



Summary Report and Take-Aways of the 2026 Canada-Africa Academic Collaborations Conference: February 26 – 27, 2026

Day One - February 26, 2026

Opening Ceremony

Welcoming Remarks and Chair: Saverio Stranges. Rapporteur: Sydney Lessard

Land Acknowledgement: Elle Eyre

Opening Remarks: Margaret Jerono Hutchinson – Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi

Keynote Address: Izzy Ward

Key Themes and Central Arguments from Presentations:

A central theme across the session was the need to reframe global knowledge production through equitable partnerships that value both Western and traditional ways of knowing. Speakers emphasized that collaboration should move beyond knowledge transfer toward reciprocity, co-creation, and shared leadership. Presentations highlighted that Africa remains under-represented in global research systems due to structural inequities, yet there is significant opportunity to reposition African institutions as agenda-setters and co-creators of knowledge. Strengthening research infrastructure, digital platforms, doctoral training, and governance capacity were identified as key pathways to achieving this shift.

Parallel discussions from the Canadian context underscored the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems and Two-Eyed Seeing, which integrates Indigenous and Western epistemologies to foster innovation, inclusive learning, and culturally grounded science education. Practical examples demonstrated how land-based and experiential learning can build confidence, strengthen identity, and generate locally relevant solutions to global challenges such as climate change.

Major Insights Emerging from the Q&A Discussion:

Participants emphasized the importance of protecting the integrity of traditional and Indigenous knowledge within academic and research collaborations to avoid tokenism or assimilation. Authentic engagement, including the involvement of community knowledge holders and Elders, and cultural humility were identified as essential. Another key insight was that pedagogical approaches can be adapted without compromising curriculum outcomes, allowing experiential, land-based, and culturally grounded learning to coexist with formal academic standards. Participants also highlighted ongoing tensions around what is considered “evidence-based,” noting the need to broaden definitions of evidence to include lived experience, community knowledge, and culturally rooted methodologies. Intentional advocacy at institutional and policy levels was seen as necessary to legitimize these approaches.

Cross-Cutting Issues Related to Africa/ Indigenous–Canada Collaboration:

- The importance of **bidirectional learning** between Global North and Global South partners, as well as between Western and Indigenous knowledge holders
- Recognition that both African and Indigenous communities have historically experienced **systemic exclusion within dominant research paradigms**, reinforcing the need to address power imbalances
- Moving away from extractive engagement towards **co-creation**

- Investing in **capacity strengthening** (training, infrastructure, governance) while also supporting community knowledge systems and leadership
- Centering **local priorities, lived experience, and culturally grounded innovation**, including land-based approaches and community-driven research
- Ensuring inclusion of **women, youth, and Systemically Excluded Groups (SEG)** as key contributors to knowledge production
- Emphasizing ethical practices such as equitable authorship, data sovereignty, and respect for Indigenous and local knowledge

Notable Policy, Research, or Innovation Implications:

- Policies should support co-creation of research agendas and equitable authorship
- Funding models need to prioritize locally led research and frugal innovation
- Educational institutions should integrate culturally responsive curricula
- Research should be explicitly linked to policy engagement and community impact, particularly in areas such as climate resilience, health systems strengthening, sustainable agriculture, and inclusive governance

Key Takeaways:

1. **Equitable partnerships require reciprocity, humility, and shared leadership**, not one-way knowledge transfer, particularly considering the shared colonial histories that continue to shape research and education systems in both Africa and Canada.
2. Indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge systems are essential to innovation and should be recognized as valid evidence.
3. Strengthening Africa’s global research role depends on capacity building and inclusive knowledge production.
4. **Experiential and land-based learning approaches demonstrate how integrating multiple ways of knowing** can enhance education, empower communities, and foster culturally grounded solutions.
5. Future collaborations should prioritize real-world outcomes and long-term, trust-based relationships.

Session One: Transforming Education, Knowledge, and Innovation Systems

Chair: Gervais Ndayizeye. Rapporteur: Natasha Fortin

Presenters: Kwabena Amporful, Massah Tarawalley, Florence Odarkor Entsua – Mensah, Agape Ishimwe, Alemine Abebe Mekonen, Petronilla Mutinda.

