

Schools Connect

Creating more inclusive schooling

Speakers' biographies

Susan Douglas CBE

Senior Adviser, Schools, British Council and Chief Executive Office, The Eden Academy Trust

As CEO of the Eden Academy Trust, Susan is responsible for 9 schools for children aged 3-19 with a range of learning disabilities. All the schools have been judged as good or outstanding.

Susan is also a Senior Schools Adviser at the British Council providing sector expertise - particularly on school leadership and inclusion – across programmes involving ministries of education, school leaders and teachers in Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

She is a Trustee of CST and the NFER and was awarded a CBE for Services to Education in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June 2021.



George Barrett

Country Director, British Council South Africa

George Barrett is the Country Director of the British Council in South Africa, where she joined the team at the end of 2022. Prior to this George worked at the British High Commission heading up the UK's trade development portfolio for the Southern African Customs Union and Mozambique.

George came to South Africa in 2008, and emersed herself in the Higher Education sector as a student and Lecturer of International and Political Studies at Rhodes University. Before coming to South Africa, George began her career in the international development space; at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in communications and knowledge management, and the Africa Educational Trust on basic computer, language and numerical literacy programmes. George has also worked at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), collaborating with civil society and political parties to strengthen democratic practices across the



African continent, and helped to establish the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Somaliland in the UK Parliament.

George is passionate about youth and female empowerment, and the transformative potential that education and skills opportunities create to bring about positive inclusive and sustainable societal transformation. She also believes firmly in and actively promotes greater cultural understanding and respect between communities through the power of education, arts and language, which she champions in her current role leading the UK's cultural relations team at the British Council in South Africa.

Shingai Ziki

Regional Support Manager Schools SSA, British Council

Shingai Ziki is a Regional Support Manager Schools at the British Council based in Harare. With over 16 years' experience in the education sector, she supports the delivery of British Council Schools programmes in over 8 countries. She engages and supports teams with multilevel stakeholders to support the improvement of teaching and learning in local classrooms as well as supporting the British Council's work in the area of policy engagement with education stakeholders.



Berenice Daniels

Director of Specialised Education, from the Department of Basic Education, South Africa

Berenice Daniels is currently the Director of Inclusive and Specialised Education Support in the Western Cape Education Department responsible for Specialised Support Services which include social workers, psychologists, therapists and learning support advisors; Special Schools and Inclusive Education support, and the HIV and Care and Support Programme. She has been in the position since January 2011.

She has a combined B.A. – B.Sc. degree and Higher Diploma in Education from UCT, Honours in Psychology from UNISA and obtained a Masters' degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Manchester in 1995. The topic for her research was Policy to Practice in Inclusive Education – exploring the continuum of provision in the United Kingdom in relation to the South African context.

In 1997, she was seconded to the South African National Department of Education, as a co-ordinator of the National Commission on Special Needs and Education Support Services which investigated the current situation and researched policy options for the new democracy. The Commission report led to the development of the White Paper 6 on Developing an Inclusive Education and Training System in 2001.

She has authored and co-authored various publications on Inclusive Education, School Psychology, Health Promoting Schools and Conflict Mediation and presented on these and related topics internationally. In 2013, she was featured in the Pearl Anniversary Edition of 'Who's Who in



the World' for outstanding achievement in her field of endeavour and significant contribution to the betterment of contemporary society.

In January this year, she was appointed to the Ministerial Task Team which is reviewing the 2001 Special Educational Needs/Inclusive Education policy document.

Selamawit Alemayehu

Regional Basic Education Manager, SSA, British Council

Selamawit is currently providing technical leadership and oversight for strategic programme implementation, overseeing a diverse team of regional and country project team members delivering education programme interventions across sub-Saharan African countries in Literacy, EdTech, Gender Transformative Pedagogy, Inclusion in Education, Teaching at the right level and Transferrable skills. She is an experienced professional with a range of experience in fostering relationships with Ministries of Education, education development organisations, programme implementation of Basic and Higher Education programmes.

Through her years in the profession, she has had oversight of Education programmes in over 21 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. She possesses an in-depth understanding and passion of education development issues, and a strong interest to continue to be a part of and contribute to the broader stakeholder input to Africa's Education development agenda, upskilling and empowering the youth to be resilient and competent drivers of community transformation through employability, and ensuring all development interventions can be built to scale and create real impact. She completed her Graduate studies earning an MA in International Relations focusing on Development Studies from the United States International University, Kenya; and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Williams Baptist College, Arkansas, United States, she has acquired over 15 years of experience in the education sector driving impact of programmes in collaboration with key education partners and government stakeholders. Within British Council she has worked in different country and regional operations including Ethiopia, Mauritius, Kenya & Nigeria. Selamawit is from Ethiopia and lives with her Husband and two sons in Nairobi, Kenya.



