

MASTER  
EDUCATIONAL  
QUALITY  
IN DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES



# IMPEQ NEWSLETTER

SPRING Issue May 2025

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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,**

A little later than usual you are receiving a new newsletter with some of IMPEQ's activities over the last few months. IMPEQ VI continues. We are preparing IMPEQ VII, which will be a milestone in the history of IMPEQ: the Masters' programme will move from the University of Bamberg to the Protestant Universities in Goma in the DRC, in Mbo in Cameroon and in Huye in Rwanda. This will be an important development for the future and will require a great deal of work from all those involved. We are grateful that our partner, Bread for the World, is strongly supporting this transition. We will hand over the programme to our partners in October 2025 and close the programme in Bamberg at that time.

We are happy and proud of the scientific achievements - in publications, PhDs and community engagement. I hope you enjoy reading about them.

In recent weeks, there have been structural reforms and developments at the Evangelical University of Rwanda. We thank from the bottom of our heart Dr Christine Nyiramana for the impact she has made at IMPEQ over the last few years and wish her well in her future career as a Member of Parliament in Rwanda. Dr Charles Gahutu has implemented MEQUAM, the Rwandan version of IMPEQ, with great care and professionalism. At the same time, he has also been responsible for IMPEQ, which has been a huge workload. He has now been appointed as the new Dean of the Faculty of Education in Huye. We are very grateful for this dedicated work. We are delighted that Dr Emmanuel Niyibizi, the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Education at PUR in Huye, will now take on this responsibility. We look forward to working together in this new capacity.

**Annette Scheunpflug  
Bamberg, May 2025**



## IMPEQ VI MEETS ONLINE READY FOR FINAL SEMESTER



IMPEQ VI students have completed the third semester. After this online learning period, the students are now ready for the final meeting in Rwanda. The students will graduate after presenting their thesis. This second and final online meeting was productive and rewarding.

The educational landscape has in recent years witnessed a significant shift towards online learning, accelerated by technological advancements and global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic. However, both face-to-face and online lessons have their merits and demerits. The organisational prowess of the IMPEQ coordination team blended online and face-to-face teaching, giving the students the opportunity to experience and make maximum benefits of both in their learning journey.

### POSITIVE LEARNING CLIMATE

Moreover, organisation and provision of teaching and learning materials have often well been anticipated by the team of coordinators especially for online sessions considering the challenges that may arise with technology and internet connections. All these resulted in the provision of a positive learning climate with very interactive teaching sessions that gave students the opportunity to make their voices heard in regards to their learning progress and challenges which all received the necessary support. Furthermore, the effective management of time by the teachers during the different sessions have been another important lesson for the students. Having experienced online and face-to-face learning, the following advantages and disadvantages could be highlighted beginning with online lessons then face-to-face.

During the online session, the students reminisced about their stay in Germany in September 2023 (L).

Although the participation of some students in the intensive online training period was interrupted from time to time by internet problems, it was completed with a happy ending (U).

*Continued Page 4*

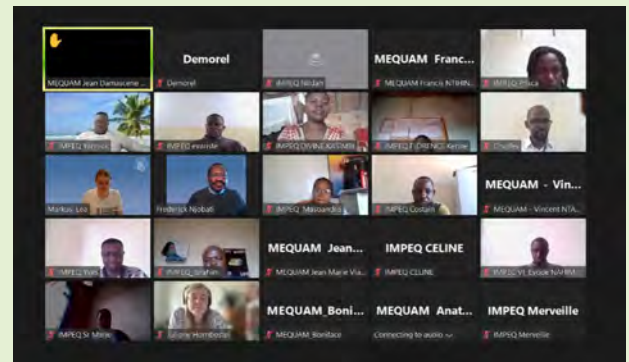
## IMPEQ VI MEETS ONLINE READY FOR FINAL SEMESTER

First, online sessions offered exceptional flexibility in their schedule which permitted students to learn at their own pace and access materials at anytime. This gave students the opportunity to balance studies with other commitments.

