



HONOURING THE LEGACY OF *Professor Michael Cross*

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**THE ALI MAZRUI
CENTRE FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION STUDIES**

Professor Michael Cross

1952–2021



Founding Director of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher
Education Studies, University of Johannesburg



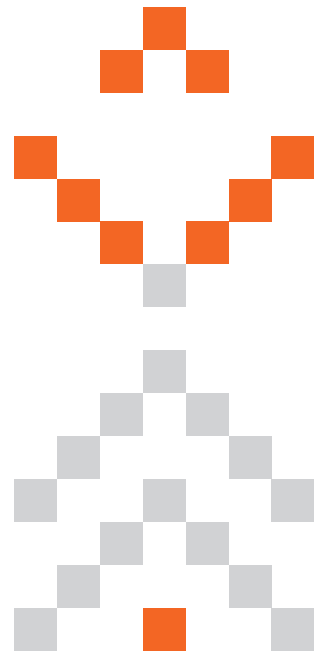
Professor Michael Cross with colleagues at a writing retreat in Mpumalanga, early 2021

Introduction

This Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies (AMCHES) special edition magazine is dedicated to the memory of Michael Cross, who was the founding director of the Centre. In the wake of Michael Cross's passing on 6 June 2021, staff at AMCHES and other colleagues from the University of Johannesburg (UJ) undertook to compile a publication dedicated to Michael. This magazine is a result of that undertaking. It comprises the outpouring of tributes and messages of support following the announcement of Michael's passing after a protracted battle with the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

This dedication includes a short biography of Michael, and edited versions of messages and tributes adapted mainly from his funeral service and memorial held during the month of June 2021. This record is not only testimony to the immense contribution that Michael made as an academic and scholar, but it also shows that Michael was much loved as a warm and charismatic human being.

A second focus of the magazine is to highlight the programmes and activities of AMCHES and its dedicated staff and partners who honour the legacy of Michael Cross and will continue to do so into the future. It is hoped that this magazine will be cherished by those who came to know Michael as students, colleagues, friends and family.





Ms Loria Mokoena with conference participants at the SAERA conference in Cape Town, 2016



The Gifts of Michael Cross

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

PROFESSOR MICHAEL CROSS (MEd 1986, PhD 1994), or “Prof” as he was fondly known, in 2016 became the founder and Director of AMCHES, University of Johannesburg (UJ), having started working at UJ as a Research Professor in 2012. Before this, (1986–2012), he was attached to the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Professor Cross served in several initiatives, such as the Governance Task Team of the National Commission on Higher Education and the Technical Committee on Norms and Standards for Educators in South Africa. He was involved in reviews across the continent, including the Tertiary Education Linkages Project, Finnish Aid to Developing Countries (South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique, Bosnia, Bolivia and Nepal), Quality Assurance of Postgraduate Programmes in Tanzania and Mozambique, programmes of the Association for African Universities, as well as in the development of the Rwanda Higher Education Sector Strategic Plan.

Professor Cross was also a visiting scholar at Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, Stanford, Stockholm and Jules-Vernes Universities. He received the first Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) award in 2012 as the Outstanding Mentor of Educational Researchers in Africa. This was testimony to his great passion for developing young scholars. Professor Cross was also a co-founder and co-editor of the book series on *African Higher Education: Developments and Perspectives* with Brill/Sense Publishers, and *Higher Education Transformation* with Sun Press.

Professor Cross authored at least 15 books, of which six were single-authored, while nine were co-authored. He also produced at least 27 book chapters and 45 articles in leading scholarly journals.

In addition, he was involved in the production of over 35 reports on different topics. At a mentorship level, Professor Cross produced 37 MEd/MA graduates, supervised 15 doctoral graduates, and mentored 12 postdoctoral research fellows – including several who were still under his supervision at the time of his passing.

Family meant everything to Professor Cross – he enjoyed family debates, imparting his knowledge and entertaining family, friends and colleagues with his unique sense of humour. An avid supporter of Chelsea F.C., he loved watching soccer and had his own sworn theories about coaching tactics.

Professor Cross leaves behind him a rich legacy of academic networking, friendship and a commitment to critical scholarship



STAFF AND COLLEAGUES, AMCHES

Professor Michael Cross was our dearest colleague and friend. As the founding Director of AMCHES, Michael leaves a lasting legacy of dynamic scholarship in higher education. He was particularly focused on advancing the excellence and contributions of scholars from Africa and the South, linked to the decolonisation project of epistemic and social justice. Michael established a wide range of contacts, nationally and internationally, all of whom share in the outpouring of grief and disbelief in his untimely passing. He will be remembered by many for his immense intellectual contributions and consistent

leadership, mentorship and wisdom. The formation of AMCHES is one of the many legacies he has bequeathed us, and one that we at AMCHES are dedicated to continuing.

His life's work was also dedicated to the development of young scholars, and there are many living examples among us. He was a great mentor, always finding opportunities for students. He was meticulous in guiding and helping students enhance the quality of their intellectual endeavours, whether in the writing of their theses and publications or in making presentations at conferences and seminars. Michael's students have risen

to influential positions in academia, government and in civil society, a testimony to his ability to attract a diverse student group to work with him and go on to make their mark in society.

There was always something special about him. He was not only a consummate scholar; he was an energetic and vibrant personality. Michael loved to laugh even while working – he enjoyed life! He loved those bright, sparkling shirts and outfits that were a signature of his effervescent spirit. As such, he was his own person with his own identity, yet as one with the vulnerable and downtrodden of this earth.





Michael Cross Jr, Son

“Some people come into our lives, leave footprints on our hearts, eventually go and we are never, ever the same.”

– Flavia Weedn

On 6 June at 02:45, our lives were changed forever. We lost a husband, a father, a loving grandfather, a friend to many and a colleague to many. He took his last breath surrounded by his family, after succumbing to a 3-week battle with COVID. Nothing prepares you for that moment, nothing prepares you for the pain and realisation that you will never see your loved one again. Yet, there is comfort in death, the comfort of knowing that he is no longer suffering and is at peace, the comfort of knowing he was loved by many and the comfort in treasured memories.

“Ancient Egyptians believed that upon death they would be asked two questions and their answers would determine whether they could continue their journey in the afterlife. The first question was, ‘Did you find joy?’ If yes, the second was, ‘Did you bring joy to others?’”

My father was full of life. He was adventurous, and loved to travel and explore the world. Laughing was his medicine, it was his secret to eternal youth even in difficult times. Ever the optimist, he always had a positive outlook. Never looking to be the centre of attention, he always was. He had a natural way of making people feel welcome, and making people laugh. And probably one of his greatest traits was how he remained calm even when facing adversity, a trait that has definitely helped his family, friends and colleagues through the most challenging times. Nothing phased him. He was always so calm and composed, he held no grudges and as quickly as conflict happened, it was forgotten. A man with flaws, yet he always had good intentions and was authentic with a kind soul.

Family meant everything to him. Growing up, he ensured we had a comfortable life making lots of sacrifices along the way alongside my mother. Life was a constant celebration. Our house often hosted parties, sometimes celebrating life’s milestones, at other times just celebrating life itself. Something he continuously insisted on throughout our lives, all the way to his last breath. And we will continue to celebrate life, celebrate his life and the legacy he leaves behind.


It is important to acknowledge my mother when speaking about my father and the man he became; the man we celebrate today. She too made lots of sacrifices, a pillar of support throughout his academic career, often staying home in his early career to take care of us children while he travelled the world. Always by his side through sickness and health, this year they would have celebrated 42 years of marriage. Many years ago, she met and fell in love with Michael Cross, years later proudly referred to him as Professor Michael Cross, yet to her, he was and will always be her only love, the love of her life, a husband and father to her children. She too has lost her lifelong pillar of support.

“Sometimes you will never know the true value of a moment until it becomes a memory.”

– Theodor Seuss Geisel

I can confidently say that my father left an impression on everyone he met. He loved a good debate, a heated discussion which he naturally facilitated to give everyone a voice. It amazed me sometimes how he would make sense of all that confusion and summarise it so eloquently, always leaving us with something profound to think about.

Education was important to him, not only because of the opportunities it provides to so many, but also because it allows each and every one of us to shape



a better society to live in. A proud mentor to countless graduates only surpassed by a proud father at our graduation ceremonies. All you had to do was ask, he was always willing to provide inputs, proofread or brainstorm ideas. Professor, as he was often known, was well respected and valued in the academic community.

“Don’t cry because it’s over, smile because it happened.”

– Dr Seuss

It’s the small things we will miss – his contagious laughter, which always improved the mood, and the brightly coloured Hawaiian shirts he loved to wear, which became his signature look and a symbol of his welcoming, bubbly personality. His love of technology not only facilitated his work, but I believe also maintained his youth – I could imagine the joy in him unwrapping the latest gadget, that same joy which reverberated as he told whoever would listen about his latest purchase.

A night owl, he often woke up late but worked well into the early hours of the morning. A celebrated family braai master, he was a master chef with lamb chops and braaied fish. And the classic soccer debates where family ties were almost cut at times. Highly opinionated when Chelsea was on top and winning, he was uncharacteristically silent when things did not go their way. Phones often went unanswered, messages were not returned and if you were in his presence, he often found a way to change the subject. Another occasion to get the family together for an important match.

*“Those we love don’t go away,
they walk beside us every day.
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
still loved, still missed and
very dear”*

– Alex MacLean

I can assure you that my father lived life to the fullest – he truly loved life. Although we may say his life came to a premature end, perhaps we can also believe that he accomplished all he set out to

do and his time here on earth with us came to its natural end. Perhaps he was needed elsewhere, in another place, another life. He is not here with us physically, but he is definitely here with us all. He lives within us, in our memories, in the way we approach and live life, in the lessons taught and in the love shown.

Everything has changed. We will never see him again, never have a conversation with him again, and tell him we love him. We will always miss him but this is not goodbye, we will meet again. You are not with us in body, but spiritually you remain. There is still love after someone dies.

Professor Michael Cross leaves behind an extensive body of work to build on and a great legacy – a legacy that will continue to live on through the UJ’s AMCHES, of which he was founder and director.

On behalf of the entire Cross family, we would like to thank everyone for their lovely messages, tributes and continued support. This includes his international colleagues, his colleagues at the Ali Mazrui Centre, his students and the Dean at UJ. We would also like to extend a special thank you to the medical team at Rosebank Clinic, a truly exceptional group of doctors that fought alongside our father and to the staff at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital for their unwavering support to our mother. A very special and heartfelt thanks to my aunt and uncle, Paul and Carla, for being here for us day after day.

And finally, thank you to everyone at UJ for putting his memorial together to celebrate a wonderful life, an amazing soul, and a great man.



Professor Michael Cross celebrating his birthday with family



Professor Saurabh Sinha

*Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
University of Johannesburg*



I acknowledge the family members of Professor Michael Cross, his wife, Albertina, his children, Eunice, Michael Jnr, grandchildren, and loved ones who have joined us at the memorial service.

Furthermore, the colleagues of the research centre and faculty, in particular, Professor Sarah Gravett, Professor Nadine Petersen, Professor Mdu Ndlovu, Dr Logan Govender, Professor Emnet Woldegiorgis, Mr Ahmed Essop, Professor Shireen Motala, Miss Loria Mokoena, and others are acknowledged.

Dear Collaborators, Representatives from various organisations, including Dr Thandi Lewin of our line department, Colleagues and Friends.

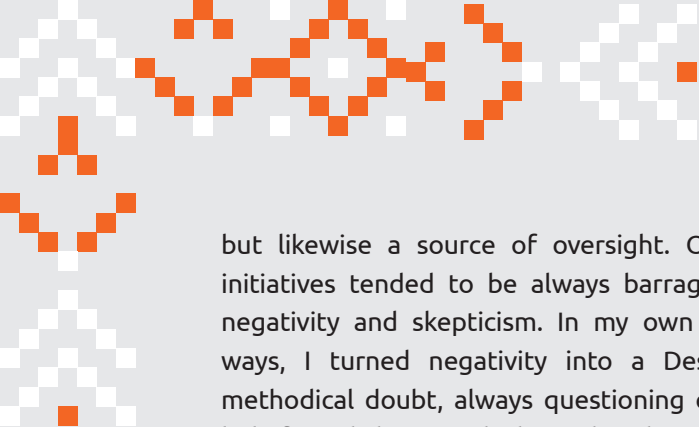
On the morning of 6 June 2021, news filtered through that Professor Michael Cross had passed away after a fierce battle with COVID-19. After joining UJ in 2012, he became the founding Director of AMCHES at the Faculty of Education. He was also an international scholar, a family man, a distinguished academic, supervisor, friend, colleague and a vital voice in the higher education sector. I have since learnt that he was passionate about football and an ardent follower of Chelsea. It is said that a university is the sum of its parts. We have lost a powerful part of our university. We are left bereft, conscious of our own vulnerability and deeply cognisant of our own mortality. A grim cloud seems to have lingered over us in the last few weeks. The loss of this giant of a man is palpable. We are far greater as academics and as people for having known him and for having been exposed to his phenomenal mind.

