University of Bamberg

MASTER EDUCATIONAL QUALITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES



IMPEQ NEWSLETTER

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IMPEQ

Educational Quality in Developing Countries

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Dear IMPEQ students,
Dear IMPEQ alumni,
Dear friends of the Master's program,

With this newsletter, we send you all warm greetings from Bamberg during an extraordinary Advent season.

We have already seen some snowfall here in this area on a few days, which belongs somehow to the wintry Christmas mood in Germany. As always at Christmas time, we have festively illuminated city centres, but also private homes and gardens. However, at the same time there are very few people going shopping in the inner cities, as the Corona crisis determines all of our lives. We will also have a lock down around Christmas and New Year, which will change our everyday life even more intensely.

This scenario determines not only our daily life here in Germany, but in many other countries as well. Accordingly, we had to reorganize the IMPEQ program because we could not meet and work with one another in person. This change has cost us all a lot of extra work and engagement. However, it made it possible for us to continue our cooperation and shared learning journey despite all the restrictions. You will read about these changes in this newsletter.

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to everyone who helped convert and implement our program digitally. I would like to thank explicitly all IMPEQ students for their cooperation and their understanding of this special situation, which requires from all of us to adapt to a new situation and to secure mutual solidarity more than ever before.

In the Christmas story according to the Evangelist Luke, the angels proclaim, "Do not be afraid! See, I proclaim great joy to you." I wish you all for this period of time and also for the coming New Year, that we do not feel fear in the face of the great challenges that lie ahead of us. A great joy is announced, from which we should be infected. I very much hope that this infection of joy is stronger than Corona and will inspire, encourage and determine our work more than any di iculties.

I wish you and everyone great joy, especially for the upcoming year 2021,

Annette Scheunpflug
Bamberg, Advent 2020



IMPEQ NEWSLETTER
Educational Quality in Developing Countries

NEW ERA IN IMPEQ: ALL ONLINE SEMESTERS



Online semester marked a milestone with attendance of teaching staff, mentors and students from 10 different countries and 4 different time zones.

The online semester, in which the fourth batch of IMPEQ students participated, was successfully completed. While Covid-19, which affected the whole world, also affected education and training activities, of course, it cannot be expected that IMPEQ would not be affected by the events. In this regard, the fourth batch of students had to attend the third semester from home, not in Rwanda. Students attended the courses sitting in front of their computers to follow the lessons given online. This was a new experience not only for the students but for the entire IMPEQ team. It required a long preparation period with many technical details. All faculties, mentors, and students were happy for successfully completing the 2-week online learning period. They have already started preparations for the 5th meeting to be held again online coming February and March 2021.

LOGISTICS WAS A HURDLE

The online semester is a new learning experience for all faculties, mentors, and students mainly because of the heterogeneous context of the students. They are from 10 different countries and 4 different zones. For this reason, the IMPEQ team had to reflect and review the plan and form of organization in many aspects. Most students gathered in working groups, some of them met in church hostels to create a classroom effect and to learn from each other. Thus, the students, who moved away from the home environment, used all their attention and time to learn, just as they had to leave their

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homes to study face-to-face periods. In this way, they could move away from distracting effects and focus only on education. In this way, they also reached access to a more stable internet, which is the most basic requirement of online education. There were 6 groups of 3-5 students. They helped each other to complete and accomplish the given tasks. The groups also took all precautions and were very sensitive about the hygienic measures as to keep the distance of 1.5 m, not to touch each other, and to wash hands intensively.

COMPETENCES OF ONLINE LEARNING

Since face-to-face teaching and learning makes the intensive and immediate interactions possible and allows students to learn from each other, in online teaching and learning it is very difficult to provide opportunities for intensive and immediate interactions. For these reasons, individual mentors were allocated to all groups as well as to all students. These mentors met with students outside of normal class hours and provided individual support to both groups and students. Like the training, the support of the mentors was also online. Mentors from different countries and time zones held online meetings with students from different countries.

IN ADVANCE PREPERATIONS

In order to overcome the difficulties of not being present in the same environment as the students, all the necessary materials and notes for the course were delivered to the students in advance. The materials were kept available in a virtual environment that all students could access at all times. Information about the online teaching process was shared with students before the term began and all the necessary materials were downloaded by the students in advance.

Each virtual meeting was followed by a period of review and reflections in self-learning and individual mentor meetings.



Prof. Annette Schuenpflug made the opening speech for the Online Semester. Students and mentors asked their questions after her opening remarks.



When the courses started at 9.00 AM in Germany, it's10.00 AM for Tanzanian students, and 7.00 AM for Liberian participants.

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NEW ERA IN IMPEQ: ALL ONLINE SEMESTERS

TECHICAL SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL

The technical support team was one of the most important and indispensable bodies of online education. It checked every student one by one. It made sure that students had all the learning materials and access to the used platforms like Zoom, Skype, and WhatsApp. They helped with installing necessary platforms, downloading learning materials, setting up group meetings, following up with students and staff concerning the digital learning environment. There was always somebody on duty on teaching days.

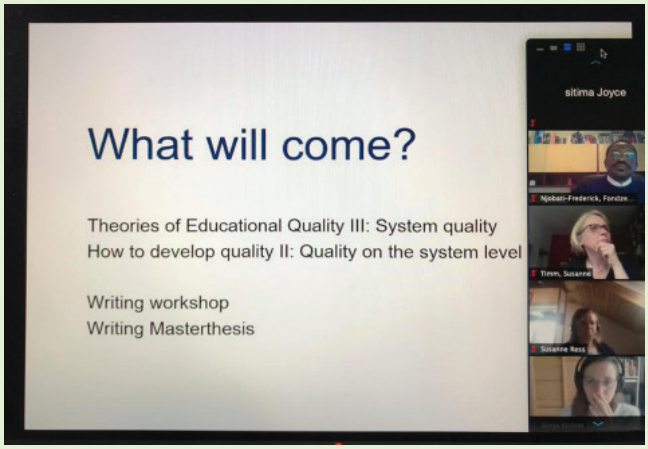
STEADY INTERNET CONNECTION IS A MUST

A steady internet connection was very important to participate in the teaching sessions, the video calls. Even though some of the students had difficulties in this regard, the problems were solved fast by some adjustments. In this context, the importance of communication, which is of great importance in every stage of life and education, was once again experienced. Communication at the appropriate times of time played an important role in solving the problems of all participants in overcoming the difficulties of being in different time zones and countries.

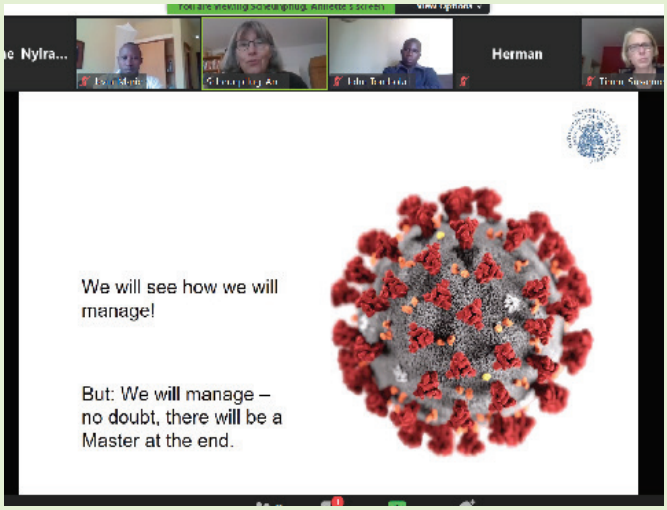
4 DIFFERENT TIME ZONES

All the programs started at 9.00 AM German time (and also the same for Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, and Norway) when students and mentors were present. At 9.00 AM in Germany, it was 7.00 AM in Liberia, 8.00 AM in Cameroon and England. For Tanzania, South Sudan, and Madagascar it was 10.00 AM. Although the time differences between countries created difficulties for the participants, with the great sacrifice of the students and mentors, the difficulties were easily overcome.

At the end of the semester, the students successfully completed their tasks and works and they are ready for the new online semester which will be held between 21 February and 13 March 2021.



