

SESSION CONCEPT NOTE

MedEdAfrica 2026 | July 6–8, 2026 | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SESSION INFORMATION

Session Title	<i>Innovation, AI, and Transformative Technology: Unveiling ONE SPACE Africa</i>
Session Type	<i>Plenary: Keynote, Platform Demonstration & Interactive Panel</i>
Theme Track	<i>Transformative Technologies, AI, Innovation, and Simulation-based Education in Medical Education</i>
Date & Time	<i>Day 2 Tuesday, July 7, 2026 8:15-9:45 AM</i>
Duration	<i>90 minutes</i>
Room / Venue	<i>TBC</i>

Session Overview

Across Africa, medical schools are expanding rapidly to address critical workforce shortages. However, digital transformation within health professions education remains uneven. Institutions face fragmented learning systems, limited access to high-quality shared resources, inconsistent data systems, and minimal integration of artificial intelligence into curriculum design, assessment, simulation, and workforce planning. While global conversations on AI in medical education are accelerating, African institutions risk becoming consumers rather than co-creators of innovation. There is an urgent need for a coordinated continental platform that centers African priorities, promotes equity in digital access, strengthens collaboration across institutions, and leverages AI responsibly to improve education quality and health system performance.

ONE SPACE Africa (OSA) is a COMS-A flagship digital transformation initiative, in collaboration with UGHE, designed to serve as a shared continental platform for collaboration, learning, research exchange, faculty development, simulation integration, workforce data mapping, and AI-enabled innovation. OSA aims to move African medical schools from isolated digital experimentation to coordinated, scalable transformation. This session will officially unveil ONE SPACE Africa to the continental academic community, situate it within the broader AI landscape, and explore how similar transformative learning technologies can strengthen quality, equity, and resilience in African health systems.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the current state of AI and digital transformation in African health professions education.
2. Explore opportunities and risks associated with AI integration in curriculum design, assessment, simulation, and workforce planning.
3. Learn about the vision, architecture, and strategic pillars of ONE SPACE Africa.
4. Identify pathways for institutional engagement and co-creation within the OSA platform.
5. Reflect on governance, ethics, equity, and data sovereignty considerations in AI deployment across African institutions.

Session Breakdown

This 90-minute interactive session will be highly participatory and learner-centered.

TIME	ACTIVITY / DESCRIPTION	FACILITATOR / NOTES
8:15-8:25	Opening & Keynote Remarks: The State of Transformative Learning Technologies in Medical Education Globally and in Africa	Speaker: Abebe Bekele, MD
8:25-8:40	Transformative Learning Technologies in Health	Speaker: Peter Weinstock, MD, PhD
8:40-9:05	Official Unveiling of ONE SPACE Africa (Approx 10 mins) w/10 Min Brief Q&A	Presenter: Liliane Uwase, MSc
9:05-9:45	Interactive Panel: Scoping, Designing, Implementing and Evaluating Learning Technologies for Health	Moderator: Peter Weinstock Panelists: See Below

Technical Requirements & Setup

List audio-visual, equipment, and logistical needs for this session:

- Projector and screen: Yes
- Microphone: Podium w/Mic + 1 Lapel or Handheld for Moderator + 1-2 Handhelds for Panelists
- Internet access: Required minimum of 50 Mbps
- Special equipment: No
- Any other requirements: Podium (Above)

Speaker / Facilitator Bios

Convener — Abebe Bekele, MD, FACS

DVC Academic Affairs & Dean, School of Medicine | UGHE | Rwanda

Secretary General & Chair of the Transformative Technology Technical Working Group | Consortium of Medical Schools - Africa

Insert a brief biography (3–5 sentences): professional background, current role, and areas of expertise relevant to this session.

Moderator — Peter Weinstock, MD, PhD

Chair, Centre for Transformative Learning Technologies (CTLT) | UGHE | Rwanda

Dr. Weinstock is a Pediatric Critical Care physician, Chair of UGHE's Center for Transformative Learning Technologies (CTLT), Director of Healthcare Engineering at Boston Children's Hospital, and Professor of Anesthesia at Harvard Medical School. A co-founder of the field of simulation applied to child health, he brings over 25 years of experience transforming healthcare and advancing health equity globally through the integration of innovative technologies and educational models across diverse nations and economies. Dr. Weinstock holds degrees in Philosophy, Genetic Engineering, Medicine, and Surgery from Columbia University, Rockefeller University, Cornell University, University of Pittsburgh, and Harvard Medical School.