Key themes and central arguments from presentations:

1. Belonging as a Core Outcome of Education

Across presentations, a central argument was that access is not enough. True transformation requires fostering belonging through inclusive social networks, relational mentorship, and community-connected learning. Educational systems must move beyond infrastructure and competency-building to create environments where students feel socially, culturally, and academically included.

2. Equity and Gender-Responsive System Reform

Gender equity is a structural, not peripheral, issue. Targeted teacher training and leadership development can shift awareness of gender norms, reduce school-based inequities, and increase women’s leadership and STEM participation. Sustainable transformation requires embedding equity into pedagogy, institutional culture, and governance.

3. Youth-Centered and Psychosocially Informed Approaches

Positioning youth as co-creators strengthens both educational and health outcomes. Trust-building, creative expression, and community-led design enhance confidence, agency, and well-being. Psychosocial support must be integrated alongside academic and medical interventions to ensure holistic development.

4. Human-Centered Digital Transformation

AI and digital tools are reshaping education by enabling personalized learning and academic support. However, concerns around privacy, overreliance, and limited AI literacy highlight the need for clear governance frameworks and institutional guidance. Technology must complement human relationships, especially in areas of wellness and mentorship.

5. Collaborative and Decolonized Knowledge Systems

Transforming education requires collaborative knowledge networks within and across institutions. Africa–Canada partnerships underscore the importance of reciprocity, ethical engagement, and incorporating diverse epistemologies. Curriculum reform must move beyond Western-centric models to embrace co-created culturally grounded knowledge.

Major insights emerging from the Q&A discussion:

- Institutions are experimenting with integrating diverse knowledge systems and incorporating student feedback to enhance both employability and broader life skills.
- Ethical research and partnership models must respect youth autonomy and lived experience.
- International collaboration, including partnerships with industry, can strengthen research and innovation when governed by clear and ethical agreements.
- Transformational change depends on bridging institutional silos and aligning curriculum, research, and community engagement.

Policy, Research, and Innovation Implications:

- Higher education policy must move beyond infrastructure toward fostering belonging and inclusive social ecosystems.
- Teacher education should integrate structured gender equity and leadership development components.
- AI governance frameworks are needed to address privacy, trust, and literacy gaps.
- Mental health and psychosocial care should be embedded within both education and health systems.
- Funding models should incentivize collaborative, community-engaged, and cross-border research partnerships.
- Curriculum reform must prioritize epistemic diversity and co-creation of knowledge.

Key Takeaways:

- Belonging is foundational to educational transformation. Access without inclusion reproduces inequity.
- Relational, community-based, and youth-led approaches generate a deeper and more sustainable impact.
- Equity must be intentionally designed into leadership, pedagogy, and institutional systems.
- Digital transformation must remain human-centered, ethically governed, and literacy-driven.
- Africa–Canada collaboration offers powerful opportunities for reciprocal knowledge exchange and system-wide innovation.

Session Two: Climate, Environment Sustainability and Disaster Management

Chair: Yolanda Hedberg. Rapporteurs: Kelayat Abebe and Evelyn David.

Panel on the Impact of Corrosion on Food Contact Materials in Africa.

Panelists: Grace Ajayi, Robert Addai and Temitope Olowoyo.

Key Points from the Panel Discussion:

Affordability drives cookware choices. Many households rely on low-cost metals, often recycled, because safer materials like stainless steel are expensive. In higher-income settings, access to safer cookware is easier. Participants were also informed that cooking practices can increase exposure, and factors that increase metal

leaching include: High cooking temperatures, Acidic foods, Long cooking times, Storing food in cookware for extended periods, Reheating food repeatedly, and Scratches or damages to cookware coating.