However, this also was disadvantageous as it required higher degree of motivation and self-discipline to stay focused and effectively manage time considering the distractions of other commitments. Secondly, online lessons integrated a variety of multimedia resources ranging from videos, podcasts, interactive quizzes and forums that enhanced learning experiences and cater for different learning styles. Nonetheless, this became challenging as some students had challenges having the required technology and unstable internet connection thereby hindering their active participation. Furthermore, the recordings of online sessions enabled students who missed the sessions because of varied reasons to later follow the lessons exactly as if they were present. In addition to the aforementioned disadvantages, online lessons equally reduce face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers as well as limited hands on activities. Consequently, this might have led to feelings of isolation thereby hindering social development.

### FACE-TO-FACE VS ONLINE

Unlike online lessons, face-to-face lessons provided a structured learning environment void of distractions. This helped students to stay focused and engaged although this might have caused teachers to struggle to cater for each student's individual learning pace and style. Secondly, face-to-face lessons enhanced interactions with teachers and peers which facilitated communication and instant feedback thus improving understanding. Thirdly, face-to-face sessions promote socialization among peers through activities such as sports, singing etc. fostering interpersonal skills and friendships which may be vital for personal and professional growth. One of the disadvantages of face-to-face is the lack of flexibility which do not accommodate commitments outside the schools program. A blended approach, combining the merits of both online and face-to-face methods adopted by IMPEQ ensured that all students had access to quality learning experiences. **Ibrahim Lemven (IMPEQ VI) Cameroon**



IMPEQ VI students continued their studies in October 2024 with an online session during four weeks. It was a moment of interaction sessions with teachers, students groups working and sharing. The working groups and non-formal meetings of students were daily organised to share and discuss about each unit from the modules five and ten. There have been four groups where students could find themselves and share for better understanding.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR REPEAT

In fact, learning from others in small groups is a good occasion for students to be with others and discuss about materials and explain to one another, ask any question and get answers from different thinkings. The good parts of learning with classmates are found in the fact that we can use our own language and all members of group feel free to ask any questions. Much time is given for each part of the modules and ideas are matched to better understand. We have opportunities to repeat a subject several times until every one understand it and all the tasks are discussed together in the group for common understanding. The way groups are made up is also another opportunity to enhance the learning because they are well made up according to the language that French and English speakers are together, which is very good as they can freely discuss. Unfortunately, working in groups sometimes is challenging because the lon-

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## IMPEQ VI MEETS ONLINE READY FOR FINAL SEMESTER



Students had the opportunity to study both face-to-face and online and. Although both have their advantages, they preferred face-to-face.

ger some persons stay together, the more they abuse each other's tolerance. Secondly, professional and other commitments did not permit some of us to read, or some persons had not worked individually thereby hindering effective participation in group discussions. So, it would be better to modify the group members, not to keep the same persons together for all online sessions. In addition, when comparing online sessions with face to face, we can agree that both are ways of learning and each of them has advantages and disadvantages.

For online ones and according to our experience with the last October online session, the advantages are twofold: 1. It is financially economical, 2. It allows time saving. 3. For online, and according to our experience, there is possibility of re going back to the subjects (see recordings), 4. The fact that we were given the power points before the interaction allowed students to self-train and understand easily during the full session. The recordings

from one drive are benefiting more students.

The disadvantages are as follows: 1. Difficulty in concentrating, as some students were always on the go with their professional tasks, even when they do not have much time. 2. Insufficient interaction between students and teachers. 3. There are internet challenges more times and that do not allow some students to get all the online interaction.

### ADAPTING TO NEW TECHNIQUES

Finally, the online session was very good with participatory teaching. Teachers used examples which brought students to their context situations to reinforce their understanding. It was another way of adapting to digitalisation despite the internet challenges sometimes and less exchanges between participants. *Divine Kasimbi (IMPEQ VI) DRC*