Next seesion will be online and will be beld between 21 February and 13 March 2021 which include final moduls of IMPEQ before graduation.



Despite the challenges of the new online education model, students are confident that they will succesfully complete the IMPEQ program.

ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCES FROM IMPEQ STUDENTS AND MENTORS

On hearing about online learning for the first time, I was worried given the current conditions in my country. The major worry was about internet reliability and high costs. I worried about interruptions from family which could hinder concentration. I am therefore grateful to the IMPEQ team for the good set up which motivated me to learn without major challenges. My experience about online learning is that it is a cognitive activity which is very engaging and requires a comfortable and secure environment.



From this study, I learnt that it is possible to achieve anything if carefully planned and organized. I liked the fact that I read and listened to recorded audios prior to morning meetings especially from a very familiar voice. The exploration and reading through the materials helped me to be more focused and interacted freely with my teachers and mentors. The workload was a lot, but online learning enabled me to plan my time. I knew I would lag behind if I did not plan my time since mentors were far. Therefore, I maximized any little time to do my assignments and became autonomous and self-disciplined.

Online learning is best done with strong internet connections. The internet during the study was generally weak, although it helped me to learn but at some points the internet gets disconnected and disrupted some meetings. Throughout the learning, cameras remained off due to internet quality and this limited active interactions between mentors and students making learning less lively and human.

Finally, allow me to appreciate and thank Bread for the World, ECSS Education and the great IMPEQ team. I also thank my fellow friends of IMPEQ IV for all their support to each other during the online learning. May God see us through this Masters programme.



By Sitima Joyce Justin from South Sudan

As an IMPEQ winner and mentor, this online session was a new experience. I enjoyed so much the organization before, during and after the various meetings. Learning from each other has made an impression on me, both among the mentors and with the IMPEQ 4 students. In addition, the support of the IMPEQ team has to be mentioned. I have also noticed the evolution of the content of the modules, which has been fine-tuned compared to what I had in 2016, among other things the updating at the project planning level.

Furthermore, I am impressed by the students' commitment, their open-mindedness, self-discipline and the richness of the discussion during virtual learning.

As a mentor, this session has forged me to be more organised, patient and reflective, especially with regard to the feedback I have to offer students.

REFRESHING THE OLD KNOWLEDGE

It was also an opportunity to update my knowledge of the two modules covered and to develop my skills in implementing individual support.

I realised that prior preparation, communication and the use of technology are very important in achieving the objectives of distance learning.

All in all, this online session was rich in reflection and sharing that allowed the mentor and students to move forward together.

The celebration of the „list of joy" after the steps taken was also special: between the mentors and the IMPEQ team, between students, between mentor and students, and for the entire IMPEQ family.

I would like to thank the IMPEQ team for giving me this opportunity to refresh, learn, reflect, share knowledge and skills during this distance learning session with IMPEQ 4.



By Onja Tiana Raharijaona from Madagascar

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ONLINE METHODS: A NEW JOURNEY FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

When I started taking the first courses as an IMPEQ student in Bamberg, Germany, in September 2019, I realised that I was going to live a new experience in education and training. The learning climate, the diversity of teaching resources, the constructive feedback are some of the important aspects I would like to say a word about.

THE LEARNING CLIMATE

The climate of familiarity and conviviality that prevails during the teaching-learning process is such as to engage all participants without exception. It is important to note that all the supervisors (teachers, mentors, etc.) have managed to break the myth of inferiority that generally characterises the student vis-à-vis his or her teacher, to transform the lessons into sequences of shared experience, where everyone has the opportunity to express themselves, while respecting the opinions of others. The mutual help, better the support that all the classmates give me, makes me sometimes even forget that we are students.

THE DIVERSITY OF TEACHING RESOURCES

With the IMPEQ programme, I learned a lot about diversifying learning materials. Indeed, it is difficult for a student to get bored during teaching-learning activities. For each module, the learning materials are many and varied. Thus, Power Point presentations, videos, games, graphics, texts, etc. are alternated. This is particularly interesting when we know that learning strategies differ from one individual to another. Sometimes, some scientific concepts seem difficult at first, but the fact that I diversify the learning material, multiply the activities, finally allows me to better understand the concept and make it my own.

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

I have to admit that without constructive feedback (concrete and positive reaction of a teacher/mentor to a student's work), I could not fill all the gaps in the knowledge provided on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, face-to-face sessions are limited to one month only.



Since all the teaching activities were done online, detailed technical information was given to the all teaching staff, mentors and students before the semester began. All students were provided with the necessary technical information. Thus, all the necessary infrastructure was provided for the teaching to continue without interruption.

But this is made up for by a personalised follow-up of the student and recurrent feedback on the tasks to be carried out or assignments to be submitted.

Finally, from a strictly didactic point of view, the IMPEQ programme is unique in that it is designed to promote the success of all students through a friendly learning climate, a variety of learning materials and regular constructive feedback. Beyond all the knowledge and skills acquired with the IMPEQ programme, I have been able to integrate the three aspects listed above into my professional activities. With this, I feel that my relationship with my students has greatly improved and they are more interested in the course.



By Laure Diffo from Cameroon

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MENTORS SHARE THE LESSONS LEARNED AND COMPETENCES OF ONLINE TEACHING

The world has experienced a pandemic, which has inevitably changed the way of life. This is COVID-19. All schools are closed. Classroom courses have been moved online as part of the measures to contain any danger of the spread of this epidemic. It is this same situation that led IMPEQ to programme the distance learning courses, with each student in his or her own country, in order to continue with the sessions. In fact, the IMPEQ IV session planned for Butare has been canceled. I have been selected as a mentor to help mentor the online students. For me this is the first experience that has been useful to me.

ONLINE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The activities took place in small working groups, each accompanied by a team of mentors. Each day in the afternoons, learning was primarily individual. Then the virtual lectures at different times, within the different groups, focused on the exchanges in relation to each session of the planned module. In the afternoons, the learning was in individual form or in groups under the moderation of a mentor. This was a good time for students to ask questions and receive constructive feedback. The creation of a WhatsApp group was an important way for me to facilitate interaction with the students.

LESSONS LEARNED

I have learned a lot about how to proceed through e-learning using Zoom. This opportunity has helped me to develop and improve skills on the quality of distance learning. The intense communication between the mentors and the students allowed for a good working atmosphere. Efficient time management is very important for effective learning. The availability of learning materials on time made it easier for me to organise and prepare the daily sessions. Thanks to the internet, e-mail, WhatsApp, video conferencing, the collaboration was effective. Some technical complications related to the internet connection have arisen. But they have been resolved. In the end, this online experience was a great discovery for me. *By Siberi Kavira Kivatsi from Democratic Republic of Congo*



The IMPEQ team and family took the cue and inventively adopted the online learning process as the way forward in a challenging world setting for IMPEQ IV. The process that started on the 14 of September 2020 was interesting, challenging, intense and very rewarding for me as a mentor. The online mode of operation though innovative led to very anxious moments, first because it was a new method for me and secondly, by the dint of the fact that, students and mentors were found in different countries and in two continents of the world.

NEW COMPETENCES

This notwithstanding, the strength of the process brought about creativity and the acquisition of new competences for me. I was capable of acquiring new skills in manipulating online tools like Zoom, WhatsApp, Skype etc in the teaching-learning process. It led to the scaling up of my time management skills through effective planning to meet up with the array of programs and assignments from the students and support to colleagues.

Moreover, it enhanced my team spirit, cooperation and collaboration with other mentors, teachers and students and it was easy to fall-back to any one during this period in regards to any challenge. Above all, the coordinating team of IMPEQ was resilient, dedicated, upbeat and very supportive for the duration of the exercise.

LEARNING PROCESS

In the downside, it was very challenging, steeped in anxiety for me to understand and take part in the online process for IMPEQ. It was more demanding, tiring and exhaustive than the face-face process. Again, the setting up of meeting rooms for Zoom was not smooth at the beginning for me and needed some critical rethinking to stabilized it. In this debut edition, it was a learning process and witnessed a resounding success.

