

Namibia Up: Being 18 in Africa Today

Film Showing & Discussion at the SSEA Thematic Conference, Poland 2026

This symposium invites conference participants to engage with the documentary film *Namibia Up: Being 18 in Africa Today*, which explores the lives and dreams of fourteen eighteen-year-old Namibians from different parts of the country as they enter adulthood. Inspired by the longitudinal design of Michael Apted's "Up" series, and a companion to the Africa Long Life Study (<https://www.africalonglifestudy.org/>), the film intends to revisit its participants every four years, offering unique insight into trajectories of emerging adulthood in a sub-Saharan African context. Grounded in the Namibian setting yet echoing broader youth experiences across sub-Saharan Africa, the film captures how young people balance traditional values and globalised opportunities as they transition into adult lives.

The screening will be followed by an interactive panel discussion with experts on emerging adulthood from sub-Saharan Africa. Panelists from Namibia, South Africa, and Kenya will offer brief reflections on how the film's central themes resonate within their own national and cultural contexts. The session will then open into an extended audience Q&A, inviting participants to discuss similarities and differences with youth experiences in their regions and to consider what these perspectives contribute to emerging adulthood theory.

The symposium aims to spark reflection on how experiences of emerging adulthood outside Western settings can enrich and expand existing theoretical models through culturally diverse voices. Building on the conversation initiated during the film's first screening at the SSEA 2025 Charleston Presidential Session, this event places particular emphasis on cross-cultural dialogue with the audience and on advancing contributions to both theory and practice.

Panel members:



Byron G. Adams (Moderator) — Assistant Professor of Work & Organizational Psychology, University of Amsterdam; Senior Research Associate, University of Johannesburg. His research focuses on identity, diversity, inclusion, and well-being in non-Western contexts.



Luzelle Naudé — Professor of Psychology, University of the Free State, South Africa; counselling and research psychologist. Her work explores identity development, student transitions, and emerging adulthood in African contexts.



Anne Wairimu Muchiri-Muchai, Psy.D. — Clinical Psychologist and founder of Blossom Centre for Wellness in Nairobi, Kenya. Her scholarship centers on culturally responsive mental health care, emerging adulthood, and identity development.



Selma N. Uugwanga — Namibian clinical psychologist and researcher specializing in emerging adulthood and developmental transitions in sub-Saharan Africa. Her work examines how cultural and socioeconomic factors shape youth development in Namibia, Kenya, and South Africa.