



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN CAPE VERDE AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

(Praia and Mindelo, 8–9 April 2027)

*“Education is the most powerful weapon
we can use to change the world” (Nelson
Mandela)*

*“Learn from life, learn from our people,
learn from books and from the experiences
of others. Always keep learning!”
(Amílcar Cabral)*

ORGANIZATION OF THEMATIC PANELS (SUGGESTIONS)

In addition to the opening and closing sessions and the plenary lectures, the International Conference will include the discussion of submitted papers, in accordance with the relevant regulations and organized into the following thematic panels:

Axis 2 – Governance, Funding, and Sustainability of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);

Axis 3 – Quality, Regulation, and Evaluation of Higher Education;

Axis 4 – Internationalization, the Geopolitics of Knowledge, and the Future of Global Higher Education;

Axis 5 – The Contribution of the Scientific Diaspora to the Development of Higher Education;

Axis 6 – Academic Freedom, Interdisciplinarity, and Emancipation;

Axis 7 – Cultures, Identities, Knowledge, and Post-Memory.



The following are guidelines provided for informational purposes only for organizing the various thematic areas, which may also be taken into consideration by the Organizing Committee when reaching out to public institutions, companies, and civil society organizations to seek collaboration and support for the International Conference, whether through panel discussions.

1. AXIS 1 – CURRICULUM, TECHNOLOGIES, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND PEDAGOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1.1. Context

Global higher education is undergoing a crisis of “relevance,” with a tendency to give way to alternative training models that are short-term and offer immediate employability. In Cape Verde and other contexts, particularly at universities in the Global South, the challenge is twofold: to ensure that curricula are capable of conveying knowledge that is pertinent and relevant at both the national and international levels; to provide educational models that equip students for entry into the workforce through the systematic integration of theory and practice, research, and innovation, in order to meet the demands of fostering the local economy (Blue Economy, Green Economy, Digital Economy, Tourism, etc.).

This area also focuses on the transition from a teaching model centered on the transmission of content to one centered on the active development of life skills in new and challenging contexts, which requires changes in the pedagogical paradigm and in the training of university faculty training that is not limited to the acquisition of an academic degree in a specific disciplinary area.

By comparing recurring training practices with opportunities to integrate new active methodologies, digital applications, and artificial intelligence tools—from an ethical, reflective, and pedagogical perspective—the aim is to design an innovative pedagogical framework that enables institutions of higher education (HEIs) not only to align with international standards of academic excellence, but also to transform them into laboratories for developing critical skills for the 21st century.

1.2. Specific Objectives of the Area

- a) Identify national and international best practices in curriculum design;
- b) Discuss ways to integrate digital technologies, artificial intelligence, technical and scientific skills, and critical and creative attitudes into university education;



- c) Propose guidelines for the continuing education and in-service training of faculty in pedagogy and teaching-learning-assessment methodologies;
- d) Discuss quality indicators for academic education, based on approaches that emphasize processes and outcomes aimed at achieving a real impact on society.
- e) Identify methods for monitoring and providing continuing education to graduates;
- f) Propose mechanisms for the professional advancement of faculty members as a factor in career development and a driver of impact on the quality of teaching. Identify national and international best practices in curriculum design and development;

1.3. Suggested Topics for Presentations and Discussions

- i. Curricular Reforms in Higher Education: Integration of research, teaching, and outreach into curricula; Integration of valid knowledge from the North, the South, and other regions; Combination of regular courses with microcertifications (microcredentials) that foster life skills;
- ii. Pedagogy of Higher Education: Profile of the higher education faculty member. Challenges and opportunities presented by digital technologies and artificial intelligence in academic training;
- iii. Digital and Networked University: Hybrid models and digitization as a strategy to overcome territorial barriers to access to education; Networked education and integration of the diaspora;
- iv. Profile of Higher Education Graduates: Disciplinary, Multidisciplinary, and Transversal Skills (Soft Skills): Strategies for integrating critical thinking, digital literacy, scientific research, technological innovation, and entrepreneurship into university programs;
- v. Curriculum and Lifelong Learning: Curriculum and Working Life. Connection with Higher Education Graduates (Alumni); Continuing Education for Graduates (Modular Courses and Micro-Credentials).