## INSIGHTS ON EXPERIENCES FROM BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH TO ONLINE TEACHING

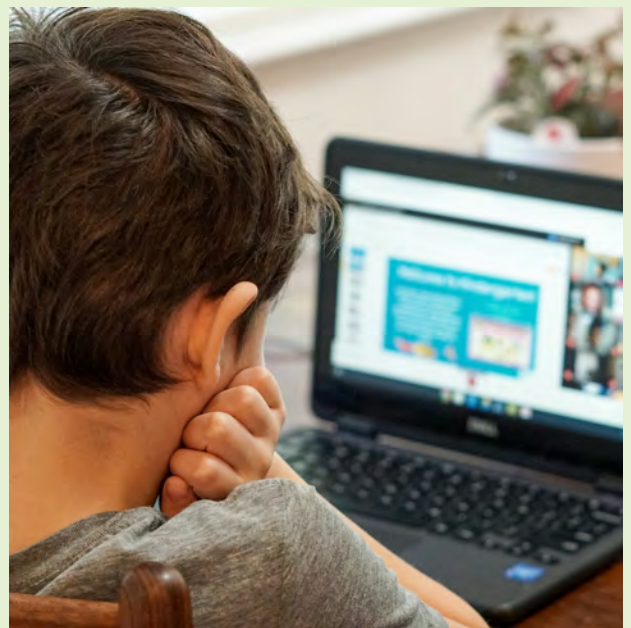
**S**usanne Ress, Frederick Njobati and Annette Scheunpflug worked on systematic reflections concerning the transformation of IMPEQ into a purely online teaching format during and due to the COVID-pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Their results will be published soon under the title: “Change of perspective in transformation processes: A single-case-study on online teaching for underserved adult students”. For the newsletter, an outlook at the results of their reflections will already now be given.

As a result, the authors propose an intentional change of perspectives, for which they name special conditions of the Master's programme as a starting point, which on the one hand can limit the transfer of their insights to other situations, but at the same time those conditions can also serve as strengths of IMPEQ and as objectives for other cases: They call on a shared narrative of belonging that may still need to be constructed, the stable funding situation, the proven establishment and implementation of the programme, as it was not started but continued. Furthermore, the well-established cooperation between the partner universities involved in the programme was important in ensuring that communication channels could be reliably continued. And finally, the students had already taken part in face-to-face courses, i.e. teachers and students already knew each other and were able to switch to the online programme with a foundation of trust.

The model of an intentional change of perspectives provides a heuristic for systematically reflecting on and planning for change by combining insights from complex problem solving with the principles of culturally responsive teaching. As a result of their work they realize that managing change has instructional, operational, and emotional components. Finally they formulate recommendations for practitioners and policy makers:

Changing perspectives should always take place intentionally and be continuously reflected upon. Suitable formats for this are the development of scenarios, reflexive stops and the establishment of circular communication with students, interest groups and team members. Those activities serve to continuously adapt the transformation processes.

Transformations require in-depth contextual know-



ledge of the students' circumstances, especially the challenges, resources and routines of their life and work contexts. Nevertheless, it must always be taken into account that the problem formulations and therefore also the solutions are not sufficiently complex. However, attention should be put on gaps in knowledge and the different situations of students and teachers so that disparities are not exacerbated by the transformation dynamics.

Transformation processes in a context of resource scarcity and uncertainty can generate feelings of anxiety and stress. To mitigate these emotions, the authors insist on the need for an ethic of care. This includes a commitment to reciprocity and mutual trust, as well as a conscious effort to build community through reliable and dependable communication and celebrating successes together.

Finally, favourable educational, operational and emotional conditions need resources, networks and partnerships. This requires a long-term commitment to community building and ongoing efforts to build new alliances.

**Dr. Susanne Timm, Bamberg**

## IMPEQ COORDINATOR FREDERICK NJOBATI COMPLETES HIS PHD WITH SUCCESS

**F**rederick Njobati, one of the IMPEQ program coordinators, completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bamberg with his work about, "Protestant school leaders - a qualitative research about their self-understanding: Case of Protestant secondary school principals in Cameroon" at the University of Bamberg and he joined the ranks of IMPEQ graduates who have earned the title of doctor. Frederick, who wrote his thesis under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug and Prof. Dr. Henrik Simojoki, continued his academic studies within the framework of IMPEQ.

Frederick, who is a first batch IMPEQ graduate, talked about his experiences during the IMPEQ period, as well as the difficulties and excitement of doing a PhD.

