

**Development Work and Research to Address  
Poverty Alleviation, Empowerment, and Social Transformation:  
Promoting School – Community – Real Life Collaboration**

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Historically, education discourse is oriented toward the goals, aspirations, desires, and needs of the millions. This workshop will focus on addressing the needs of the billions. More specifically, the workshop will address ways in which educators can be engaged in development work and research to address poverty alleviation, empowerment and social transformation. Within the goals of this conference, the workshop will focus on promoting school – community - real life collaboration and cross-discipline integration.

Access to knowledge is indeed access to power. All too often educators are complicit in failing to afford the poorest of the poor access to education, knowledge, and the opportunity to achieve the overriding goal of life satisfaction and well-being. As educators engage in development work and research, it is imperative that the needs of the billions - and the needs of youth, who presently number 1.8 billion - be addressed in efforts to empower people. In the least-developed countries (LDCs), empowerment is intrinsically linked to poverty alleviation and economic growth.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education is often disassociated from the contextual realities of life. This is particularly true in developing country contexts. Drawing upon 20+ years of collaborations in rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, the workshop will highlight ways to create opportunities for self- and social-empowerment, whereby learners and community members engage in participatory action taking focused upon community development. The workshop will highlight methodologies - such as participatory rural appraisal and transformative action research - conducive to facilitating social transformation. Collaborations intended to facilitate social transformation will be viewed through the lens of assuming issues of locality, cultural values, and social justice.

The following critical questions will guide this workshop:

- How can STEM education be transformed to ensure it serves as a primary means of investing in human resources and for promoting development?
- How might we envision the roles and responsibilities of STEM educators of the future?
- How can STEM education be more intrinsically linked to the goals of human rights, democracy, and social justice?

- How can STEM education be more connected to issues of sustainable development?

I believe STEM educators must stand together with policy makers, curriculum developers, evaluation and assessment specialists, and others to develop a vision for the future while concomitantly addressing the 15 Global Challenges Facing Humanity and The Global Goals for Sustainable Development.