

Concept Note

Advancing School Leadership Research in Africa: Strengthening African-Led Evidence through Research Collaboration and the Community of Learning

1. Background

The African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL) is convening the inaugural webinar of its Research Community of Learning (CoL) to bring researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and partners into a focused conversation on strengthening school leadership in Africa. The webinar provides an opportunity to deepen engagement within the CoL and strengthen its role as an African-led platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and engagement across research, policy, and practice.

The inaugural webinar will create space for participants to engage with evidence and perspectives on school leadership in Africa, reflect on their implications across different contexts, and identify areas for continued learning and collaboration. Through this engagement, the CoL seeks to encourage African-led dialogue and knowledge exchange that responds to the realities, priorities, and diversity of education systems across the continent.

The webinar will be structured around two connected areas of focus. First, it will frame the relevance of the Research Community of Learning (CoL) for African researchers working in school leadership, including how the CoL can support collaboration, knowledge exchange, and sustained engagement across research, policy, and practice. This session will also introduce the CoL Engagement Pathway and create space to capture participants' ideas for future CoL activities.

Second, the webinar will explore the need for Afrocentric school leadership perspectives and research. It will consider how African philosophies, indigenous knowledge systems, decolonial thinking, and contextual realities can inform school leadership scholarship and practice across the continent. The two sessions will be followed by structured dialogue questions to help participants reflect on the implications for their work and identify priorities for future CoL engagement.

2. Goal

The webinar aims to reposition the ACSL Research Community of Learning (CoL) as an African-led platform that is directly relevant to African researchers working in school leadership, while advancing dialogue on the need for Afrocentric perspectives and research in school leadership.

Specifically, the webinar will provide a space for CoL members and other stakeholders to:

- Clarify the relevance and value of the CoL for African researchers working in school leadership;
- Gather participants' ideas for future CoL activities, collaboration, and knowledge exchange; and
- Stimulate dialogue on Afrocentric school leadership perspectives and the research needed to strengthen African-led scholarship and practice in the field.

3. Webinar Details

Webinar Title: *Advancing African School Leadership Research: The Role of the Community of Learning and Afrocentric Perspectives*

Date: 6 October 2026

Time: 12 – 13.30 GMT/ 15 – 16.30 EAT

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

Format: Virtual webinar

Platform: Zoom

Registration and Zoom Link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8zLkIb9USA2pHOzkjSlhQA

Convened by: African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL) – Research Community of Learning (CoL)

Target Audience: African researchers working in school leadership, CoL members, policymakers, practitioners, development partners, and other stakeholders contributing to school leadership research, policy, and practice in Africa.

Contact: comms@essa-africa.org

Language: English and French

4. Modalities of Delivery

The webinar will be delivered virtually as a **1-hour 30-minute interactive session on 6 October 2026**. It will combine two focused presentations with structured dialogue. The first presentation will frame the relevance of the CoL for African researchers working in school leadership and introduce the CoL Engagement Pathway. The second presentation will focus on the need for Afrocentric school leadership perspectives and research.

Participants will be invited to contribute actively to the dialogue through guiding questions.

The first set of questions will focus on how the CoL can support African researchers and shape future CoL activities, while the second will focus on Afrocentric philosophies and their implications for school leadership research and practice.

5. Webinar Focus and Programme Outline

Time GMT	Programme segment	Focus and purpose	Mode of engagement and expected contribution	Lead speaker/facilitator
12:00 – 12:05	Opening and welcome	- Welcome participants - Introduce ACSL and the purpose of the maiden webinar.	Chair-led welcome	Dr Edmund Aalangdong
12:05 – 12:10 (5 minutes)	Housekeeping and webinar overview	- Housekeeping - State the two programme themes: strengthening the CoL for African researchers and advancing Afrocentric perspectives in school leadership research.	- Agenda overview - Housekeeping: interpretation guidance and how participants will contribute through Menti and plenary dialogue.	MC – Emmanuel Mensah Duah
12:10 – 12:40 (30 minutes)	Presentation: Positioning the CoL for African researchers in school leadership	- Present the purpose and relevance of the CoL for African researchers - Identify concrete opportunities for mentorship, collaborative research, research uptake, peer learning, resource sharing and policy-practice engagement.	Structured presentation supported by 3 - 5 slides. 2 questions to spark participants' engagement: Participants respond to a short Zoom poll prompt and open discussions: Question 1 <i>a. Poll:</i> In one/two words, write how the CoL can add value to African researchers working in school leadership (expected responses: collaboration, knowledge exchange, mentorship, research uptake, resource sharing)? <i>b. Follow-up question:</i> Share the reason behind your response.	Presenter: Stephen Acquah

			Question 2 a. <i>Poll:</i> In one or two word(s), share any CoL activity(ies) that would be most useful for supporting African-led research and dialogue on school leadership? b. <i>Follow-up question:</i> Share how this can be done.	
12:40 – 13:00 (20 minutes)	Presentation: Afrocentric philosophies and school leadership research	Explore the need for Afrocentric perspectives in school leadership research	Expert presentation with contextual examples	Presenter: Prof Frederick Ebot Ashu ebotashu87@gmail.com
13:00 – 13:20 (20 minutes)	Participants' dialogue: Advancing Afrocentric school leadership research	- Enable participants to interrogate the relevance of Afrocentric philosophies, values and indigenous knowledge systems for school leadership. - Surface theoretical, methodological and policy-practice priorities for strengthening Afrocentric school leadership research. - Identify collaboration opportunities and future CoL learning products that can support African-led scholarship in this area.	Moderated plenary drawing on 2 main questions The moderator will draw on the following guiding questions: 1. What Afrocentric philosophies, values, or indigenous knowledge systems are most relevant for rethinking school leadership in African contexts? 2. How can researchers working in this field strengthen the evidence base and theoretical foundations for Afrocentric school leadership?	Dialogue moderator: Professor Olujuwon Olutola Thompson olujuwonot@lasue.d.edu.ng Pre-informed conversation starters: - Dean Collin Langeveldt dean.langeveldt@spu.ac.za - Jayne Nasimiyu Wasike jaynewasike@gmail.com - Elinami Swai - swaiev@gmail.com

13:20 – 13:30 (10 minutes)	Closing and Call to Action	- Summarise the main insights - Invite continued participation in the CoL - Confirm next steps for future activities and collaboration.	Concise wrap-up, confirmation of immediate follow-up actions and direction to post-webinar communication channels.	Closing remarks: Dr Leila Abdullahi
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6. Expected Outputs

The webinar is expected to generate the following outputs:

- A webinar summary note capturing key insights, reflections, and emerging issues from the presentations and moderated dialogue (Stephen leads).
- A synthesis of priority areas for future CoL learning and collaboration, including opportunities for knowledge exchange, collaborative research, and other joint activities (Stephen leads).
- A short knowledge product, such as a blog or learning brief, drawing together key messages and implications for school leadership research, policy, and practice in Africa (Stephen leads).
- A webinar recording for the ACSL website/repository and future learning and dissemination (Michael leads).
- An agreed set of next steps for continued CoL engagement and collaboration, informed by participant contributions during the webinar (Stephen leads).

7. Expected Outcomes

The webinar is expected to contribute to:

- Increased awareness and understanding of Afrocentric school leadership perspectives, emerging evidence, and African-led approaches to school leadership research;
- Stronger engagement and collaboration among African researchers and members of the Research CoL;
- Clearer priorities for future CoL activities, knowledge exchange, and collaborative research on school leadership and Afrocentric perspectives; and
- Strengthened positioning of the Research CoL as a platform for African-led dialogue, learning, and collaboration on Afrocentric school leadership research and practice.