### How did you decide to do a PhD?

It had been my great desire to further my academic career to PhD level from when I was reading natural sciences at the bachelor degree. However, this was not possible to proceed at that time based on contextual challenges in Cameroon, but the idea was not suppressed. After several years of working as a teacher and teacher educator following my international professional training in innovative approaches in pedagogy and didactics, I focused more at that time in the field of practice. The opportunity for me to do IMPEQ Master opened the greater window especially in the domain of research and educational science for which my desire to do a PhD was rekindled with a stronger enthusiasm. Even though it was not yet clear as to whether doing a PhD could be possible at the University of Bamberg after IMPEQ completion, some of my colleagues and I inquired and with the resourcefulness of Prof. Annette Scheunpflug, we got more information about the selection criteria, application process and getting a supervisor. My dream was fulfilled and I was very happy to have been selected in the first set of persons to do PhD from IMPEQ.

### How did you hear about the IMPEQ?

My knowledge of IMPEQ came from two angles. The first ideas were from Prof. Annette Scheunpflug and her



Frederick Njobati from first cohort completed his PhD study while he was working as the IMPEQ coordinator in Bamberg.

team by then at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, towards the end of the scientific evaluation they conducted for the Pedagogic In-service training Programme, ISTP-Cameroon. This was followed by an explicit call by Bread for the World in cooperation with the University of Bamberg. More precisely, I received the announcement from the representative of Bread for the World during the forum on innovative pedagogy which

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## IMPEQ COORDINATOR FREDERICK NJOBATI COMPLETES HIS PHD WITH SUCCESS

took place in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I immediately disseminated the information to teachers in the network of ISTP schools and other schools in Cameroon.

**What was your colleagues and family members' reactions to you when they learned that you were doing PhD?**

My colleagues and family members also expressed a great fulfillment to my dream. What bothered them was how I would get time to do a PhD given that I had a heavy workload. My family members were already used to my rhythm of work which differentiated family activities from Work imperatives for which doing a PhD would still not make much difference in my work and life frame.

**Were there any difficulties during the PhD?**

Doing a PhD needs concentration as well as making it part of life, for which moments of joy need to be celebrated along the journey. From the side of time availability, this was not a bed of roses as I continued to have a full workload. From the side of research, the time of my data collection coincided with the peak period of war in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon during which many schools were shut down. As the participants of my research were Principals of Protestant schools in Cameroon, a majority of whom are found in the Anglophone regions, it was not possible to reach some of them. I myself at a certain moment was internally displaced because of the crisis. It should also be noted that my PhD was done without a bursary, so the major costs of travelling to the different parts of Cameroon for data collection and other related costs were shouldered by myself and this cannot be underestimated. By principles of work organization, time management and self-distancing, I found little but regular time to work on my research project. Given that I was very motivated and liked my research, and by working with the PhD learning community and getting research advice from my supervisor, the difficulties highlighted were not any major obstacle.

**How did your family support you during your PhD?**

I first of all explained the nature of my work and the



Frederick's supervisors were Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug (2<sup>nd</sup> L) and Prof. Dr. Henrik Simojoki (L). Prof. Dr. Barbara Drecshel (R) was at the PhD committee.

exigencies of my PhD research and my family members understood and gave me encouragement and moral support. Nevertheless, I missed them for the most part and they equally missed me but we maximized moments of warmth when connected virtually or in presence.

**How did your PhD affect your career?**

I will first of all like to indicate that, my interest in doing a PhD was not just to have a title but more importantly to develop my competences in the field of science and also contribute to science from a deeper research in the in the Global South. For this, I am very fulfilled. Upon completion of the PhD, my basic work has at now has not really changed as such. Nevertheless, a PhD gives an added value, recognition and more visibility. But all of these in my thinking is not just because of a PhD cap but

## IMPEQ COORDINATOR FREDERICK NJOBATI COMPLETES HIS PHD WITH SUCCESS



Frederick Njobati's family in Cameroon joined the celebrations in Bamberg online and shared the joy and happiness on their screens.

more on the competences developed and new knowledge acquired, as well as the understanding to doing research, collaborating with other persons and continuously learning. One of the anticipated effects is that the study would soon be published for which I would like to hear some insights.