1.4. Expected Outcomes

- Presentations and thematic conferences;
- Proposed Conclusions and Recommendations.

2. AXIS 2 – GOVERNANCE, FUNDING, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

2.1. Context

University governance models and instruments must be aligned with the operations of academic management structures, working in harmony toward the common goal of ensuring the quality of education in a sustainable manner. Particularly in peripheral contexts and in small island nations, such as Cape Verde, it is imperative to move from a model of mere survival exacerbated by the proliferation of higher education institutions without due prior consideration of their sustainability potential to a university model capable of fostering synergies for institutional development and ensuring an educational system that, by integrating research, teaching, and outreach, develops in a coherent, coordinated, and adequately funded manner.

However, in the current context, academic education in Cape Verde and at universities on the global periphery faces the “paradox of scarcity,” which manifests itself, in particular, in the following challenges that must be overcome: (i) the critical need to appropriate and mobilize science and technology to solve local problems (e.g., water management, renewable energy, food security), on the one hand, and the limited resources allocated to scientific production and technological innovation, on the other; (ii) the need to train highly qualified human resources and, in contrast, the economic and financial constraints faced by most families and the government in funding access to and attendance by the poorest students a necessary condition for breaking the cycle of poverty.

It is therefore important, within this area, to explore how institutions of higher education (HEIs), in coordination with public authorities, can break away from the logic of mere dependence on funds transferred by public entities by seeking



hybrid models of financing and mutually beneficial partnerships capable of positively impacting student inclusion, the sustainability of HEIs, and the quality of education the latter being aligned with the empowerment of society.

2.2. Specific Objectives

- a) Reflect on the university's model and vision, as well as the factors contributing to its academic and financial sustainability;
- b) Identify constraints and best practices regarding student access, enrollment, and inclusion in higher education institutions;
- c) Map international funding sources accessible to middle-income countries and small island states.
- d) Discuss the creation of a National Scientific Research Fund in Cape Verde based on best practices from other peripheral contexts;
- e) Establish strategies to increase indexed scientific output, a key factor in attracting global funding. Reflect on university models and visions, as well as the factors that determine their academic and financial sustainability.

2.3. Possible Topics for Discussion

- i. University models in diverse contexts (island nations and countries of the Global South, CPLP countries, PALOP countries, etc.)
- ii. Funding Models: Revolving Funds: Establishment of a Cape Verdean Foundation for Higher Education (FUES), with the creation of matching fund mechanisms with international partners and reimbursement models;
- iii. Science Diplomacy and the Diaspora: Mobilizing the vast Cape Verdean diaspora to invest in and/or attract external funding for networked projects capable of generating returns to replenish the funds
- iv. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Tax incentives and strategies to attract the local and regional business sector to co-finance applied research centers.



- v. Open Science and Infrastructure Sharing: Low-cost models for shared laboratories and data networks among universities in outlying areas to optimize limited resources.
- vi. Business Incubation and Entrepreneurship among University Students. University models in diverse contexts (island states, Global South countries, CPLP and PALOP member states, among others).

2.4. Expected Outcomes

- Presentations and thematic conferences;
- Proposed Conclusions and Recommendations.

3. AXIS 3 – QUALITY, REGULATION, AND EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1. Context

In an era of rapid global change, the relevance of higher education in Cape Verde and in international contexts depends fundamentally on the ability to reinvent its academic training models to ensure that they meet national and international quality standards. This thematic axis proposes an in-depth reflection on the triad of Quality-Regulation-Innovation, based on the assumption that the university curriculum is not a static document, but rather a project that is designed and implemented within a dynamic ecosystem, in which various actors interact both within and outside the traditional boundaries of academia to meet students' aspirations and the demands of the economy and society.