- Regulation gaps are a major concern. Panelists described situations where scrap metals, including car parts and batteries, are melted together to produce cookware without knowing the chemical composition. This creates significant contamination risks.
- Health risks are widespread and cumulative. Exposure to metals such as lead, aluminum, nickel, chromium, and arsenic can contribute to: Kidney damage, Neurodevelopmental impacts in children, Cognitive delays and learning difficulties, Reproductive health issues and lower birth rates.
- Environmental contamination is a major concern. Pregnant women, children, artisans, and mining communities were identified as most vulnerable.
- Occupational exposure is a critical issue. Artisans and miners often work without protective equipment and are exposed through inhalation, ingestion, and skin contact. Mining practices using mercury and arsenic were also discussed as major contributors to environmental and health harms.
- Awareness and education are essential. In some communities, health impacts may be attributed to spiritual causes rather than environmental exposure, which can delay intervention. Increasing public awareness could help drive both behavior change and policy action.

Next steps:

There is a need for urgent attention to this matter, as communities may be facing a growing public health crisis if these issues are not addressed.

Suggested Solutions Raised by Panelists:

1. Stronger regulation and enforcement of cookware production
2. Investment in research to understand exposure levels and health impacts
3. Public education on safe cooking and storage practices
4. Training and support for artisans
5. Improved waste management and recycling systems
6. Government leadership and policy development

Session Two Plenary Presenters: Lesley Gittings, Patricia Mumbi Wambua, Pauline Omolo, Pamela Kaithuru, Ayakpo Akpi.

Key Themes and Central Arguments from Presentations:

- Climate challenges are not a future threat but a current problem.
- Climate change affects all populations differently, with rural minority groups suffering the most.
- Top-down interventions often ignore local, socio-economic realities.
- Integration of indigenous and scientific knowledge systems enhance relevance, legitimacy and usability of climate information.
- Psychosocial support and mental health infrastructures are needed now, more than ever.
- Droughts and extreme high temps are identified as the most frequent extreme weather events in these select regions in East Africa.

Major Insights Emerging from Session Two Q&A discussion:

Question: Researchers are doing their part in gathering evidence, and providing evidence - based solutions for implementation - can you comment on barriers to implementation? Which implementers do these barriers impact?

Answer: Research is left on the shelf after graduation or promotional purposes, but we need to reach a level ensuring every research that is done informs practice and policy. Barriers to implementation are finances, capacity and infrastructure. Stigma is another barrier, where people cannot speak about their experiences but with more awareness and engagement with policymakers - these barriers can be broken, and research will influence policy and implementation.

Cross-Cutting Issues Related to Africa–Canada Collaboration:

Discussions followed on:

- Importance of addressing social protection, poverty alleviation, and crime as part of disaster response
- From a place of privilege, should researchers define what an emergency is, to individuals of different social contexts?

- Lessons learned from initiatives in the southern regions of Kenya, regarding environmental governance and gender responsive climate action for sustainability, should be replicated in Kenya's northeastern region and in similar contexts elsewhere in Africa.

Notable Policy, Research, or Innovation Implications:

1. By enhanced adaptive capacity, vulnerable communities, specifically women, will be better equipped to handle future climatic events.
2. A great importance is placed on disaster preparedness due to climate change and increased social and structural issues.

Key Takeaways from the session:

- There is a present need for further research and collaboration to support community health workers in their roles, during disaster management.
- There is a need for collaboration and technical solutions that address cultural and governance barriers.
- Governance and inclusion are just a foundation, but the indigenous knowledge systems need to be secured so there is continuity.
- Many citizens of East African countries facing devastating disasters attribute their mental health issues to climate change.
- For Integrated climate resilience and mental health programs, there is a required investment in mental health, training local providers, and community outreach programs to support populations.

Youth Panel: Breaking Barriers and Building Pathways for Meaningful Youth Leadership

Moderator: Elle Eyre. Rapporteur: Kelayat Abebe.

Panelists: Marot Touloung, Bailey Waukey, Deborah Ola, Jonta Kamara and Tyler Tukamuhabwa

Key Points from the Discussion:

What Meaningful Youth Inclusion Looks Like:

Panelists emphasized that meaningful inclusion means moving beyond symbolic participation to:

- Real decision-making roles
- Responsibility and accountability
- Being involved from the beginning of initiatives
- Having lived experiences respected as expertise

Barriers Youth Face:

- Structural barriers
- Financial costs
- Travel and visa restrictions
- Limited internet access in some regions

Institutional barriers:

- Tokenism
- Adults not ready to accept Youth perspectives
- Systems designed without Youth in mind

Personal and social barriers:

- Trauma and systemic discrimination
- Lack of confidence due to exclusion
- Unsupportive environments

Mentorship as a Key Solution:

Mentorship was repeatedly identified as critical to the solution.