Demonstration — Liliane Uwase, MSc

Software Engineer, CTLT | UGHE | Rwanda

Liliane Uwase is a software engineer, lecturer, and global health technology professional with experience building digital platforms that support education and health systems. She currently works at the University of Global Health Equity, where she develops AI-enabled learning tools and teaches AI in Healthcare, with an emphasis on equity, responsible use, and real-world implementation. Her background combines software architecture, product delivery, cross-functional collaboration, and technical mentoring. She is also a Global Health Corps Africa Leadership Accelerator Fellow, strengthening her work in systems thinking, coalition building, and organizational change.

Speaker / Panelist — Simone Titus, PhD (Educator)

Associate Professor, Health Professions Education | Stellenbosch University | South Africa

Simone Titus-Dawson is an Associate Professor in Health Professions Education at Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. She holds a PhD in Education, with expertise in technology-enhanced learning and educational transformation. Her research aligns with SDGs 3 and 4 and the African Union's Agenda 2063, focusing on inclusive, contextually relevant learning through game-based learning, GenAI, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR). A recipient of the Black Academic Advancement Programme award, she contributed to the EU-funded "Caring Societies" project and serves on the WHO-Africa Curriculum Development Advisory Group. Her leadership roles include Western Cape executive member of the Southern African Association for Health Educationalists (SAAHE) and convener of its Learning with Technology SIG. She also supports HELTASA's Digital Dialogue initiative. With a background spanning health sciences gender studies, management, and health education, Simone is committed to advancing equitable, digitally fluent health professions education.

Speaker / Panelist — Salsawit Yigrem, MD (EABD Fellow/Designer)

East Africa Biodesign Fellow | Institution | Country

Dr. Salsawit Tesfaye Yigrem is a medical doctor, East Africa Biodesign Fellow, and CEO of InnoHeza Ltd. Her work sits at the intersection of medical education, clinical innovation, and entrepreneurship, with a focus on translating unmet healthcare needs into impactful medical technologies for Africa.

Speaker / Panelist — Channele Pillay, PhD (Entrepreneur/Adopter)

