



THE EDUCATION  
COLLABORATIVE

**Systems  
Change  
Program**  

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**Employability**

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## Overview

[Systems change](#) is an intentional process designed to fundamentally alter (or create) the components and structures that cause a system to behave in a certain way.

The Systems Change Program-Employability (SCP-E) is an 18-month systems transformation process designed to fundamentally develop the components and structures of key systems that drive outcomes in higher education institutions (HEI).

It takes a systems approach, and implementation grant to drive the targeted institutional transformation. The program identifies leads from HEIs as champions for change and takes them through expert training and mentoring and provides them with funding to improve on and develop new systems within their department or institution.

## Why This Program?

Through this program, HEIs receive the needed resources to review, build and remodel critical systems and structures to help improve their impact. The program allows for both individual and institutional ownership of leading and sustaining change. The program lead builds their capacity to lead the transformation process and encourages institutional participation to ensure growth and sustainability of resulted projects and outcomes. The program lead is expected to be among senior leaders of the participating institutions, who have the responsibility and the authorization to implement system level changes. In addition to project funding, program leads are and a maximum of two coworkers are awarded a monthly stipend. The Systems Change Program - Employability also encourages peer engagements through collaborative learning, networking opportunities, and participation in a community of practice following the completion of the program.

Kepler, a member institution in the Education Collaborative has been engaged as an employability partner and will manage the implementation, tracking, evaluation, and growth of this systems change program beginning with the pilot cohort from October 2021 to May 2023.

This document outlines the structure and the operational plan of the SCP for this initial pilot.

## Program Structure

The SCP implementation structure is designed to achieve the following:

1. Drive ownership of the transformation process from within the participating higher ed institution.
2. Engage exemplar member institutions in the Education Collaborative as leads for transformation in their areas of expertise and experience.
3. Build lasting mentorship, collaboration, and sharing relationships in the identified focal area (in this case, employability systems) across institutions on the continent

The program has 3 phases with pre-determined outcomes and milestones. Details of the System Change Program - Employability (SCPE) structure below:

Stage	Progress	Output
<b>PHASE 1: Selection, Baseline, Training and Proposal Preparation</b> DURATION: 3 months		
Stage 1: Identify Program Lead in HEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications are submitted and reviewed</li> <li>• HEIs program leads enroll in the first cohort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of selected program leads</li> <li>Contractual agreement</li> </ul>
Stage 2: Institutional needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCPE mentors conduct needs assessments in the enrolled institutions to establish a baseline</li> <li>• Baseline covers both institutional assessment and leads' capacity appraisal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseline reports</li> </ul>
Stage 3: Mentorship, training, workshops, proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCPE program leads go through job shadowing, campus visits, workshops, and mentorship towards developing the design and structure of a specified project. This would include travel to peer institutions twice over the 15-month period</li> <li>• Networking opportunities for program leads among co-leads and resource persons from mentee institutions</li> <li>• Program lead works with assigned mentor to develop a proposal for a specific system's structures development for pilot; with targets for impact and outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentorship and training reports</li> <li>Proposal for pilot of system's change initiative</li> </ul>
Stage 4: System Design Pilot Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal submission for review and agreement by the program lead, their institution, and the Education Collaborative</li> <li>• Grant funding received for pilot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System Design Pilot Grant award</li> <li>Contractual agreement</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE 2: Project Implementation, Mentorship and Reporting</b> DURATION: 12 months (1 academic year + summer)		
Stage 5: Pilot Implementation and Continued Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant for pilot is disbursed</li> <li>• Program leads receive mentorship and consulting to assist the rollout and testing according to project pilot proposal.</li> <li>• Networking opportunities for program leads among co-leads and resource persons.</li> <li>• Periodic articles and reflections on project progress and success or learnings in achieving targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project launch report</li> <li>Project progress reports per milestone target outcomes</li> </ul>
Stage 6: Reporting and Impact Review Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions provide acknowledgement of project progress</li> <li>• At the end of the phase, program leads present on the overall success of the project in an Impact Review Conference</li> <li>• Pilot project is reviewed to determine qualification for the next phase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project outcomes portfolio (Compilation of project reports)</li> <li>M &amp; E Assessment reports</li> </ul>
Stage 7: *Post -program leads engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program lead joins a community of practitioners</li> <li>• Continued sharing of learnings from the new system formed</li> </ul>	N/A
<b>PHASE 3: Project Scaling and Engagement after the pilot SCP*</b>		
Stage 8: Systems Change Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on measured outcomes and impact from pilot targets, the institution may receive a larger grant to scale the system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Second proposal for funding for scale (Systems Change Grant)</li> </ul>
Stage 9: Postfellowship engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program lead joins a community of practice in the project area</li> <li>• Continued sharing of learnings from the new system set up</li> </ul>	N/A

\*\* Following the Impact Review Conference, based on performance toward outcomes, some institutions may not qualify for Phase 3 where the project receives further grant to scale. Leads on such projects begin post-SCP engagements after the Impact Review Conference.