### **Overall, how has the IMPEQ affected your life and career?**

IMPEQ has affected my life in several ways. It is important to indicate here that before joining IMPEQ, I was already very deep in practice related to teacher training and educational projects in development cooperation. By doing IMPEQ, I learnt a lot especially about developing educational quality especially in the challenging context of Sub-Saharan Africa, how to bring about change, how to do research, and how to work in professional learning communities, all of which were connected to theories in educational science and to empir-

ical evidence. Above all, working in Protestant schools which together with other faith-based schools are shaping the landscape of education in Sub-Saharan Africa, through IMPEQ, I got a new understanding that such schools which offer education as a public good, are public schools with respect to access and other aspects of social justice. But this understanding is not visible in international discourses. With all of these, my professional and academic life reflects evidence-based reflections in my work as research assistant, teacher and in-service training coordinator.

### **What were the changes in your work since IMPEQ?**

There has been a lot of changes as a result of doing IMPEQ. As I work in the field of education and teacher training in development cooperation, I have been able to add new knowledge from educational quality discourses and theories as well as insert my arguments to

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## IMPEQ COORDINATOR FREDERICK NJOBATI COMPLETED HIS PHD WITH SUCCESS

the global understanding of developing society. Above all, doing research and working on evidence-based background is for me a visible added value for which I can now connect in a clearer way as well as differentiate professional knowledge from scientific knowledge and what this means. This culminates to my new function as teacher and researcher at the university whose scientific basis is rooted in doing IMPEQ.

The biggest difference in my life after IMPEQ is the insertion of scientific discourses and argumentations and also being more open and connected to the scientific world

**Are you still in contact with your colleagues from IMPEQ? If so, how?**

Still very connected. Especially through alumni activities, doing projects together, through conferences, doing research together but this still has room for expansion as change agents.

**What is your current job? What are your responsibilities and daily routine?**

My job consists on the one hand on IMPEQ coordination and teaching at the level of the University of Bamberg and on the other part on the coordination of In-Service Teacher Training Programme (ISTP-Cameroon) in cooperation with Bread for the World. In addition to this, I am also an active member of the network of the Global Pedagogic Network of Protestant Schools Worldwide (GPEN) where I serve in the Activity and Scientific Committee. As researcher, I am interested in educational quality in the development cooperation, school leadership and peace education.

**What was your PhD about**

The study was concerned with the **self-understanding of Protestant secondary school leaders about their school leadership in the context of Cameroon** where education is rooted in missionary and colonial times. As faith-based schools shape the educational landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa amidst poor financing (Wagner, Castillo & Lewis, 2022; UNESCO, 2021; Backiny-Yetna & Wodon, 2009), the role of principals in Protestant schools and how they perceive their school profile in their leadership matter. In particular, the de-



The hosts of Frederick (C), Christine (L) and Günthher Fösel (R) congratulated him after his successful dissertation.

bate at international level on whether or not non-state schools are widening inequality gaps and whether school leadership is contributing to enlightenment or to fundamentalism matter in researching about the Protestant school profile and leadership (Acton, 2021; Waite & Robbins, 2017; Buchanan, 2013; Backiny-Yetna & Wodon, 2009; Dronkers & Avram, 2009). Although current research highlights Protestant school profile mainly in countries of the Global North (Bader & Maussen, 2012; de Wall, 2012, Becker & Wößmann), little is known about the research context in SSA.

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## IMPEQ COORDINATOR FREDERICK NJOBATI COMPLETED HIS PHD WITH SUCCESS

Furthermore, the discourse on faith-based schooling emphasizes on differentiating the character of inclusivity and exclusivity (Bertram-Troost et al, 2015, p. 204) and all of these suggest the argument to research on school profiles and leadership of non-state faith-based schools (Scheunpflug, 2015; Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015). The research sought to find out the perceptions secondary school principals of Protestant schools in Cameroon have about their school leadership and was conceptualized as exploratory and hypothesis-generating within the qualitative research paradigm.