By Abraham T. Tangwe from Bamberg



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DIGITAL TEACHING AND LEARNING: THE CAMEROON EXPERIENCE

The start of a novelty introduced by IMPEQ for the Summer Session of the fourth cohort for me was crowded with excitement as well as anxiety. Having to join the educational bandwagon that is increasingly rooted in blended teaching and learning under the auspices of IMPEQ was particularly exciting. However, the anxiety was reflected by the fact that I was engaging a journey without knowing exactly how and what the outcome would be. This was evident owing to the fact that online teaching and learning was something I was experiencing for the first time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING VIA ZOOM

My experiences are captured in a hybrid approach to teaching and learning. The online learning was blended with face-to-face interactions. The inter/intra-mentor and mentor-student exchanges, both virtually and in-person, were rich in content and diversity. For me, it was a new learning experience – learning while teaching.

Using Zoom and the other online learning platforms provided me with a new and safe dimension in performing my duties as a school leader with a reduced frequency of in-person meetings in the era of COVID-19. My participation as a mentor and learner gave me a better understanding of the theories on teaching quality and quality development, besides deepening my skills in project conception, planning, execution, evaluation, reporting/communication, which are useful for my practice.

CHALLENGES/MITIGATION

Online teaching and learning is more demanding and requires sustained efforts in planning, preparation of learning materials, prioritizing, proper time management, and effective communication. I was apparently caught in the multitasking web. That is, integrating other work imperatives, navigating mentoring schedules, supervising the marking of the Cameroon General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination, recruitment of new students for the 2020/2021 academic year, and attending meetings were hard nuts I had to crack. Faced with these multiplicities of tasks, my IMPEQ experience proofed invaluable. To-do-lists, prioritizing, and delegating were techniques that enabled me to navigate the different daily tasks, though time management was still a challenge, something I still need to work towards improving.



LESSONS LEARNED

My participation in the Summer Session of IMPEQ IV as a Mentor and Learner would not have been effective without better work organization and time management. These are tenets that I have absorbed in the pursuit of the mission of my institution and my personal goals in an effective and efficient manner. In addition, communication and constructive feedback are essential vectors that drive the realization of organizational goals and which are vital for my practice as a teacher, teacher-trainer, and school administrator. With new skills in scheduling and running Zoom meetings, my frequency of in-person staff meetings has reduced. The challenge remains inadequate logistical tools to support this learning platform in my context.

PERSPECTIVES

This online experience is indicative of the reality that teaching and learning can no longer be confined to a defined location where learners and teachers are boxed in physical interaction. It is probable that in-person attendances of IMPEQ could be reduced in favor of this hybrid approach. I see a lot of prospects and positive multiplier effects of online teaching and learning as an engine that will propagate the impact of IMPEQ further. And so, let the train continue to move! *By Essaw Samgwaa from Cameroon*



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ONLINE PHD SEMINARS DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD

Covid-19 has risen as a global pandemic which brought virtually everything to a standstill since March 2020. Specifically, the pandemic has severely hit educational systems all over the world leading to a virtual closure of schools and universities all over the world. It is estimated that nearly 1.6 billion students in more than 190 countries and all continents were affected by the pandemic as a result of schools' disruption. However, some schools and universities came up with new strategies to go on with courses within the limits of lockdown measures. To this end PhD students being supervised by Professor Annette Scheunpflug in Bamberg University kept working on their projects and following their PhD seminars in a new way.





Online PhD seminars continued nonstop during the Corona lockdown.

ADAPDATION TO THE NEW TOOLS

Basically when the covid-19 pandemic set in some of those students were in Bamberg, Germany, others were in their home countries like Rwanda, Cameroon, DRC, Madagascar fulfilling their daily duties or carrying out their field researches. Prior to the pandemic outbreak, they were accustomed to a practice of face-to face PhD seminars where they worked on their PhD projects in learning communities under supervision of their Professor. After realizing that the pandemic was due to take longer time than expected, Prof. Scheunpflug came up with a new way of working through online meetings. Therefore, meetings were organized through the Zoom platform of the university of Bamberg, at first like a trial since there was a concern about the quality of internet connectivity in their respective countries.

SUCCESFUL EXPERIENCE

Eventually, the practice turned out to become a successful experience and PhD students were excited about it. As a matter of a fact, since then, online meetings are organized on a regular weekly basis and PhD students are literally appreciative about those sessions. Actually, online PhD seminars mainly take place every Friday in the afternoon with participants having the guiding principle that materials to be discussed need to be shared the latest by Wednesday. There is no specific organization of "who present what", rather participants work responsibly and whoever is ready shares his/her work to the group by Wednesday with prospects of getting feedback from them on Friday. Surprising enough, PhD learning community members did not lose their working momentum rather they all made significant progress in their PhD projects. They did so through their independent and collaborative working. They have been able to present their achievements to their colleagues and their supervisor and get constructive feedback from both sides through online discussions. All of them got boosted by this new way of working to the extent that some managed to celebrate

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ONLINE PHD SEMINARS DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD

significant milestones in their projects.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

It is worth noting that on the margins of the regular PhD seminars, PhD learning community members got opportunity to participate in other online conferences and meetings. In this regards they attended the ANGEL conference 2020, which was designed for early career researchers as it was organized by Oulu University in Finland from 11th to 12th of June 2020. The topic of the conference was "Research on Global Education and Learning" and one of them namely Abraham Tangwe got a room to present the findings of his research on effects of violence on the learning outcomes of students in Cameroon.

Similarly, in the framework of online PhD seminars, they enjoyed a presentation made by Prof. Dr. Beatrix Palt on the topic of "Learning to manage a project: a qualitative analysis of the discourse" where the issue of professionalization of project managers was discussed from empirical point of view.

RESILIENT WORK

Definitely, Covid-19 pandemic has proven to be a global challenge not only to educational systems but to various ongoing projects as well with some of them being brought to a rush unexpected halt. However, it is exciting to see how some people did not adopt a passive attitude towards the pandemic, rather they made efforts to rise above it.

Members of PhD learning community under supervision of Professor Dr. Scheunpflug showed their resilience to the pandemic by reflecting lockdown measures, observing them and coming up with new strategies of working. It was a good experience for them and another opportunity to learn while enjoying the benefits of our current interconnected world.

Similarly, they experienced the idea that learning cannot be confined within classic class walls with the point being that education got enhanced by facilitations brought about by changing world as it is driven by latest technological developments.



By Charles Gahutu PhD student from Rwanda

Mentoring IMPEQ Online:

Heart of co-working is communication

The shared experience to be a member of the mentoring staff included some extraordinary chances due to exceptional conditions: Mentoring means accompanying students during their learning journey, and their learning was at the centre of the whole project. The outstanding motivation of the students, their immense efforts and commitment, their interest and ideas enriched the mentoring process as much, that it felt as an privilege to be part of the mentoring group.

INTERNATIONAL TEAMWORK

Mentoring means to work within an international team, spread over continents and located in different time zones, with different conditions for the online situations as different backgrounds and a variety of learning and teaching histories. In this regard the mentoring group can be described as a reciprocal supportive international professional learning team. The mentoring team has been supported in manifold ways by the IMPEQ-team. It has been obviously the objective of the colleagues in the team to welcome everybody, to involve us into the processes, to provide several channels as communication mean were and to enhance the exchange through different formats. To facilitate the daily work on a organizational level, sophisticated timetables were arranged and re-done, a lot of learning and teaching material was prepared. The heart of this co-working has been communication – its structure of different issues, occasions and participants, its content in regard to teaching issues and the students' needs, and finally its modus: There has been always a chance for friendly and encouraging words, and never a doubt, that questions were answered, most of the time before they had been formulated.

The main focus for this learning period has been to deal with project development. The success of this online block shows on a large scale that all together have developed this project „Online teaching in IMPEQ" well and in an outstanding high quality.