His friends, colleagues and students have described him as “a towering intellect”, “a mind abuzz with ideas”, “a giant in the debates on social justice and the knowledge project,

social inclusion and access in higher education”, “a supervisor who demanded your everything but equally gave you everything” and “a chuckling laugh that announced his presence”. Testaments to Michael’s stature as an academic and scholar have traced his professional career from Wits university to UJ. It was a significant moment for the university when together, we established AMCHES in 2016. Professor Ali Mazrui was an exceptional scholar and Pan-Africanist who had a pervasive influence on higher education. Michael Cross said at the time of the launch: “We would like this Centre to be a hub for critical intellectual engagement for African scholars in South Africa and across the continent who have a strong interest in the progress, challenges and opportunities facing African higher education.”

Michael was an academic with considerable range and influence. He was a scholar of great integrity grounded in a humanity that was deeply cognisant of the social injustices of our country, the destruction wreaked upon us by apartheid and the powerful need for the country to craft a transformation agenda, especially in education. His was a life dedicated to eloquence and high-quality scholarship that he integrated with a perceived duty to provide both committed leadership within the university, amongst academics and above all to fostering new generations of students.

In reflecting on Michael Cross, I dipped into his stellar work, *Steering Epistemic Access in Higher Education in South Africa*, published in 2018. In Chapter 1, he writes: “My entire professional career has been dedicated to academic life, which is the thing I appear to know the best. This closeness to the subject of analysis can be a source of insight,



but likewise a source of oversight. Our own initiatives tended to be always barraged with negativity and skepticism. In my own humble ways, I turned negativity into a Cartesian methodical doubt, always questioning our own beliefs and doings, which rendered me a more productive positionality towards our work and the institution... Conscious of this difficulty, the project offers a unique opportunity for introspection and self-analysis, which, with the necessary precautions, affords the possibility of a detached scrutiny of my familiar world. This reappropriation of the self is only possible through the objectification of my own familiarity with this world, an epistemological privilege that requires a great deal of analytical vigilance. I have applied myself to this task to the best of my abilities."

Embedded in his scholarly work is the meta-awareness of Michael as a black academic and intellectual encountering an academic world defined by colonial values and viewed at the same time by race. This consciousness of the distraught legacy of apartheid, colonialism and deep injustices carved in society informed his scholarly journeys and ensured that these created a global footprint. His scholarly canon will continue to be cited as a major sphere of influence and through his students, he will continue to champion the causes that he was so passionate about.

The losses of the last year are difficult to put into words. While the rolling statistics we hear each evening are often nameless and faceless, the losses are now too often hitting close to home. The tragic death of Michael has left us with the overwhelming and unabating weight of grief. To many at UJ, he was more than a colleague, he was a dear friend. Perhaps most notably, Michael stood so vehemently for social justice that it spoke to the heart of the democratic project. He was a formidable scholar whose name has become synonymous with the decolonisation movement. Though he will long be remembered for his commitment to these fights, it is his energy, his passion and his warm spirit that will stay with many of us.

*In the words of the great poet
Maya Angelou:*

*“And when great souls die
after a period peace blooms
slowly and always irregularly.
Spaces fill with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.”*

Rest in peace Michael Cross.

Messages from Members of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies



Professor Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis

*Director,
AMCHES University of Johannesburg*




On behalf of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies at the University of Johannesburg, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy and condolences to Professor Cross's family and colleagues.

Professor Michael Cross was a brilliant academic, an engaging intellectual, and a passionate scholar of education sciences who published numerous scholarly works over the course of his academic career. He dedicated his academic life to posing critical questions in his research endeavours on issues of academic leadership, the academic performance of students, access and equality, as well as social justice, the political economy of education and the decolonisation project in higher education.

In the late 1990s, with some of his colleagues, Professor Cross was part of the heated debate on the Politics of a National Curriculum dealing with the issue of Diversity in the South African Education system. In 1998, he published a policy paper on the topic "Dealing with Diversity in South African Education". He emphasised the importance of open and genuine debate among educationists, policymakers, practitioners, students and people interested in exploring how education can overcome the legacy of differences that was engineered by apartheid. He reflected on the role of inclusive and just education in reshaping the future of South Africa.

Professor Cross has contributed his part in the academic discussions and debates in the effort of restructuring the post-apartheid South African higher education system within the social justice framework advocating epistemic access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Professor Cross had a strong sense of concern about how students from marginalised communities or historically underprivileged backgrounds negotiate their performance within an extremely unequal and unjust university environment. His commitment to change and inclusive education went beyond research and academic publications; rather, it included advocacy as well as participation in major curriculum development and pedagogical initiatives at national and international levels. He participated in the development of a training curriculum for school supervisors, headmasters and principals of independent schools; he also participated in the development of the teacher education curriculum for the African Virtual University. Further, he was part of the international team reviewing the liberal arts curriculum in ten countries; he has thus left a strong legacy in diversity scholarship and institutional transformation initiatives in South African higher education.

His main assertion on inclusive education, however, was not limited to access; rather he questioned the very nature of knowledge production in African higher education. Besides the ongoing concern with



the epistemological and theoretical hegemony of the West in African academic practice, Professor Cross tried to understand how knowledge is produced and controlled through the interplay of the politics of knowledge and current intellectual discourses in African universities. In this regard, he called for African universities to relocate from the position of object to subject in order to gain a form of liberated epistemological voice more responsive to the social and economic complexities of the continent.

Professor Cross established AMCHES as a knowledge hub for critical thinking and the production of knowledge that contributes to a deeper understanding of strategic issues in higher education through multidisciplinary and policy-relevant research. The Centre has since emerged as a Pan-African institution for scholarly research, inquiry, training and professional development in higher education. It is now providing an academic space for training, scholarly debates and research for many scholars within the continent and beyond.

Professor Cross published a number of academic works on issues of power and knowledge, thus contributing to the decolonisation debates in Africa. He theorised the dynamics and the politics of knowledge in the context of African epistemologies, and he always asserted that the production and mediation of knowledge

is a genuine political process. Professor Cross is the author and co-author of several books, book chapters and numerous articles in leading scholarly journals. He served as an education specialist in several major national education policy initiatives in South Africa, such as the National Commission on Higher Education and the Technical Committee on Norms and Standards for Educators. His passion for education research in Africa enabled him to embrace the complexities of postcolonial African realities, engaging in the broader contexts of Pan-African projects. His understanding of these complexities was among the many reasons Professor Cross established AMCHES and led the Centre with impressive precision and wisdom.

AMCHES's *African Higher Education* book series, of which he was co-founder and co-editor, provide a platform for the dissemination of cutting-edge research on current higher education issues in Africa. In this sense, Professor Cross's legacy laid the foundation aimed at steering critical engagement among scholars, students, academic leaders, policymakers and other key stakeholders who have a strong interest in the progress, challenges and opportunities facing *African higher education* within a broad (global) context.

As the Director of AMCHES, Professor Cross had an extraordinary charisma that brought together scholars developing research projects on higher education. Among others, Professor Cross was the principal investigator of the ongoing research project on understanding epistemic access and success in public universities in South Africa. The project explores how the knowledge question is being approached in post-apartheid universities and its implications for understanding the meanings of access and success. In the collaboration of research projects and colloquia, many of us will always treasure the moments of delightful discussions with Professor Cross and his hearty laugh that pierced the silence in our regular meetings.

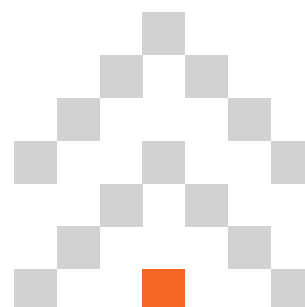
Professor Cross leaves a lasting legacy of dynamic scholarship in higher education. He was particularly focused on advancing the excellence

and intellectual contributions of African scholars. He launched a new project on Generations of African Scholars with the aim of critically investigating, analysing and documenting the intellectual legacies of African scholars, leaders and institutions. Because of Professor Cross, the project now hosts book initiatives, postdoctoral research projects and many more research collaborations to come. We recently launched a new book project on the future of African higher education; Professor Cross was working hard on the project, getting leading scholars on board. As the book project had been near and dear to Professor Cross, we will honour his name by dedicating the book to him.

Beyond the details of his curriculum vitae, Professor Cross's impact remains immeasurable. His critical and rigorous writings helped anchor progressive academia throughout the higher education community. His passion for learning and scholarship shaped the views of many of his colleagues who worked with him on a wide range of projects. His legacies have been captured both in his academic work and in the unbreakable and inspiring relationships he built with all of us.

There will be many tributes to his life, but it is doubtful that any can fully capture Professor Cross's impact on African scholarship. We will continue the journey that Professor Cross started, to honour his vision and to maintain AMCHES as his living legacy.

The Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies, on behalf of the University of Johannesburg, would once again like to express its deepest condolences to the family of Professor Michael Cross and express our appreciation of the time we spent with him, as well as the family's support following his passing. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to colleagues and friends from across South Africa and all over the world for providing support in diverse ways.



Professor Michael Cross introducing Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos at a joint symposium held at JIAS (Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study)



Dr Logan Govender

*Senior Lecturer,
AMCHES University of Johannesburg*

I remember Michael Cross as an activist scholar, educator, mentor, colleague, friend and much more. I first met Michael in the mid-1990s when I was working as an education policy researcher at the Human Sciences Research Council. Education policy work was one of his passions. We shared many ideas in the policy arena work we did in collaboration with other colleagues, government and civil society organisations in the crafting of post-apartheid education policies. From there, Michael was instrumental in supporting my PhD – he became my supervisor, and I had first-hand experience of his many related skills, as did fellow PhD students of his at the time (I believe Chika Trevor Sehoole was his first PhD student, Bernadette Johnson his second, and I, his third; so we always thought of ourselves as “Michael’s babies”). Trevor is today Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, Bernadette is Director, Transformation and Employment Equity at Wits University, and I, Senior Lecturer at UJ’s AMCHES, and we have remained close friends, thanks to Michael.

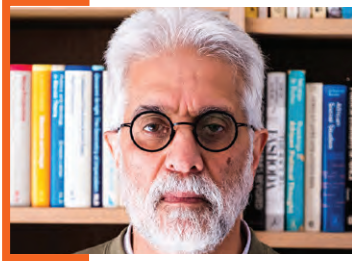
Our paths diverted for a while in the mid-2000s when I went to work in government (eventually not in education, but in international relations), partly at Michael’s urging: he believed, like many of us, that as researchers/academics having the vantage of a policymaker was important in deepening our appreciation of the complexities around policymaking and implementation. In the early 2000s, while still at Wits University, Michael began a project that was to turn into a lifelong passion. Together, with Brahm Fleisch and Francine de Clerq, we developed a proposal for the establishment of a Wits Centre for Education Planning Support, which was closely linked to the Wits School of Education-led consortium been awarded a franchise to establish a Southern African Development Community (SADC) centre of education policy support in the region.

While this project did not see the light of day at Wits, it would turn into a bigger, more impactful reality when Michael moved to UJ, culminating in AMCHES. I was contracted by Michael to develop the proposal for the establishment of AMCHES. During his academic journey, Michael’s interests extended beyond his passion for policy analysis research; it became infused with the decolonisation and epistemic and social justice projects, an important part of the AMCHES research agenda, to which many colleagues are contributing.

Michael and I also shared a love for history and its importance in understanding context and relevance in knowledge production and intellectual work. This led to a project, among others, on “SADTU [South African Democratic Teachers Union] and the struggle for professional unionism in South Africa”, which we were in the middle of when news of his untimely passing was received. Indeed, we are busy at AMCHES with many other projects: the Generations of African Scholars project, Reimagining the African University, Student Epistemic Access and Success, COVID-19 and Higher Education, the list goes on, all of which bear Michael’s intellectual stamp.

Of course, there is no better way to remember Michael’s passion for history and his intellectual work in general than to continue with the many projects he dreamed of, and through sheer slog and determination, found the means to make a reality. This is something, we at AMCHES are committed to doing, and are certain that with the vast network of partners both in South Africa and abroad that Michael established, his legacy will live on in the work that we jointly undertake.

Farewell Michael, colleague, friend and brother, you will forever remain in our hearts and minds, in our work and in our dreams.