## Structural Pillars of the Program

### Funding

Upon submitting the proposal for Phase One, participating institutions may receive funding as part of the system design pilot Grant. Following the full pilot implementation within a 18 month window, the participating institution may access additional funding to scale the system.

The pilot grant process is designed to be helpful to the participating institution to provide the foundations needed for continued growth with or without the larger scale grant. At the end of the pilot grant period, with mentorship and training, the institution would have defined clear outcomes and pathways to positively change a system. They would have identified and strengthen key partnerships needed and addressed critical challenges that rise through the implementation process. They would hence have strengthened their ability to be sustainable and raise further resources.

### Training and Mentorship

The program leads and institutions enrolled within the Education Collaborative Systems Change Program - Employability benefit from:

- One-on-one consultations, training, coaching and support.
- Tools to develop accountability and create long-term sustainability.
- The tools and resources to mentor other institutions in the network.

SCP leads within the program receive training and coaching towards developing the design and implementation of the structure of an identified system in the institution; particularly in phases 1 and 2. This training and coaching assignment and tracking is managed by an Education Collaborative partner institution. The mentorship provided during the program is tailored and institution specific, and based on expertise and need alignment, location, and institution's context and profile.

### Institutional Commitment

Institutional commitment to the SCPE is key and begins from the nomination process and continues throughout the program. A nomination letter and a nomination form are required as a part of the application process to provide evidence of an institution's commitment to the project. The institution commitments to consistent communication and update meetings from the program leads throughout the program. The institutional leadership provides acknowledgement and review of interim and outcome and impact reports at all scheduled milestones throughout the process. The program leads are expected to be from the senior leaders of participating institutions.

## Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Measurement

The impact tracking and measurement of SCPE begins with the establishment of a baseline and ends at the end of phase 2 with a final measurement.

There is also a mid-point measurement of progress and outcomes. Measurements are conducted by the Education Collaborative. Targets and timelines for interim reviews and measurements apply to both goals for the program leads' development in phase 1, and goals related to the project's progress and success in phase 2.

The steps to setting goal targets, and impact measurement timelines are:

1. At the beginning of the program, in phase 1, program leads set their Theory of Change, which is the change or improvement the project is expected to bring after a set period. This is set in relation to the target program's Theory of Change defined by the Education Collaborative. Program areas in the Education Collaborative are developed along our five transformational goal areas.
  - a. Ethics and leadership development
  - b. Employability and relevant career readiness
  - c. Active entrepreneurship ecosystems
  - d. Systems for accountability and sustainability in HEIs
  - e. Inclusion, equity and diversity in HEIs

The 2021 and 2023 SCP will focus on Systems for Employability and relevant career readiness

2. In consultation with a mentor, the program leads and co-leads and institution will set strategic goals to be achieved over the period of the 18 months of implementation. They will be determined by the systems design goal expected at the end of the program. These goals are expected to be objectively certifiable and may consist of both quantitative and qualitative measures as well as other relevant ways by which systemic change can be measured.
3. The program lead will document their progress and outcomes per milestone in mini reports reviewed and signed by their institutional leadership per period. These reports will be published as learnings and outcomes from the program on the SCPE blog on the Education Collaborative website.

Interim progress and outcome reports will be reviewed by the Education Collaborative partner institution per milestone. The program lead and institution will either receive excellent reviews or be required to submit a performance improvement plan if not achieving the set targets for each period. Criteria for reviews will be based on target milestones, goals, and outcomes set, as well as the lead's participation in the relevant communities of practice.

### What we look for in a lead

- The candidate has a strong profile showing a steady record of engagements in the higher education field (academic, professional and/or personal).
- The candidate can show evidence of experience managing program or project planning, timelines, communication, and deliverables, and engaging top leadership.
- Candidates must demonstrate a commitment to their institution's growth and strategy.
- Candidates must have demonstrated commitment to the program's philosophy by driving change through collaboration and innovation, and creatively solving problems in their professional lives.
- Candidates should be willing to share their insights and participate actively in a knowledge sharing community during and after the program.
- Candidate needs to have a responsibility/role in the institution within transformational goal areas of SCPE.
- Candidate must have the time to commit to the full program for at least 15 months.

### What we look for in a program leads's institution

- Institution must be an accredited African higher education institution.
- There's evidence of fit of the systems change project with the institution's strategic focus for the target period
- Must be ready to assign a program lead to champion the implementation of the transformation processes.
- Institution should be thoroughly ready to provide support and the environment for successful implementation of the transformation process.
- Must be ready and committed to share and mentor other institutions to develop in similar areas of change.

### Application Process

To enroll in this SCPE, institutions would have to express interest. Follow the call for [expression of interest here](#),

\* For 2021 to 2023, the SCP will focus on Systems for Employability and Career Development