By Dr. Susanne Timm from Bamberg

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A MENTOR'S EXPERIENCE: NEW METHODS, NEW HORIZONS

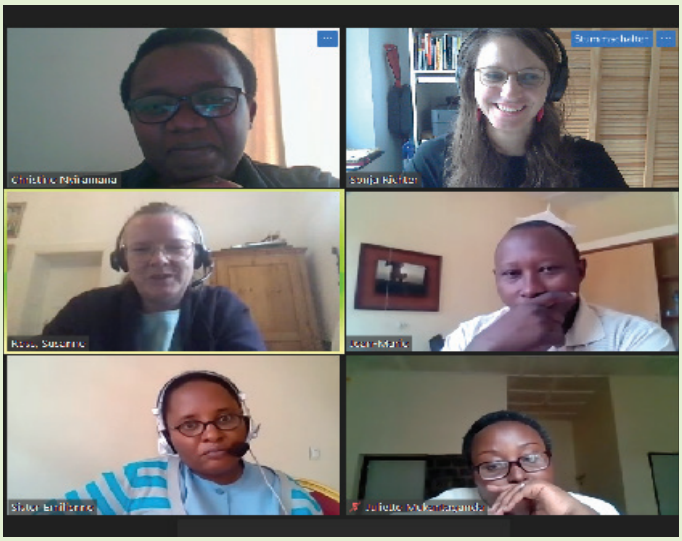
Teaching the IMPEQ students has always been both: a special challenge and a unique learning experience for each side, the students and us teachers. But in 2020 a new challenge hit this already very complex master programme: The Corona-Virus. And although it got very clear that Corona was in the beginning more a problem in the Western-European world, we realized very soon that this will have an enormous impact on how we teach in our programme. I asked myself: How would this work? Teaching via Internet students from the most remote places in Subsahara-Africa? Without the diverse and intercultural learning group setting? Without all the side-learning-effects that happen during lunch time, in coffee breaks and in the evening events?

FIRST TIME VIRTUAL TEACHING

After an intensive preparation phase the kick-off meeting with all students and mentors was very exciting: Suddenly two worlds got melted together: My African-mentor-student-teaching-world and my secure, cosy home in romantic Bamberg have become ONE when I greeted more than 40 students and fellow-mentors from all over the world, sitting at my desk in my apartment.

For me it was the first time to teach in such an international and virtual setting. I was very amazed about how good the technical part worked and they did a very good job, how prepared and committed the students were with online learning and they also did a great job! The decision to bring most of them together in their respective countries in small groups – and most of them even stayed in the same hotel or guesthouse together in their home-country during the online-phase helped a lot. So we had many small "IMPEQ-learning groups" that were (and still are) connected via Whatsapp to the teaching staff and the technical support staff.

The new "method" of "WhatsApp-Teaching" was probably one of the best decisions. While University of Bamberg staff usually is not even allowed to save data on clouds like Onedrive or Dropbox, we shall please not ask about protection of privacy data using the messenger tool "WhatsApp". But: particular situations need particular solutions, and as WhatsApp is the messenger that is used all over Africa with only very little data usage (in many countries even for free), we decided to communicate via that tool and of course we did not share sensible data via WhatsApp.



CONNECTING TO THE STUDENTS

My impression is that it definitely made us feel "more together". And it facilitated communication so much due to reduced amount of e-mails everyone get. Of course, at some point we also start to share some private information with each other. This happens quickly when you get notified through the whole day on the mobile phone. But this stays always the decision of each student or teacher. For me personally, accompanying the students on their way to their Master´s Degree is only possible if you also have a good connection on the individual level. So I do take into account the whole context of their respective life situation. And this, amazingly, worked as well during online teaching in times of Corona. Anyhow, even if online-teaching worked quite fine, I am looking very much forward to the summer of 2021 when we hopefully meet all the students live and in person!



By Sonja Richter from Bamberg

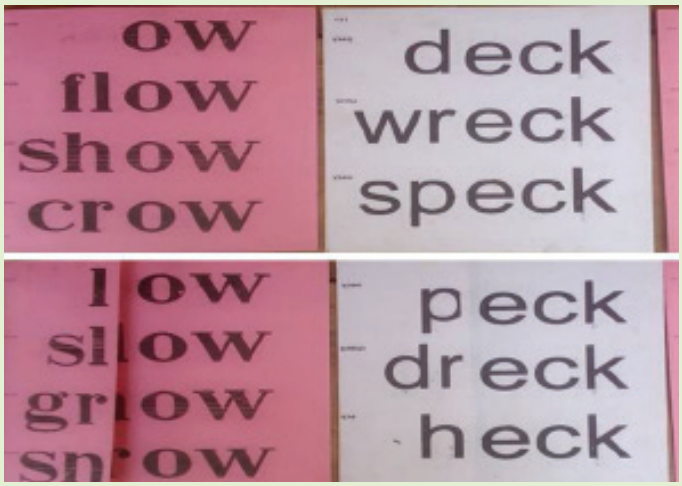
EDUCATING KIDS DURING PROLONGED CRISIS: A SUCCESS STORY FROM CAMEROON

Close to four years (since 2016 when the crisis escalated) schooling has been interrupted by teacher trade union strikes, civil strife and the current armed conflict that has closed down virtually all schools in the entire "Anglophone" area in Cameroon. As a seasoned and dynamic secondary school science teacher and teacher trainer with the In-service Training Program (ISTP) Cameroon, Banboye shared his experiences during this turmoil. His kids of early primary education ages have not been able to attend regular school this period, but using his experience and dynamism he devised a free-flowing approach to educate his kids and which by his assessment, has been very successful in instilling quality education them. At the moment, the kids are nine and seven years old. By wishing to share his experience below, he hopes that through this newsletter, persons in similar situations may find aspects of it useful to their kids and communities at large. His key concerns have been to impart literacy, maths, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and creativity skills to the kids.

WHAT TO DO WITH KIDS?

By 2017 when the crisis degenerated to a violently armed conflict, my elderly kid (now 9) was in his second year of early childhood education and the younger (now 7), was in his first year of nursery education. Though the elder could read to some degree, the younger couldn't. At first, I simply allowed them just doing what they wished in the house, hoping that the political tensions were to go down very soon for to return so they could attend school, but as the weeks of lockdowns turn to months, and now years with no hope of better days in sight, I had to get into deeper reflections, observations and experimentation.

Fortunately for them, there is a wide variety of books in my house together with a few ICT tools. I had been keen to some level, as the activities of the ISTP-run Early Childhood Education Centre in Bamenda where they were schooling. My first step was to observe their daily routines in the house to see what they loved doing most of the time. In less than a week, I noticed that they had been introduced



Flash cards with words of first letters replaced to enhance the kids' reading competences.

to "Ms Paint" while at school, the younger cherished playing with toy cars and they both loved doing things on the computer and phone more than watching television. Their familiarity with books and papers in the house had implicitly made them cautious and careful handlers and users of anything related to schooling and learning. These were their needs: to be able to read, write, count, calculate, design, draw and do art works that can be life-saving during hard times. I evaluated what I had at their disposal and decided as follows:

UNDERSTANDING THEIR NEEDS

First, I allowed then free access to all the ICT tools at home, including my personal computer. Curiously, my younger kid preferred using my computer than theirs, and when asked why, he said mine was easier to manipulate, the screen was larger, the mouse was more flexible and that there was the 3D option in paint. After cautioning them on careful handling of files both on hard paper and on the computer, I allowed them to be doing just anything of their choice. I equally provided enough papers, pens, pencils and colour pencils for any drawings of their choice, but that no sheet was to be wasted. With these, they became very busy

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IMPEQ NEWSLETTER
Educational Quality in Developing Countries

EDUCATING KIDS DURING PROLONGED CRISIS: A SUCCESS STORY FROM CAMEROON

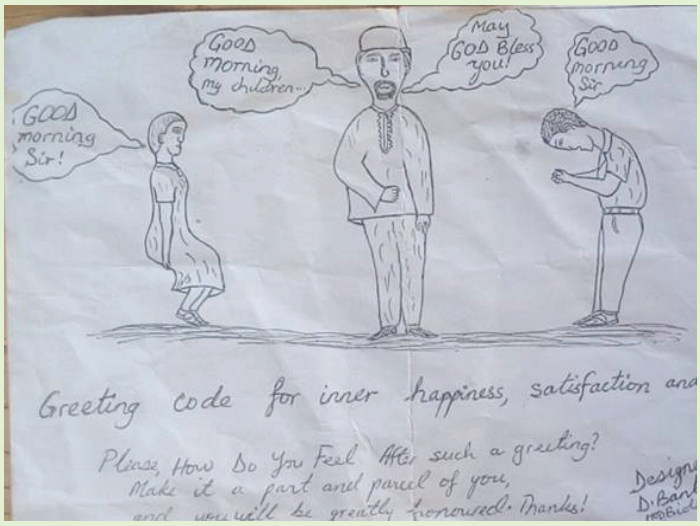
drawing trees, cars, birds, and so forth and colouring variously. I encouraged them that every week, they should each cut any of their best drawings with a scissors to be pasted on the wall in my room. After a couple of weeks with this and no stress, I realized they had run out of options within their scope as they started asking me every morning "What should I do on my book, on the computer today?" They now needed my input, at their request and they were always excited to do the task to the best of their abilities. This was how I started taking them to higher levels, first by asking them to always write down names of all their drawings both on paper and on the screen.