Mr Ahmed Essop

*Research Associate,
AMCHES University of Johannesburg*



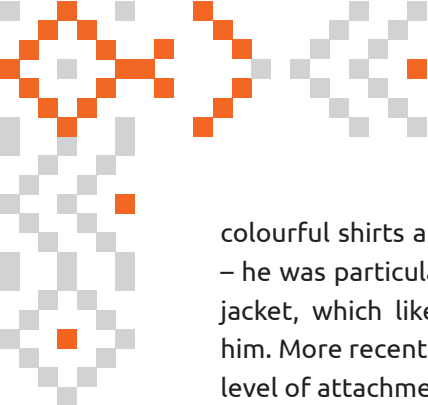
On behalf of Michael's colleagues at the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies at the University of Johannesburg, I would like to extend our deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to Michael's family, to Albertina, Eunice, Michael Jnr and his beloved grandchildren, Laila and Michael Jnr. Michael's passing has left a gaping hole for us in the Centre and for his colleagues in the broader academic community, but we can only begin to imagine the deep void it has left in your lives – you were the centre of Michael's universe.

I have known Michael for some 25 years – we first met in the mid-1990s when I briefly had a courtesy office at the Education Policy Unit at Wits and Michael was a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education. However, our initial contact was fleeting and it was not until the mid-2000s that I got to know Michael and got the measure of Michael, both as a person and as a scholar – first, when I was a visiting researcher in the Education Leadership and Policy Studies division in the Faculty of Education at Wits – Michael was the chair of the division; and then in 2015 when he invited me to join him in his journey to establish AMCHES at UJ. It was not an easy journey, but Michael's perseverance and single-minded pursuit resulted eventually in the university providing the seed funding, which enabled the launching of the Centre in August 2017.

Michael's work defined him. He was an intellectual – engaging and grappling with ideas drove and energised him. And he died as he lived with his scholarly boots on. Even from his hospital bed, while he was still able to, Michael was participating in webinars and providing feedback to participants. Michael, as colleagues from near and far have testified, was a brilliant academic. He was also a dedicated teacher, supervisor and mentor, who inspired and paved the way for many young scholars to pursue academic careers.

Michael was a brilliant academic, but he was much more than that. His passion for ideas was equalled only by his passion for soccer. Aside from spending time with his family, it was soccer that provided welcome relief from the world of ideas. Michael supported Chelsea and support was more than turning on the television to watch the latest game – as a colleague observed, during a writing retreat a week before he fell ill, Michael emerged in full Chelsea regalia to watch a game, anxious about the likely outcome and erupted in joy when Chelsea won.

I suspect he supported Chelsea because, in the past, Chelsea to all intents and purposes was an African team with players from across the continent. And although it was not obvious at first sight, Michael was a fitness fanatic – as another colleague pointed out, during a similar writing retreat a few years back at Bela-Bela (or Warmbaths), our daily routine and work agenda were determined by Michael's visits to swim in the hot springs. Michael also had a penchant for bright,



colourful shirts and, in his Wits days, for velvet – he was particularly attached to a black velvet jacket, which like his work seemed to define him. More recently, although not with the same level of attachment, the black velvet jacket was replaced with a white linen suit.

Michael was a brilliant academic but he was less than brilliant (in fact, and he will not mind me saying so as I often teased him about it), he was hopeless as an administrator. He was not made for the routine humdrum of the day-to-day running of an academic unit. I recall the first meeting of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies division at Wits that I attended. It was a far cry from the bureaucratic routine of the public service where I had come from – there was no agenda, no decision made, no minutes kept and Michael and his colleagues were not only all talking at the same time but at cross purposes. It was reminiscent of a Monty Python sketch. And to get Michael to respond to emails was like getting “water out of stone”.

Michael would often call and ask for a document and when it was pointed out that it had been emailed to him, he would frantically search his email folder, difficult even with the search function, as there were literally thousands of emails, which were not filed or deleted. And this from a man who was a technology junkie – Michael not only had the latest Apple laptop and iPad but also all manner of paraphernalia that went with it.

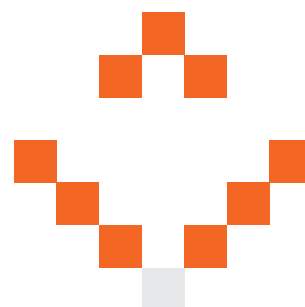
Michael was a brilliant academic, but he was much more than that. Michael was a wonderful human being, warm, sensitive, humorous – he loved making and laughing at his own jokes – with a generosity of spirit and a smile, always a smile, which lit his face and the world around him. Michael, we will miss you more than you can know; we will miss your friendship, your guidance and wisdom and your laugh and love of life. COVID-19, this terrible pandemic that is ravaging the world, has claimed you before you could fully realise your vision for the Centre – the culmination of your intellectual journey. We pledge to complete the journey that you started, to honour your vision and to build AMCHES as your living legacy.

*Hamba kahle, Michael.
Rest in peace.*



Dr Sibonokuhle Ndlovu

*Postdoctoral Research Fellow,
AMCHES University of Johannesburg*



It is with great sadness that I join hands with Professor Cross's family and colleagues in celebrating his life, as I represent the voice of the postdoctoral research fellows on our personal and academic experiences at Ali Mazrui Centre, in memory of Professor Michael Cross, who was our mentor.

Professor Michael Cross was a jovial person, always laughing. When as postdocs we presented our challenges to him, Professor Cross always suggested that it was not as bad as we would think or imagine. His door was always wide open for us and we could go to him for anything and before speaking, he would stand up from his chair and give us a strong assuring handshake. Professor Cross taught us humility, by demonstrating it himself. For some of us who were with him in his last days, we can still hear his laughter resounding in our ears.

Professor Cross always walked with us in our fellowship journey. Postdoctoral fellows were his garden. He cultivated us, acknowledging, praising, encouraging and motivating us all the way. He was described as the best mentor in Africa, and indeed as postdoctoral fellows at Ali Mazrui Centre, we attest to that. When we still operated from our offices before COVID struck, we would go to his office to discuss our co-authored manuscripts. He would ask you to pull up a chair and sit next to him. We would read together, discuss and debate every sentence, line-by-line, paragraph by paragraph, to the conclusion. He would do this, even if it meant persisting for weeks and months. In the end, he would make a pronouncement – "You can now submit!", which was like a blessing, because after that we knew that a publication was definitely coming.

Professor Cross always engaged us and got us actively involved in all the projects of the Centre, seminars, conferences and writing retreats. He also urged us to edit and write our own books.

Some of his quotes have remained with us to carry us through. He would always say:

“*Collect your data in South Africa. Do not complicate life.
There's not enough time; just settle and work.
The [postdoctoral research fellow] opportunity
is to consolidate your career trajectory.***”**

Encouraging our participation in projects, he would say: "We have many projects to be completed, with problems, theories and policy dimensions to be stretched."

He always said to us: "Postdocs, you know very well what will retain and keep you at Ali Mazrui Centre and at the University of Johannesburg", and indeed we knew exactly what he meant. He would not only say that, but would also motivate us by saying: "The postdoctoral research fellows' undertaking should be mutually beneficial: gain independence, gain confidence and build a curriculum vitae. Though the university requires that you publish two units per year, that's just the minimum; you must do much more than that, yes you can!"

His emphatic, "Yes, you can!" motivated each one of us to try to do more than required by the university. He always encouraged us to apply for our own funds and not rely on university funding. He not only encouraged us to look for funding but also strongly supported our funding applications. His reference letters always ended with the words, "I strongly support this application, Yours sincerely, Professor Michael Cross".

He was an empowering mentor, and our success was his success and our achievements, his achievements. He embodied vibrance and grace, purpose and poignance, all in one. As we celebrate his life today we cannot but ask: "How can the very cup that holds your wine, be the cup that is burnt in the potter's oven? How can the very flute that soothes your spirit, be the wood that is consumed by fire?"

Postdocs at the Ali Mazrui Centre pledge to honour him and continue his legacy, by remaining on the path on which he has put us. The best mentor in Africa. He will always be remembered by his postdoctoral fellows.

Thank you!



Professor Michael Cross with his then PhD student, Dr David Matsepe, who has since graduated, attending the SAERA conference in Cape Town, 2016



Dr Naziema Jappie

*PhD Graduate,
AMCHES University of Johannesburg*



From our family of students at the Ali Mazrui Centre, I wish to convey our sincere condolences to the Cross family, our thoughts and prayers are with you all; may God give you all patience, comfort and guidance. We know that you will always hold onto the warm and loving memories of Professor Cross that bring solace and comfort for brighter days ahead.

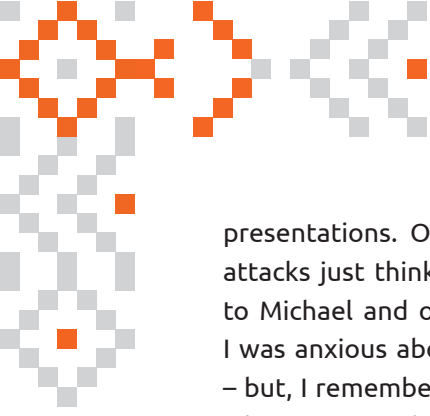
While it is with great sadness that we mourn the loss of Professor Michael Cross, we celebrate the life of a transformational figure in higher education. He has left behind a legacy in the field of education with his inspirational and thought-provoking teaching and mentoring style, and a multitude of scholarly publications. “Prof”, as some knew him, or “Michael” to others, is well remembered as a warm and inspiring professor. I feel indeed privileged to have had him as my PhD supervisor.

I met Professor Michael Cross at Wits University where I was Dean of Student Affairs in the late 1990s. This was a riotous and difficult time for students for various reasons. During one of the days of student protest action, Michael and I were chatting, and he said ‘if you can negotiate and mediate with workers you can do the same with students’ – he was very supportive and encouraging.

My PhD journey began when I attended the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) University Presidents’ Forum in October 2015 in China, where I was invited by the Faculty of Education at the Beijing Normal University to participate in a panel discussion. This is where I met Michael once again. Apart from the many photos we took, we began chatting about a number of things, basically catching up. While we were at this conference we got news of the student protest – #RMF – flaring up in South Africa and I said to Michael at lunch ‘this is a crazy situation, there is something that we are missing; maybe I should conduct research on social justice practices in higher education’. And he laughed ... and said “Very interesting, there is a lot we need to understand about social justice – let’s talk when we get back home.” – and that is how my PhD journey began with Michael as my supervisor.

Michael changed some of my perspectives about life and higher education. In our frequent interactions, I told him about the challenges with my work at the University of Cape Town and that I would be happy if he could help me speed things up with my proposal. Then the bombshell dropped when I was told this will take at least a year and that I should use 2016 as a pre-registration period, and this happened to be the beginning of an amazing start to my PhD. Sure, your proposal is important, but supervising PhD students is a big time commitment for academics, who, chances are, are already overburdened, and Michael definitely had a lot on his plate.

The induction itself was challenging but I was exposed to the academic way of life in learning, writing and experiences, through seminars, conferences and



presentations. Of course, I used to get panic attacks just thinking I had to present my work to Michael and other academics and students. I was anxious about comments I would receive – but, I remembered that Michael had my back; when you spend a lot of time together with your supervisor, and some of it will be when you are at your most vulnerable, you realise that this is someone you can talk to openly and Michael was always there – sometimes after a few WhatsApp messages – but he never failed to respond. I will always treasure the moments of delightful discussions and the hearty laugh that shattered my long, stressful days.

I thought of Michael as my lawyer who advised me on the best course of action to take as I navigated my PhD journey, but ultimately, the decisions I made were mine and I was accountable for the form and direction that my PhD was taking.

As my supervisor, Michael always made sure I was on track and doing what I was supposed to and reaching important milestones. He kept

going on about a thesis prospectus, and I asked some colleagues about this – and they said they don't know about this. I asked myself what Michael was going on about. Why was he so hooked on this thesis prospectus? When I finally got the prospectus right after many drafts, my work became much easier.

Michael offered intellectual and academic advice on the literature, choice of methodology and research design decisions. He would spend hours reading through and commenting on draft chapters – at times we agreed to disagree on certain issues. He encouraged me to write articles and very often provided emotional support, especially during the pandemic year. I know many students say different things about their supervisors – but for me, Michael's influence can never be erased. He taught me that life isn't perfect, and neither is every student-supervisor relationship, but it is down to you to work with what you've got and do so creatively in order to achieve your goal.

Albert Einstein said, and I quote:

*“Education is not about learning the facts,
but training the mind to think.”*

and that is exactly what Michael did. Thank you, Michael, you leave behind a legacy of intellectual and professional rigour that many will embody; may you rest in peace.



Dr Tshepo Mvulane-Moloi
Postdoctoral Research Fellow,
AMCHES University of Johannesburg



Farewell Professor Michael Cross: A thought leader par excellence.

After hearing that Professor Michael Cross had transitioned to the ancestral realm in June 2021, I grieved in dismay. Beyond the cause of his untimely death, the heartbreaking loss for his immediate family and the broader scholarly community, my thoughts turned inwardly. After the awful news sank in, I reminisced about my initial dialogue with Professor Cross in 2014, while I was a doctoral candidate in Political Science under the supervision of Professor Chris Landsberg. After a brief walk to Professor Cross' office, I recalled asking him if he knew about a much younger Michael Cross.