### IDEAL TYPES OF THE RESEARCH

Six ideal leadership types emerged from the abduction process and consist of (1) call for superiority leadership, (2) state-conformational leadership, (3) ecclesiastical leadership, (4) community-participatory leadership, (5) vocation to serve leadership and (6) diaconal leadership. The main findings revealed among other aspects that the principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon have individual ideas of school leading based on experience and that not all the six ideal leadership types are contributing to quality education (Types 4, 5 and 6 are contributing to quality education). Also, there are fundamentalist leaders who have an influence in the school, focusing on normative aspects of discipline while others are related to democratic values, promoting democracy in a non-democratic environment. Furthermore, there are school leaders working in a diaconal way, promoting social justice and contributing to education as public good. Meanwhile, the action of school principals is limited by national frames with little awareness of belonging to the church as a global institution. Subsequently, difficulties of financing education in Protestant schools affect school leadership.

The study adds value to science in different ways. First a multi-dimensional self-understanding by principals on the Protestant ethos of schools and their leadership function that connects to a wide field of the relationship between school leaders' theological and religious perceptions (Freire, 2020; Swain, 2020; EKD, 2017; Wulf, 2003; Andreotti, 2011) in a context rooted in colonial and missionary times. In addition, the argumentations

from the findings add new narratives to the discourse from the Global South showing the possible responsibility of the state for educational injustice, widening inequality gaps by their non-financing of faith-based schools (Barber et al., 2020; Dupraz, 2019). This further underlines the importance of professionalization in school leadership and a shared understanding of faith-based school profiles. Further more, the perceptions of quality driven ideal leadership types show that change towards quality school development and the development of society can be possible through Protestant school leadership resilience even in fragile state context (Barber et al, 2020; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Ngwa & Mekolle, 2020; Buchanan, 2013). Consequently, the visibility and understanding of the role of the church in the Global South has the potential to shape global social justice even in the context of Cameroon with perceived sublimation of society by the state (Scheunpflug, 2020; Szczerba, 2020; Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003).

The study suggests, on the one hand, quantitative research in the distribution of school leadership types in Protestant schools in Cameroon and another on school leadership actions and implications for teaching in Protestant schools in Cameroon. It further recommends practical actions on evidence-based professional development for school leaders and education stakeholders on the protestant school profile and leadership role to bring change in quality school development and the development of society.

A PhD study is a realization from collaboration and support of many persons and institutions for which I am very indebted and thankful: My supervisors for their encouragement, professional knowledge development and expertise, members of the Chair of Foundations in Educational Sciences at the University of Bamberg and the PhD learning community members. ISTP-Cameroon, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) and Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service for their unwavering support that inspired me to combine work and research in an effective way. The invaluable support from my friends and family members. *IMPEQ Team*

## CANON ETIENNE FROM PUR FINISHED HIS PHD



Prof. Dr. Stefanie Lorenzen (L) and Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug (C) were the supervisors of Canon Etienne, while Prof. Dr. Barbara Drechsel (2<sup>nd</sup> R) and Dr. Christof Beer (R) were at the PhD committee.

**C**anon Etienne Uwajiyabo, a first batch IMPQ graduate from Rwanda, has completed his doctoral studies and has added his name to the list of “IMPEQ graduates with a doctorate”. Canon Etienne, who works at the Protestant University of Rwanda, will continue to his work with the title of “Dr.”. Canon Etienne told his experiences about his work.

### How did you decide to do a PhD?

I was in the group of IMPEQ I and I felt a need to undertake a PhD research towards the end of my Master Program. After finishing IMPEQ, I talked to Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug for an advice about how I could start a PhD research related to quality education. I also asked her if she could be my supervisor. She answered me to choose a topic and send it to her and after some tries of topics,

the one about Protestant profile and quality education was accepted. She also accepted to be my supervisor.

### How did you hear about the IMPEQ?

I heard about IMPEQ first when I was in PIASS general assembly, where present members were informed about a partnership between PIASS and Bamberg University, and members were asked to inform interested and qualified candidates to apply for a Master’s Program in Quality Education. From then I started the preparation for application.

IMPEQ affected my life and my career by connecting me to international students and researchers. IMPEQ also helped me to get promoted professionally because I shifted from being a secondary school leader to a university lecturer because of my Master’s degree received from IMPEQ.