Important factors include: Mentors who believe in youth potential; Advocacy, not just guidance; Safe environments for learning and questions; Thoughtful matching between mentors and mentees. Panelists also noted that working effectively with youth requires training and intentional effort.

What Institutions Should Do Now:

Recommendations included: Designing youth engagement from the start; Supporting Youth-led initiatives with resources; Ensuring leadership reflects the communities served; Planning for generational succession; Creating safe and inclusive participation spaces.

A major theme was the need for institutions to trust the Youth and recognize their capacity to lead change.

Overlapping messages across Session Two panels and plenary sessions:

Several shared themes emerged:

1. The importance of equity and access
2. The need for education and awareness
3. Institutional responsibility and accountability
4. The role of research and evidence
5. Mentorship and capacity building
6. Intergenerational collaboration

Session Three: Health, Mental Health and Social Protection in Times of Crisis

Chair: Asua Akolie. Rapporteur: Sydney Lessard

Presenters: Noah Boakye – Yiadom, Amani Mugenya, Olayinka Ariba, Yvonne Kasine, Francisco Mendina

Key Themes and Central Arguments from Presentations:

1. **Interconnected Perspectives on Mental Health and Wellbeing.** Mental health is shaped by racism, ancestry, community identity, and local cultural context (ADWEN framework).
Decolonization is central: care must center the community's definitions of mental health and wellbeing rather than imposing external norms.
Wellbeing is multidimensional: spiritual, social, mental, material, and should be defined by the community. Empowerment shifts from giving voice, to enabling communities to make decisions and allocate resources. Narrative is both method and outcome: communities must tell their own stories to validate knowledge and cultural safety.
2. **Culturally Adapted Mental Health Interventions.** Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) can reduce depression among caregivers in low-resource settings. MBCT can be adapted to local contexts as it ensures feasibility, scalability, and affordability in LMICs.
Caregiver mental health is integral to cancer treatment outcomes, addressing only patients ignores half the problem.
3. **Sociopolitical Factors Shaping Mother-Child Separation.** Family homelessness is a gendered crisis; structural conditions (poverty, weak social protection, patriarchal norms) drive separation, not maternal failure. Systems intended to protect families often reinforce marginalization and prolong separation. Trauma-informed, rights-based, housing-centered policies; integrated services; prioritization of family preservation and reunification; are recommended.
4. **Digital Safety and Youth Mental Health.** Black adolescents face disproportionate mental health challenges; immigrant youth navigate tensions between home culture and host society. CBPR approaches highlight the importance of community involvement in digital literacy, online safety, and youth resilience interventions. Flexibility, humility, and listening are essential when co-developing interventions with communities.
5. **Practices of Solidarity in Francophone Africa.** Solidarity operates at family and community levels, especially where formal welfare systems are limited. Drivers include religion, social capital, and fear of social sanctions; obligations can be coercive and gendered, reinforcing inequities. Solidarity maintains social connections and belonging but may place uneven burdens on women and young people.

Major Insights Emerging from the Q&A Discussion:

- ADWEN and culturally grounded frameworks are not meant to be directly translated to Western contexts; they serve African-descendant communities within or outside the Global South. Narrative ownership is critical: individuals must control their own stories to correct misrepresentation and validate experiential knowledge.
- Solidarity dynamics are complex, intersecting religion, social networks, and fear of sanctions; coercive elements can undermine autonomy and wellbeing. Cross-cultural applicability requires careful attention to local contexts, power sharing, and community-driven definitions of wellbeing.

Cross-Cutting Issues Related to Africa–Canada Collaboration:

1. Structural inequities (racism, poverty, gender norms) are common across contexts but manifest differently; solutions cannot be “one-size-fits-all.”
2. Community-led approaches, co-design, and narrative-centered methods are essential for ethical and effective interventions.
3. Shared challenges: fragmented services, limited social protection, gendered burdens, and inequitable access to care.
4. Lessons from African contexts (e.g., solidarity networks, narrative methods) can inform culturally sensitive practices in Canada, particularly for African-descendant populations.