The aforesaid Michael Cross happened to have been my schoolmate at Sacred Heart College, from primary school until Matric. He had an elder sister, at the College called Eunice Cross. The young man followed in the footsteps of his sister when he later enrolled at Wits University in the year 2000, where he secured "bragging rights" after winning the "Mr Wits" crown. Professor Michael Cross's reply to me, following further discussion, was "of course, that is my son and his sister". The more we chatted, the more we realised that although our initial dialogue took place in 2014, our common confrère proved how we can co-exist, in the same locale. My deepest condolences to Prof's wife, Albertina, and his two children, Eunice and Michael Cross Jnr.

In bidding farewell to Professor Michael Cross, we take comfort in his *oeuvre* of theoretical work as a thought leader in Africa. Undoubtedly the establishment of AMCHES in February 2016 demonstrates his commitment to praxis. Let's recall the words of the pre-eminent ancient Greek playwright of tragedy, Sophocles (496–405 BC). In his play *Antigone* (of 441 BCE) we learn that:

“You can kill a man, but you can't kill an idea.”

– Sophocles, 441 BC

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) linked the latter quote, with “human nature”. In *I Write What I Like* it is also echoed that:

“It is better to die for an idea that will live, than to live for an idea that will die”

– Biko, 1978

Alas, if “Africa operates within a triple heritage. We must learn to keep [personal] accounts” (Mazrui, 2014:53–56). In closure, as current scholars, our homage to Professor Michael Cross must involve an ongoing engagement with his ideas.

Bolekaja!

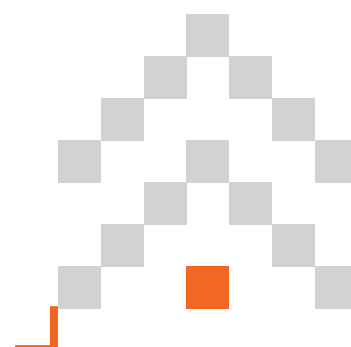


Messages from friends of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies



Professor Ihron Rensburg

*Founding Vice Chancellor
of the University of Johannesburg
(2006–2017)*



Albertina, Eunice, Michael Jr, and your extended family, Colleagues and Friends. It is a very special honour and enormous privilege for me to speak today as we memorialise Michael.

The words of fellow scholar and colleague, Thad Metz, come to mind when I reflect on the life and times of my dear colleague and friend. As he did with many of us present here, Michael regularly sought out Thad to contribute book chapters on African ethics.

Exploring, analysing and synthesising his critical and self-reflective thinking on Ubuntu, our indigenous African intellectual tradition to ground a moral-philosophical worldview that is intended to rival accounts prominent in the East Asian and Western traditions, Thad¹ observes that Ubuntu literally means “humanness” and to exhibit Ubuntu is to be a person who is living a genuinely human way of life, whereas the lack thereof is to be lacking in human excellence.


Following this human philosophy, Metz continues, one’s basic aim in life should be to exude Ubuntu, which one can do by valuing communal relationships with other people. Although the philosophies of Aristotle and other ancient Greek thinkers – who had built upon the rich foundations of North African philosophy – include significant elements of self-regard and self-realisation, they do not essentially involve other people. This is in contrast to sub-Saharan world views, which maintain that realising oneself cannot be achieved except through others. Thus, “a person is a person through other persons” or “I am because we are”. And one exhibits human excellence, “insofar as one displays character traits such as politeness, kindness, sympathy, compassion, benevolence, altruism, sacrifice, forgiveness, mercy, and tolerance”².

Nelson Mandela³ affirms this sub-Saharan ethic of Ubuntu when he

¹ Metz, T. (2014). *Ubuntu: The good life*. In *Encyclopaedia of quality of life and well-being research* (pp. 6761). Springer+Business Media.

² Metz, T. (2014). *Ubuntu: The good life*. In *Encyclopaedia of quality of life and well-being research* (pp. 6764). Springer+Business Media.

³ Mandela, N. (2002, May 18). *Nelson Mandela speaking at the 90th birthday celebrations of Walter Sisulu*. Johannesburg.



reminds us that “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead”.

This then is how I have come to know Michael – exhibiting human solidarity for its own sake – polite, kind, sympathetic, compassionate, generous, benevolent, and altruistic, always sacrificing himself for his neighbour, forgiving, accommodating, making a difference to the lives of others, and truly at peace. Add to these traits of human excellence his pioneering, distinguished and globally recognised scholarship, then we have the role model of role models for academic leaders and scholars to emulate.

I have many fond memories of Michael, going back to our first meeting in the corridors of Wits in 1989 where from an office I helped reset and rebuild the National Education Coordinating Committee alongside Eric Molobi and Vusi Khanyile, with the intellectual leadership of Joe Muller, Nick Taylor, Linda Chisholm, Shireen Motala, George Mashamba, Blade Nzimande, and many others.

Michael was always hopeful and ebullient about creating a better future, brimful and more, with several simultaneous book projects and chapters. Creating the Chair for Higher Education Studies for Michael was my idea; since we wished to appoint both Michael and the late Brenda Leibowitz. Creating from this AMCHES was Michael’s brilliant new idea and a project that we embraced with enormous enthusiasm at UJ. It only required our quiet support and encouragement.

With Michael stirring and encouraging me, alongside the diligent Shireen, I would eventually, last year, publish my book of reflections on the making and evolution of UJ;

and together the three of us would co-edit an important book reflecting on 25 years of transformation in and new pathways for post-apartheid higher education, also published last year.

To Albertina, Eunice and Michael: please accept our gratitude for sharing Michael’s generous spirit with us; and rest assured that Michael’s gifts will endure.

Michael, I do have the SADTU Chapter 2 with the reviewer’s comments in my mailbox and commit to working with Logan on completing this work. Regarding the new AMCHES project, “Creating the New African University”, and your injunction via WhatsApp on 22 April that “All heavy-weights are joining in the battle for creating the new African university. The colloquium will be fascinating and the book historical. Please just say “YES”.” Again, Michael you will recall my affirmation of this call, and I look forward to working with colleagues on this, your last and enduring call to action. Hamba kahle, my friend and colleague. We have picked up your fallen spear!

*I thank you Ke a leboha
Ngiyabonga Asante-sana
Rolivhuwa Merci beaucoup
Obrigado*



Professor André Keet

*Research Chair for Critical Studies
in Higher Education Transformation and
Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Engagement and
Transformation at Nelson Mandela University*



Slected excerpts from paper titled, *Co-Travelling Higher Education Transformation The “gifts” of Michael Cross, presented by Professor Andre Keet at the World Council of Comparative Education Societies symposium, 18 November 2021.*

To approach Michael as a “permanent” travel companion, is to work towards converting his “gifts” into memory as an ally of justice to advance transformative and decolonial praxes within higher education. Mobilising insights from our collaborations and friendship over more than two decades, I ponder over our journey as co-travellers *in and of* higher education transformation. Reading Michael’s “gifts” at the interplay between the “regimes of love” and the “regimes of justice”, I hope to sketch them as productive travelling artefacts of the university transformation journey.

Amidst the many gifts, *how to carry oneself with humility as a scholar in the academy* was one that Michael consistently demonstrated; all the more remarkable, as this gift is ironically a rarity. I spoke about this gift in June 2021, when I delivered one of the lectures of the Global (De) Centre Network in honour of Michael, as one of the founding members of the Critical University Studies network.

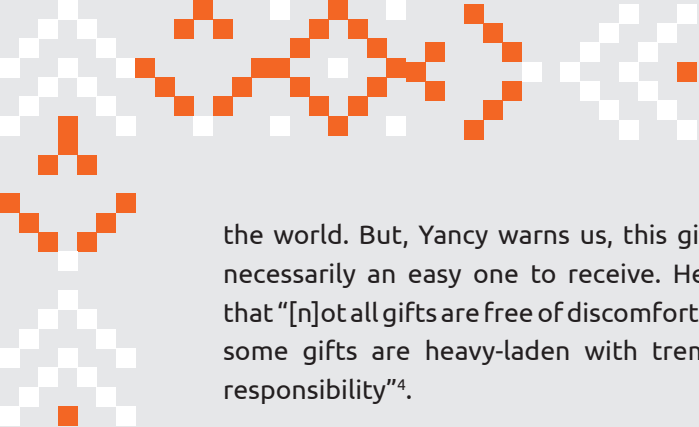
My arguments, as they generally do, centre around this key question: How do we, in the academy, develop a critical ontology of ourselves, since we so clearly lack one? To engage this question, *the gifts of Michael Cross* are necessities.

To make the point of Michael’s gifts, we have to oscillate between the use of the word in everyday parlance – a talent, an ability, a blessing, a present – and the use of the concept in social theoretical thought. Mauss, in his seminal work *The Gift*¹, was interested in the gift economy; and Derrida², in typical deconstruction style, argues that the gift is immediately annulled at the moment of gift-giving, for it creates a relationship of expectation between giver and receiver that cannot be undone. It seems, therefore, that the gift offers us an impossible possibility – the impossible possibility of being selfless. This might seem counterintuitive, and even contradictory to what the gift ought to be – effectively negating any possibility for a truly transformative instance of gifting. And yet, it is perhaps its greatest strength. Yancy³, in thinking about African Philosophy specifically, and Black Thought more generally, argues that the tradition of Othered thought constitutes a gift to

¹ M. Mauss, *The Gift: forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies* [Trans. I. Cunnison] (London: Cohen & West, 1966).

² J. Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money* [Trans. P. Kamuf] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

³ G. Yancy, “Through the Crucible of Pain and Suffering: African-American philosophy as a gift and the countering of the western philosophical metanarrative,” in Peters, M. A., and Mika, C. (Eds). *The Dilemma of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2018).



the world. But, Yancy warns us, this gift is not necessarily an easy one to receive. He argues that “[n]ot all gifts are free of discomfort. Indeed, some gifts are heavy-laden with tremendous responsibility”⁴.

When the gift is something that has not been gifted before, when it does not circulate in the regime of gifts as being giftable, such as African Philosophy, Black Thought, and other Othered paradigms, gifting is an act of restitution and responsibility-inculcating. There is, in Yancy’s words, an un-suturing of the illusion of wholeness of the world within a purely European epistemological framework and praxes. This gifting of African Thought on Higher Education has been central to Michael’s make-up – the AMCHES *African Higher Education* book series and other work attest to this.

The notion of “Othered” thought, specifically Black Thought, as being a gift to the world, is not new. It can be found in the ideas and arguments of black thinkers for centuries. Anna Julia Cooper had already proposed the “Black Gift Thesis” in 1892⁵, wherein she argued for a conceptualisation of Black Thought and culture as a gift to the world. And in the context of South Africa, there is perhaps no better articulator of the gift than in the Black Consciousness writings of Steve Biko, who argued that “[t]he great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa---giving the world a more human face”⁶. Importantly, Biko did not articulate this notion in relation to an idealised worldview. Biko saw the regime of the gift as expressed in the context of black South African communities and theorised from that vantage point.

One can easily superimpose Michael’s sense of the role of the academy and the knowledges of *African higher education* it produces, onto the thoughts of Derrida, Yancy and Biko on gifting.

Perhaps, one can say, Michael lived his gifts, the *gifts*, between the regime of love and the regime of justice.

As Boltanski⁷ argues, most of us care a great deal about injustice when our sense of justice is affronted or disturbed; and we use arguments to claim general validity where disputes are regulated by “regimes of justice”. But there are, as Boltanski suggests, some actions that are selfless and gratuitous, and that belong to what might be called a regime of “peace” or “love”. In the course of their everyday lives, people constantly move back and forth between these two regimes, that of justice and that of love.

That is Michael – right there – one can literally see *him moving*; and amongst those many others, he stands tall. That will continue for us as Michael takes on the ghostly form – not simply as a dead or missing person, but a social figure – where history and subjectivity make social life, to rephrase Gordon⁸.

In honouring Michael, we should make memory an ally of justice, and here I am referencing Misztal⁹, with the recognition and acceptance that Michael’s gifts and gifting, as Yancy says, are heavy-laden with tremendous responsibility for us living with his legacy. To carry this obligation, we can mobilise the gifts of Michael Cross as we co-travel higher education transformation.

⁴ G. Yancy, “... Crucible of Pain ...”³².

⁵ A. J. Cooper, *A Voice from the South: By a Black Woman of the South* (Xenia: Aldine Printing House, 1892).

⁶ S. B. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1987), 48.

⁷ L. Boltanski, *Love and Justice as Competences* [Trans. C. Porter] (London: Wiley, 2012).

⁸ A. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

⁹ B. A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2003).