Honourable Mehnaz Akber Aziz

Parliamentary Secretary, Law and Justice Ministry, Government of Pakistan, Pakistan

One of the 11 women directly elected to the National Assembly of Pakistan in the Elections 2018. Within the parliamentary system, Hon. Mehnaz is a strong advocate for gender mainstreaming, child rights (especially girls' education), women economic empowerment and political participation. With 25 years of dedicated work with Children's Global Network she initiated the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights and is a global co-chair of International Parliamentary Network for Education.

Leading the parliamentary discourse on child rights and women's agenda, Mehnaz has undertaken key legislative and oversight business initiatives. To her credit are the landmark legislations (1) Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Bill 2021 Islamabad Capital Territory; (2) The Rights of Domestic Workers Bill 2021 Islamabad Capital Territory; (3) Cyber Crimes Act; amendment to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 (Act XL of 2016) and has initiated the Constitutional Amendment 2021 – Article 11A for age of person for attaining majority.



Zeny Zerfu

Gender and IE Trainer, British Council, Ethiopia

Zeny Zerfu is an experienced English teacher who has dedicated more than 10 years of her career to teaching in various educational settings. She has worked in government, private, and community schools, gaining a diverse range of teaching experiences. Additionally, Zeny has actively volunteered with different non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support marginalized communities both within and outside Addis Ababa.

Since 2012, Zeny has also been involved in teachers' development, focusing on training teachers and school leaders across Ethiopia. Her work in this area has been instrumental in enhancing the skills and knowledge of educators throughout the country. Notably, she has been particularly engaged with teachers in refugee communities, providing them with essential support and guidance.

Zeny is a qualified trainer affiliated with the British Council. As a World Voice Master trainer, she possesses expertise in delivering effective training on language and communication skills. She is also a facilitator for the Connecting Classrooms and Language For Resilience programs, both of which aim to promote global citizenship and resilience through education.



Zeny's passion lies in improving the quality of education. Her extensive experience in teaching, teacher training, and engagement with marginalized communities has shaped her commitment to enhancing educational opportunities and outcomes for all students in Ethiopia.

Joel Kamoko

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Zambia

Joel Kamoko is Zambia's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education in charge Education Services.

Mr Kamoko is an accomplished educator in the field of Psychology having lectured at the Kwame Nkrumah University and Chalimbana University. Prior to his appointment as Permanent Secretary he served as District Education Board Secretary, Principal Education Officer, Senior Inspections officer – Teaching Council of Zambia and an auxiliary position as Director for Public Relations and international Affairs & information and research at the Zambia National Union of Teachers Headquarters,

He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Education Psychology) from the University of Zambia.

He is passionate about supporting the Minister's agenda of giving underprivileged girls second chance opportunities to complete their education. Education for All aligns with Zambia's moto of not leaving anyone behind. Since his appointed in 2021 as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, he has overseen almost 100,000 vulnerable girls in Zambia especially in the hard-to-reach rural communities access and complete their education. Together with his Minister, he is especially keen on providing policy direction relating to safeguarding, bringing back girls who drop-out of school, those affected by negative cultural practices and those who get pregnant while at school.



Hilda El Khoury

Director of Guidance and Counselling, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon

Hilda El Khoury is the Director of the Directorate of Guidance and Pedagogical Counselling in Schools (DOPS) at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). DOPS takes part in educational strategy and policy-making and oversees the promotion of quality education in public schools.

Ms. El Khoury was previously the Head of the Official Exams directorate at MEHE for three years. She achieved the digitalization of the official exams system and the accommodation of the official exams to the needs of learners with disabilities.

At DOPS, Hilda established the Child Protection Unit and led the development, launch, and roll-out of the Child Protection Policy. She



manages the inclusive education project in public schools and the development of the National Policy for Inclusive Education. Furthermore, she has improved health education and led the “School Health Guide” development. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she represented MEHE in the committee established by the Cabinet and led the development of “The COVID-19 Preventive Measures Guidelines” in addition to coordinating the shift to remote and hybrid learning and the safe return to school and supervising the launching of the call center to receive all complaints for disasters and schools well-being topics and follow up on all cases. Hilda supervised the establishment of a coaching system and the development of observation tools to ensure qualitative follow-up.

Ms. El Khoury is a trained Maths teacher and holds M1 in Mathematics, M1 in informatics, and a Master’s in Education. She is finalizing her Ph.D. in the Science of Education and has held a range of previous positions: teacher trainer; mathematics coordinator, and education consultant in a variety of schools.