Notable Policy, Research, or Innovation Implications:

- Integrate caregiver mental health into cancer and chronic illness programs.
- Develop housing-centered, trauma-informed policies to prevent mother-child separation.
- Expand culturally adapted mental health therapies (e.g., MCBT) for low-resource and immigrant contexts.
- Design youth digital safety interventions using CBPR to ensure community relevance.
- Recognize informal solidarity networks in policy design; address inequities that arise from coercive or gendered expectations.

Key Takeaways from the Session:

- a) Mental health and wellbeing must be understood through local, cultural, and community-specific frameworks, not imposed definitions.
- b) Empowerment and narrative ownership are essential for both mental health interventions and social justice.
- c) Structural inequalities (poverty, gender, housing insecurity) are primary drivers of health and social challenges; solutions must target systemic change.
- d) Culturally adapted, scalable interventions (MCBT, CBPR, ADWEN methodology) can improve outcomes in low-resource settings, immigrant communities and African-descendant populations living in Canada.
- e) Solidarity and informal social protection networks are vital in contexts with limited formal welfare, but their coercive and gendered aspects must be addressed.

Day Two - February 27, 2026

Opening Ceremony.

Opening Remarks and Chair: Godwin Arku. Rapporteur: Evelyn David.

Land Acknowledgement: Brianne O’Sullivan.

Keynote Address: Elmond Bandaoko.

Panel on North-South Collaborations: Damalie Nakanjako, Funa Moyo, Amadou Gaye and Melanie Katsivo.

Key Themes and Central Arguments from Presentations:

- There are four pillars of necropolitics: geographies of spatial constriction; infrastructure as deathscape; toxic ecologies; and the perpetual threat of eviction.

We need to challenge assumptions about urban governance in the global north **and** south and acknowledge that **no one** is protected until everyone is protected.

Cross-Cutting Issues Related to Africa–Canada Collaboration:

Case studies from Harare and Edmonton illustrated the lived experiences of marginalized populations in both geographies; as well as potential for future collaborations, and the importance of building partnerships that are equitable, sustained, and transformative.

There is need for equitable agenda-setting and funding in research collaborations.

Notable Policy, Research, or Innovation Implications, in North-South Collaborations:

1. There is the need for researchers in the south to define terms of collaboration and to ensure respectful partnerships, but the panel also noted that the global north's control over funding often leads to unequal relationships and outcomes.
2. There is the need for a coordinated effort in postgraduate training to build future research capacity, to drive the research enterprise in African universities.

Key Takeaways from the session:

- Calls were made for humility, shared leadership, and mutual benefit in collaborations, thus aiming for equitable, sustained, and transformative outcomes.
- There is urgency in understanding how urban governance and infrastructure deprivation converge to create environments of slow, systemic, and spatially inscribed death.
- There is a need for equitable access to basic services and infrastructure, to address the structural inequalities faced by marginalized populations.

Common theme: the global north often controls funding and research outcomes, leaving the global south underdeveloped. To address this disparity, African governments *need* to allocate significant funding and resources to research and development, in their budgets.

It was also noted that African governments often do not give the private sector enough latitude to participate in research funding, which could improve the economy and development.

Session 4 – Emerging Technologies and Sustainable Futures

Chair: Anthony W. Ndungu. Rapporteur: Nawal Faysal

Plenary presenters: Neha Bhargava, George Gatere Ruheni, Metmku Yohannes, Malvin Wright.