Professor Chika Sehoole

*Executive Dean,
Faculty of Education,
University of Pretoria*



THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING THE WORK AND FINISHING IT: TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR CROSS

I greet you in the name of my Lord and Saviour Jesus, and I send my condolences to the Cross family and friends; thank the family for the honour and privilege they gave me in leading the send-off service of their husband, father, uncle and grandpa. My name is Chika, also known as Trevor, and I am also Michael's son. I am his academic, scholarly and intellectual son. Michael raised me. I met him 33 years ago at Wits University. He supervised my honours project; he also supervised my master's dissertation, with which I graduated on 27 June 1991, exactly 30 years ago. He then supervised my PhD, with which I graduated on 12 December 2002. I was among his first honours graduates, his first master's graduate and his first PhD graduate. He has been all to me and his other students, and so I am standing here also representing a cohort of young scholars whom he raised, groomed, mentored and are now leaders – holding positions of influence in the country, on the continent and around the world.

Even though he was not a very religious person, he respected my faith; it formed part of the 33-year-long journey of our relationship and friendship. We complemented each other, he brought the intellectual and scholarly dimension to the relationship, and I brought the learning and the spiritual part. I remember in 1999 he took me to the World Congress of Comparative Education in Toronto, Canada, where I presented my first paper at an international conference. We shared a hotel room, and he asked me to present it to him. It was not easy and after three rounds of practising the presentation, we finished. And before we slept, I asked him that we pray. I prayed and afterwards, he said to me, "Chika, you know if you can present the way you pray, you will be a good presenter". He continued and said, "because when you pray, you know exactly what to say, and when done, you close. Go there tomorrow and present like you just prayed now".

*From the Scripture we read, we learn
about the aspect of work:*

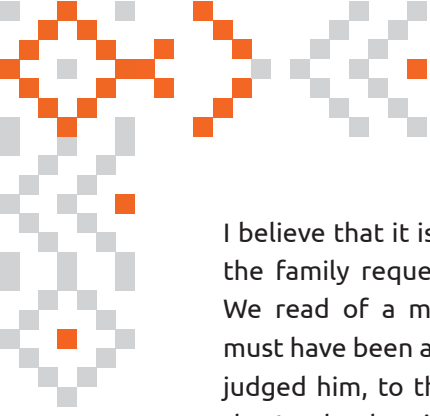
*And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man
which was blind from his birth.*

*²And his disciples asked him, saying,
Master, who did sin, this man, or his
parents, that he was born blind?*

*³Jesus answered, neither hath this man
sinned, nor his parents: but that the
works of God should be made manifest
in him. ⁴I must work the works of him
that sent me, while it is day: the night
cometh, when no man can work.*

*⁵As long as I am in the world,
I am the light of the world.*

– John 9:1–5



I believe that it is against that background that the family requested that I perform this role. We read of a man who was born blind, who must have been a burden to society, and society judged him, to the point that they even asked the Lord, who sinned that this man was born blind. They were quick to judge. The cure of this blind man was a kindness to the public, enabling him to work for his living who before was a charge and burden to the neighbourhood. It is noble, generous, and Christ-like, to be willing to serve the public, even when we are slighted and disobliged by them, or think ourselves so.

Christ had a sense that when he was here on earth, he was not here forever; his being here was time-bound. He used the metaphor of day and night to describe his work and his time here on earth, and during that time he knew that he had some work to do. Nobody can fault Michael for not having done his work. He who loved and cared for his family. From the early days, he would drop off his children and after school, he would pick them up and drop them at home without fail. I travelled the world with him and he would always talk about them and think about his family. We used to do shopping together, he made sure that he bought something for each and every one of them. That is work.

He loved his students, he trained, mentored and inducted them into scholarship, withholding nothing. He opened his home to his students, modelled what mentorship is, and allowed us to shadow him to see how things are done. When you work, you need resources. Michael was resourceful and was able to spot talent and knew how to mobilise resources (physical, intellectual and financial, emotional) to nurture that talent. He even offered to supervise a love relationship.

Not only did he love his family and students, but he loved his work. He would spend long hours in the office, and also at home, working. He invested in technology to support his work. He would always have the latest computer model and software in his office. When he started work in the 1980s, computers were linked to the mainframe, and then came PCs that had

hard drives, and then came laptops in their different models, and now iPads. Whatever new technology was introduced in the market, he would ensure that he bought it. He was also a technician who was able to fix his computers.

While it was still day, he did the works of his Creator. He worked like someone who understood that while it is still day, he needs to work, because the night is coming when no one can work. Christ continues to say (in John 4:34), Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." John, "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."

Christ had a sense of purpose. He knew that he was sent, and the one purpose was to do the will of the one who sent him, and to finish it. Michael had a sense of purpose, he worked hard and always ensured that whatever he started, he finished. His hard work is demonstrated by the outpouring of grief and condolences from around the country and the world. He came here and worked, he trained young scholars, he edited journals, he opened doors for us; he fought for his students.

Christ, when he had done everything and had complied with all the requirements of redemption, said "It is finished," and he gave up his last soul. The last assignment Michael had was with his students at the Wits Rural Facility. He was there working with his students and young scholars. When I spoke to him telephonically from his hospital bed, he explained what happened. Little did he know that that would be his last assignment, and he finished it.

His night has come, and he cannot work. As a sign of the finished work, Christ rose from the dead. He would not have risen, if he had not finished the work. He complied with all that was required of him to be the Saviour, and on the third day, the heavens dispatched an angel to come and roll away the stone. Why? Because he had finished the work. Paul, when speaking of it in relation to his life journey, says: "I have fought the good fight". Michael fought a good fight in his career as a scholar.

This is what Professor Shirley Pendlebury, former Head of Department at Wits University says of him:

“Michael was a man of such vision and drive and intellectual energy, it’s hard to imagine he’s no longer on this earth. I remember him especially as an inspiration to young black postgraduates, encouraging their ambitions, appreciating their talents, and demanding that they do themselves proud. His work in mentoring scholarly writing through the Perspectives in Education writing workshops produced many fine publications at a time when there was a paucity of diverse critical research writing.”

– Professor Shirley Pendlebury

Because of the battles he fought and won, he learnt important lessons, which he passed on to his students and mentees. One of the lessons was that in scholarship and academia, you don’t have to talk too much and produce nothing. If you want to silence your critics, put publications on the table. If you do that, the noise will fade and you will earn their respect.

He fought for his students. My thesis took six months to be examined. And because he knew that there were gatekeepers, he planned long before the completion of the thesis that we must produce a document that would be difficult for them to block. They tried and did not succeed. The first PhD thesis that he supervised, was found not to be making the grade in this country; the South African examiner tried to make a case for major revisions, while the international examiner recommended one minor change, and advised that the candidate look for a commercial publisher.

Even though in our country, it took six months for it to be approved, it took a Routledge series editor six weeks to recommend it for publication. The first thesis Michael supervised became the first single-authored book on higher education to be published in post-apartheid South Africa. The others were edited books. I remember when I returned from Illinois with a draft manuscript of more than 245 pages, he did not mind reading it. When he finished reading the manuscript, he said, “This is a good piece of scholarship”.

Paul concludes by saying: “I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing”.

Michael has finished his race, his assignment.

What assignment has God given you, what are you busy with, are you busy with the work that you have been assigned to do? Let your Father’s business be your food, and make sure that you finish it so that at the end He will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant”. Let us get back to those unfinished businesses and projects and finish them, so that we can experience the joy and benefits thereof.

May his soul rest in peace.

God bless you.



The professorial inauguration of Professor Michael Cross



Professor N'Dri Therese Assie-Lumumba

*President World Council of Comparative Education Societies,
Cornell University and Distinguished Visiting Professor at AMCHES*

To the family of Professor Michael Cross, Sister Albertina, his spouse, his daughter Eunice and son Michael Jnr, and grandchildren, Friends, Colleagues and Students of Professor Michael Cross, the University of Johannesburg, especially in the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies under the leadership of Emnet Woldegiorgis, and common colleagues and friends in numerous other institutions in the world: from New York, I say Yako in my Akan/Baoulé language of Côte d'Ivoire, to express the grief for our indescribable loss.

I would like to convey my profound gratitude for having known Professor Michael Cross. I also speak for my husband, Professor Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo, a political scientist who worked with Mwalimu Mazrui, and attended a conference that was organised by Michael, which led to one of the books produced under the Ali Mazrui Centre. My husband contributed a chapter titled "Pan-African Curriculum in Higher Education: A Reflection", in the book co-edited by Professor Cross and Professor Amasa Ndofirepi, Knowledge and Change in African Universities. My words are also on behalf of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) to which Michael contributed immensely; the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) of USA, specifically its Africa Special Interest Group, for his enlightening and insightful contributions, and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), especially in honour of Michael who was one of the first recipients of the Education Research in Africa Awards (ERAA).

We know that Michael was actively involved in many other Pan-African and global organisations, such as the Council for the Development of Social

Science Research in Africa, which has already issued a powerful statement upon learning the shocking news, and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Michael and I have been contributing to a project on the Futures of Higher Education, led by UNESCO's International Institute for Higher Education based in Caracas (Venezuela). The Institute has issued a statement of sympathy. My words also express sentiments shared among many other colleagues and friends, some of whom I will mention later, and who wish they could be here to pay their tributes to the illustrious son of Africa, the citizen of the world, Professor Michael Cross. I want to share sections of Michael's global journey that took him to numerous countries across the African continent and to many other parts of the world, contributing to educational thought and empirical research.

I first came to know Professor Michael Cross through his regular attendance of annual conferences of CIES, a United States-based but very global, professional organisation. He attended those conferences as a presenter, with relevant topics, which were diverse and based on theoretical/philosophical arguments or empirical studies. In the debates in different panels, his contributions were always insightful. In one-on-one or small-group discussions following some panels, we often talked about African historiography, knowledge production, and epistemology.

My connection with Michael was also partly related to the work of the ADEA, where Dr Hamidou Boukary, who was senior programme officer, imagined and led the process of creating the ERAA. With distinguished colleagues, including Professor Martial Dembélé as Chair of

the Scientific Committee, and Professor Kabiru Kinyanjui, we designed this award with four categories:

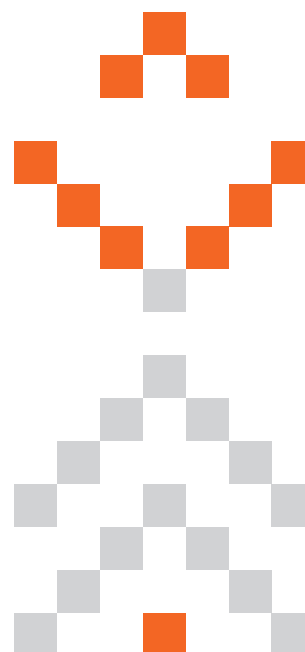
- Emerging Educational Researcher;
- Accomplished Educational Researcher;
- Outstanding Mentor of Educational Researchers; and
- Enabling Institutional Environment for Educational Research.

While Michael could have been nominated for the category of “Accomplished Educational Researcher”, his dossier was appropriately submitted for the category of “Outstanding Mentor of Educational Researchers” when the first call for submissions was launched. He was recommended as the winner of the first edition of this category. Following are excerpts of the comments by members of the jury in the justification of their selection: “very impressive research profile and responded to the required rubrics”; “Highly appreciated in mentoring, research and teaching”; “outstanding & fulfilled all expectations ...”; “this candidate is highly appreciated based on his original philosophy that led him to such intensive mentoring, collaborative research activities ...”; “great accomplishments”.

Thus, Michael made history as the first recipient (2011) in the category of the Outstanding Mentor of Educational Researchers of ERAA established by ADEA. The inaugural cohort of 2011 and the second cohort of 2012, which was also completed, were combined to confer the awards in a ceremony hosted by CIEP (Centre International d’Études Pédagogiques), Sèvres (France), in May 2013, with Professor Ali A. Mazrui as a keynote speaker.

Going back to the United States CIES, I vividly remember approaching Michael during the 2013 annual meeting in New Orleans and asking for his support in subsequent years. I had just been elected to a leadership position of CIES. In the CIES, besides Michael’s papers in the general pool, he was very supportive of the Africa Special Interest Group through his paper submissions, and attendance of the Group highlighted sessions, including the intellectual and community debates of Bantaba. As president-elect of CIES, in 2015 I was responsible for organising the annual conference, with the brilliant young African scholar, Dr Joan Osa Oviawe. We selected the theme of “Ubuntu! Imagining a Humanist Education Globally”. Held in Washington, D.C., the conference was conceptualised with several innovations, including the pre-conference responses to the theme from regional and thematic perspectives, cinematic spaces and speed-mentoring.

This conference with the Ubuntu theme stirred extraordinary enthusiasm and drew unprecedented participation in terms of panels and attendees surpassing more than 3 300 registered participants in a CIES annual conference. Michael’s enthusiasm and genuine support were among the critical factors of this unprecedented collective success of the conference. This was a testimony to the African presence and contributions to the intellectual debates, epistemology, and knowledge production.