Amal Khalil Chaaban

Head of Official Exams, General Secretary of Equivalence Department, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon

Amal Khalil Chaaban, an internationally recognized and respected senior education specialist, is well known for her success in resolving urgent situations and implementing rapid changes. With more than 20 years of experience in the public sector, and the education field, she brings a wealth of knowledge in education operation strategies and management on international levels. Amal occupies the position of Head of Official Exams Department at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education “MEHE” Lebanon (since 2019). Also, she is the General Secretary of the National MEHE Equivalency Committee for Secondary and Primary Education in Lebanon (since 2017). Most distinguishing, she is especially successful serving as a calming force for the chaos inherent in troubled country Lebanon.

Over the past 3 years, Amal and her exams team successfully organized, planned and managed official exams for more than half a million students in Lebanon. Moreover, Amal and her Equivalency team, manage, coordinate and implement not only the British Curriculum, but also the American Program (AP), the French Baccalaureate and the International Baccalaureate (IB) in Lebanese schools in Lebanon and overseas thus insuring students ‘appropriate achievements recognition. Amal skillfully brings order to immensely complex, multifaceted, and tumultuous situations, all while creating transparency, setting priorities and restoring fragmented groups in a complex atmosphere like Lebanon.

Born in Lebanon 1978, Amal holds a Masters Degree in Education Management from USJ University Beirut Lebanon 2022, A Teaching diploma AUL University Beirut Lebanon 2017, A Bachelor of Sciences in Business Administration USJ University Beirut 1999 and a University



Diploma of Technology in finance from USJ University Beirut Lebanon 1997.

Amal is fluent in Arabic, English and French.

Kenneth Marangu

Deputy Director (Gender and Administration), Teacher Services Commission, Kenya

Kenneth is a certified human resource professional of Kenya (CHRP- K) and he holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree in human resource management and a Bachelors of Education degree from Kenyatta University – Kenya.

He has wide experience, knowledge, skills and expertise in teacher management, administration and general public service spanning over 30 years and is currently serving as deputy director, Administrative Services at the Teachers Service Commission, Kenya.

Born and bred in central Kenya, Kenneth attended his early schooling in a rural setup that entailed walking at least five (5) kilometres daily to and from school. This was in addition to performing many domestic and farm chores after school to support and supplement his large family of six siblings. This early rural life presented numerous challenges and demands, fostering certain qualities that played a crucial role in building remarkable resilience that would be invaluable in his future roles.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Education degree, Kenneth taught mathematics and business studies in various high schools. He later joined the Teachers Service Commission secretariat as a District Staffing Officer to perform teacher management functions, a role he served in various districts and provinces.

Kenneth developed interest in human resource and enrolled for a MBA in human resource management and later undertook the professional qualification course - CHRP – K. He has worked in various roles rising through the ranks to the position of deputy director, Administrative Service at TSC.

He has a wide exposure and experience in policy development and implementation, educational leadership, teacher management, curriculum implementation and supervision, training and development, monitoring and evaluation, compliance, networking and partner relations and resource mobilization.

Kenneth has deep appreciation for the environment and its unpredictability and he likes working with rural farmers to instill resilience and help them to adopt to change and develop sustainable practices and embrace innovation. He strongly believes in cultivating strong work ethics, fostering



self-reliance, nurturing community cooperation and encouraging appreciation for nature in navigating challenges and uncertainties in various settings thereby enabling individuals to persevere, adapt and thrive.

Dr Faith Mkwanzzi

Researcher, Panache Consultants, South Africa

Faith Mkwanzzi researches education, mobility, youth, and international development in Sub-Saharan Africa. She has also researched topics in education in emergencies, girls’ education, and peace education in post-conflict settings. Through her projects, she operationalises the capability approach and uses diverse methods, such as systematic reviews and creative participatory approaches. Faith aims to bridge the gap between researchers and development practitioners, as well as civil society organizations. She has published several peer-reviewed publications. Her recently co-edited book, *Post-conflict Participatory Arts: Socially Engaged Development*, published by Routledge (2022), illustrates how academics and practitioners can collaborate towards social justice in education.

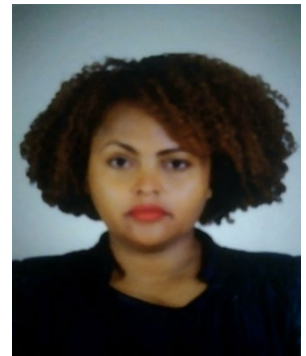


Lamrot Fikre Gebresilassie

Deputy Country Director, British Council Ethiopia

Mrs Lamrot Fikre is an experienced policy advocate and legal professional with 21 years’ experience in the field spanning government, academic and civil societies. She has a background in international human rights law and brings the needed experience of understanding, interpreting and manoeuvring complex and evolving policy and legislation developments, with a particular focus on women, children and young people.

