

EAST AFRICA DIALOGUE SERIES

The East African Institute, in collaboration with Columbia University and with generous support from IDRC, Aga Khan Foundation Canada and Ford Foundation, has established the East Africa Dialogue Series.

The Dialogue Series will be empirically grounded, utilizing quantitative, scientific data and experiential evidence. Moreover, the series will help generate practical and ethically driven solutions to East Africa's existing and future development opportunities and challenges.

The Dialogue Series will bring together outstanding scholars, thinkers and community leaders who have creative, imaginative and innovative perspectives. The Dialogue Series will challenge existing paradigms; focus on solutions; and raise the level of public debate and engagement. Over the next three years, the Dialogue Series will focus on three issues: youth, urbanization, and economic growth and inequality

The first dialogue will be on youth. We would like to engage with scholars/researchers in education, the social sciences, the humanities and policy to conduct research on four issues:

1. Motivations and influences

How and why do motivations and influences – such as a sense of self, identity, social responsibility and civic engagement – develop and change? What role do they play in influencing civic purpose among youth?

2. Enabling learning experiences and environments

What kinds of environments, pedagogies, curricula, and relationships are conducive to civic learning and to developing positive motivations and commitments among youth?

3. Societal norms, technology, media or events, historical and contemporary cultural trends, peer pressure and other contextual influences

How are youth influenced by the times, cultures, and contexts in which they live?

4. Chronic unemployment has led to a surge in entrepreneurial innovation, prompting young people to develop a risk-taking startup mindset. Unemployed youth are adapting to the realities of a perennially weak job market by launching their own businesses.

Is entrepreneurship a promising outgrowth and viable adaptive response to the youth unemployment crisis?

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