambia, 4 from Unicaf in partnership with University of East London, 4 from Unicaf Université, and 1 each from Unicaf in

partnership with University of Suffolk and Unicaf University in Malawi.

Furthermore, our presence at international conferences such as the 3rd International Dilemmas of Humanity Conference and the 1st International Conference on Making Sense of Educational Systems for Sustainable Development provided valuable platforms for knowledge exchange and collaboration, further strengthening our ties to the global academic community.



As we reflect on the past year, we take pride in the plethora of impactful events and initiatives that have contributed to research excellence and knowledge dissemination at Unicaf University. From the groundbreaking [National Symposium on Dementia Care](#) to the launch of Monthly Research Dissemination Seminars in Malawi, our collective efforts have been dedicated to fostering collaborative research communities and effecting positive societal change.

This issue celebrates the establishment of 2024 as the "Year of Education in Africa" by featuring two interviews with the Dean of the School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences from Unicaf University in Zambia and the Dean of the School of Education, Social Sciences and Technology from Unicaf University in Malawi.

Additionally, we are delighted to announce the launch of the inaugural Unicaf University Doctoral Research Award, which celebrates impactful research and recognizes outstanding contributions to research excellence. Also, the Dean of School of Doctoral Studies discusses with our team the importance of winning such an award.

In this edition, we delve into comprehensive coverage of the monthly research dissemination seminars initiated at Unicaf University in Malawi, providing a platform for the showcasing of doctoral studies and facilitating collaboration among students and faculty members.

Notably, this is complemented by 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.

2024: Year of Education in Africa – A Response from Research Scholars

In this edition, we are privileged to host two esteemed researchers from Unicaf University. We had the opportunity to discuss with them the significance of the African Union (AU) declaring 2024 as the 'Year of Education in Africa' in relation to Research. They graciously shared their insights with us, shedding light on this important topic.

Interview with Dr Lupiya Daniel Mpolomoka, Dean of the School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences at Unicaf University in Zambia

AK: How does Unicaf University plan to contribute to the goals set for education in Africa during this designated year?

LDM: The University has developed various initiatives to advance the AU 2024 education agenda. Firstly, Unicaf University has recently constructed a state-of-the-art campus to promote student and faculty mobility within African nations and facilitate intra-African and international research collaboration, in accordance with the agenda's emphasis on open sciences. Secondly, Unicaf implements a faculty and student exchange policy and program, further promoting mobility and research collaboration across the continent and beyond. In 2024, health science programs will be introduced to address key aspects of STEM education, supporting the AU 2024 agenda and embracing open sciences. Furthermore, the institution invests in student-centered teaching and learning approaches, such as the Community of Practice, enabling students to enrich the communities they serve, and vice versa. Additionally, Unicaf emphasizes technological innovations for faculty and students, aligning with the AU agenda's focus on digitization and equipping educators with digital skills. Lastly, the university employs innovative teaching methodologies, including face-to-face, blended, and online learning platforms, to enhance instructional techniques and cater diverse learning needs.



AK: What specific initiatives or programmes is the University undertaking to promote education and research within Africa in 2024?

LDM: Unicaf University offers bachelor's degrees and postgraduate programs that are tailored to enhance the teaching workforce across various educational levels in Zambia. The aim is to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio in Zambian schools, especially with the implementation of the Free Education Policy by the Zambian Government. These degrees include Bachelor of Education in Pre-Primary Education, Bachelor of Education in Primary Education, and Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature. Unicaf University in Zambia provides postgraduate programs designed to train educationists capable of integrating theory and policy frameworks with practical application to

shape, influence, implement, and evaluate educational policies in schools, aligning with the AU agenda's interpretation of education. In 2024, the University will introduce the Bachelor of Education in Food and Nutrition; and the Master of Education in Food and Nutrition to further support the AU agenda's objectives. The School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences has also launched the Unicaf Online Education Journal inviting submissions for publication to foster scholarly discourse and contribute to advancing educational practices in line with AU goals.

AK: Could you elaborate on any collaborative efforts Unicaf University is engaged in with other institutions or organizations to enhance education and research in Africa in 2024?

LDM: Unicaf University places great emphasis on research excellence, and achieves this through its multidisciplinary research clusters that align with global, regional and national policy priorities in education. These clusters cover thematic areas such as education for development, global change and sustainability, financial inclusion and innovation, and alternative knowledge systems and health remedies & technology. Additionally, Unicaf collaborates on research endeavours with esteemed institutions, such as the Zambia National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), utilising expertise and resources to address pressing educational challenges. Furthermore, partnerships with organisations like the Southern Africa Regional University Association (SARUA) enable collaborative efforts to advance research agendas and contribute to regional educational development initiatives.



AK: How is the university ensuring that the knowledge and insights generated from these research endeavours are effectively disseminated and applied to address real-world challenges in Africa?

LDM: Unicaf University offers a variety of opportunities for students to advance their academic and professional development. For instance, undergraduate students can undertake final-year research projects and present their findings at conferences tailored to both undergraduate and doctoral students. Additionally, industry or community-based postgraduate research engagements, including dissertations, are available for Master of Education, Doctor of Philosophy and professional doctorate programs. Unicaf University Graduate Student Papers is another platform where student research works are published and disseminated to the corporate sectors and the wider community. This helps them stay informed about emerging trends, best practices, and areas requiring policy attention. As a Pan-African institution, Unicaf University is committed to continuously harmonising education policies and learning programs, making a meaningful contribution to the African Union's Agenda.