Her program leadership and business development includes creating an enabling environment for girls’ education focusing on youth employment and livelihoods opportunities. In the Ethiopian context, she has led advocacy and policy change through institutional capacities development. She also led development of policy framework for safeguarding children’s rights in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. She has strong experience in gender justice, child rights, women’s right and human rights in broad terms. She is currently working with British Council, Ethiopia as Deputy Country Director.



Yetneberesh Nigussie Molla

Programme Specialist (Children with Disabilities), UNICEF, Kenya

Yetneberesh Nigussie Molla is an Ethiopian lawyer with a disability having accomplished tremendously in changing the mindset of people towards persons with disabilities. Having studied law and social work in Addis Ababa University, Ms. Yetneberesh is currently working for the Eastern and Southern African regional office for UNICEF as a disability inclusion specialist.

In her early days of activism, Ms. Yetneberesh has co-founded the [Ethiopian center for Disability and Development \(ECDD\)](#) a prominent local organization advocating for disability inclusion in development in 2005 and served as the executive director till 2015. With a view to broaden her influence beyond her home country, Ethiopia, Ms. Yetneberesh joined [Light for the World](#), an international NGO based in Austria, Vienna (2016-2019) and provided professional and technical support on the human rights of persons with disabilities.

In 2019, she co-founded the Ethiopian Lawyers with Disabilities Association (ELDA) the first professional association of persons with disabilities in the country and served as the first president of the association.

Before joining [UNICEF ESARO](#) in May 2021, Yetneberesh was serving as the senior manager of the [Global Action on Disability \(GLAD\)](#) network, a unique platform bringing bilateral/multilateral donors and agencies, foundations and key global coalitions of the disability movement together.

Ms. Yetneberesh has also received a number of outstanding awards nationally, regionally and globally in recognition of her magnificent work in the area of disability inclusion. To mention some, Yetneberesh is a joint winner of the Rights Livelihood Award 2017 (interchangeably known as: “alternative Nobel Prize” and the Spirit of Hellen Keller award 2018. The World Economic Forum recognized Ms. Yetneberesh Nigussie as one of the most influential young Global Leaders in 2020 along with other global figures.

In her family life, Yetneberesh is married and is a proud mother of three beautiful girls (Ahati, Zema and Sanita).

For more info on Ms. Yetneberesh Nigussie Molla, please visit the websites below.

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pdwztouckk4>

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mYTJogS7Jc>

* <http://www.tadias.com/12/13/2019/meet-yetnebersh-nigussie-a-blind-ethiopian-lawyer-fighting-for-global-disability-rights/>



Dr Cleophus Mugenyi**Commissioner, Teacher Instructor Education & Training Standards, Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda**

Dr. Cleophus Mugenyi is a seasoned teacher and education manager with experience of over 25 years. He has taught learners in Primary and Secondary level, teacher training institutions and universities. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Dr. Cleophus has actively engaged in educational research. His research endeavours encompassed a broad range of topics including educational equity, teacher effectiveness, curriculum development and integration of technology in the classroom. His groundbreaking research studies contributed valuable insights into improving educational practices at both local, national and international levels. He has wide range of experiences especially in development and implementation of education sector regulations and policies. Dr Mugenyi have progressive experience institutional management and education quality assurance with keen interest in the education of vulnerable and marginalised groups such as the girl child and displaced children. Dr. Mugenyi possesses Bachelor of Arts (B.A) with Education of Makerere University, Master of Science (MSc) in Educational Management of University of Dublin/Trinity College Dublin; Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) of The University of Manchester. His experience and exposure while working as District Education Officer, Commissioner Teacher Education Standards, Commissioner Basic Education and Lecturer has offered him the opportunity to work with government and development partners on issues of children, development and implementation of plans and policies such as Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities, Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, Universal Primary Education Policy, National Teacher Policy, and Inclusive Education Policy amongst others.

**Constance (Connie) Alezuyo****Coordinator for the Education Response Plan Secretariat in Ministry of Education and Sports**

Connie has 28 years of work experience, with non-governmental and government institutions in development, post-conflict and emergency contexts. She is passionate about the cause of children with total commitment to their protection and empowerment. Connie managed education in emergency projects for Windle International in Uganda, mobilizing resources for critical needs and contributing to program development, capacity building, monitoring and learning. She demonstrated the value of education as a protection tool and successfully advocated for establishment of secondary schools in new refugee settlements in West Nile. She also contributed to the Uganda National



Strategic Program Plan of Interventions for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children 2011/2012 – 2015/16. Connie has actively engaged with local governments, civil society organizations and local communities to ensure the right to education for children and youth. Her work with the Edukans Foundation contributed to approaches adopted by the Ministry of Education and Sports for continuous professional development of teachers.

