
PRESS RELEASE

Georgetown University and AKADEMIYA2063 Partner to Promote Experiential Learning and Applied Research

WASHINGTON, DC & KIGALI, September 8, 2026 — AKADEMIYA2063’s Managing Director, Dr. Debisi Araba, and Prof. Erwin Tiongson, Director of the Global Human Development (GHD) Program at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service (SFS), recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to combine rigorous academics with hands-on experiential learning to equip tomorrow’s change-makers with the skills, tools, and networks needed for impactful careers in international development. The MoU was signed during an event hosted by the GHD Program at Georgetown University’s Washington, DC, campus, attended by SFS Dean, Prof. Joel Hellman, and a small group of graduating students from the GHD Class of 2026, underscoring the significance of the partnership and the parties’ shared commitment to advancing global development.

The partnership is also anchored in a second MoU recently signed with the Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM), also at the SFS. Together, these two agreements establish a framework for collaboration in learning, applied research, academic exchange, and scientific innovation. In a rapidly evolving development landscape, the partnership framework aims to strengthen institutional capacity and advance applied learning through knowledge exchange, methodological collaboration, and practical training for emerging development professionals.

“Navigating the international development space requires multidisciplinary capacity grounded in policy literacy, scientific expertise, and practical stakeholder engagement skills. We welcome this partnership with Georgetown University’s SFS, which will connect graduate students with real-world development use cases across Africa,” said **Dr. Debisi Araba**, Managing Director of AKADEMIYA2063. “AKADEMIYA2063 recognizes the central importance of strong knowledge and evidence systems for advancing Africa’s development ambitions. Our proximity to policymakers in delivering development priorities across the continent provides a unique opportunity to equip the next generation of development practitioners.”

Through this collaboration, the partners will facilitate capstone projects, internships, and other applied learning opportunities for students enrolled in the STEM-designated, two-year GHD Master’s program, while also promoting scholar and staff exchanges through visiting and practitioner fellowships.

“Over the past two years, our partnership with AKADEMIYA2063 has connected GHD students with critical development challenges facing Africa, providing opportunities through internships, capstone projects, and access to expertise and data to contribute to real-world development work while learning directly from leading practitioners. We are excited to build on this strong foundation through the new MoU and deepen

opportunities for internships, student research, and collaboration that support African scholars and emerging development leaders. This is exactly the kind of partnership we hope to cultivate at GHD—one that creates meaningful experiential learning opportunities for our students while contributing to impactful development work,” said **Dr. Ekin Birol**, Associate Professor of the Practice of Development, GHD Program at Georgetown University.

The partnership framework also aims to promote and facilitate internship opportunities for graduate students in the Master’s Program in International Migration and Refugees, also at SFS, providing participants with hands-on learning experiences under the professional supervision of AKADEMIYA2063. It will also support joint activities, including guest lectures, skills clinics, conferences, symposia, seminars, policy dialogues, and side events at the national, regional, and international levels. Additional areas of collaboration include joint research, publications, and dissemination through institutional and scholarly platforms.

About AKADEMIYA2063

AKADEMIYA2063 is a pan-African non-profit research organization with headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda, and a regional office in Dakar, Senegal. Inspired by the ambitions of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and grounded in the recognition of the central importance of strong, knowledge- and evidence-based systems, the vision of AKADEMIYA2063 is an Africa with the expertise we need for the Africa we want. This expertise must be responsive to the continent's needs for data and analysis to ensure high-quality policy design and execution. AKADEMIYA2063's overall mission is to create, across Africa, state-of-the-art technical capacities to support the efforts by the Member States of the African Union to achieve the key goals of Agenda 2063: transforming national economies to boost economic growth and prosperity. For more information, visit www.akademiya2063.org.

About Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service

Founded in 1919, the Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS) is the oldest and one of the most prestigious schools of international affairs in the world. Situated in Washington, D.C., SFS combines rigorous academic training with the Jesuit ideal of service to others, instilling a strong ethical foundation in its students. The school is globally renowned for its academic excellence in both undergraduate and graduate programs. As a premier training ground for world leaders, its distinguished alumni network spans the public, private, and non-profit sectors, including numerous heads of state, ambassadors, and corporate executives. For more information, visit <https://sfs.georgetown.edu/>.



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