AK: Lastly, what message or call to action would you like to convey to students, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders across Africa as we embark on this journey of education and research in 2024?

LDM: Unicaf University is a Pan African institution of higher learning, accredited by the Higher Education Authority, offering education programmes that meet the learning needs of 21st-century students and tailored to equip students with practical, innovative and entrepreneurial skills to fit into the dynamic global community. Students are encouraged to enroll at Unicaf University, speak to the

AU 2024 Agenda on Education and still look ahead to meeting other national (e.g. Vision 2030, Eighth National Development Plan) and global policy ratifications (SDGs 2030).

Interview with Dr Steve Sharra, Associate Professor of Education & Dean School of Education, Social Sciences and Technology, Unicaf University in Malawi



AK: Can you share with us the significance of declaring 2024 as the 'Year of Education in Africa' from the perspective of Unicaf University?

SH: In the history of the African Union, this is the first time that 'Education' has been featured as the Theme of the Year. The idea to make Education the theme of the year 2024 originated from the Transforming Education Summit which was convened by the UN Secretary General at the 2022 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The Transforming Education Summit itself was historical because it was the first time in the history of the UN that a

summit focusing on education was held alongside the UNGA. Heads of State of every UN member country presented a National Statement of Commitment to Transforming Education for 2030. Malawi's Head of State, President Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera presented Malawi's national statement of commitment and expressed the country's aspirations for the teaching profession. Dr Chakwera said Malawi aspired to transform the teaching profession "to make it prestigious, autonomous, trusted, and accountable." Unicaf University's response to this national commitment, and to the National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP) 2020-2030 is the introduction of the Bachelor of Education in Primary Education programme for primary school teachers. As a follow-up to the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, the UN Secretary General went ahead and established a High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession, which released its report this year. One of the recommendations in that report is that the minimum qualification for teachers at all levels of the education system should be a university degree, and ideally a Master's degree. So Unicaf University is pioneering Malawi's efforts to make the teaching profession prestigious and attractive, in that regard.

AK: In what ways do you envision research playing a pivotal role in advancing education across the African continent during this year?

SH: The World Bank has reported that the African continent needs to produce 100,000 PhDs between 2020 and 2030 if the continent is to meet its desired goal of ending poverty. South Africa alone is also targeting 100,000 PhDs by 2030. The Africa Agenda 2063, the continent's development blueprint for transforming the lives of Africans by the year 2063, also prioritises education and the development of human capabilities for the prosperity of all Africans. African governments see research as key to achieving national and continental goals, which is why making Education the African Union theme for 2024 is an important strategy. The key to all this is home-grown research that should be integrated into the school curriculum and the teacher education curriculum. That will go a long way to unleash the talents and capabilities of Africa's young people and adults towards addressing the challenges the continent faces.

AK: How does Unicaf University plan to address challenges such as access to quality education, infrastructure, and funding within the African context during this year?

SH: Unicaf University has a state-of-the-art online learning platform that can handle massive numbers of students at scale, at all levels of higher education. The Bachelor of Education (Bed) in Primary Education we launched in July 2023 is aimed at making a direct impact on the quality of education in Malawi. We also offer master's and doctoral degrees in education, thereby supporting the production of teacher educators, education managers, and education researchers. As all our programmes are 100 % online, nobody has to leave their duty station and move elsewhere to attend university. This is very important for working adults, especially teachers. This has allowed us to introduce an innovative Teaching Practicum that extends to two years. It also enables the immediate application of theory to practice, something not available in traditional teacher education programmes. One of the huge bottlenecks to widening access and improving the quality of education is the cost of putting up infrastructure. By making high-quality education available via online platforms, Unicaf University can offer high-quality education at a drastically reduced cost, thereby addressing hurdles posed by infrastructure and also funding. By 2030, the number of young Africans under 25 years of age is set to increase by 21 per cent to reach 860 million. By 2050, up to 90 million young Africans aged 15 years and above will need to be put through higher education, from the current 30 million. That requires massive numbers of college and university lecturers. East Africa alone has a lecturer shortage of 35,000, projected to rise to more than 87,000 by 2030. The need for a new model of educating young people and adults, and training college and university lecturers, cannot be over-emphasised.

AK: What impact do you anticipate these efforts will have on the academic landscape in Africa beyond 2024?



SH: If the continent can train its sole focus on education and human capabilities development, the impact will be phenomenal. It will make the 2030 and 2063 goals look attainable. It will also give hope to millions of Africans, young and old, that they can take their destiny into their own hands. Teachers and educators at all levels can start to feel proud again, and educational institutions can become centres of excellence in knowledge production addressing the continent's challenges.

AK: Lastly, what message or call to action would you like to convey to students, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders across Africa as we embark on this journey of education and research in 2024?

SH: Making Education the African Union theme for the year 2024 is a rare opportunity to galvanise interest and support in revitalising education as the most important investment into the future of Africa. For education to play its role in transforming the African continent, there is a need for more teachers who are well-educated, respected, and better remunerated. That is why there is great momentum regionally and globally to transform the teaching profession so that young people can be attracted to join the profession. Globally, 44 million additional teachers are needed for the world to achieve universal primary and secondary education, with 17 million of those teachers needed for

the African continent. There is no other way to achieve high-quality education without high-quality teachers. We need the best students to see teaching as a great profession that can put them on the cutting edge of solving national and global problems. We need educators to embrace this challenge and inspire young people to appreciate education as the key to inclusive prosperity. We need policymakers and other important stakeholders across Africa and globally to make education the priority it needs to be for a better world.