Connie is currently the Coordinator for the Education Response Plan Secretariat in the Ministry of Education and Sports, as an outsourced staff through the UN Refugee Agency. She provides technical leadership and ensures that the education response plan and associated implementation address dimensions of gender, protection, and equity. Connie contributed to developing an effective coordination structure for the Education Response, ensuring linkages among government ministries/departments, local governments, humanitarian and development partners and donor community. She studied in Makerere University and holds a Masters' and a bachelor's degree in Science, a Postgraduate diploma in Education and a certificate in Disaster Resilience Leadership.

Emily Ikiriza Nuwagaba

Project Manager, British Council Uganda

Emily is a Projects Manager for the British Council in Uganda. She is a versatile Prince 2 certified project management professional with over 18 years' experience in the non-profit sector in Uganda. She led programmes and projects in education, women/girl's empowerment and leadership, sport for development, education in emergencies, citizen action and agency. She possesses a Bachelor of Library and Information Science (Hons) from Makerere University, a Post-Graduate Diploma in Human Rights from the Institute of Social Studies, in the Hague the Netherlands and is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Psychology at the Liverpool John Moores University. Emily is a strong believer in the power of quality Education to transform societies.



Abdellah Loucif

President of the National Programme Council, Ministry of National Education, Algeria

Dr Mzikayifani Barney Johnson Mthembu

Deputy Director-General, National Department of Basic Education, South Africa

I am Dr. M.J.B. Mthembu, I hold a Doctoral Degree in humanities (Geography) having reasserted on the possibility of using rural tourism for poverty alleviation in KwaZulu Natal. The I also have a Secondary Teachers Diploma (Adams College of Education), Bachelor of Arts (Geography and Pedagogics) and Bachelor of Arts Honours (Geography) from the University of Zululand, Master of Business Administration degree and the PhD. I am currently employed, on contact, by the National Department of Basic Education as Deputy Director General for Curriculum Policy Monitoring and Support (Same position in KwaZulu Natal I held before joining the National Department).



Dr Folake Olatunji-David

Director, Basic Education, Federal Ministry of Education

Dr Folake has worked for over three decades in the Nigeria public education sector, as a classroom teacher, school administrator and planning, research, monitoring and evaluation capacity.

She has represented Nigeria in various national and international for a in these capacities and is currently the Director, Basic Education, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria.



Motasim Billah Shah

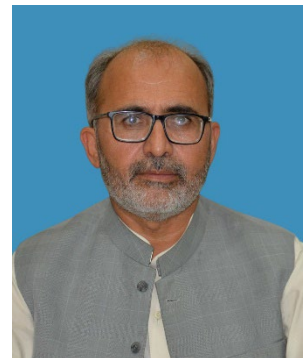
Secretary, Elementary and Secondary Education, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

With Bachelor of Law, Bachelor of Education, Masters in English and professional development courses from world renowned institutions, Mr. Motasim Billah Shah has more than 20 years professional experience in the public sector and has served on the following positions in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa:

Secretary, Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar

Special Secretary, Local Government Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar

Additional Secretary, Health Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar



Additional Secretary, Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar

Director General, Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Peshawar

Managing Director, Elementary & Secondary Education Foundation, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar

Director, Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar

Director (Recruitment), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission, Peshawar

Deputy Commissioner, Swabi

Deputy Commissioner, Dera Ismail Khan

District Coordination Officer (DCO) Chitral

District Programme Manager Capacity Building (NCHD, Islamabad)

He is a highly qualified and experienced public servant with a proven track record of success.

Mr. Shah has made significant contributions to the education sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in accessibility, equity, governance and quality. In his tenure, he has been able to enroll more than 1.6 million students in a short period of sixteen months and has decreased the dropout to minimum possible level. He is also credited with introducing several innovative programs and initiatives to improve the education system in the province.

Mr. Shah believes that education is the key to socio-economic development. He is committed to providing quality education to all children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, regardless of their background or circumstances. He envisions a future where all children in the province have access to a quality education that prepares them for success in life.

Mr. Shah is a dedicated and passionate public servant who is committed to make a difference in the lives of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He is a strong advocate for education and believes that it is the key to a better future for the province.

Tumisang Thabela

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe

Mrs. Tumisang Thabela became the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education on 1 November 2018. Immediately prior to her appointment as the Permanent Secretary, she was the Principal Director in the Office of the Vice President. Prior to that position, she served as the Principal Director in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education where she was responsible for Curriculum Development.

From 2009 to 2017, Mrs. Thabela served as the Provincial Education Director for Matabeleland South Province. As the highest-ranking education official in the province, she oversaw about 8,600 staff and more than 650 schools. She was responsible for the strategic direction and leadership of the education sector as well as the development, implementation and monitoring of education policies and programmes. She successfully built partnerships with other Government agencies, civil society, communities and the private sector to increase and improve access to quality education.