Presenter for Workshop on Equity Attunement: Katrina Plamondon

Key Themes of the Presentations:

1. Sustainability in healthcare innovation must include **representational sustainability**. Underrepresentation of African and other marginalized populations can lead to inequitable outcomes. Sustainability must mean fairness, shared responsibility, and co-designed systems.
2. Revitalizing indigenous African crops is essential for food security, climate resilience, and economic empowerment. Over-reliance on monocrops has led to biodiversity loss and malnutrition. Neglected and underutilized species (NUS) such as millet, sorghum, baobab, and pigeon pea—are nutrient-dense, climate-resilient, and require low inputs.
3. WaterScope Ethiopia demonstrates how open-source, locally manufactured water quality testing systems can build diagnostic sovereignty and public health resilience. By reducing dependency on imported technologies, lowering costs, and integrating digital monitoring, the initiative strengthens local capacity, creates jobs, and supports scalable water surveillance systems.
4. African and diasporic foodways are systems of ecological intelligence, preservation science, and communal knowledge. Food is not merely nutrition—it encodes memory, adaptation, and intergenerational responsibility. True sustainability is relational, rooted in reciprocity, continuity, and community.

Major Insights from Q&A:

- Food is a broader reflection on sovereignty, power, and identity, and not just nourishment; it is culture, power, and self-determination. Food commercialization was not framed merely as an economic development, but as a structural shift that reshaped autonomy, health, culture, and knowledge transmission.
- Reclaiming sustainable futures requires reclaiming control—over seeds, land, knowledge, and consumption practices.

Cross-Cutting Issues Related to Africa–Canada Collaboration:

- a) Equity and Representation: In data systems, crop diversity, technological access, and cultural knowledge.
- b) Local Sovereignty: Data sovereignty, food sovereignty, and diagnostic independence.
- c) Integration of Tradition and Innovation: Combining advanced technologies with indigenous and embodied knowledge systems.
- d) Policy and Infrastructure Gaps: Need for sustained investment, supportive policies, and institutional collaboration.

Notable Policy, Research, or Innovation Implications:

1. Africa–Canada collaboration must be reciprocal and co-creative.
2. Sustainable futures are not only technical—they are relational, ethical, and intergenerational. Embed cultural and relational accountability into sustainability policy and education.

3. Build inclusive global health datasets. Strengthen Canada–Africa data governance and sovereignty. Integrate AI ethics and data literacy into medical education and align digital monitoring with national public health systems.
4. Invest in research, seed systems, and commercialization of indigenous crops. Recognize and protect traditional food knowledge.
5. Strengthen value chains and integrate NUS into climate strategies.
6. Support open-source, locally manufactured diagnostics, and scale African-led innovation models

Key Takeaways:

- a) Sustainability must include equity and representation.
- b) Local ownership and capacity-building strengthen long-term resilience.
- c) Technology alone is insufficient without ethical governance and cultural grounding.

Session Five - Gender, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

Chair: Pauline Omolo. Rapporteur: Natasha Fortin.

Presenters: Kolawole Aramide, Donel Kadima, Aimable Nkurunziza and Brian Ofori.

Key Themes and Central Arguments from Presentations:

1. Inclusion Must Be Systemically Designed. Accessibility and social inclusion require ecosystem-level change (across physical spaces, digital systems, policies, and institutional culture). Barriers are often compounded by stigma and intersectionality. Sustainable inclusion depends on co-design with affected communities, accountability mechanisms, and moving from reactive accommodation to default accessible design.
2. Culturally Grounded Approaches to Gender and Violence. Domestic violence and gender inequities are complex and shaped by cultural norms, including constructions of masculinity. Effective prevention and intervention must be community-informed, culturally responsive, and inclusive of all affected groups. Empowerment and accessible help-seeking pathways are central to reducing harm.
3. Power-Sharing and Collaborative Knowledge Production. Top-down models often limit participation and impact. Transdisciplinary, non-hierarchical collaboration strengthens trust, adherence, and local ownership. Co-created knowledge enhances both research relevance and implementation outcomes.
4. Addressing Stigma Through Psychosocial and Social Reintegration Supports. Stigma remains a structural barrier affecting adolescent mothers, people aging with HIV, and persons with disabilities. Medical or technical interventions alone are insufficient; integrated psychosocial care, family reconciliation, community reintegration, and culturally sensitive support systems are critical to restoring dignity and belonging.

Major Insights from the Session:

Although there was no Q&A discussion, several overarching insights emerged:

- a) Inclusion fails when systems require systemically excluded individuals to “fight” for access.
- b) Cultural context profoundly shapes experiences of stigma, violence, disability, and health.
- c) Participatory and transdisciplinary approaches strengthen both research and service outcomes.
- d) Social reintegration and dignity restoration are as important as service provision.