FLASHCARDS FOR LEARNING

After trying for a couple of days, they complained of inability to spell the names, but that they could identify the articles physically and on picture, and that they had lost almost everything they drew on the computers. Now they were faced with two tasks naming and saving documents. Their manipulation of both finger and external mouse had increased very significantly together with drawing speed. To this aspect, I used flash cards, first with single numbers, double, triple and even quadruple numbers, then I started mixing them with letters. Although I supplied much input at this early stage, I latter bought cardboards and bold markers for them to write both letter and numbers and cut so that each should have at least 100 flash cards of their choice, both capital and lower cases in their envelopes. This took them a very short time and they were very anxious to read to me and amongst them. With this, they had learnt to write, read and cut a wide variety of numbers and letters, but couldn't construct names of their drawings.

LET THEM TRY TO DEVELOP SKILLS

I had always allowed them to explore every level to the full and I come in when they present their difficulties. With very little input in vowel sounds of single, double and triple letters, I was amused they picked on their own and were able to write to near perfection the names of their drawings as long as they could pronounce them. From here, they learnt to read commands on the computer and this is how they



An old sketch depicting explicit traditional respect expected from expected from the young by the elders.

developed skills to draw, label, create folders and save their things. I requested them to always prove authorship of anything by writing their names on the top left of the sheet, together with the date and this took then very little time to master. As they progressed with time, I kept coming in with flash cards bearing longer and longer words. Though they loved repetition of one level, I realized that when this was used, they would be reading from their memory rather than the card itself. To overcome memorizing and improve their reading skills, flash cards of more complex and even double words were introduced.

DRAW AND NAME

To my amusement, I noticed they started reading from the TV screen and at times arguing amongst themselves. Fantastic to me! When I noticed they already saved many named drawings in their folders and could retrieve and even edit at will, I now requested them to start naming the parts of the drawings using arrows. They could easily explore these from the many biology books at their disposal. The results have been awesome. At one point, the youngest expressed his wish to also read bible texts during our devotions, as he could search and open any given bibli-

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EDUCATING KIDS DURING PROLONGED CRISIS: A SUCCESS STORY FROM CAMEROON



(From L to R) Father shaving his kids, the kids shave each other to shaving their father. Equality and raising of self-esteem, as the youngest looks on curiously to be given a chance to shave.

cal reference. Though I didn't limit them to the scheduled daily readings, I noticed that he loved reading only pages that had drawings. We now decided to draw a reading rota for bible texts. Though most often reading by 'counting', everybody was discouraged from laughing at each other's errors, and as a motivation, their texts were never re-read by anyone after they read. At the moment, their reading abilities have significantly improved and they can even pray inspirational prayers during devotions.

NO PRESSURE BUT FUN

The kids are aware of the happenings in their environment; they see heavily armed soldiers and hear sounds of gunshots and heavy explosives on a daily basis. What makes them conscious of time is Sundays, when they go to church, or read time and days from the computer screen. With their yearning to go to school, I bought a variety of elementary books with mathematical and English exercises in which they have been learning calculations. Here, I ensure that I go through the worked exercises and give feedback anytime they present such to me, but I do not coerce them to work under pressure. At the moment, they are able to do basic arithmetic of addition, subtraction, division and some multiplication. They are able to identify and manage money in terms of basic purchases and calculating balances. I gave this copy to my kids and asked them to paste on the wall of our sitting room. Without saying a word, they started practicing this method of greetings and it has become an integral part of their behaviour. Nobody ever read the message to them, but with time, they learn to read with ease.

REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

Of recent (January to early March 2020), they had an opportunity to attend a regular school and were enrolled into primaries 1 and 3. Though the elder fitted squarely in the primary level, the younger proved above primary one, based on their performances. Feedback from his class teacher indicates that he can read virtually everything written on the board very good and active during group work and ability to teach his mates in several aspects. As schools closed (mid-march) with the onset of Covid-19, together with the worsening state of the political crisis, we are back in the house.

TIME FOR LIFE NEEDS

Before the crisis, two basic craft skills (haircut and shoe mending) had been introduced to all my children. Their elderly brothers are already good at shaving each other, so, I decided to enable the younger ones to the haircut.

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EDUCATING KIDS DURING PROLONGED CRISIS: A SUCCESS STORY FROM CAMEROON

There was rejection by the bigger ones of the younger ones shaving their hair. To overcome this, I decided that they shall henceforth be the ones to shave my hair. This has been going on for a while now, and any errors observed are rather discussed and laughed at. Former page photos show my 9 years old kid shaving my hair, though he barely stretches his head to get a clearer view of the head he is shaving. I have provided suitable and enough shaving and shoe-mending materials in the house and they have all become very fun of these.

In perspective, if kids are provided with suitable materials and aided to work at their pace, without restricting their play time, but rather incorporate learning activities into their playtime, a lot of implicit learning will go on in the kids. Kids love being recognized and appreciated.

As such, regular, constructive feedback and feed forward are required for their continuous motivation to work and learn with enthusiasm. If the crisis continues to prolong, and I succeed to hire a home teacher for them, I believe they will easily move to higher levels whenever schools shall resume. As they keep asking the meanings of the words on the flash cards, I hope to install a simple dictionary in their computer and direct them how to search for words and their meanings in the nearest future. Shaving and shoe mending are necessary trades with many professionals making their lives from, so no one knows tomorrow. In this times of uncertanity, nothing should be minimized.



By Fred Banboye from Cameroon

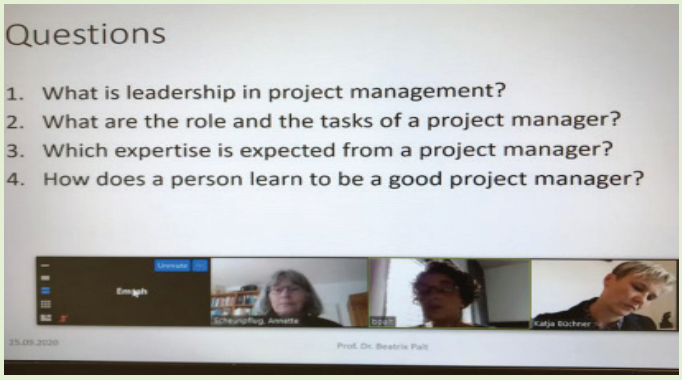
Learning to manage projects effectively: a presentation by Prof. Beatrix Palt

The participants of the PhD Learning Community and IMPEQ graduates had a chance to participate in an online presentation by Prof. Dr. Beatrix Palt from FOM University of Applied Sciences for Economy and Management, Hamburg. The presentation was about her work on the qualitative analyses of the discourse of team leaders in various projects. Palt made qualitative interviews with the projects runners including team members, and analyzed their decision making process and how they make assessments.

The presentation offered rich data about analyzing qualitative interviews and hints for forming the typologies of the interviewees. She underlined that whenever there is a question mark, the researcher always has to apply to the interviews and the discourse analysis. The language and communication style of the interviewees always suggest hints and clues for the progress of the research.

Prof. Beatrix Palt's online presentation is covered by many IMPEQ graduates including the PhD Learning Community.