From 2004 to 2009, she served as the Deputy Provincial Education Director for Matabeleland South Province, where she was responsible initially for Administration and subsequently, Quality Assurance. In that position, she led the provincial mainstreaming of vocational education to improve pass rates and opportunities for youth, in line with the recommendation of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training:1998 (commonly referred to as the Nziramasanga Commission).

Mrs. Thabela started her career as an English teacher in 1982 and quickly rose to become the Head of the English Department at Mzingwane High School, one of the oldest schools in Zimbabwe. She was promoted to the position of Deputy Head of School in 1988 and subsequently became initially Acting Head and then substantive School Head (serving at three schools between 1989 and 2000) from where she was regraded to Gwanda District Education officer from 2000 to 2004.

Mrs.Thabela's collaborative leadership, intimate knowledge of the education sector and strong management experience will be a great asset in her new position. She brings to the position of Permanent Secretary a commitment to equitable access to education and more than 36 years of experience in Zimbabwe's education sector. She has worked as a member of the Provincial and National panels responsible for English Language and Literature in English examinations at the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC), where she has also been a board member since 2014. She was also a member of the Matabeleland South Regional Management Board of the Higher Education Examinations Council (HEXCO).

In addition to her work-related appointments, Mrs. Thabela has also provided leadership in civic organisations. She has served as the



Chairperson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church's -highest governing body- the national governing assembly. She is also a member of the Forum for African Women Educators (FAWE)- an organization that helps to advance the cause of educating women in Africa.

Mrs. Thabela has a Master of Arts in English from the University of South Africa and a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in English from the University of Zimbabwe. She also holds a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education from the University of Zimbabwe, a Certificate in Public Administration from the Public Service Commission and the Zimbabwe Institute of Administration and Management (ZIPAM).

Siân Williams

Inclusion Consultant, UK

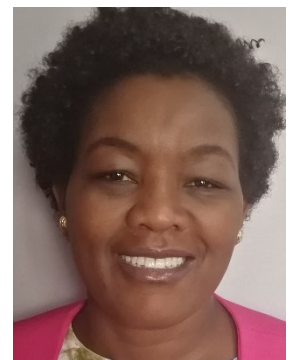
Siân Williams has spent her career exploring ways of including more children and young people in education, for more of the time - as a teacher, inclusion programme leader, and freelance consultant. She has spent the last seven years working internationally for the British Council as an inclusion consultant in a variety of Sub Saharan African and Middle East and North African contexts. Most recently Siân has been focusing on: supporting the development of inclusive practice at scale; including children with SEND in regular classrooms. She is delighted to be here to share her experiences and learn from colleagues.



Gikambi Zipporah Kawira

Deputy Director in the Directorate of Policy, Partnerships and East African Community Affairs, Kenya

Ms. Gikambi Zipporah Kawira is a citizen of Kenya and an Educationist by profession currently working in the Government of Kenya- Ministry of Education. She is a Deputy Director in the Directorate of Policy, Partnerships and East African Community Affairs that is charged with Education Policy development; Coordination of partnerships; Educational research and Mainstreaming of cross cutting issues such as inclusive education in the sector. She has a Master of Education (Planning and Economics) degree and currently Pursuing a doctorate degree in the same discipline. Ms, Kawira has gained over 25 years of experience in education, specifically in teaching, Education management, educational Research; development of gender responsive education plans and pedagogy and formulation /review of various educational policies and guidelines. Kawira is an active member of the IIEP-Africa community of Practice in Gender responsive education; Kenya Education Evidence for Action (EE4A)- a coalition of Civil Society Organizations, Academia and



Government through Ministry of Education that champions for evidence-based policy development. She has participated and made presentations in various national and international conferences including CIES and COMSTEDA.

Eva Muluve

Senior Research Fellow, Population Council, Kenya

Eva Muluve is a social science and public health researcher with more than 12 years of experience leading multi-disciplinary teams of researchers and program implementers and contributing to the design and implementation of rigorous research on issues impacting adolescents, women, and children. She is the Principal Investigator for the Evidence for Gender and Education Resource - Kenya project; a co-investigator on the Adolescent Girls Initiative Kenya study; and co-chair of the Kenya Gender and Education technical working group.