Professor N'Dri Assie-Lumumba with Professor Njabulo Ndebele

Anytime Michael and I passed by each other in the corridors of the Washington Hilton where the conference was held, he would wave at me with a big smile or with the laughter of pride, fulfilment, and approval.

Michael informed me that he wanted to submit my dossier for a position as UJ's Distinguished Visiting Professor in AMCHES. And I expressed my strong commitment to supporting his visionary work in founding an academic unit bearing the name of the global icon, Mwalimu Mazrui, an illustrious colleague in the Africana Studies and Research Centre at Cornell University for two decades before his premature passing in 2014.

Until his sudden passing, Michael made constant and inspiring intellectual contributions during intellectual gatherings. For instance, among the ERAA recipients who were invited by ADEA to submit a paper in the panel "Promoting excellence in educational research and disseminating its outputs: The case of the ERAA", Michael presented a paper that he and Vivian Atinde, also of UJ, had co-authored and that was titled "The Pedagogy of the Marginalised: Understanding how Historically Disadvantaged Students Negotiate their Epistemic Access in a Diverse University Environment". The topic, substance and the findings of this paper that were powerfully delivered by Michael, stirred engaged debate.

Michael's enlightening contribution to the first Bantaba held at the 2017 CIES Annual conference in Atlanta was entitled "The Future of Higher Education in Africa: searching for 'An African turning point'". He argued forcefully in reference to the 2016–2025 Continental Education Strategy for Africa and the African Union Agenda and held that there was a need to rethink the future of tertiary education in the African continent based on important concepts embedded in the discourses with regard to the conceptualisation of higher education for public good grounded on "people-centred development".

Referring to the necessary connections embedded in temporality, he articulated the vital connection between the quest for *looking to the past* for inspiration ("lessons"), *looking inwards*

for individual and collective introspection (a basis for the necessary political, economic and epistemological breaks), and *looking outwards* to the changing surrounding and global arena for a critical engagement of what he referred to as "self-ghettoisation". He posed the question of how the African tertiary education systems would purposefully and meaningfully navigate these complex intersections while addressing with clarity "the issues of colonial bondage and misguided borrowing".

In 2016, following the successful application submitted by Michael for my appointment as a University of Johannesburg Distinguished Visiting Professor, I travelled to UJ to start my term. Michael and I held several meetings to discuss my research projects, the stage of each of them to determine the type of support I needed to advance them and possible collaborations with colleagues at the university and elsewhere. Among others, I had a project which I had submitted to Cornell University's Mario Einaudi Centre for International Studies a few years earlier and could not be funded fully because of the 2008–2009 financial crisis: "Generations of African Scholars and Institutions of Higher Learning". Michael indicated that this specific project was exciting, promising and could generate an unlimited number of sub-projects and themes focusing on aspects of temporality and geography considering the regions and



Professor Michael Cross at the 3rd Eric Molobi Annual Memorial Lecture, with colleagues and friends



nation-states on the African continent and even Global Africa.

We talked about the different colonial experiences and languages and their implications for knowledge production and dissemination, gender and women intellectuals, and emerging scholars among the youth, considering several significant factors and the critical importance of intersectionality. I developed the project further and held meetings in different contexts, including at the University of Ghana. We decided that since it would be difficult to initially secure one mega grant because of its scope and all the complexities, it should be realistic in adopting an incremental approach. So, we decided that he would embark on cases in the Southern Africa region.

Additionally, Michael and I had planned to meet with Professor Amin in Paris in the summer of 2017 to start a series of in-depth interviews for this project on "Generations of African Scholars and Institutions of Higher Learning". We decided that interviews for this research would be held during Professor Amin's visit to South Africa in October 2018 for the "Geo-Politics of Knowledge on Higher Education" conference that was rescheduled from May 2018, following the untimely passing of Professor Brenda Leibowitz who was a co-organiser.

Professor Amin was utterly pleased with the invitation. He was anticipating visiting some comrades and places, primarily Soweto and Alexandra in the

shadow of the skyscrapers of Johannesburg, but where the effects of apartheid are still very much palpable in everyday life. Sadly, the October 2018 trip to South Africa did not take place, as Professor Amin passed away suddenly on 12 August 2018, from a brain tumour.


Several months later, in an email to Michael dated 3 April 2019, I indicated to Michael: "We must move faster with our project. The great Ivorian first-generation intellectual I mentioned in one of my recent emails, Bernard Dadié, whom I wanted badly to interview, passed away last month at the age of 103!" In August 2019, I travelled to Ghana to discuss again specific areas of the collaboration for this research project on generations of African scholars and institutions of higher learning.

Upon my request as President of WCCES, Michael agreed enthusiastically to have AMCHES host the first WCCES symposium, which was held on 21-22 June 2018, with the theme of "*Comparative Education for Global Citizenship, Peace and Harmony through Ubuntu*". This inaugural symposium was held concurrently with the first retreat of WCCES since its creation in 1970 as well as the WCCES 53rd executive committee meeting. This was held in conjunction with the 5th International Centre of the Indian Ocean Comparative Education Society, "Rethinking Epistemologies and Innovating Pedagogies to Foster Global Peace".

The symposium articulated the persistent inequality and marginalisation as well as global trends

of violence, intolerance, and isolation, requiring the urgent need to acknowledge and address them as socially produced crises that can also be resolved by social actions and engagements guided by Ubuntu as a philosophical and practical principle that encompasses human beings and the comprehensive and worldwide ecosystem. A book that arose out of this symposium, titled *Comparative Education for Global Citizenship, Peace and Shared Living through Ubuntu*, is co-edited by Professor Cross, Professor Bedi, Professor Ekanayake, and me. The book will be published in the WCCES-Brill/Sense Book Series.

In January 2019, we organised the second WCCES symposium, which was hosted by the International Bureau of Education in Geneva, Switzerland, on the theme of "Immigrants and Comparative Education: Call to Re/Engagement". Michael attended this meeting and presented a paper, which he co-authored with Michael Jnr. The revised version of this paper was included in the WCCES book edited by Professor Zehavit Gross with the slightly modified title of *Migrants and Comparative Education: Call to Re/Engagement* published in the WCCES-Brill/Sense Book Series in 2020.



Michael was passionate about knowledge production and dissemination towards social transformation. During the numerous conferences, symposia, and congresses that he attended, he always provided insightful contributions through his papers and in debates. He accepted my invitation to serve on the WCCES Research Standing Committee during my first term as WCCES President. He continued to serve as a member of the Research Standing Committee and became the Chair of the Peace Education Task Force at WCCES during my second term, which started in May 2019.

Early in 2021, he agreed to serve also as a coordinator for a chapter on Africa for a historical and forward-looking volume on comparative education as part of a major WCCES book project involving all the world regions and aiming to capture various regional perspectives on comparative education. Michael and I again discussed his contribution to this project when we spoke (sadly for the last time) on 14 May 2021. The co-authors of the African region, composed of Professor Ali Abdi as coordinator, Professor José Cossa, Professor Aïcha Maherzi, and Professor Malak Zaalouk, are pursuing the African perspective with a new sense of mission after the passing of Professor Cross.

In our exchanges since the COVID-19 disruptions at the beginning of 2020, Michael had been contemplating that the conditions would improve and that I would travel to South Africa again. We often reminisced about many moments, including the writing retreat that he organised in August 2018, and which involved himself and several colleagues, Drs Amasa Ndofirepi, Waithera Kimani Roki, Logan

Govender, Phefumula Nyoni, Sibonokuhle Ndlovu and Ahmed Essop; the 2018 3rd Eric Molobi Lecture; and the WCCES meetings. As we were reminded during the funeral service on 9 June 2021, Michael proved he really was a tech-savvy resource person. When Waithera and I informed Michael that the Wi-Fi was not functional in the unit where we were staying, he reached out in his bag and pulled out an external Wi-Fi modem, which we used for the duration of the retreat.

The personal, educational and professional dimensions of Michael's life journey converge to reflect a consistent quest for equal opportunity for all, struggle for social justice, and commitment to helping develop the full potential of all around him for contributions to rigorous knowledge for development. He played a primary role in the creation of the book series on *African Higher Education: Developments and Perspectives* with Brill/Sense Publishers, and *Higher Education Transformation* with Sun Press. His seminal works that encompass solid theoretical frameworks and rigorous empirical research include his book *An Unfulfilled Promise: Transforming Schools in Mozambique*. His most recent books include *Steering Epistemic Access in South African Higher Education; Knowledge and Change in African Universities* with Volume 1 on *Current Debates* and Volume 2 on *Reimagining the Terrain*.

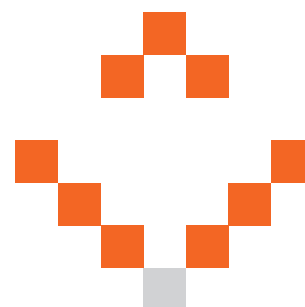
Michael was always very supportive and encouraged everyone to advance the research and publication they were involved in. He did not want to be the only shining star. In fact, he did not aspire to be a star. Rather, he wanted all who were associated with him to succeed and become outstanding academics/professionals. In the process, he had been creating the most enabling environment.

Despite the COVID-19 confinements and travel restrictions, Michael and I remained in contact several times a month by email, Skype, phone and other remote devices, to enquire about each other, the family and research and publication projects. He reiterated "I can't wait for your next trip back here". He would validate

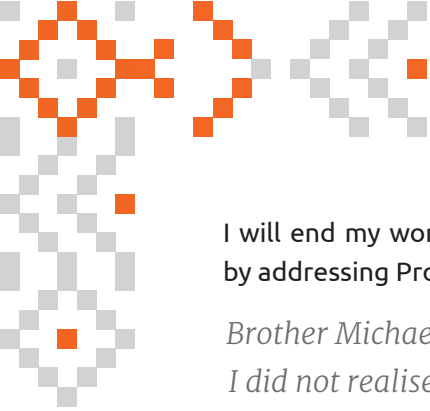
and affirm my personal and intellectual commitment to the Ali Mazrui Centre, to which I regularly and sincerely responded that he was a model and that he had created an enabling environment for all of us to make our humble contributions. The office atmosphere was pleasant and supportive, first with Colleen Cronk and then with Loria Mokoena.

I had the privilege of meeting members of his lovely and loving family, namely his wonderful wife Albertina and Michael Jnr II and his little sister Laila in the office. I thoroughly enjoyed their company and the refreshing conversations of these innocent and bright minds. I was looking forward to meeting his daughter Eunice and son Michael Jnr without imagining that it would be under such dire circumstances.

Thanks to Michael, I had the opportunity of interacting in another academic space – at UJ – with other CIES colleagues in their administrative functions, as was the case with Professor Juliet Perumal, a past recipient of the CIES Joyce Cain Award. The award recognises “an outstanding article that demonstrates academic rigour, originality and excellence, and contributes to a better understanding of the experiences of African descendants”. I also made new connections of lasting significance especially with Professor Shireen Motala, with the Dean, Sarah Gravett, who chaired the 3rd Molobi Lecture, and with former Vice-Chancellor Ihron Rensburg, who delivered the valedictorian address “Conditionalities and Opportunities in Early Transition Societies: The Challenge for the Left” at the 2018 WCCES Symposium, while he was the Chairperson of the South African National Commission for UNESCO. Michael and I also had very enriching scholarly discussions with the current Vice-Chancellor, Tshilidzi Marwala, outside his own discipline of mechanical engineering and computer science, and who will author the foreword for the aforementioned forthcoming book of which Michael will remain co-editor as we completed the manuscript before his untimely passing.



Professor N'Dri Assie-Lumumba and Professor Michael Cross attending the 2nd WCCES conference in Cancun Mexico



I will end my words about a life that epitomises exceptional productivity and inspiring humility, by addressing Professor Michael:

Brother Michael, you embody Ubuntu. When I called you and we talked on 14 May 2021, I did not realise it would be the last conversation we would have. You promised to fight, although you had some major concerns about how your efforts would turn out, given the nature of COVID-19. As Albertina told me on 6 June 2021, just a few hours after you tilted to the other World, and as Eunice and Michael Jnr told us during the funeral service of 9 June, you fought hard. But the human condition became a reality.

My Brother Michael, we miss you deeply while we try to comfort each other and vow to continue your work. For the Akan people in Ghana and also Côte d'Ivoire where I come from, you are now in "the Universe of Truth". According to another Akan people saying, "the name of a good person who transitions to the world of the Ancestors becomes wealth that is inherited by all" (Sran kpa ouli i douman di adja). I shared this proverb when I had the honour of delivering the aforementioned 3rd Eric Molobi Lecture in 2018. It is appropriate to share it again here as we have gathered, albeit virtually, because we have inherited the good name of Michael Cross.