Unicaf University Doctoral Research Award

The Unicaf University Doctoral Research Award is a prestigious event set to launch for the first time in March of 2024. This award will be presented to the doctoral researcher who presents the most impactful research during their Viva Voce. The aim of this award is to recognise the importance of research impact, dissemination, outreach, and its contribution to knowledge.

We are thrilled to announce the winner of the prestigious Unicaf Doctoral Research Award. Following a meticulous evaluation process led by a dedicated committee, three outstanding individuals:

1. Dr Francis Anno Ekiru, Thesis Title: 'The Effects of Traders' Competitive Rivalry on Livestock Market Access in Pastoral Areas: A Case of Turkana County in Kenya' Unicaf University in Malawi,
2. Dr Oliver Ombeva Malande, Thesis Title: 'Drivers of Vaccine Hesitancy and Underimmunization Among Children of Hoima and Wakiso Districts of Uganda', Unicaf University in Zambia,
3. Dr Ahmad Abdullahif Fakai, Thesis Title: 'The Contemporary Motivation Issues and Acceleration of Employees' Productivity in Nigerian Deposit Money Banks between the Periods of 2010 to 2019', Unicaf University in Zambia,

were selected as finalists for their exemplary doctoral research projects showcased at a Viva Voce.

Among these distinguished nominees, the winner is Dr Francis Anno Ekiru, whose groundbreaking research exemplifies the core principles of impact, dissemination, outreach, and knowledge contribution that the Unicaf Doctoral Research Award seeks to celebrate. Dr Ekiru, born in Turkana County, Kenya, in 1978, grew up amidst severe food insecurity, poverty, and illiteracy. Despite challenges, scholarships from the government and civil society enabled him to pursue education. He holds degrees from various institutions, including an MBA from the University of Nicosia, a PhD in Marketing Management from Unicaf University in Malawi, and an ongoing MSc in Business Psychology from the University of East London. Dr Ekiru's Unicaf experience has greatly influenced his career, leading him to become a leading scholar in Turkana. He focuses on transforming the livestock sector, promoting education and commerce among pastoral populations, and advocating for the acceptance of science and technology. His position at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization reflects his expertise, acquired through Unicaf training. Through active engagement with Unicaf, he has contributed numerous articles to reputable journals, disseminating knowledge and prompting initiatives for societal



transformation. Ongoing research and collaboration with Unicaf aim to address socioeconomic challenges in Turkana and similar communities.

The nomination event took place in March 2024. During this highly anticipated online gathering, each nominee had the opportunity to present their thesis to esteemed committee members, followed by an engaging Q&A session.

Furthermore, we are delighted to announce that the winner of the Unicaf Doctoral Research Award received a prize of a \$500 voucher. Additionally, the recipient was invited to showcase their exceptional work at the upcoming [Unicaf University Graduate Conference \(UGraC 2024\)](#).

This esteemed nomination is a testament to the dedication, scholarly excellence, and impactful contributions of our finalists. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to each nominee and express our gratitude for their invaluable contributions to the realm of research.

Significance of the Unicaf University Doctoral Research Award



Dr Olga Novokhatskaya, Dean of the School of Doctoral Studies, Unicaf Federal, discusses with Dr Athanasia-Eleni Kavadia the significance of the Unicaf University Doctoral Research Award.

AK: Why is it important for the University to establish this award?

ON: Establishing the Doctoral Research Award serves as a mechanism for acknowledging and honouring excellence in doctoral research. By showcasing outstanding research achievements, the award elevates the University's profile as a leading centre for innovative scholarship, attracting top-tier talent and fostering a vibrant academic community. The award underscores the University's commitment to producing research that transcends academic boundaries and makes tangible impacts on industries, societies, and academia at large. Moreover, it promotes the dissemination of research findings, aligning with the University's mission of knowledge dissemination and societal engagement. Overall, the establishment of the Doctoral Research Award is linked to the University's overarching goals of fostering quality in research, enhancing its reputation, and development a dynamic academic environment conducive to scholarly achievement and societal impact.

AK: Why is it important for doctoral students to participate or be nominated for the award?

ON: The Doctoral Research Award holds significant importance for students as it serves as a prestigious recognition of their scholarly achievements and contributions. Being nominated or awarded this accolade not only validates their hard work and dedication but also provides tangible evidence of their academic excellence to potential employers, collaborators, and funding agencies. Moreover, the award can enhance the student's professional reputation and open doors to future career opportunities. Furthermore, receiving the award can boost the student's confidence and morale, motivating them to continue pursuing excellence in their academic and professional endeavours.

AK: Can you outline the criteria used for selecting recipients for the Doctoral Research Award among last year's doctoral graduates?

