CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

East African Research Frontiers Conference 2026

Hosted by

The East African University (TEAU), Kitengela Campus

In collaboration with

Regional Universities, Research Institutes, and Development Partners

Conference Date: 28th and 29th May 2026

Conference Theme:

Innovating for Resilience: Research for a Sustainable and Inclusive Future

INTRODUCTION

East Africa stands at a pivotal moment in its development trajectory, confronting intricate challenges such as climate vulnerability, health system weaknesses, educational disparities, and socio-economic exclusion. Although there has been a notable increase in investment in higher education and research infrastructure in the region, a substantial gap persists in locally-led, interdisciplinary research to address these challenges effectively (Hjortsø et al., 2025).

Historically, African universities, particularly those outside South Africa, have been underrepresented in global research outputs and lack the adequate institutional mechanisms necessary to integrate community engagement and inclusive development into their core academic missions (Hjortsø et al., 2025). This deficiency has hindered their potential to serve as transformative agents in combating rural poverty, enhancing climate resilience, and promoting sustainable development.

Inclusive Development, as articulated by Dörffel and Schuhmann (2022), necessitates a holistic approach that transcends mere economic growth to encompass equity, environmental sustainability, and human well-being. Current dominant metrics like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Human Development Index (HDI) often overlook these broader dimensions. In contrast, the Multidimensional Inclusiveness Index (MDI) provides a more comprehensive framework for assessing development outcomes by emphasizing both equity and achievement dimensions.

Concurrently, *resilience* and *sustainability*, while frequently considered separately, should be harmonized to effectively manage social-ecological systems (Zhang et al., 2025). While *resilience* refers to the capacity of systems to absorb shocks and adapt, *sustainability* focuses on maintaining balance across socio-economic and environmental

facets. In this regard, Zhang et al. (2025) advocate for an integrated framework that minimizes trade-offs between these two goals, fostering synergies within governance and policy.

The East African University Research Frontiers Conference 2026 aims to bridge these gaps by offering a platform for interdisciplinary, locally grounded research that enhances resilience, sustainability, and inclusive development. The conference aspires to amplify the voices of East African scholars and practitioners, encourage regional collaboration, and contribute to the global knowledge base on transformative development.

The East African University invites submissions for this annual East African Research Frontiers Conference, a multidisciplinary academic and professional forum dedicated to advancing scholarly inquiry and evidence-based solutions to local, regional and global challenges. This year's theme highlights the critical role of innovation and resilience in the creation of sustainable futures, especially within the context of East Africa's socio-economic and ecological imperatives.

CONFERENCE SUB-THEMES AND TOPICS OF INTEREST

The conference will delve into eight sub-themes, reflecting the region's most pressing development challenges and opportunities for scholarly engagement.

Sub-Theme 1: Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability

Research topics may encompass climate adaptation strategies, renewable energy initiatives, and biodiversity conservation efforts such as community-led reforestation and circular economy models.

Sub-Theme 2: Health Systems and Public Health Innovations

Submissions may focus on enhancing healthcare delivery through digital health solutions, mental health initiatives, and epidemiological modeling, including mobile health clinics for pastoralist communities and AI-driven diagnostics.

Sub-Theme 3: Education Transformation and Digital Learning

This theme encourages exploration of pedagogical innovations, inclusive education practices, and technology-enhanced learning approaches, including gamified learning platforms and digital inclusion strategies for learners with disabilities.

Sub-Theme 4: Agricultural Resilience and Food Security

Studies may investigate climate-smart agricultural practices, soil health, indigenous farming methods, and nutrition-sensitive food systems, featuring youth-led agri-tech startups and community seed banks for climate-resilient crops.

Sub-Theme 5: Youth, Gender and Social Inclusion

Topics should highlight equity and empowerment across various social dimensions, focusing on gender-responsive budgeting, youth entrepreneurship, and social protection mechanisms for marginalized groups.

Sub-Theme 6: Technology, AI and Data for Development

Research may explore the use of emerging technologies in developmental contexts, examining applications like AI for public service delivery, block-chain for land rights documentation, and predictive analytics for drought early warning systems.

Sub-Theme 7: Peace-building, Governance and Policy Research

Submissions should address research on peace-building processes, governance frameworks, and policy analysis in the East African context, highlighting best practices and innovative solutions.

Sub-Theme 8: Creative Economies and Cultural Heritage

Researchers may explore the intersection of culture, creativity, and development. Topics include digital archiving of indigenous knowledge, arts-based research for social transformation, cultural entrepreneurship, and heritage tourism models.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Length: 150-350 words

Language: English

Format: Introduction/ Objective, Methodology, Results, and Conclusion/ significance/ Applied implications**.**

Keywords: 3 to 5 relevant keywords.

Author Details: Full name, affiliation, and email address for all authors; clearly designating the presenting and corresponding author.

Timelines:

Abstract: 27/03/2026

Registration Deadline: 31/03/2026

Full paper: 01/04/2025

Pre-Conference: 27/05/2025

Conference Date: 28-29/05/2026

Submission Portal: research@teau.ac.ke

Conference Fees:

Presenters-Physical (Book of abstracts, certificates and publication of conference proceedings)	KShs. 6500
Presenters-Online (Book of abstracts, certificates and publication of conference proceedings)	KShs. 4500
International Presenters	USD 65
Conference participation fee	KShs. 4000
Doctoral Students Mentorship/Pre-Conference	KShs. 4000
Continuing Students Mentorship/Pre-Conference	KShs. 1500

Only original, unpublished work should be submitted.

Authors will be notified of acceptance as either an **Oral Presentation** or a **Poster Presentation** based on the conference review committee's decision.

Payment:

- Institution: The East African University
- Bank: Cooperative bank-kitengela
- A/c no: 01129285860000

Review Criteria:

- Relevance to the theme and sub-theme
- Originality and scholarly contribution
- Methodological soundness
- Potential for policy or community impact

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Young Researchers Track: Dedicated sessions for undergraduate and postgraduate research. This track will include a doctoral consortium where doctoral students and candidates will present their work and receive mentorship

Community Impact Award: Recognition for research with demonstrable societal benefit

Interdisciplinary Panels: Facilitating cross-sectoral dialogue and collaboration

Publication Opportunity: Selected papers will be published in a peer-reviewed journal

REFERENCES

Dörffel, C., & Schuhmann, S. (2022). What is inclusive development? Introducing the Multidimensional Inclusiveness Index. *Social Indicators Research, 162*(1), 1117–1148. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-021-02860-y

Hjortsø, C. N., Romanova, G., Abdulkader, B., et al. (2025). Community engagement in African agricultural universities: Challenges to the institutionalisation of engaged scholarship. *Higher Education*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-025-01538-5

Zhang, J., Ji, Q., Skene, K. R., et al. (2025). Bridging resilience and sustainability: A reconciled framework for navigating social-ecological systems. *Regional Environmental Change, 25*, Article 106. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-025-02442-5