Cross-Cutting Issues in Africa–Canada Collaboration:

1. Reciprocal Learning on Accessibility Standards and Policy. Canada’s regulatory frameworks and Nigeria’s lived challenges offer opportunities for mutual learning and policy refinement.
2. Culturally Grounded Approaches to Gender and Violence Prevention. African and diaspora contexts highlight the need for nuanced, community-based engagement strategies.
3. Shared Mental Health and HIV Priorities. Both Ghana and Canada face gaps in integrating mental health care into aging HIV populations.
4. Decolonizing Research Practices. Collaborative, non-hierarchical models in Benin and Rwanda underscore the importance of shifting power dynamics in global research partnerships.

Policy, Research, and Innovation Implications:

- Accessibility policy must move beyond compliance toward ecosystem-wide design and accountability.
- Domestic violence interventions should incorporate culturally responsive frameworks that address masculinity norms and diverse survivor experiences.
- Funding bodies should incentivize transdisciplinary and community-led research approaches.

- Psychosocial services must be integrated into maternal health and HIV care systems.
- Anti-stigma strategies should include community dialogue, education, and structural reform.
- Measurement frameworks should track inclusion of outcomes, not only service delivery metrics.

Key Takeaways:

1. Inclusion must be designed, funded, and measured; it cannot just be assumed.
2. Culturally grounded and non-hierarchical approaches improve participation and outcomes.
3. Stigma remains a central barrier across disability, gender, and HIV contexts.
4. Psychosocial support is essential to social reintegration and long-term well-being.
5. Africa–Canada collaboration is strongest when rooted in reciprocity, shared learning, and power-sensitive research practices.

Session Six - Public Health and Innovation

Chair: Phaedra Henley. Rapporteur: Abdujalil Abdullahi

Presenters: Diarra Diouf, Malaz Arga, Metmku Johannes, Brianne O’Sullivan, Rebecca Nansubuga.

Key Themes and Central Arguments from Presentations:

The session highlighted how context-driven, locally adaptable innovations can address structural health and infrastructure inequities across Africa and beyond.

Presentations highlighted, demonstrated and showcased:

- Environmental variability particularly dust, surface winds, humidity, and temperature significantly influence meningitis outbreaks in West Africa, even in the post-vaccination era. Integrating climate modeling with public health systems can improve outbreak predictability and preparedness.
- A high burden of late-stage childhood cancer diagnoses in pediatric oncology unit at Muhimbili National Hospital in Tanzania, with strong associations between stage at presentation and treatment outcomes. Systemic barriers; referral delays; limited early detection; and infrastructure gaps; remain critical challenges.
- A frugal innovation model for 3D-printed, body-powered prosthetic hands in Ethiopia that emphasizes functionality, low-cost, and locally manufacturable assistive devices. The project foregrounded equity and reciprocal academic collaboration.
- How medical drones delivery affects healthcare outcomes, accessibility and trust in remote regions of Madagascar.
- An open-source surgical fracture table designed to address infrastructure barriers to orthopedic surgery. By reducing costs and enabling local repair, the innovation challenges the “equipment graveyard” phenomenon and promotes surgical sustainability.

Cross-Cutting Issues Related to Africa–Canada Collaboration:

1. Collaboration is increasingly shifting from technology transfer to reciprocal knowledge exchange.
2. Joint supervision, co-design, and cross-disciplinary mentorship strengthen institutional capacity on both sides.
3. Local adaptation of global innovations is more effective than direct replication of Northern-designed systems.
4. Transdisciplinary engagement bridging engineering, medicine, climate science, and public health enhance impact.

Key Takeaways from the Session:

- a) Contextualized innovation is essential for sustainable global health solutions.
- b) Infrastructure gaps are often the hidden constraint in healthcare delivery.
- c) Equity-driven, open-source approaches can democratize access to essential services.
- d) Africa Canada collaboration is most impactful when it is reciprocal, transdisciplinary, and locally grounded.