3.2. Specific Objectives

- a) Analyze models and practices of international regulation of higher education, exploring alternative approaches based on emancipatory and holistic humanistic principles aimed at promoting the quality of university education;
- b) Identify strategies for the internationalization of Cape Verdean higher education;



- c) Promote a culture of evaluation, fostering the integration of self-evaluation and peer evaluation with a view to continuous improvement;
- d) Assess the impact of public investment and international partnerships on the quality of higher education. Analyse international models and practices of higher education regulation, exploring alternative approaches grounded in humanistic, emancipatory and holistic perspectives for promoting the quality of university education;

3.3. Possible Topics for Discussion

- i. International Regulation: A critical analysis of regulatory opportunities in the context of CPLP countries and the Global South
- ii. Regulation and Quality of Higher Education in Cape Verde: The role of the Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES) in the accreditation and evaluation of institutions and degree programs; Regulation and the promotion of a culture of evaluation and continuous improvement; Regulatory agencies and the challenges of regulation and quality promotion in the digital world and in new international contexts;
- iii. Institutional Evaluation Models: Complementarities between external evaluation and self-evaluation.
- iv. Global Trends and Cooperation: The influence of international models and the importance of cooperation within the CPLP and PALOP regions in pursuing the 2030 goals.
- v. Quality Indicators: Discussion of indicators such as qualified faculty, infrastructure, scientific output, technological innovation, inclusion and academic success, and employability;
- vi. Legislative Reform: Analysis of the new package of revisions to the foundational legislation governing higher education in Cape Verde.

3.4. Expected Outcomes

- Presentations and thematic conferences;
- Proposed Conclusions and Recommendations.



4. AXIS 4 – INTERNATIONALIZATION, THE GEOPOLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE, AND THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION

4.1. Context

Higher education policy in Cape Verde has evolved from a phase based exclusively on training personnel abroad (until 1979) to a phase focused on the rapid expansion of domestic higher education offerings, without restricting the demand for education at foreign universities particularly Portuguese and Brazilian ones with state support and under cooperation agreements.

In this process, marked by advances and some setbacks in enrollment at national higher education institutions, two trends stand out: “commercialized internationalization,” in which higher education is presented as a competitive arena for attracting students, and “solidarity-based internationalization,” grounded in South-South cooperation with a humanistic orientation.

At a time when knowledge knows no borders, but its production still reflects profound geopolitical asymmetries, this conference does not limit itself to focusing on the archipelago; rather, it serves as a forum for reflection with contributions from scholars across various continents—on the opportunities available to higher education institutions to promote higher education as a “public good,” a factor in empowerment, and a driver of sustainable social progress, thereby countering hegemonic market-driven perspectives.

It is therefore important to discuss how Cape Verdean higher education can be international without losing its identity and focus on national issues, how technology can democratize access to global knowledge without exacerbating “digital illiteracy,” and, finally, how higher education institutions can influence the global knowledge agenda, rather than merely complying with its dictates, with a view to ensuring the sustainability of higher education in Cape Verde and in other contexts.



4.2. Specific Objectives

- a) To promote dialogue on the role of universities in building resilient societies, comparing models of governance and innovation between the Global North and South;
 - b) To understand the possibilities for higher education institutions in the periphery to take an active and critical stance as key players in relevant and collaborative global scientific production;
 - c) To promote the solidarity-based internationalization of higher education, moving beyond the market-driven logic reflected in unbridled competition among institutions;
 - d) To debate the future of higher education in the current context, given the resurgence of new trends in power relations, geopolitical tensions, research priorities, and the use of science and technology;
 - e) Strengthen “Internationalization at Home” through mobility programs and virtual interaction;
 - f) Discuss strategies for integrating global dimensions into local academic education, as well as into the production and sharing of knowledge;
 - g) Debate the relevance of promoting a culture of internationalization in teaching, scientific research, outreach, and academic management;
 - h) Discuss strategies for creating a sustainable, indexed international scientific journal focused on giving priority to articles by researchers from CPLP and PALOP countries, with the aim of providing them with greater visibility.
- Promote dialogue on the role of universities in building resilient societies, comparing governance and innovation models across the Global North and Global South;