ON: In selecting recipients for the Doctoral Research Award among last year's doctoral graduates, we employed a comprehensive set of criteria to evaluate each candidate's research. These criteria included assessing the immediate impact within specific industries or countries, the effectiveness of research dissemination, the originality of the research questions, the contribution to knowledge, the outreach through publications, and the quality of the written work. We prioritised tangible outcomes that could drive real-world change and emphasised the novelty and innovation in research design. Each project's contribution to theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and empirical insights was thoroughly considered. Additionally, the quantity and quality of publications served as indicators of the researcher's engagement with scholarly discourse. In order for students to be nominated for the award they should have had a minimum of 1 publication at a peer-reviewed journal and should have defended their thesis successfully; receiving either *a pass with no correction* or *a pass with minor correction* at the point of the award. The overall assessment ensured clarity, coherence, and adherence to academic standards in written work. Through this rigorous process, we aimed to recognise quality in doctoral research that demonstrates significant impact, originality, and scholarly rigor within a concise evaluation framework.

AK: Who comprised the committee responsible for selecting the recipient of the award?

ON: The evaluation committee consisted of distinguished members from various academic and administrative positions. Chaired by the Vice Chancellor of Unicaf Federal, the committee included the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Doctoral Studies and Research) from the same institution serving as the co-chair. Other members comprised the Partnerships Director, Dean of the School of Doctoral Studies, the Dean of the School of Business, the Dean of the School of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and the Dean of the School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology, and Engineering, all representing the Federal institution. Additionally, a Research Officer contributed to the committee's proceedings. Furthermore, representatives from both Unicaf University in Malawi and Unicaf University in Zambia were involved, including the Vice Chancellors and Pro Vice Chancellors (Academic & Research and Innovation), ensuring a comprehensive and multi-faceted evaluation process.

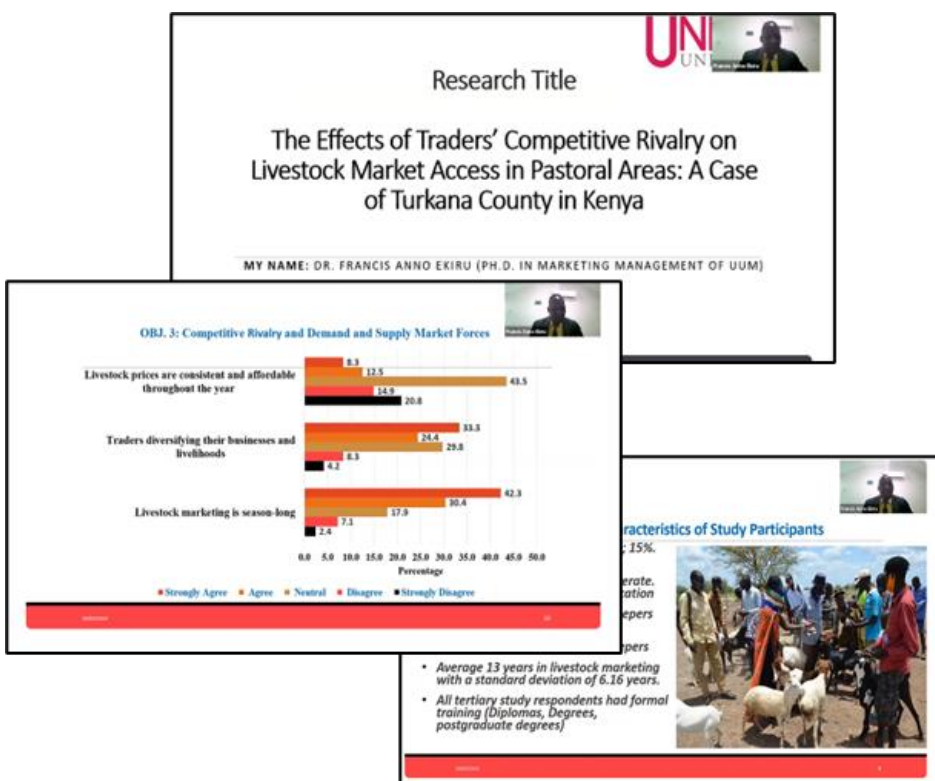
AK: Who were shortlisted for the award?

ON: Following an extensive and rigorous evaluation process, overseen by a committed committee, three remarkable individuals emerged as finalists for the Doctoral Research Award. Among these finalists were Dr Francis Anno Ekiru, whose research journey led to the attainment of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Marketing Management, showcasing his expertise in his study titled "Effects of Traders Competitive Rivalry on Livestock Market Access in Pastoral Areas: A Case of Turkana County of Kenya." Additionally, Dr Oliver Ombeva Malande, a dedicated scholar in pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health, with his research focused on "Drivers of Hesitancy and Underimmunisation Among Children in Uganda: A Case Study of Hoima District." Furthermore, Dr Ahmad Abdullahi Fakai exhibited exceptional prowess and innovation in his pursuit of a Doctor of Philosophy in Business, contributing valuable insights to the business landscape with his study titled "The Contemporary Motivation Issues and Acceleration of Employees' Productivity in Nigerian Money Deposit Banks Between the Periods of 2010 to 2019." These three outstanding individuals were chosen as finalists for their exemplary doctoral research projects, which were meticulously

showcased and defended during the rigorous Viva Voce examinations, solidifying their positions as leaders in their respective fields of study.

AK: What factors led to Dr Francis Anno Ekiru being selected as the recipient of the award?