It is a privilege and an honour to be associated with this commemoration. We are working to publish the book and advance other projects to commemorate Michael's name. In Global Comparative Education: Journal of the WCCES, a section is dedicated to articles presenting the profiles of outstanding members of the comparative and international education scholars. Professor Michael Cross is on the list of such distinguished educationists/comparativists whose careers are analysed and presented to our community as recognition and a source of inspiration. We will honour this decision made while Michael was alive.

I would like to refer to the eternally relevant poem of the Senegalese diplomat and writer/poet Birago Diop titled Les Morts ne Sont pas Morts (the Dead are not Dead).

Brother/Professor Michael, through your family and your generous actions that have touched many from local organisations and institutions of higher learning and the community on the global stage, you have done your work here on earth and already earned your everlasting presence in the visible part of this world, as Professor Aïcha Maherzi has powerfully captured in her poem dedicated to you. We also pray that, rather than from the African cosmology of the non-linear, but from the cyclical conception of life, you come back. May you, Brother Michael, have eternal peace, whether you remain in the world of the Ancestors or return to this world through the revolving door of the Cycle of Life.



Mr Mugwena Maluleke

*General Secretary,
South African Democratic Teachers Union*



Indeed, we have lost a distinguished scholar, policy specialist, and mentor, to mention but a few, and he will always be remembered as Maya Angelou put it clearly,

“A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies, it brings us together, again and again.”

We met with Professor Cross back in 2011 when he blessed us with the then young emerging scholar and researcher, the late Mr Samuel Fenyane. We then jointly embarked on the SADTU book project later in 2015 when Mr Fenyane passed away on 26 December 2015. Indeed, Maya Angelou was correct when she said, *“A great soul ... brings us together, again and again”*. Professor Cross once again ushered in another young emerging scholar and researcher, Dr Malau David Matsepe, who recently (in January 2021) completed his PhD degree under the supervision of the professor. It does not end there.

Under Professor Cross’s supervision, Dr Matsepe published eight peer-reviewed journal articles and has a book chapter in press and he presented several research papers at reputable international gatherings. As we speak, the SADTU book project is about to be published with University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. Professor Cross left us with this project to take forward his legacy because Maya Angelou was correct in saying *“A great soul never dies”*, that’s what characterised Professor Cross. Lastly, Professor Cross was actively involved in the establishment of the SADTU Journal in 2019.

I thank you, May His Soul Rest in Eternal Peace.



Professor Michael Cross and Mr Ahmed Essop in a meeting at the Auckland Park Kingsway Campus, University of Johannesburg



Professor Shireen Motala

*NRF/SARChI Chair for Teaching and Learning,
University of Johannesburg*

On behalf of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies, University of Johannesburg and the Cross family, I greet you. We are in a time of grieving, sadness and celebration of the life of Michael Cross, our friend, colleague, and much-loved husband of Albertina, father of Eunice and Michael Jnr, and grandfather of Leila and Michael Jnr II, and the extended family of David, Monica, Arthur and Carla la Cruz. His family was indeed his bedrock, his firmness and his anchor. Our deepest condolences to them, we share in your pain and sadness, and wish you much strength and love in the days ahead.

We have had an outpouring of grief, remembrance, disbelief, many anecdotes and sharing about our beloved Professor Michael Cross. Michael has a shared history with many of you present today, some of whom were students with him when he began at Wits, others as an early career academic, research professor, and Director of AMCHES. Michael's eminence as a national, Pan-African and global scholar is evident in his multiple partnerships and his many scholarly writings, an absolutely formidable list of some 15 books, 70 peer-reviewed publications, 40 reports, and much more. It is a dizzying record of achievements. Michael was a true scholar in the Gramscian sense; he had a questioning mind, tolerated no mediocrity or sloppy intellectual work, and gave substance to the concept of promoting emerging and new scholars, long before it was fashionable, with a dedication that is now legendary. We have much to learn.

As a historian, his research and its philosophical underpinnings, are deeply relevant to the difficult transformation battles we continue to wage in post-apartheid South Africa. In the early

1990s, we were together as young black scholars in different ways waging our own battles, in the education policy units with Salim Vally, Leon Tikly and others. We were grappling with the meaning of socially engaged scholarship, and with the fit in our institutional settings, and Michael was passionately and rigorously exploring the issues of identity, diversity, curriculum and institutional transformation with his students, and critiquing the notion of transformation, a theme which resulted in his seminal work with the Council on Higher Education in 2011. This is to be concluded in the next iteration, in a Council-commissioned study on epistemic access, decolonisation and social justice at the end of 2021. Simply, his deep interest was in students, who they were, and what they learnt. He was also concerned for their wellbeing and in the last several years this contributed to his research on knowledge, the politics of knowledge, and transforming epistemologies, especially for the marginalised in postcolonial universities.

There was never any slippage into a simplistic racial explanation of things. He was a sophisticated and exemplary scholar, elegant and deep in his writing, very unlike the impatience and exasperation he showed on matters administrative, an exasperation we shared and commiserated about. In the things we worked on together, I, the very pragmatic scholar, wanted to get things complete and sent off, and Michael would write, revise, and write and revise until it had the required depth and quality.

Michael and I have journeyed a long way together, for some 30 years, as with many of you. With the establishment of the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) Chair in Teaching and Learning, we had begun a programme of joint



work with AMCHES that we were both excited and energised by, and his support and focus in getting to this are indeed irreplaceable and missed. There is a comfort for all of us in the depth of our relationships that traverse the personal, political and ideological. In the weeks before he got ill, Michael had contributed to an international UNESCO study on university futures post COVID-19, on the Monday he had a successful meeting with the Presidency on the Sustainable Development Goals, and a few days before we had been together at an AMCHES writing retreat for a week (some of us online), doing what he did best, engaging, critiquing research papers of students, postdoctoral research fellows and staff at AMCHES – being very critical at times, but constructively and in his inimitable, firm and charming way. That week, Aslam Fataar, Michael, André Keet and I were meant to meet to establish a critical higher education studies network. His energy was indefatigable, inspiring and sometimes exhausting. There are many plans ahead, and hopefully, in keeping his legacy alive, these will continue.

I wish to reiterate the words of Ahmed Essop who poignantly and eloquently noted, how Michael was a brilliant academic but he was also much more than that: “Michael was a wonderful human being, warm, sensitive, humorous, with a generosity of spirit and a smile, that always lit his face and the world around him”. I have been struck by how often students and colleagues, many of whom had not met Michael, spoke about this following his death.


Our grieving brings together colleagues, nationally and internationally, friends and family who have journeyed with Michael Cross. The tributes have flowed in and we are sharing some of them with you here.



Professor Linda Chisholm
Centre for Education Rights & Transformation,
University of Johannesburg

In 1984, a skinny 32-year-old student stepped into my office at the Wits Education Department on the main campus. He came to ask for admission to the master’s programme, as the History Department had turned him down. I asked to see something he had written and he gave me the thesis he had prepared for the Licentiate or Master’s degree in History at Maputo’s University of Eduardo Mondlane where he graduated in 1979. I was enthralled by what I read: it was clear he had been schooled in the burgeoning field of anti-colonial African studies that had found a foothold as much in London, Yale, Dar es Salaam and Johannesburg as in Maputo. Although Michael’s thesis was written in Portuguese, it was instantly recognisable as a rigorous historical materialist analysis written to the highest standards of scholarship.

Michael was accepted into the MEd at Wits and within no time he had mastered all the debates then raging between the so-called radicals and liberals in education.



He inserted himself right in the middle of them by publishing a piece in the Wits journal, *Perspectives in Education*, subtitled “Open the boxes and look inside before you stick on the labels”. In it he took on the various protagonists in the debate, in a manner that contrasted strikingly with the dominant mode of engagement among educationists at the time – he employed reason rather than derision and he debated inclusively rather than exclusively. He set a new standard for the rest of us and won the respect of people on both sides of the debate.

I have always thought that Michael’s education and experience in Mozambique was vital in shaping the way he engaged with social-political and intellectual issues in South Africa. But his work in South Africa also influenced his seminal contributions to Mozambican history of education. And both in turn informed his work on the continent.

In preparing for today, I wanted to find out a bit more about what had shaped Michael in Mozambique. I did not have to look far, as he himself has written about the intellectual environment at Eduardo Mondlane during the crucial years immediately before and after independence in 1975 when he was but 23 years old.

An Unfulfilled Promise: Transformation of Schools in Mozambique, published in 2011, is a small masterpiece. In it, Michael brings everything he had learnt about the analysis of education in South Africa to bear on an account of the history and political economy of education in Mozambique before and after independence – a task that until then had not yet been performed.

When I first met Michael, I had asked him about his experiences, and he had mentioned the names of Aquino de Braganca and Jacques Depelchin. In *An Unfulfilled Promise*, it becomes clear that they were an intellectual lodestar for him. In the course of deepening authoritarian and polarising tendencies in the late 1970s/early 1980s Mozambique, they had written a piece that argued for critical self-reflection rather than idealisation of the revolution and Frelimo.

Michael adopted the path they advocated in South Africa: a path of critical engaged scholarship rather than of *uncritical* engaged scholarship.

I will miss Michael greatly. He was a gentle soul, who gave us so much. I am proud to have had an association with him and am deeply, deeply saddened by his loss.



Professor Michael Cross with Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos and colleagues at a symposium held at the University of Johannesburg



THE ALI MAZRUI
CENTRE FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION STUDIES

The AMCHES Story

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

AMCHES was established in February 2016, with the formal launch of the Centre occurring on 3 August 2017. Its establishment was the culmination of the vision and lifelong ambition of AMCHES' founding director, Professor Michael Cross.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

1

To produce knowledge that contributes to a deeper and nuanced understanding of strategic issues in higher education through multidisciplinary and policy-relevant research;

2

To build institutional capacity in higher education leadership, management and governance through professional development programmes that are evidence-based and underpinned by high-quality research

3

To promote critical reflection on, and advocacy of, higher education issues through facilitating and providing a platform for dialogue among scholars, institutional leaders and policymakers.

VISION & MISSION



Vision

To contribute to enhancing the role of higher education towards social and economic development in Africa within the context of democratisation and social justice.



Mission

To be a Pan-African centre for scholarly research inquiry, training and professional development in higher education.



The Centre gives effect to its mission as set out in the following focus areas at its founding:

Research Training and Professional Development Programmes

The Centre offers a strong postgraduate programme at master's and doctoral levels to contribute to the production of a group of highly skilled academics, researchers and knowledge practitioners. The Centre also offers short courses and workshop-based training on specific issues, including higher education management, leadership and governance. Developing formal programmes that are conceptually and theoretically coherent, evidence-based and informed by research, distinguishes the programmes offered by the Centre.

Emerging Researchers' Development Programme

Through the Emerging Researchers' Development Programme, the Centre aims to provide graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and early career academics with a unique, invaluable opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge and skills gained during their earlier university experience to participate in the mainstream community of scholarship.

AMCHES TODAY

Currently, AMCHES has four full-time academic staff (two associate professors, a senior lecturer and a lecturer), two distinguished visiting professors, eleven research associates, nine postdoctoral research fellows, one administrative assistant and seven PhD students. The Centre is constituted under the Faculty of Education and is directed by Professor Emnet Woldegiorgis. AMCHES strives to be the leading research Centre in higher education research in Africa, focusing on producing quality and relevant research in the field.

Research Programme

The specific research themes of the programme are determined by the policy imperatives at national, regional and continental levels and are informed by a combination of the interests of staff employed in the Centre and research partners at other institutions. Themes include leadership, management and governance, institutional and system differentiation, internationalisation and regionalization. Key projects for collaborative large-scale multi-country, interdisciplinary research include student formal and epistemic access, ranking systems and institutional culture. Projects are undertaken with the involvement of national and international researchers.

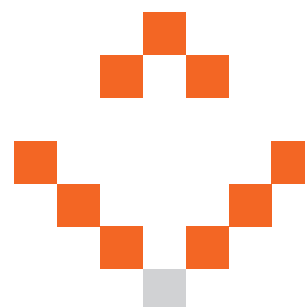
Advocacy and Dialogue

The Centre provides a platform for dialogue and critical engagement on key issues in higher education through colloquia, seminars and conferences. This is to contribute to the public discourse and debate on higher education, including the provision of a space for key stakeholders to reflect on and engage with pertinent issues.

The Centre had the following strategic priorities in 2021:

- Increased throughput of postgraduate students;
- Improved research quality, productivity and output in peer-reviewed publications;
- Policy dialogue and networking;
- Professional development;
- Leadership in higher education scholarship; and
- Strengthened governance and financial sustainability.