4.3. Proposed Topics for Discussion

This theme proposes to discuss how universities, regardless of their location, can establish themselves as integral parts of the global higher education ecosystem by seeking effective responses to new demands, namely:



- Alternatives to the Hegemony of Knowledge: Analysis of alternative forms of international rankings and accountability in higher education that reflect the specific characteristics and missions of universities in developing countries and take a holistic approach to the processes and outcomes of academic education
- Networked and Borderless Universities: The elimination of physical boundaries through hybrid education and shared curricula; overcoming the vicious cycle of marginalization (local/central divide; centralization; isolation);
- Science Diplomacy in North-South Relations: Establishing partnerships between universities in developed countries for scientific research and the dissemination of knowledge;
- Scientific Diplomacy in South-South Relations: Seeking partnerships among universities in the Global South for scientific research, dissemination, and technological innovation;
- North-South: Establishing partnerships between universities in developed countries for scientific research and the dissemination of knowledge; This thematic axis seeks to explore how universities, regardless of their geographical location, can position themselves as active participants in the global higher education ecosystem by responding effectively to emerging challenges, including:
- Digital Transition, Artificial Intelligence, and Global Ethics: The impact of distance learning, digital applications, and AI on redefining the role of the university campus and the teacher-student relationship, on promoting academic integrity, and on pedagogical approaches in different contexts;
- Higher Education, Global Challenges, and the 2030 Agenda: The fundamental role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Higher education as a driver of climate literacy and solutions for environmental sustainability, the energy transition, and the viability of island nations such as Cape Verde;



- Academic Mobility in the Contemporary Context: Identifying new formats for academic cooperation and mobility.

4.4. Expected Outcomes

- Presentations and thematic conferences;
- Proposed Conclusions and Recommendations.

5. AXIS 5 – THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC DIASPORA TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1. Context

With only half a million resident citizens, Cape Verde is, nevertheless, a nation whose reach extends through a diaspora estimated to exceed one million nationals, who participate in various aspects of the country's life. The contribution of emigrants falls far short of their potential, particularly in the scientific and academic fields.

Researchers of Cape Verdean origin hold prominent positions at universities and R&D centers in Europe, the Americas, and elsewhere in Africa.

Notwithstanding some instances of collaboration by Cape Verdean academics residing abroad on academic projects at national higher education institutions, the contribution of the scientific diaspora to the development of higher education in Cape Verde can be maximized through a strategy based on several fundamental parameters: a comprehensive survey of academics in the diaspora and the ways in which they participate in the development of higher education; the adoption, at the national level, of higher education policy measures and, at the university level, of academic policies that, working in harmony, promote and facilitate the integration or collaboration of diaspora scholars in training and research projects.

In fact, integrating the scientific diaspora into the national higher education system is not merely a desire for cultural closeness, but a strategic necessity to raise academic standards, increase indexed scientific output, and facilitate



access to international funding networks in which these researchers are already engaged.

This panel, which could be organized as a roundtable discussion bringing together researchers from the diaspora and interested national researchers, thus aims to help transform the “brain drain” into “brain circulation,” connecting the intellectual capital of Cape Verdeans abroad and at home to strengthen national institutions.