ON: Dr Francis Anno Ekiru was selected as the recipient of the award based on several key factors aligning with the established criteria. Firstly, his research demonstrated immediate and direct implementation in industry by addressing the intricate dynamics of livestock trading and market access in Turkana County, a region heavily reliant on livestock for sustenance. Secondly, the impact of his research dissemination and adherence to academic standards was evident through publications in reputable journals such as the American Journal of Environmental and Resource Economics, International Journal of Agricultural Economics, and International Journal of Business and Economics Research, indicating a wide reach and influence within academic circles. Thirdly, Dr Ekiru's work demonstrated originality and novelty by exploring previously uncharted territories in



understanding competitive rivalry's impact on livestock markets, contributing significantly to the body of knowledge in this field. The research offered valuable insights and strategies to enhance market functionality and alleviate poverty, showcasing a substantial contribution to knowledge and addressing pressing socio-economic issues. Therefore, this research directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 by offering actionable insights to improve livelihoods and food security in pastoral communities like Turkana County, thus advancing

sustainable development efforts locally and globally. Overall, Dr Ekiru's research not only met but exceeded the established criteria for the award, making him a deserving recipient recognised for his outstanding contributions to academia and sustainable development efforts in pastoral communities like Turkana County.

AK: What strategies can doctoral students employ to increase their likelihood of being nominated for the Doctoral Research Award? Additionally, could you provide some advice?

ON: To be nominated for the Doctoral Research Award, doctoral students should actively engage in various scholarly activities that enhance the visibility and impact of their research. Participation in scientific conferences, accompanied by presentations of their findings, provides a platform to showcase the significance of their work to the academic community. Moreover, publishing their research in peer-reviewed journals not only adds credibility but also ensures that their findings are

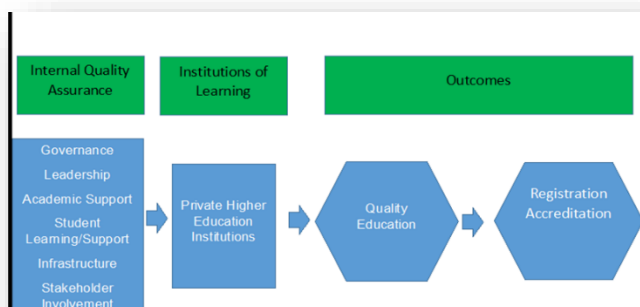
disseminated widely among fellow researchers and practitioners in the field. By actively participating in these activities, doctoral students can increase the reach and influence of their research, thus increasing their chances of being recognized for the Doctoral Research Award.

Monthly Research Dissemination Seminars at Unicaf University in Malawi

Unicaf University in Malawi proudly presents its Monthly Research Dissemination Webinars, launched in January 2024. Supported by the federal team, these webinars serve as a platform to highlight groundbreaking research conducted by recent doctoral graduates, current doctoral students, and outstanding master’s students. The seminars aim to spotlight completed or ongoing research by recent and current postgraduate students, particularly at the doctoral level.

Join the seminars on the last Tuesday of each month from 15:00 to 17:00 (GMT+2) as valuable insights are shared with the public, benefiting industry, civil society, and political decision-makers alike. Each session features a distinguished presenter chosen from among our talented researchers. Additionally, to foster meaningful engagement, a respondent with relevant expertise is selected for every webinar.

The inaugural webinar held on January 30, 2024, featured Dr Martha Mondywa, Senior Lecturer and Director of Clinical Practice at Unicaf University in Malawi (UUMw). Dr Mondywa's presentation titled "Factors Related to Quality Assurance Systems that Affect Delivery of Quality Education", delved into the quality assurance challenges faced by private universities in Malawi. Dr Mondywa highlighted findings from her study, indicating that several private universities in Malawi faced accreditation obstacles due to factors such as insufficiently qualified lecturers, inadequate infrastructure and resources, and gaps in quality assurance systems and stakeholder



involvement. She proposed a model to facilitate NCHE accreditation by focusing on internal quality assurance and emphasized the importance of establishing internal quality assurance units. Her presentation concluded with the assertion that prioritizing internal quality assurance is crucial for ensuring the quality of education in universities. Dr Ben Malunga, Deputy Vice Chancellor of DMI St John Paul the

Apostle University (DMI), contributed his insights, underscoring the paramount importance of holistic quality assurance in higher education. He emphasized that quality assurance systems encompass various elements, including the criteria outlined by the NCHE and essential 21st-century transferable skills vital for graduates, such as critical thinking, applied academic skills, and systems thinking.

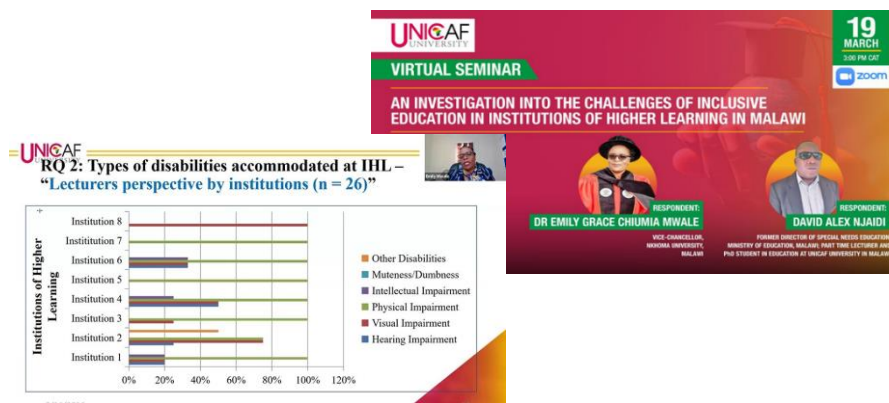
The second webinar, which was scheduled for March 19, 2024 was by Dr Emily Chiumia Mwale, Vice Chancellor of Nkhoma University, Malawi and a recent graduate of Unicaf University in Malawi. She has received a Doctor of Education (EdD) and her thesis as her presentation was titled ‘An