CAREER PATH AFTER IMPEQ

IMPEQ OFFERS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND A PHD OPPORTUNITY

Like many of the other IMPEQ graduates, Roger Muhindo Binzaka's life changed after obtaining his Master's degree. His main difficulty during the programme was understanding English education as his daily language in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is French, but he managed the language problem and succeeded in his work. Moreover since the programme, he has more responsibilities at his job at the university.
After his Master's degree, he started his PhD at University of Burundi.

How did you hear about the IMPEQ?
I heard about IMPEQ from two sources. The first time it was my colleague Semerita Kavira Kamundu who was in full training in IMPEQ I. And the second time through the Rector of the Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs, Democratic Republic of Congo (ULPGL), who at the time was a member of the Selection Committee/ Program Steering Committee.
Both raised awareness among the staff of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences about the training opportunity that the program offered about educational quality. They encouraged us to take a chance by collecting all the necessary documents in preparation for the IMPEQ II next call training.

How was the application process?
The difficulty was at a personal level because I didn't know how to make up a file for admission to a training program. But with the support of colleagues who had already gone through this process, I was able to overcome this difficulty.

What was your working colleagues and family members' reactions to you when they learn that you start a master's degree?
Colleagues found this as an opportunity to progress scientifically in European universities and to see us improve the quality of teaching in my university which is always striving for excellence.



After his Master's degree, Roger Binzaka's responsibilities at the university where he is working changed. Now he is in charge of coordination and execution of a Bread for the World project.

At the family level, I read the reactions at two levels: on the one hand, those who did not study saw this as an opportunity to come to Europe and stay there in order to make money, and on the other hand, those who studied saw this training as an open door for the Phd, which would lead to the degree of Professor.

Were there any difficulties during the programme?
During the training, my biggest difficulty was the language of instruction. My level of English was indeed insufficient and I had problems adapting to the rhythm of the lessons which were all in English. But, with the support received from the teachers and in the mentoring sessions, I was able to progress and finish the program with marks that allowed me to enrol in Phd.

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CAREER PATH AFTER IMPEQ

IMPEQ OFFERS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND A PHD OPPORTUNITY



Roger Binzaka is teaching at ULPGL and also running projects about the math teaching quality in DRC. He is also writing his PhD thesis at the University of Burundi.

Were there any changes in your work since IMPEQ?
Indeed, I was given the responsibility of coordinating the execution of the three-year project funded by Bread For the World at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. I was subsequently appointed member of the Steering Committee of the ULPGL Triennial Plan and principal secretary of the faculty journal. Afterwards, I was charged to assist Semerita Kavira Kamundu in the work of supervision and assistance of the German trainers in university didactics.

What is the biggest the difference in your life after IMPEQ?
The biggest difference in my life after IMPEQ is in my knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills. In terms of knowledge, IMPEQ increased my intellectual baggage in educational quality and improved really my scientific research level in general and specifically on qualitative research and intervention research. I had never dared to do intervention/action research other than to talk about it theoretically.
But, with IMPEQ, not only did I acquire this but I also realized it through my dissertation. There is no need to point out the theoretical and practical achievements on the level of the educational quality and particularly on the quality teaching.
In terms of life skills, IMPEQ taught me how to communicate with others throughout the training. This positively influenced my behaviour at work and in my family.

Are you still in contact with your colleagues from IMPEQ?
I keep in touch with my colleagues at IMPEQ. This can be seen through the joint research projects that we carry out in our country. The latest joint project with IMPEQ colleagues was on the quality of mathematics teaching in basic education in North Kivu. That project was funded by the "Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie". The report was judged with being of very high quality by the evaluators of this organization.

How is your PhD going? Do you have other occupations other than PhD?
I am currently enrolled in the doctoral school of the University of Burundi where I am working on my thesis project. I am also involved in teaching at the ULPGL.
I had just finalized the research report on the quality of mathematics teaching in basic education in North Kivu. Now we are working to set up a didactic center at ULPGL with the support of Bread For The World.
During the period of confinement, I was able to set up my website for distance learning as part of the teaching practices at Lagos State University in partnership with the University of Burundi.
Colleagues can check this web site for further information. https://constructiondestests.com

IMPEQ NEWSLETTER
Educational Quality in Develeoping Countries

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH SUDAN

The news of COVID in South Sudan was received in March 2020 with mixed feeling whether it is a reality or a fantasy. The country is experiencing continued political and inter-communal conflicts beside the increasing hunger, and other diseases like malaria, etc. That claims lives in great numbers daily across country.

On 5 April 2020 the Ministry of Health of South Sudan has reported the country's first case of COVID-19. On 13 April, South Sudan suspended flights and public transportation between the other countries and Juba including the internal flights. Despite the pandemic threats and increasing cases, South Sudan reopened on 7 May by the curfew schedule to range from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. For instance, Boda Bodas (commercial motorcycles transport) were allowed to have one passenger and rickshaws (motorcycles with three wheels) on condition of passengers to wear face masks, and shops were allowed to reopen with a maximum of five occupants at a time. On 12 May, airports were reopened for local, regional, and international flights.

On 14 May, South Sudan reported its first death from COVID-19. The country with an estimated population of 14 million people (about1.5 million in refugees and 2.8 million displaced) has only 4 ventilators and rely largely on national and international partner organizations for its interventions.



South Sudan hosts 1.5 million refugees and many Sudaneese are living in camps located in neighboring countries during the pandemic.

MOBILE TESTING LABORATORY

As of November 2020, the figures from the national Ministry of Health indicate that the number of coronavirus infections in the country passed the 15.000 mark. This number include almost 6 thousand active cases, 9 thousand recoveries and 1.175 deaths. According to the ministry of health active case management are monitored both for those under quarantine in health facilities and for those who are quarantine in their homes. The monitoring of cases at homes proofed challenging due to inadequate number of personnel and resources. A mobile testing laboratory is expected to be launched soonest in order to extend testing to other major towns in the country.

INTERVENTION TO THE PANDEMIC

South Sudan government established a COVID-19 management structure with a High-Level Task Force (HLTF) chaired by the First Vice President soon after the declaration of the pandemic. Thereafter, on 18 May, First Vice President announced himself and his wife and most of the taskforce members and the government cabinet tested positive. This led the first committee dissolved by the president and another committee is formed under the leadership of the Vice President. Due to further technical challenges the new chair formed an advisory board to support the national taskforce in the fight against the

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IMPEQ NEWSLETTER
Educational Quality in Develeoping Countries

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH SUDAN



Episcopal Church of South Sudan made a call to the worshippers to stay at home and take necessary precautions for further infection.

Arcbishop Justin Badi Arama



COVID-19 and it is leading the country to date.

Religiously, the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) issued a pastoral statement on COVID-19. The SSCC announced the formation of an ecumenical task force with the purpose of "complementing the efforts of the country's National High-level Taskforce on COVID-19".

CHURCH CALLS FOR NECESSARY ACTION

The Church recognizes that COVID-19 is a disease caused by corona virus and not only a global pandemic but a reality in South Sudan and made a call to make the necessary action to combat this pandemic because our cultural practices and the current context is difficult and we have to bear with it.

In the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) the worshippers are to stay away from churches and pray at home and the church leaders are to participate in the various taskforces.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The role of women in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan is instrumental because of home to home awareness raising and training of other mothers union members in order to increase the coverage on protection message of COVID-19 on voluntary basis. It is a task most of women could do voluntarily and in love as they have the culture of home to home prayer meetings.

Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) has eleven departments and ECSS Education is one of them and it's a Strategic Partner Organisation (SPO) that has three Partner Organisations (POs) involved in the field of disability and inclusion with the support of Liliane Foundation (LF) and these are: Community organisation for

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EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH SUDAN

Empowerment & Development (COED), Change Agency Organization (CAO) & Christian Agenda for Development (CAD). The three POs cover only a smaller part of the country and in collaboration with the entire Episcopal Church of South Sudan & ecumenical task force (South Sudan Council of Churches-SSCC) it presents the position of the church as wider network in the fight of COVID-19 in partnership with the national task force. The Partner Organisations besides their activities are engaged in the fight against COVID-19 by:

*Providing home to home and smaller groups awareness arising. For example, COED CBR supervisor is doing awareness rising to a family that has three clients with paraplegia and another with savour case of epilepsy.