5.2. Specific Objectives

- a) To assess the scientific output of researchers in the diaspora;
- b) To reflect on the issue of the brain drain and how to reverse it for the benefit of countries of origin;
- c) To understand the intellectual capital of the diaspora by identifying scholars, their fields of expertise, and their willingness to collaborate;
- d) To identify ways to leverage the diaspora’s international experience to enhance higher education and scientific research in and about Cape Verde;
- e) Promote the use of scientific diaspora networks to facilitate access to infrastructure, laboratories, and international funding;
- f) Discuss ways to collaborate with academics in the diaspora to reduce scientific and technological disparities;
- g) Debate public policies and forms of cooperation that encourage the return (physical or virtual) of talent from the scientific diasporaTo assess the scientific production of diaspora researchers;

5.3. Possible Topics for Discussion

- i. The issues of “Brain Drain,” “Brain Gain,” and “Brain Circulation”: Reversing the logic of talent loss to a logic of talent gain through in-person or remote collaborative networks of varying duration;



- ii. Sharing of studies, patents, technologies, and innovations developed abroad by Cape Verdean academics that could be adapted to the realities of the archipelago;
- iii. Discussion of the feasibility of short-term visiting scholar programs—where researchers from the diaspora spend intensive periods in Cape Verde to teach advanced courses or support laboratories;
- iv. Transatlantic Co-Supervision: discuss the feasibility of doctoral programs in Cape Verde having a supervisor or co-supervisor from the diaspora, ensuring, where possible, dual scientific validation. The issues of “Brain Drain”, “Brain Gain” and “Brain Circulation”: Reversing the logic of talent loss into a logic of gains through networks of face-to-face or remote collaboration of varying duration;
- v. Scientific and Diaspora Diplomacy: How scientists abroad can serve as ambassadors to attract R&D (Research and Development) projects.
- vi. Legal and Administrative Barriers: Challenges regarding degree equivalency, hiring foreign staff, and tax incentives for the “return of talent.”
- vii. Digital Collaboration Platforms: The use of technology for guest lectures, seminars, and joint research projects without the need for permanent physical relocation.

5.4. Expected Results

- Presentations and thematic conferences;
- Proposed Conclusions and Recommendations.

6. AXIS 6 – ACADEMIC FREEDOM, INTERDISCIPLINARITY, AND EMANCIPATION

6.1. Context

In democratic political systems, universities in particular, and institutions of higher education in general, enjoy broad administrative, financial, and property



autonomy, with decision-making power and capacity also (and above all) in scientific and technical areas, as well as in defining principles and values related to fundamental human rights consistent with their mission. For this reason, they are institutions particularly dedicated to research and the transmission of knowledge, with a strong capacity to engage with political authorities, the business world, and civil society.

Institutional autonomy is reflected in the ability of faculty members and researchers to define the subjects of study and research, exercising the freedom to teach and learn without restrictions other than those pertaining to constitutional principles and other legal statutes, as well as to the regulations and codes of ethics defined and approved by collegial bodies that possess the necessary legitimacy to do so.

This, therefore, is what is widely recognized as the principle of academic freedom. A principle that is beginning to be constrained and threatened in some countries, but which continues to be widely respected (and even expanded) in institutions of higher education, having enabled extraordinary advances in terms of scientific and technological discoveries and innovations in the so-called hard sciences, as well as in reflective and critical thinking and creative imagination in the social sciences and humanities. On the other hand, as knowledge advances in all these areas, the maintenance of old, rigid disciplinary boundaries is increasingly losing its meaning. In this sense, interdisciplinary approaches are indispensable, maximizing synergies across various fields in order to better address the growing complexity of the world and contemporary problems. And all of this, when conceived and pursued with a view toward environmental and ecological preservation, epistemic justice, and respect for all forms of life, cannot fail to constitute an emancipatory alternative.

6.2. Specific Objectives

- To understand the political and cultural factors that justify or lead to different forms of scientific denialism and to promote effective mechanisms for its eradication;



- To understand how institutions of higher education have responded to external interference that seeks to curtail scientific and pedagogical autonomy AND TO DISCUSS strategies to resist such curtailment;
- To highlight organizational structures (departments, research centers, teaching units, etc.) that are grounded in interdisciplinary practices;
- To understand the values and principles enshrined in statutes and codes of ethics that apply to faculty and researchers at institutions of higher education.