Investigation into the Challenges of Inclusive Education in Institutions of Higher Learning in Malawi'. Her study found that some higher education institutions had no policy on the recruitment of students with disabilities, no appropriate infrastructure, and no assistive learning technologies. Other challenges included limited financing of inclusive higher education in Malawi and limited human resources to handle inclusive higher education. She concluded that such limitations were tantamount to "systematic discrimination" against people with disabilities and denial of their rights to higher education.



To facilitate a seamless debate, Mr David Alex Njaidi has been chosen as the panelist for this fascinating seminar presentation. Dr Njaidi is a former Director of Special Needs Education in the Ministry of Education, Malawi. He is currently a part-time lecturer with Unicaf and a PhD student in Education at Unicaf University in Malawi. It's worth noting that Dr Njaidi is also a person with individual needs, as he has a visual impairment. He argued that out of all the challenges Dr Mwale had listed financing was probably the most serious challenge in implementing policies on inclusive education from kindergarten to universities. Inclusive education policies did exist and new ones were in the offing, he added.

The third webinar was on March 26, 2024. Our speaker was Dr Wellington Binali, a recent doctoral graduate of the University. He has received a Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration and he is a project manager at Smile Life Insurance Company and a managing director at BN-Business Consultancy, in Malawi. The



presentation was titled "Investigating Youth Entrepreneurship Initiatives as a Strategy for Economic Growth in Blantyre City-Malawi". Dr Binali argued that both his quantitative and qualitative inquiries (triangulated) concluded that youth entrepreneurship contributes positively to Blantyre City's economic growth and creation of employment for the youth. The study further found that despite this great potential, young entrepreneurs encountered a lot of challenges to improve and expand their businesses. These challenges include 1) high interest rates on loans from commercial lenders, 2) limited access to finance through loans, 3) lack of entrepreneurship education and training, 4) unfriendly business environment, 5) high taxes, 6) lack of business information, and 6) lack of trust of the youth by the society.



He recommended that the Malawi government and the private sector needed to change their perception and mindset about youth-led entrepreneurship and take the youth seriously as an economic growth engine for Malawi if the Blantyre City case study findings were to be generalised.

The next speaker is Dr Cromwell Bryson Mpinganjira who has received a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) from Unicaf University in Malawi. His presentation, 'Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Financial Performance: The Case of Tobacco Companies in Malawi', will be held on 30 April 2024.

VIRTUAL SEMINAR
INVESTIGATING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVES AS A STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN BLANTYRE CITY-MALAWI
26 MARCH 10:00 PM GMT
DR WELLINGTON BINALI
 PROJECT MANAGER, SHAGI LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY, MALAWI & MANAGING DIRECTOR, BK BUSINESS CONSULTANCY, MALAWI

Purpose Statement

- To identify policies/initiatives that will reduce unemployment levels among the youth, reduce poverty and increase economic growth (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2022).
- Identify public policy recommendations to enhance youth entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2018).
- The guiding theory is Schumpeter Innovation and Entrepreneurship Theory (Schumpeter, 1934).
- Identify youth entrepreneurship initiatives to increase productivity (YES) (SIDCO, 2018).
- Determine strategies on how entrepreneurs can contribute to employment (Dzardzic & Maghula, 2016).

Conceptual Framework (Developed by Wellington Binali, 2021)

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

- Psychological Factors: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Traits
- Entrepreneurial Capabilities: Decision and Planning
- Entrepreneurial Environment:
 - Task-oriented: such as resources, time, financial, and technical support
 - Relationship-oriented: such as social and financial networks, social resources, and social networks
- Resources: such as the entrepreneur's capabilities, such as education, experience, and social networks

MEDIATING VARIABLE

- Successful Entrepreneurship

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

- Employment
- Economic growth
- Output Growth

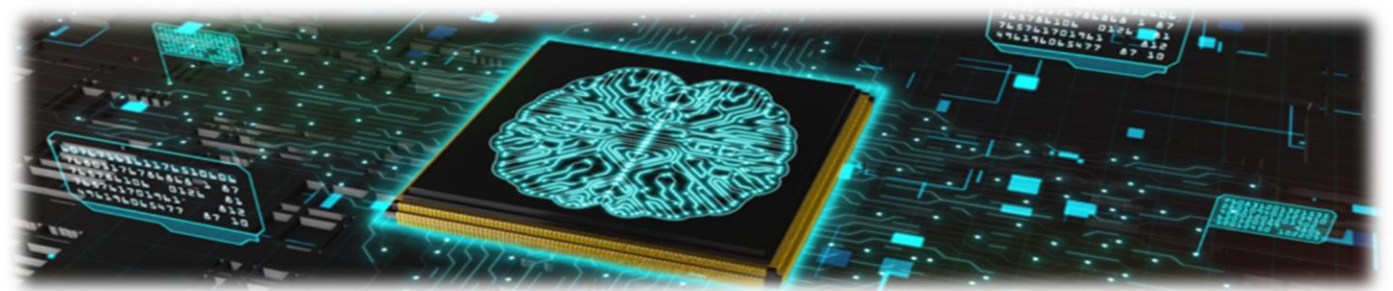
Mark your calendars for upcoming sessions. Stay tuned as the names of the distinguished presenters will be announced by Unicaf University in Malawi each month.