*Provision of face masks to parents and children with disabilities.

*Provision of other basic needs.

CONFLICTS, COVID-19 AND PEACE

The increase of incidents of inter-communal violence, cattle raiding, revenge killings and armed violence throughout South Sudan have had a negative impact on the protection of civilians with threats to life, abductions, GBV and displacement. The ability for those newly displaced to access health and WASH facilities are limited and observing physical distancing is difficult. This has also hindered humanitarian interventions and COVID-19 preparedness and response leaving some areas inaccessible.

Conflict along the border of the Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo has driven new arrivals of people seeking refuge in South Sudan. Working with the Commission for Refugee Affairs, access to refugees has been maintained with COVID-19 precautionary measures taken.

The role of the church and its partner organization would be able to contribute in the fight against COVID alongside the national task force and humanitarian organizations in the same approach it did for the referendum that led to the independence of South Sudan.





Since women have the most important role for the fight with COVID-19 because of their position in society, ECSS informed women to combat this pandemic.

Despite the voluntary efforts basic resources are still relevant to improve and speed the intervention.

Sustainable peace is paramount to mitigate the spread of any diseases. For example, the photo at the side showed internal displaced people who escaped attacks in June 2020 from the Payams of Lainya, Mukaya and Kupera (Lainay Conty) to Yei County. In this situation they think of food, water and various basic needs other than control of COVID-19, malaria, etc.

By Lubari Stephen Elioba, Episcopal Church South Sudan

IMPEQ NEWSLETTER
Educational Quality in Develeoping Countries

ALUMNI IMPACT:

E-MENTORING PROGRAM IN CAMEROON

The United States (US) Embassy Yaoundé Cameroon launched its first e-mentoring program entitled: The Alumni Impact E-Mentoring Program on July 17, 2020. When the program was advertised, 175 persons applied for the position of mentors and 50 were selected: 28 females and 22 males. Meanwhile 3617 applied to be mentees and 150 were selected: 69 females and 81 males.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The Alumni Impact E-Mentoring Program is a virtual mentoring program. It has two main objectives; first to create an opportunity for Cameroon US Exchange Program beneficiaries to give back to their home country by sharing the gained knowledge and the expertise in diverse fields. Second, to contribute in raising up a generation of youth in Cameroon who are independent by equipping them with the skills, knowledge, confidence, professional contacts, and networks needed to contribute to their success.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to observe the necessary restrictions, the mentoring program was online and made use of electronic platforms and tools like WhatsApp, phone calls, video conferences, emails, text messages, and other technologies.

WHAT DO MENTORS AND MENTEES DO?

The mentor is an Alumna of the US exchange program: the Cameroon Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement program (CAFTAL) of the 2014 spring cohort, hosted by the Winthrop University, South Carolina, USA. In line with my shared professional interests and personal compatibility, I e-mentored three high profile young women engaged in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). My goal was to provide individual support to enable mentees attain their set objectives.

The mentees: Blanche, aged 23, is a laboratory technician by profession, and obtained a professional bachelor's degree in Biomedical Sciences. She is currently seeking admission to pursue a master's degree in Molecular Biology and Bioinformatics at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Kenya. Her goals were to improve on her self-confidence, increase her professional network and enhance her leadership skills.



Because of COVID-19, the mentoring program that should normally be done face to face had to be made online.

Solange, 28 years old, is a PhD researcher in Applied Ecology and Wildlife Management, passionate about animals, especially birds. Her research is on the diversity and distribution of birds at Mount Cameroon. Her goals were to improve on her self-confidence, social life, public presentation, and teaching competences.

Rita, aged 30, holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and is presently at the job market. Improving on her self-esteem, developing strategies of exposure, and securing the job market were vital objectives for her.

Having individual goals in life, the three young women were passionate to improve on their professional and personal life in order to reach their full potential and achieve their life aspirations.

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ALUMNI IMPACT:

E-MENTORING PROGRAM IN CAMEROON



WORKING WITH THE MENTEES

At the beginning of the mentoring program, a mentor-mentee mentoring agreement, was established and signed by both parties. In this agreement each mentee and the mentor established the following:

*Three goals to achieve within the one month
*Activities to be carried out to attain the goals
*When and how regular to meet in order to work for at least 10 hours within the mentoring period of one month
*Suitable communication platforms
*An understanding of confidentiality of information and mutual respect for each other

SHARING AND DISCUSSIONS

In the mentoring process, communication was both individual and collective. Emails, WhatsApp messaging and calls, Skype and Zoom platforms were utilized. Depending on individual goals, tasks were prepared in advance, and literature or links provided for further reading and additional research. Zoom and Skype platforms were used for group sharing and discussions wherein the mentor provided support, guidance and counseling geared towards offering constructive feedback, encouragement and seeking solutions to mentees' challenges. Templates, contacts, and other practical items that would help the mentees move forward to the realization of their goals were also provided. At the end of the e-mentoring program, the evaluation of the overall process showed 80% success and the attainment of each mentee's set goals revealed 80% for Solange, 80% for Blanche and 85% for Rita, with each of them meeting the minimum of 10 hours target. The young women were overwhelmed with their achievement and promised to continue in the network and to seek counsel when need arises even after the official mentoring period.

CHALLENGES OF THE PROGRAM

Poor internet connectivity, possibility of having everyone on board for group sharing and rescheduling planned meetings due to traffic or other commitments were evident challenges. These challenges were surmounted due to flexibility and proactivity.

From science, mentoring is widely acknowledged as an effective method for professional and personal development. The IMPEQ face to face and online mentoring program is therefore crucial for personal and professional growth as IMPEQ students experience individual challenges ranging from language to workload and academic issues. In this light the mentor-mentee relationship becomes important for the realization of set goals.

BUILDING TRUST-RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER

Thus, in the mentoring process, building trust and respect for one another, being innovative and creative, establishing an action plan that includes mentoring goals, meeting schedule, expectations and measurable steps that can be evaluated at the end of the mentoring process become pertinent. Furthermore, planning each session with specific topics and activities, active participation, giving and receiving feedback and staying positive reassures the relationship. Meanwhile the mentor's role remains that of stimulating thinking, and letting the mentees gain ownership of finding solutions to their problems and also maintaining a professional relationship.

CONCLUSION

The Alumni Impact e-Mentoring Program was a sharing and learning space for me, while contributing to the professional and personal development of Cameroonian youths. I utilized the opportunity to demonstrate expertise, develop further my coaching, counselling, and leadership skills and also to network. On the whole it was enriching and impactful.



By Mercy Lemyuy Fai from Cameroon

CHURCH ACTORS STRIVING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN AFRICA

The Joint Conference Church and Development (GKKE), an ecumenical, German Protestant-Catholic working group on development policy, organized an online "expert talk" focused on the opportunities and challenges of the engagement of churches in just peace, the cases of Zimbabwe and Nigeria. It brought together experts from Germany, Zimbabwe and Nigeria. During the meeting, Frederick Njobati presented the main findings from the desk study he carried out on 'Just Peace' in Nigeria as commissioned by GKKE.

Church actors, just peace and education in the Middle Belt region, Nigeria - main findings from a desk study

The study was contextualized in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. This region is characterized by ethno-religious conflicts where children and youths are very involved as both actors and victims. The study had as objectives to reflect the situation regarding education and its contribution to just peace in the work of Christian churches in Middle Belt region and and contribute to deepen the understanding of education in fostering a culture of peace and justice.

Study design

The study was exploratory and thus used a qualitative approach. As COVID-19 could not permit the visit to Nigeria, the survey was tailored to a desk study with data collected through online semi-structured interviews. A total of 11 interviews were conducted with stakeholders from Nigerian Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches as well as representatives of Bread for the World and MISEREOR.