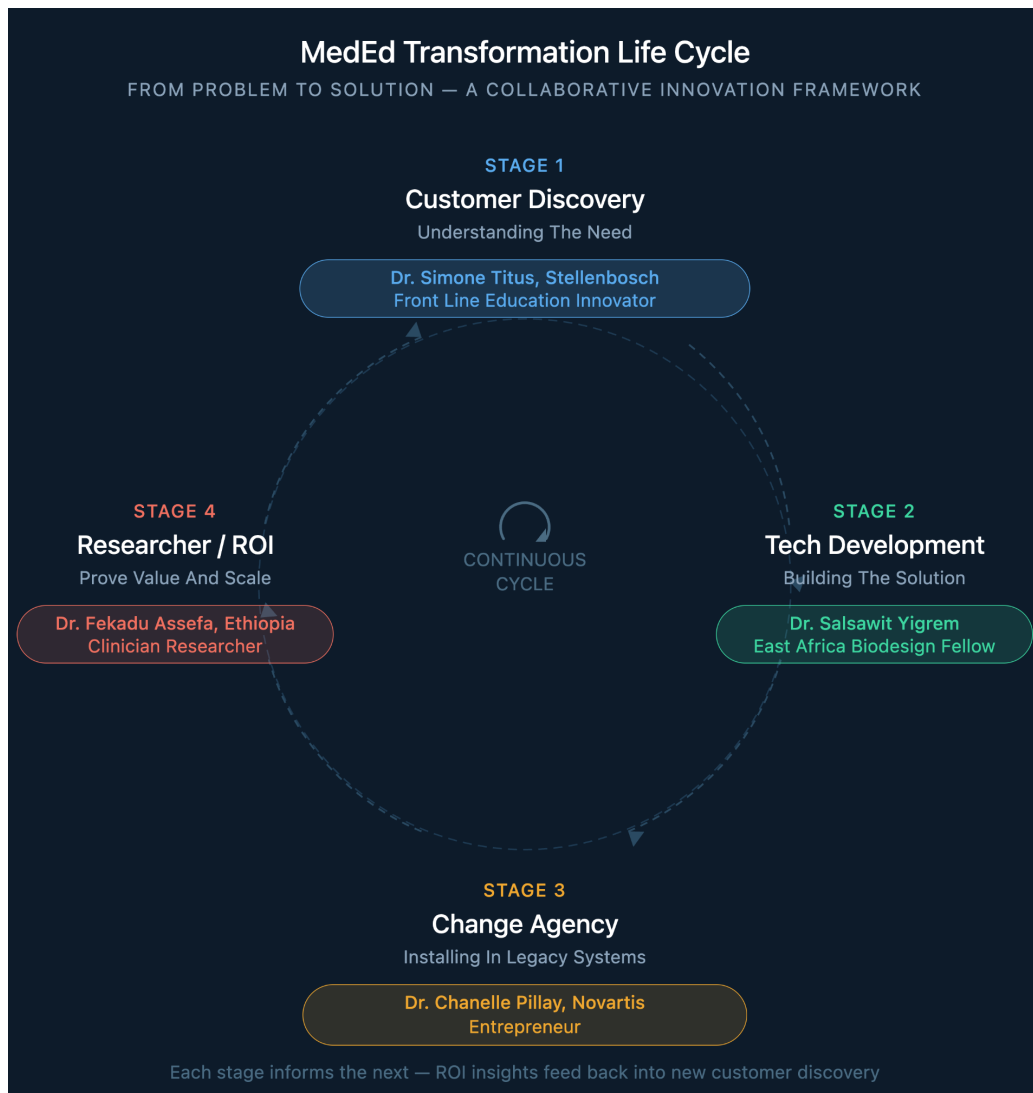
Title | Novartis | Country

Channele Pillay is based in Johannesburg, South Africa, and is a Manager of Scientific Capabilities within Global Health Medical Affairs at Novartis. In this role, she supports initiatives that strengthen external scientific research and development capabilities in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa. As a regional expert within a global team, Channele contributes to the development and implementation of scientific training and educational programs, oversees a global alumni network, and drives efforts to build sustainable research capacity in LMICs. Channele joined Novartis in 2021 as a Medical Science Liaison (MSL), where she was involved in multiple therapeutic areas, including cardiovascular, neuroscience, immunology, and respiratory diseases. Before joining Novartis, Channele was an academic lecturer and postgraduate research supervisor at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. She holds a PhD in Pharmacology from the University of Pretoria, where her academic and research work focused on malaria and oncology. Channele is passionate about fostering scientific excellence and strengthening research ecosystems to improve health outcomes globally.

Speaker / Panelist - Fekadu Assefa, MD, MPH (Researcher/ROI)

Title | Institution | Ethiopia

Dr. Assefa is an accomplished physician-leader (M.D., MPH) with 15+ years spanning health policy, medical education, and systems strengthening at national and international levels, currently leading the Grand Challenges-Ethiopia Initiative as National Health Innovation Management Officer. His career includes serving as Senior Special Advisor to the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, Health Advisor for the British Embassy (FCDO), and CEO of an 800-bed hospital, with deep expertise in innovation management, capacity building, and evidence-based policy. A published researcher with 12 peer-reviewed articles, he brings a rare combination of clinical, executive, and global health experience to drive scalable, high-impact transformation.



Internal Notes/Talking Points of Interest:

Salsawit:

- The East Africa Biodesign Fellowship on translating unmet clinical needs into practical healthcare solutions using the Biodesign process and we can use our flagship innovation as an example here
- Also, importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between clinicians, engineers, educators, and entrepreneurs
- Bridging the gap between medical training, real-world healthcare challenges, and technology development and about having a bigger vision of building innovation ecosystems in Africa that empower healthcare professionals
- **Fun Fact: I hate coffee but love coffee shops.**

Fekadu:

- ***Fun Fact: I enjoy playing "Carambole"***

Simone:

- Moving beyond technology-first thinking. While educational technologies offer exciting possibilities, we should be cautious of 'ed-tech solutionism' the assumption that technology itself is the answer to complex educational challenges.
- Designing with, not for, stakeholders. Drawing on principles of design thinking, I am particularly interested in questions of who is involved in the design process and whose voices are being prioritised (also lends itself to compassionate learning design). How do we not lose sight of why we're building something and who were building it for.
- Human-centred and context-specific innovation. I would like to touch on how we design for diverse contexts, particularly in resource-constrained settings, and how we ensure innovations remain accessible, equitable, and responsive to local needs.
- Keeping pedagogy at the centre. Technology should support learning goals rather than drive them.
- Preparing learners for uncertainty. Beyond teaching students how to use emerging technologies, we should be developing critical thinking, ethical reasoning, adaptability, and digital literacy so that graduates can navigate rapidly changing professional environments.
- ***Fun fact: my relationship with technology is complicated: I teach about it, research it, critique it, whilst at the same time I place my full trust in Google Maps to get me home.***

Chanelle:

- Examples of entrepreneurship + change agency from pharma
- Improving scientific capabilities in low and middle income countries, offering internships to up and coming scientists
- ***Fun fact: TBD***