Dr Sahar Elalfy

Director of the General Administration for Inclusive Education, Egypt

Sahar Elalfy is a respected educator who has dedicated her career to improving the education and lives of students with special needs. She is currently the Director of the Special Needs Department at the Egyptian Ministry of Education, and also has a Bachelor of Physical Education degree, a Professional Diploma in Special Education, and a Special Diploma in Special Needs Education. With almost 17 years of experience as a special education teacher, she has a proven track record of creating inclusive and supportive learning environments. Ms. Elalfy's expertise in special education led to her appointment as school principal at Al. Amal School for Deaf and Mute Students, where she developed innovative programs catering to the unique needs of students with hearing and speech impairments.



Prof. Rishikesh Shanker

Professor and Associate Director, School Education, Azim Premji University, India

Rishikesh is a Professor and Associate Director at the School of Education, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, India. He has 25 years of research & teaching experience. He began his career as a teacher educator showcasing innovative pedagogic practices and an educational researcher focusing on teaching and learning in schools. He has worked at Azim Premji Foundation for nearly two decades researching on various aspects of the education domain. He currently teaches in the master's program at the Azim Premji University with research interests in the



domains of educational policies, learner assessments and teacher education.

Rishikesh has worked closely with the Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee which wrote the Draft National education Policy 2019. Subsequently he has been a member of sub-committees in States implementing India's National Education Policy 2020 and also a member of the NEP Implementation Task Force in the State of Karnataka. Currently, he is a member of the Technical Secretariat to the Steering Committee for drafting the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for school education in India.

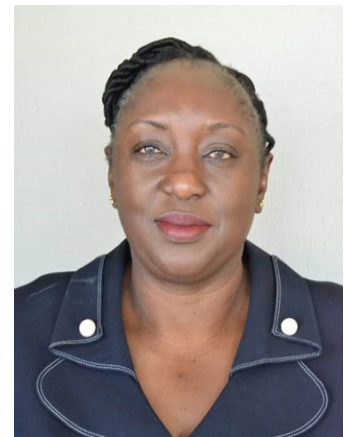
He writes regularly on educational policy related issues and is passionate about ensuring that laws and policies are accessible to everyone.

Yvonne Chuulu

Director, Secondary Education, Ministry of Education Zambia

Ms. Chuulu has the responsibility of coordinating quality education at the secondary education level in order to promote individual development and survival skills. Before this, she was in charge of distance and open learning department. She is passionate about issues of girl-child education and inclusion at the secondary level

She holds a Bachelor's degree in education and a Master's in Business Administration.



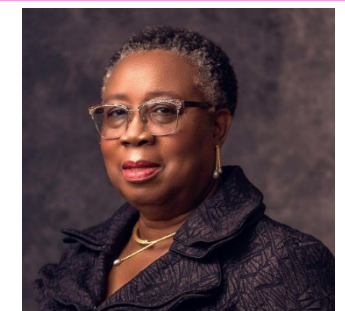
Honourable Folasade Adefisayo

BSc. Hons. (Ibadan), MBA (Lagos), IPGCE (Nottingham), MA. Edu. (Nottingham)

Folasade Adefisayo was the Hon. Commissioner for Education in Lagos State during the first tenure of the Babajide Sanwo-Olu's led administration. Before her appointment by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, she had been an active player in the education sector in Nigeria. As the Honourable Commissioner for Education, Mrs. Adefisayo is supporting the Governor of the State, His Excellency Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu in revolutionizing education in many uncommon ways.

Before her appointment to the Cabinet of Lagos State, she was the Principal Consultant/CEO of Leading Learning Ltd, an educational consultancy firm incorporated in 2014. She was consulted for public and private schools, state governments, NGO's and development partners. Her areas of professional focus include teachers training, leadership training, school set-up and schools' transformation.

Folasade has nearly 40 years working experience spanning banking operations, organizational restructuring, human resources management,



international trade and education. She retired from Corona Schools' Trust Council in 2010 after serving as was the Executive Director and CEO for 8 years. She voluntarily served as the Director of Corona Secondary School, Agbara from 2010 to 2014.

Folasade Adefisayo is an education activist with a passion for student learning, school transformation and teacher training. She is deeply concerned about the learning crisis in Nigeria schools and has volunteered to work with the Federal Government, Lagos State Government, Oyo State Government and Osun State Government. She is also dedicated in improving other peoples' lives and has served as a volunteer with a number of NGO's – Federal Nigeria Society for the Blind, Volunteer Corps, Junior Achievement, Fate Foundation, Yedi, Teach for Nigeria, Oando Foundation, SWORTE Talks among others.

She was a Merit Award winner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and a University Scholar of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. In 2011, she decided to get certified as a professional educator and embarked on an online post-graduate course of the University of Nottingham. Folasade Adefisayo graduated with distinctions at both the diploma and master's levels.