The relationship between peace and justice

The arguments on just peace are shaped by different world views, that make the global understanding of the subject complex. There is therefore the need to first clarify this. The reflections about the link between justice and peace centre on the understanding that there cannot be peace without justice. In spite of its complexity, "Just Peace" addresses dimensions of social, economic, political and ecological justice. In the framework of the Christian church, the spiritual dimension of just peace is viewed as an essential element for transformation. As the global understanding of just peace is driven by sustainable development, there is the necessity to consider inclusivity, human dignity and human rights development in the conversation on just peace. It therefore means that just peace has a wider picture and extends to the care for creation. This argumentation on just peace suggests that it is a process driven by questions regarding the increasing inequality gaps and challenges on nature protection in a fast changing globalized society.

Insights

The following main findings came out based on the materials from the study:

*The representatives of Christian churches and Christian organizations in the middle belt region of Nigeria are able to speak about justice and peace, take action and register successes. These successes are mostly registered in localized levels.

*Christian churches and church organizations show a varied understanding of just peace and not all the ideas are adequate for the global understanding of just peace. Organizations connected to Bread for the World and MISEREOR show a reflected and broader understanding of just peace.

*The quality of peace education is limited to the basic content of peace. Process dimensions (participatory and activating methods) and conditions of learning such as school climate and constructive feedback are not observed in the material of the study.

*Quality education as a landscape to just peace is not visible but has the potential to develop. Dealing with religious plurality is a challenge.

*Recurring religious-based conflicts are a challenge to the Christian churches and church organizations regarding the question of just peace and inter-faith dialogue.

These findings cannot be generalized as the study was mainly qualitative.

Conclusion

Quality education and training in just peace is a necessity for Christian churches in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria

I end with the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."



By Frederick Njobati from Bamberg

IMPEQ NEWSLETTER
Educational Quality in Develeoping Countries

IMPEQ GRADUATES AND CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE:

UPCOMING ARTICLE ON GLOBAL LEARNING



Member schools of GPENreformation run various projects in order to promote peace and values.

In the perspective of IMPEQ overall orientation about impacting educational systems in order to improve educational quality, including research two graduates: Christine Nyiramana and Emanuel Niyibizi did an empirical research on "Development Education and Global Learning: Lessons from educationists in the Global South-members of GPENreformation". The article will soon be published in 4'20 ZEP (Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik).

46 THOUSAND SCHOOLS

The celebration of the 500th Protestant Reformation Jubilee in 2017 has boosted the creation of an international network of Protestant institutions, named GPENreformation (Global Pedagogical Network Reformation). Currently, the forum brings together more than 46,000 schools and universities from all over the world of which more than half of the members are from the African continent. These institutions join in different educational activities which allow the sharing of experiences through, for instance, short or long-term global learning projects.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

The article explores lessons learnt by Protestant educationists in the Global South from GPENreformation through a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and thematic content analysis. The findings indicate that participants find the network as an open space and dialogue among schools in the Global South and North. Moreover, the network has contributed to the change of perspectives from a closer nationalism to more open international perspectives. The GPENreformation has likewise engineered the regional networks contributing to actions and reflections of peace and values in the Global South. However, inequality of school resources and asymmetric understanding of partnerships might be reflected in the GPENreformation.

By Christine Nyiramana from Rwanda



IMPEQ NEWSLETTER
Educational Quality in Develeoping Countries

A HOPE FOR THE COMMUNITY: REOPENING OF SCHOOLS IN RWANDA

COVID-19 - a virus has incurred a lot of damages. In terms of education, the pandemic led to closure of schools in different parts of the world. Some teachers especially working private schools have lost their jobs. Mid-March 2020 the first cases of Covid-19 were identified in Rwanda. Since then, a number of measures were imposed including but not limited to closure of schools and universities and then lockdown. In this regards, preventive measures including for instance obligatory wearing of masks in public places, washing hands, social distances, and closing of high risk areas (like churches and entertainment places) were put in place. With regard to schools and universities, the initial plan was first to put in place measures to contain this novel virus, as the whole world was hoping it would end soon. It was expected that schools would soon be reopened. However, it delayed due to the number of active cases that has kept increasing.

SCHOOLS OPENED AGAIN

Due to joint efforts of the government of Rwanda in collaboration with the population, solid measures to control the spread of COVID-19 have been taken, and services were gradually reopened in accordance to their urgency and threat they posed. In October 2020, reopening of schools were also announced but upon complying with Covid-19 preventive measures. This began with some universities\higher learning institutions that had met the conditions set by the Ministry of Health to minimize the spread of the virus. The reopening was done gradually, and universities are encouraged to combine on campus learning with online learning in order to combat the spreading of COVID-19.

YOUNGER STUDENTS STAY AT HOME

The reopening of secondary and primary levels followed in November 2020 but again in different phases. As of the moment, children are back to their respective schools except those in the first three classes of primary and nursery levels who are still at home because they are at higher risks for COVID-19. Time for them to go back to schools is not yet known. Parents are encouraged to continue helping their children to follow online classes provided by the Ministry of Education on different platforms like radio, and television. Unfortunately, some children especially in remote areas and from poor families have not been benefiting from learning via such platforms.



After the lockdown school openings, school managements are giving importance to the personal cleaning of the students.

STRICT MEASURES TAKEN

The reopening of schools was accompanied by strict measures to contain the spread of the pandemic. These included establishing places for washing hands, availability of non-contact thermometers as well as obligatory wearing of face masks by both students and teachers. Before COVID-19, overpopulated classrooms could be observed in some schools. With respect to the COVID-19 preventive measures, new classrooms and schools are now being constructed, and new teachers have been recruited. As per the Ministry of Education, this will also contribute to the improvement of education quality as teachers will have less number of pupils per classrooms compared to the situation before covid-19. Given that schools have been closed for long time, some challenges are observed. Some learners and teachers did not return to schools; and some girls have been victims to early pregnancies.

To address these challenges, different stakeholders including churches are collaborating with the Ministry of Education for having every child back to schools.



By Emmanuel Niyibizi from Rwanda

IMPEQ UPDATES AND ACTIVITIES

IMPEQ Innovation Fund

The IMPEQ Innovation Fund is part of IMPEQ's efforts to strengthen the network's alumni work to further enhance deep learning on quality education. The goal is to harness the competences acquired by IMPEQ graduates to further stabilize the network of experts and to enhance collaboration among graduates within single countries and also across. For the first round, we received 28 applications from which 19 projects were selected for funding. Those projects address a wide range of issues including further enhancing educational leadership, training teachers on cognitive activation and constructive feedback contributing to more productive student-teacher relations, and networking activities among IMPEQ alumni. Out of the 28 applications submitted to the Innovation Fund, 19 projects were selected. To learn more about the projects, please visit our website: https://www.uni-bamberg.de/ma-educationalquality/research-and-collaborations/



Call for Applications for IMPEQ V (2021-2023)

The IMPEQ Team is pleased to inform you that the program is now open to receive applications for the 5th cohort, which will begin in September 2021 once funding has been secured. Please share the call for applications within your networks. For more information on application process and required documents, please visit our website: https://www.uni-bamberg.de/ma-educational-quality/admission-and-application/



Changes on the IMPEQ Website

The IMPEQ Team with support from Anne-Christine Banze, who is a doctoral researcher at the Chair of Foundations in Education at the University of Bamberg, has recently made some changes to the IMPEQ website. In addition to general information about the IMPEQ program, the steering committee as well as admission and application, you can now also find information about and pictures of our current IMPEQ IV students (2019-2021). You can also find a list of all IMPEQ alumni from the first three cohorts (2013-2015, 2015-2017, and 2019-2019) under the rubric "Students" (https://www.uni-bamberg.de/ma-educationalquality/students/). Furthermore, we now also list the topics, regions, and researchers' names of all IMPEQ Master theses under the rubric of "Research and Collaboration".

Under the same rubric we also wish to provide information about ongoing research projects and IMPEQ alumni collaborations (https://www.uni-bamberg.de/ma-educationalquality/research-and-collaborations/). If you would like to post your current activities on the IMPEQ website, please contact us under edqual.allg-paed@uni-bamberg.de. We are very much looking forward to learning about your activities.

Of course, you can also find this current and past newsletter under the rubric of "News" (https://www.uni-bamberg.de/ma-educationalquality/news/).



By Dr. Susanne Ress from Bamberg

IMPRINT

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