Save the dates for these insightful sessions:

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Call for Papers – updates on deadlines



Deadline Extension - Unicaf Online Journal in Education

We are pleased to announce the extension of the deadline for the Call for Papers in the Unicaf Online Journal in Education. The new deadline for submissions is April 15th, providing authors with additional time to contribute their research and insights to this esteemed publication. This special issue of "Teaching and Learning in Modern Multilingual and Multicultural Classrooms" delves into the intricate relationship between multilingualism, multiculturalism, and education, 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 linguistic and cultural diversity in educational settings can effectively align with and contribute to each of the SDGs. Visit our [page](#) for more information.

Open Call - Unicaf Online Journal in Technology and Sciences

In addition, we would like to remind you that the deadline for submissions to the Unicaf Online Journal in Technology and Sciences is May 31st. This special issue of "AI and ML Applications in RIST to attain SDGs in a changing industrial landscape" delves into 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. We encourage all interested scholars and researchers to submit their work for consideration in these esteemed journals. Visit our [page](#) for more information.

We invite researchers, academics, and practitioners from around the globe to participate in this enriching scholarly endeavor. Your contributions play a vital role in advancing knowledge and fostering collaboration within the academic community.

RECENT UNICAF PUBLICATIONS

New peer-reviewed publications by our students and faculty



STUDENTS

Muhammad Kai Ibrahim Ergo Mohamad Azmi. Exploring the impacts operation room nursing induction programme has on newly-joined operation room nurses in Singapore. *International Journal of Nursing Education and Research*. 2023; 11(4):321-7. DOI: [10.52711/2454-2660.2023.00072](https://doi.org/10.52711/2454-2660.2023.00072)

Mremi, J. M., & Olanrewaju, M. K. (2023). Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers and its Impacts on Secondary Schools in Tanzania. *Journal of Issues and Practice in Education (JIPE)*15(1), 50-63. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61538/jipe.v15i1.1318>

FACULTY

Kabwe, C., Phiri-Mushibwe, C. and Tripathi, S. (2023), "The Role of Shared Leadership in Realizing SDGs: An Exploration of Intra-Country Collaborative Work Between HEIs and Public Policy Groups in Zambia", Caporarello, L., Kumar, P. and Agrawal, A. (Ed.) *Higher Education for the Sustainable Development Goals: Bridging the Global North and South*, Emerald Publishing Limited, Leeds, pp. 99-123. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80382-525-020231006>

Nakate, Sylvia & Mukenga, Mbalalufu & Mabonga, Eric & Tom, Mulegi. (2023). Business Process Management as a Dimension of Total Quality Management and Organizational Performance of Selected Commercial Banks in Bamako, Mali. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. DOI:[10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i12/19795](https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i12/19795)

Ndindah Ndifor, Clement & Musonda, Nathan & Rizkallahi, Siham. (2024). The Effect of Cashflow Visibility on the Willingness of Financial Institutions to Finance SMEs in Cameroon. *Int. J. Manag. Account.* 5(5). 89-98. DOI:[10.34104/ijma.023.0089098](https://doi.org/10.34104/ijma.023.0089098)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

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



[Early Career Conference Grants](#)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: any discipline

Deadline: 23 April 2024

[Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases: Management of Multiple Long-Term Conditions Funding Call 2024](#) — check also [GACD Intention to apply](#) (Researchers)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: management of multiple long-term conditions, in the context of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Deadline: 15 May 2024

[Neurosciences and mental health research: research grant: responsive mode](#) (Researchers)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Neurosciences, mental health, disorders of the human nervous system

Deadline: 15 May 2024

[AfOx Catalyst Grants](#) (Researchers)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: all disciplines

Deadline: 17 May 2024

[Wellcome Early-Career Awards](#) (Early career researchers)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: any discipline as long as it has the potential to improve human life, health and wellbeing

Deadline: 21 May 2024

[Funding Programme Democracy](#) (Post-doctoral researchers)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: humanities and social sciences

Deadline: 29 May 2024

[Racial Equity Special Research Grants-The Spencer foundation\(US\)](#)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Education

Deadline: 29 May 2024

[Open Measurement Coordinating Network for Non-Pharmacological Alzheimer's Disease \(AD\) and AD-Related Dementias \(ADRD\) Primary Prevention Trials](#) (Researchers)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

Deadline: 15 June 2024

[Global Health Policy and Systems Research \(HPSR\) Projects Call 2](#)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: any area of applied health policy and health systems research

Deadline: 19 June 2024

[Mobile Health: Technology and Outcomes in Low and Middle Income Countries \(R21/R33 - Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: innovative mobile health (mHealth) interventions or tools specifically suited for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)

Deadline: 21 February 2025

FELLOWSHIPS / AWARDS / COURSES

List of fellowships, awards and courses



[THE GENEVA CHALLENGE 2024](#) (Graduate Students)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: The Challenges of Youth Empowerment

Deadline: 22 April 2024 (Registration), 14 July 2024 (Submission)