6.3. Possible Topics for Discussion

- i. Political and cultural causes of scientific denialism
 - ii. Social and political implications of scientific contributions
 - iii. The role of scientists as committed scholars
 - iv. The appropriation of science and academic capitalism
 - v. Interdisciplinary collaboration between the social sciences and humanities and the hard sciences
- Political and cultural causes of scientific denialism;

6.4. Expected Results

- Presentations and thematic conferences;
- Proposed Conclusions and Recommendations.

7. AXIS 7 – CULTURES, IDENTITIES, KNOWLEDGE AND POST-MEMORY

7.1. Context

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, following extraordinary events on a global scale which drove, in particular, the growing internationalization of capitalism we began to speak of globalization with increasing frequency. It did not take long for us to realize that speaking of “globalizations” in the plural was more consistent with the profound changes that were taking place, because it was not just the economic dimension that was at stake, but also many other dimensions that were becoming associated with it or that were becoming more visible due to their more



intentional and explicit inclusion on an agenda that was transcending national boundaries. This is what happened with culture and education, to such an extent that, from the most critical perspectives, there has been increasing discussion of the consequences of the growing standardization and uniformity of what counts (or should count) as valid knowledge, particularly in terms of school curricula and forms of assessment.

What has been termed in sociology “methodological nationalism” an expression intended to draw attention to the significant (relative) autonomy of the nation-state in defining educational policies and forms of assessment, as well as in deploying mechanisms of physical and symbolic violence to suppress the expression of cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic, and other forms of identity and difference in favor of the homogenization of a national identity has also been challenged by the globalization movement. In this sense, what constituted (and continues to constitute in many cases) a legitimate aspiration for which many fought and gave their lives was (and is) freedom and all the conditions necessary for a fulfilling life, with a just expression of differences and identities, notably through the (legal) end of all forms of colonialism. This aspiration which is, after all, one of the fundamental human rights is today threatened, despite progress in many countries and contexts, by the events unfolding in various regions of the world (wars, genocides, ecocides, violations of international law, repression of identities, illegitimate encroachments on national sovereignty, etc., etc.). March 25 marked, once again, the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recognizing the transatlantic slave trade as “the gravest crime against humanity.”

An analysis of the votes (mostly in favor) also shows that there were three votes against and 52 abstentions. Votes against and abstentions cannot be ignored; they continue to reveal a divide between the Global North and the Global South, and demonstrate that, despite the end of colonialism, coloniality persists. This is also why, even though several decades have passed, it is still possible (and desirable) to conduct studies that gather testimonies from people who experienced traumatic situations such as the colonial war and life in the former



colonies or from people who, while not having experienced these situations themselves, wish to come to terms with a past that affected their family members and whose consequences remain present today. It is particularly in these cases that post-memory studies begin to take on great importance, and it is hoped that universities will encourage such research, especially in the social sciences and humanities.

7.2. Specific Objectives

- i. Discuss the tensions between issues of national identity and cultural globalization
- ii. Analyze the mechanisms of surveillance over expressions of identity, basic human rights, and the resurgence of anti-democratic, more conservative, and radical political movements
- iii. Understand changes in migration policies and their potential impact on internationalization initiatives in higher education
- iv. Recognize forms of coloniality in contexts of diaspora and student mobility
- v. Emphasize the need for empirical studies and research focused on approaches based on memory and post-memory. To discuss the tensions between issues of national identity and cultural globalization;

7.3. Possible Topics for Discussion

- i. Higher education and the preservation of historical memory
- ii. The debate on the decolonization of university knowledge
- iii. The reception of “epistemologies of the South” in research
- iv. Literature, cultural exchange, and postcolonial dialogue Higher education and the preservation of historical memory;

7.4. Expected Results

- Presentations and thematic conferences;
- Proposed Conclusions and Recommendations.



Document validated, for informational purposes only, in May 2026.

The Scientific Committee.