Honourable John Ntim Fordjour

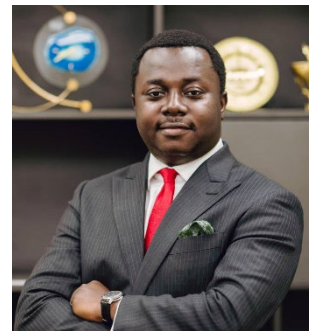
Deputy Minister of Education, Ghana

John Ntim Fordjour, the Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic of Ghana and the second term Member of Parliament for Assin South Constituency has a multifaceted academic background in Mineral Engineering, Economic Policy Management and Foreign Policy. He has creditably acquitted himself as a legislator with a prior record of sterling mining career and entrepreneurship.

Born in Assin Kruwa, and raised in the same village till the age of 16, John Ntim Fordjour studied Science in Assin Manso SHS, and was admitted to George Grant University of Mines & Technology (UMaT) at age 17 where he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Mineral Engineering at age 21.

Shortly after national service, Fordjour began his mining career as a Senior Training Officer in charge of Learning and Development Administration at Gold Fields Ghana Ltd, Tarkwa Mine. Fordjour rose quickly to the role of Human Resources Superintendent of the biggest surface Mine in West Africa at age 24, where creditably managed the HR function for a mine of 4500 employees and contractors. Key among his achievements in this role includes his leadership in the delivery of Owner Maintenance Project (OMP), a major change management project which culminated in the setting up of a newly established Heavy Maintenance & Equipment (HME) Department with 485 expatriate and critical local staff.

Ntim Fordjour has a Master of Arts Degree (MA) in Economic Policy Management from University of Ghana, Legon and Postgraduate



Certificate in Governance and Anti-Corruption Methods from Georgetown University, Washington D.C. He is currently at the concluding stage of his PhD in Political Science with University of Ghana, Legon with research Specialization in Ghana's Foreign Policy decisions at the United Nations.

In the 8th Parliament, Ntim Fordjour serves on the Appointments Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee. In the 7th Parliament, he was Chairman for Ghana-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Association and served as the Vice Chairman of Parliament's Standing Committee on Members Holding Offices of Profit, as well as Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ntim Fordjour is a minister of the gospel and serves as Senior Pastor of VBCI Higher Heights Sanctuary, East Legon.

He is married to the beautiful Tracy and blessed with 3 kids.

Dr Joseph Emmanuel

Director of Academics, Central Board of Secondary Education, India

Dr Joseph Emmanuel is the Director of Academics at CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) in India. In his role, he oversees the academic policies and programs of CBSE, which is responsible for conducting high school and higher secondary school examinations in India. Dr Emmanuel has extensive experience in education, having worked as a teacher, lecturer, and educational administrator for various organizations. He is known for his expertise in curriculum design, teacher training, and educational research. As the Director of Academics, Dr Emmanuel is committed to promoting educational excellence and innovation in the Indian education system.



Professor Tsitsi Chataika

Professor of Inclusive Education and Disability Inclusion, University of Zimbabwe

Tsitsi Chataika is an Associate Professor of inclusive education and disability inclusion in the Department of Educational Foundations. She is also a visiting Associate Professor at the iHuman Centre, University of Sheffield and the University of Witwatersrand (Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology). She serves in various inter/national boards as a disability inclusion and inclusive education expert. Her many publications include 'The Routledge Handbook of Disability Activism', a 2019 Outstanding Global Taylor & Francis Award Winner in the Social Sciences; and was also nominated as one of the 20 most influential books on activism in 2023 by BookAuthority.



Rittika Chanda Parruck**Director Education, British Council, India**

Rittika is the Director Education for British Council in India. She has over 25 years' of experience in the education sector in a variety of roles. She began her career as a research scholar working on drug clearance systems and then went on to teach biology to secondary school students for six years at a residential school. Besides teaching, her role in the school was to foster innovation and international collaboration which strengthened her belief that collaboration across borders is key to providing young people access to quality education from across the world.

She joined the British Council 18 years ago and lead many flagship schools and higher education programmes like the International School Award and Connecting Classrooms amongst others. In her current role, she is responsible for the strategic direction of British Council's education portfolio in India – one of the largest education systems in the world. Some of her recent achievements include deepening education collaborations between UK and India through successful negotiations for the formalisation of the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications (MRQ) policy and, the conceptualisation and delivery of new higher education programmes in India such as the Going Global Partnerships.

**Roland Davies****Country Director, British Council, Zimbabwe**

Roland has worked in Cultural Relations for the British Council for thirty years - in Brazil, Japan, the UK, Singapore, Korea and Zimbabwe - in English language teaching, arts, higher education and schools. He is currently Country Director for Zimbabwe and Zambia and the lead for our Southern Africa Cluster. He has a particular interest in supporting gender equality in schools and currently supports work in this area in programmes across both Zimbabwe and Zambia.