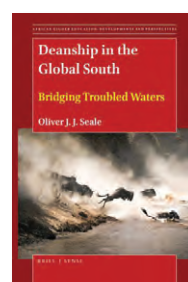
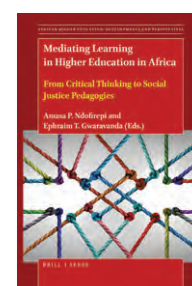
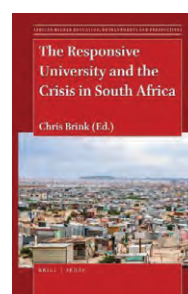
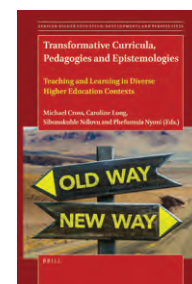
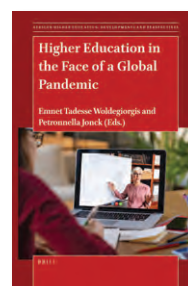
RESEARCH PORTFOLIO



The Centre has set as one of its strategic priorities the promotion of scholarship of higher education nationally and internationally. An important measure of progress in this regard is displayed in our higher education book series “*African Higher Education: Developments and Perspectives*”, with the Series Editors being Michael Cross (the process of identifying a replacement for Professor Cross is nearing completion), André Keet, and Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis. The book series has contributed greatly to growing the number of publication projects for the Centre (link at <https://brill.com/view/serial/AFHE>). Five volumes in the book series were completed in 2020 (Volumes 8–12), and one more is to be published in 2022. Our Higher Education Transformation book series with Sun Press has had considerable local and international impact to date and is continuing to grow.

African Higher Education Book Series VOLUME

- 12 Woldegiorgis, E. T. & Jonck, P. (Eds.). (2022).
Higher Education in the Face of a Global Pandemic.
Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004514461>
- 11 Cross, M., Long, C., Ndlovu, S. & Nyoni, P. (Eds.). (2021).
Transformative Curricula, Pedagogies and Epistemologies.
Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004468443>
- 10 Brink, C. (Ed.). (2021).
The Responsive University and the Crisis in South Africa.
Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004465619>
- 9 Ndofirepi, A. P. & Gwaravanda, E. T. (Eds.). (2021).
Mediating Learning in Higher Education in Africa.
Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004464018>
- 8 Seale, O. J. J. (2021).
Deanship in the Global South.
Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004459861>





RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Centre hosts several research projects that are in different stages of development.

Dr Logan Govender, Dr Zahraa McDonald and Mr Ahmed Essop – Steering Student Epistemic Access and Success in Higher Education (CHE-funded), which responds to the massive escalation of students' enrolment from marginalised communities with the introduction of free higher education. The project, recently completed, focuses on undergraduate students in six institutions: the Universities of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Limpopo, Western Cape, and Central University of Technology. The unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges, specifically around university priorities and the transition to online activities, which impacted project progress. The Centre has now been successful in securing funding of R1,5 million rand from the National Research Foundation to extend its Student Epistemic Access Project to another four universities, under the title *Steering Epistemic Access and Success of Historically Disadvantaged Students in South African Universities*. The participating universities are the University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Cape Town, Nelson Mandela University and the University of Fort Hare. The project will be led by Dr Logan Govender, who takes over from the original applicant, Professor Michael Cross.

AMCHES and SARChI Chair – Higher education under COVID-19 and beyond: A report on the impact of COVID-19 on higher education. The report, which was commissioned by the SARChI Chair on Post-Secondary Education and Training at UJ, has been completed and will serve as the basis for developing a joint Centre-SARChI research agenda on rethinking and reimagining the future of higher education.

Professor Emnet Woldegiorgis – Generations of African Scholars and Universities (Flagship Project 2020–2025): A continent-wide project with the primary objective of documenting the African intellectual legacy, particularly the contribution of African scholars and intellectuals, and leaders and institutions of higher education discourse and development. A postdoctoral fellowship to work on this project is being finalised, and a book project has been commissioned.

Professor Emnet Woldegiorgis and Professor Shireen Motala – A book project on *“Creating the New African University”*; chapters are currently undergoing peer review and the project will be completed by the end of 2022

Professor Emnet Woldegiorgis, Professor Teklu Abate Bekele and Dr Denis Thaddeus Ofofuru – new research project on “University Society Engagement in Africa”, which is initiated in collaboration with the American University in Cairo and Ekulu University in Uganda.



Professor Emnet Woldegiorgis and Dr Logan Govender – A book project “Higher Education Transformation in Africa”, dedicated to the intellectual legacy of Professor Michael Cross. Abstract selection has been completed, full manuscripts received and under review, and the book scheduled for completion in early 2023. The objective of the book project is to explore the main trends in the relationship between policy and change in African higher education systems by comparing the prevailing higher education (and related) policies and plans with the observable change that has taken place over time. Following a call for chapter contributions, about 67 abstracts were reviewed in January 2022 and the successful authors were duly informed to submit completed chapters by April 2022.

Professor Emnet Woldegiorgis and Professor Irina Turner – International conference “Narrowing the Gap beyond Tokenism: The Transdisciplinary Search for Innovative Approaches in Decolonisation and the Integration and Dialogue among Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Epistemologies”. Papers will be published either in a special journal issue or edited volume by the end of 2022

Professor Ke Yu and Dr Zahraa McDonald – ICT Higher Education Integration in Times of Social Transition – Case Study of Sweden and South Africa: An attempt to distil key theoretical, strategic and policy lessons from the Third Industrial Revolution as foundations for South Africa’s participation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

Dr Logan Govender and Mr Ahmed Essop – A book manuscript, entitled *The South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) and the Struggle for Professional Unionism* by Cross, M., Govender, L. and Essop, A (Eds.), is being revised following reviewers’ comments from University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. This is due for publication later in 2022

AMCHES Team – two special issue journals: the first one on the theme “Disadvantaged Students’ Resilience in Higher Education during Crisis” in collaboration with the *Journal of Educational Studies* ISSN 1680-7456 and the second, “Transition into a new African university in the Global South in the 21st Century”, with a journal in the process of being identified.

Dr Logan Govender and Professor Shireen Motala – Universities History Project – Case Study of UJ. The project coordinated by Professor Salim Badat at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is jointly led by Dr Logan Govender and Professor Shireen Motala and will constitute a case study for the larger project. It focuses on the development of South African universities during pre-apartheid, apartheid and post-apartheid eras, and challenges of higher education transformation, such as higher education financing and governance, and how these challenges have been confronted. A postdoctoral research fellow, Dr Tshepo Moloi, has been appointed to work on the project during 2022.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS OF AMCHES

Provided below are the journal articles, books and book chapters that have been published by AMCHES members in recent years. A complete list of publications can be found at <https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/education/centres/ali-mazrui-centre-for-higher-education-studies/publications/>.

Journal Articles

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Fluidity of teacher education and school practice during the political management of COVID-19 in Uganda.

South African Review of Education, 27(1), 122-129.

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A Fourth Industrial Revolution Paradigm Shift in Teacher Education?

International Journal of African Higher Education, 9(2), 1-21.

Cross, M. & Govender, L. (2022).

Researching students' epistemic access under COVID-19. Epistemological and Methodological Challenges.

Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning (CriSTaL), 10(1), 1-22.

Govender, L. (2022).

Using critical policy historiography in education policy analysis: A South African Case Study.

Education as Change, 26, 1-20.

Masutha, M. (2022).

Highs, lows and turning points in marginalised transitions and experiences of non-completion amongst pushed dropouts in South African higher education.

Education Sciences, 12(9), 608.

Ndlovu, S. (2022).

Barriers into gaining access to students with disabilities in research in South African higher education during COVID-19.

Journal Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning (CriSTaL), 10(1), 39-62.

Ndlovu, S. (2022).

The pedagogic domain and epistemic access in South African higher education: The challenges for students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

South African Journal of Higher Education, 36(4), 205-224.

Nyoni, P. (2022).

Pedagogies of access and success among South African university students in the extended curriculum programmes amidst COVID-19 disruptions.

South African Journal of Higher Education, 36(4), 137-153.

Atibuni, D. Z. (2021).

Analysis of the Shift from Knowledge-Based to Competency-Based Education among Secondary School Teachers in Uganda.

International Journal of Educational Research, 9(1), 1-8.

Baloyi, H. (2021).

Equity of access to schools for classroom-based research in South Africa.

Issues in Educational Research, 31(2), 371-386.

Cross, M. & Govender, L. (2021).

Researching higher education in Africa as a process of meaning-making: Epistemological and theoretical considerations.

Journal of Education (University of KwaZulu-Natal), 83, 14-33.

Kadenge, E. (2021).

A District Beginner Teacher Induction Initiative in South Africa: The Pressure and Support Contestation.

Perspectives in Education, 39(3), 214-227.

Ndlovu, S. (2021).

Provision of Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities in South African Higher Education.

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(8), 3892.

Oanda, I. & Obonyo, M. (2021).

The Multiple Waves of the African Academic Diaspora's Engagement with African Universities.

International Journal of African Higher Education, 8(2), 11–28.

Vurayai, S. (2021).

Challenges Faced by Female Students in Combined Science Education in Zimbabwe.

Gender and Behaviour, 19(2), 18086–18097.

Vurayai, S. (2021).

Double-Shift Schooling Practice in Sub-Saharan Africa: Benefits and Dysfunction.

International Journal of Educational Organisation and Leadership, 29(1), 1–12.

Vurayai, S. (2021).

The COVID-19 Pandemic, Online Learning and the Ubiquity of Pedagogic and Assessment Dysphoria in Higher Education in Zimbabwe.

African Perspectives of Research in Teaching in Teaching and Learning, 5(2), 1–12

Vurayai, S. & Ndofirepi, A. P. (2021).

The Paradox of Distributive Social Justice in Rural Satellite Primary Schools in Zimbabwe.

African Journal of Development Studies (formerly AFFRIKA Journal of Politics, Economics and Society), 11(3), 293–305.

Woldegiorgis, E. T. (2021).

Configurations of Progress and the Historical Trajectory of the Future in African Higher Education.

Educational Philosophy and Theory, 1–15.

Woldegiorgis, E. T. (2021).

Decolonising a Higher Education System which has Never Been Colonised.

Educational Philosophy and Theory, 53(9), 894–906. Taylor & Francis.



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Brink, C. (2021).

The Responsive University and the Crisis in South Africa. Netherlands: Brill.

Cross, M., Long, C., Ndlovu, S. & Nyoni, P. (Eds.). (2021).

Transformative Curricula, Pedagogies and Epistemologies: Teaching and Learning in Diverse Higher Education Contexts.
Netherlands: Brill.

Ndlovu, S. & Nyoni, P. (Eds.). (2021).

Social, Educational, and Cultural Perspectives of Disabilities in the Global South. IGI Global.

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Imparting Academic Work Ethic in Undergraduate Students through Religiosity. In *Comparative Education for Global Citizenship, Peace and Shared Living through uBuntu* (pp. 169-180). Brill.

Govender, L. (2022).

Teacher Unions and the State's Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Provision of Basic Education in South Africa. In ET Woldegiorgis and P. Jonck (Eds) *Higher Education in the Face of a Global Pandemic* (pp. 28-50). Brill.

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Rensburg, I., Motala, S. & Cross, M. (Eds.).

(2020). *Transforming Universities in South Africa.*
Netherlands: Brill.

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UBuntu Philosophy and the Gender Crisis within South Africa's Higher Education Sector. In *Comparative Education for Global Citizenship, Peace and Shared Living through uBuntu* (pp. 136-152). Brill.

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South Africa's University Teaching and Learning Dynamics amid a COVID-19 Pandemic. In ET Woldegiorgis and P. Jonck (Eds) *Higher Education in the Face of a Global Pandemic* (pp. 177-198). Brill.



Oketcho, E. J. & Atibuni, D. Z. (2022). COVID-19 Pandemic Management Strategies and Implementation of Educational Programmes in Tororo District, Uganda. In J. Keengwe (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Social Justice and Equity in Education* (pp. 278-295). IGI Global. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-9567-1. <https://www.igi-global.com/book/handbook-research-social-justice-equity/279262>

Woldegiorgis, E. T. (2022). Responses and Mechanisms for Mitigating the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on East African Higher Education. In ET Woldegiorgis and P. Jonck (Eds) *Higher Education in the Face of a Global Pandemic* (pp. 120-138). Brill.

Woldegiorgis, E. T. (2022). The Challenges of Online Learning in African Higher Education: A Critical Reflection on the Digital Divide Associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic. In ET Woldegiorgis and P. Jonck (Eds) *Higher Education in the Face of a Global Pandemic* (pp. 11-27). Brill.

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Brahima, A., Turner, I. & Woldegiorgis, E.T. (2020). Epilogue: A long way towards a decolonial future in African higher education. In *Decolonisation of Higher Education in Africa* (p. 230-240). Routledge.

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List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AMCHES	Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CIEP	Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
ERAA	Education Research in Africa Award
JIAS	Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SARChI	South African Research Chairs Initiative
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCCES	World Council of Comparative Education Societies
Wits	University of Witwatersrand

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