[TWAS-CAS Young Scientists Award for Frontier Science](#) (young scientists)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Life sciences

Deadline: 10 May 2024

[Matsumae International Foundation](#) (early researchers)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: natural sciences, engineering and medicine

Deadline: 30 June 2024

[Merck Foundation Africa Research Summit - MARS 2024](#) (Young African researchers and African women researchers)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Empowering Women and Youth in STEM / South-South Collaboration

Deadline: 30 June 2024

[Routledge/Round Table Commonwealth Studentships](#)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: research projects on Commonwealth-related themes

Deadline: 13 August 2024

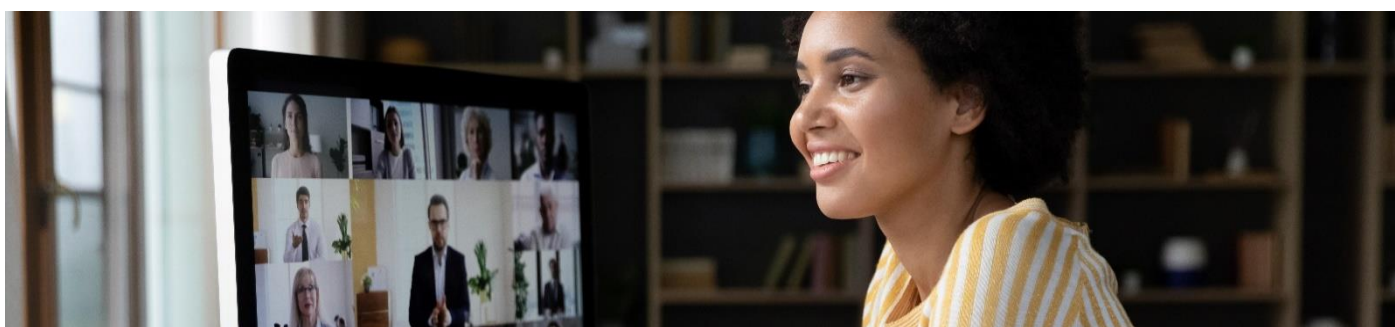
[The 2024 African Union \(AU\) Internship Program](#) (Bachelor Students)

Area/Disciplines/Themes: all African Union programmes

Deadline: 31 October 2024

CALLS FOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS (WORKSHOP / WEBINARS)

Upcoming conferences and events



Unicaf Graduate Conference

Join Us for UGrac 2024 - April 15-19, 2024 - Online Event

Gear up for an enlightening experience at our 4th annual Unicaf Graduate Research Conference (UGraC) 2024, taking place from April 15th to 19th, 2024, online. This year's conference will delve into a wide range of areas, disciplines, and themes, including Education, Social Sciences, Law and Politics, Business, Humanities, Public Health, and Technology.

Immerse yourself in a diverse array of presentations by our talented doctoral students, gain insights from esteemed researchers through captivating plenary speeches, and participate in engaging workshops tailored to enrich your academic journey.

The Unicaf University Graduate Conference (UGraC) is an award-winning, annual, 5 day, online postgraduate conference established in 2021. The conference attracts more than 500 doctoral students and faculty, while featuring multiple sessions of doctoral students' presentation, plenary sessions and workshops.



In 2022 the Unicaf University Graduate Conference was awarded the AdvanceHE Global Impact Grant for student success in recognition of its demonstrable impact on student development.

Attending the Unicaf University Graduate Conference helps students, through their interaction with the presentations and the Q&A sessions which follow them, to develop skills such as analytical reasoning, clear communication and critical thinking. There are also workshops on topics such as effective dissertation writing and how to go about your literature review.

Presenting at the Unicaf University Graduate Conference conveys further benefits. Presenters are given feedback on the formulation of both their abstract and their rehearsal and gain valuable practice in how to present before an audience. Furthermore, conference proceedings are published in the peer-reviewed [Unicaf University Graduate Student Papers \(UGrasP\)](#) via the Unicaf Online Journal, since publishing is an essential step for those who wish to work in academia.

Be sure not to miss the highlight of the event - the presentation of our prestigious Doctoral Research Award winner.

For detailed information on the programme, visit our [webpage](#).

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow scholars and delve into the forefront of academic research!

Statistics' Camp - Unlock the Power of Data: Statistics Series Camp

Get informed of the topic and the dates of our upcoming webinars on statistics.

Name of seminar	Presenter/s	Date
Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM)	Dr Costas Photiou	Apr 3 rd 2024
Correlation and Linear Regression	Dr Mary Mandiringana	Apr 10 th 2024
Introduction to Statistics & Reliability and validity of the data	Dr Evangelos Tsoukatos	May 14 th 2024
Exploratory Factor Analysis using IBM-SPSS – Introduction and Explanation of Output	Dr Clement Ndindah	May 29 th 2024

All the recordings of the webinars will be uploaded to the Unicaf website and will be accessed by all students. Updates regarding the recordings will be available on future research newsletters.

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: 4 April 2024

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Education

Dates: 25 April 2024

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Public Health

Dates: 9 May 2024

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Business

Dates: 23 May 2024

Area/Disciplines/Themes: Education

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

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 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/u6jyfopDaCyUfvyY8>. Additionally, please mention whether the publication is affiliated with Unicaf / Unicaf University.

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.

Connect with us on social media