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## CANON ETIENNE FROM PUR FINISHED HIS PHD

### **Is it difficult to work and do a PhD at the same time?**

Yes, it is difficult but for my case; the advices from my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug helped me a lot. I also benefited from the partnership between PUR and University of Bamberg. The financial support of DAAD and working regularly with my colleagues, other PhD students of IMPEQ graduates gave me a great support. Dr. Susanne Timm gave me an indefinite help during my studies.

### **What was your working colleagues and family members; reactions to you when they learned that you a PhD?**

Some of my colleagues were happy and it was encouraging for them because of studying at an old age. But for others, it was a bad decision; because I was advanced in age. Some told me even that I should leave young people to benefit from such an opportunity. In my family, there was no problem, because they had enough information on my previous education journey, and it was a way of recuperation of the opportunity I lost different times before.

### **Were there any difficulties during the PhD?**

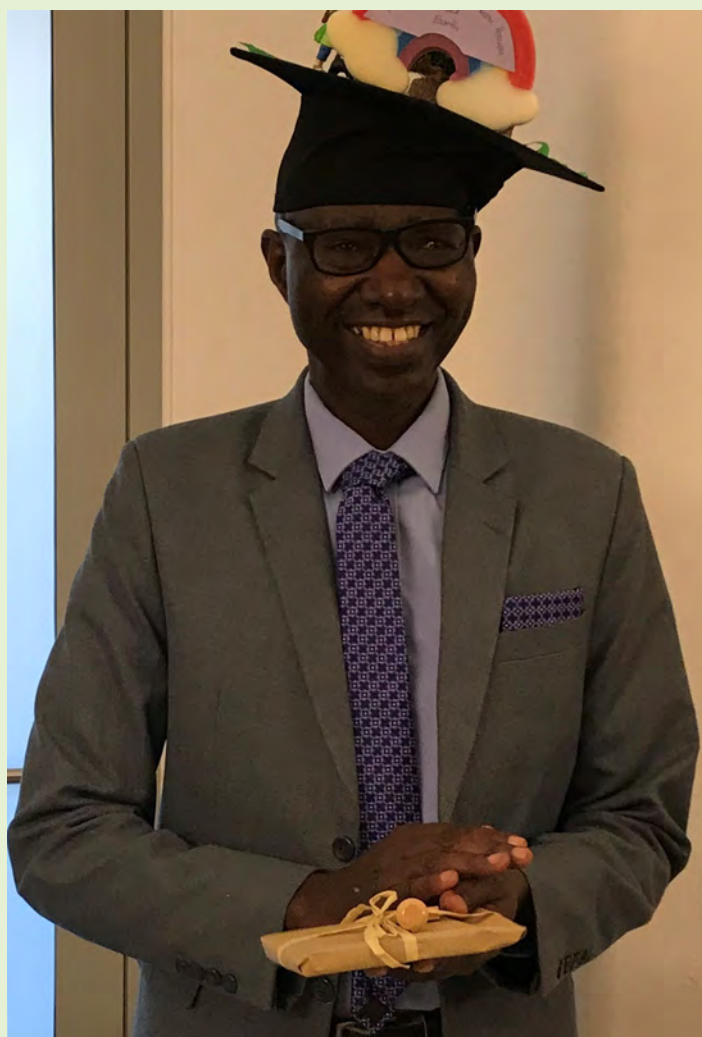
Yes, there were some difficulties, including mainly, studying and working at the same time and this was a problem when obligations for research and those related to my work were needed at the same time. Some days I felt too tired at nights because of my working hours during the day, specifically because of my age.

### **How did your family support you during your PhD?**

My family supported me in multiple ways. Specifically, my wife ensured the well-being of the whole family when I was abroad for my PhD study, and other family members had no complaints when I used the family money for my study needs.

### **Were there any changes in your work since IMPEQ programme?**

Yes, there were many changes. Before IMPEQ and during my IMPEQ, I was working as a pastor of the cathedral and president of the commission of education in the diocese, and after IMPEQ, I passed the exam for the post of Chaplaincy and students services



Canon Etienne is working at Protesant University of Rwanda.

at PUR. And finally my social status changed and I became a PhD student.

### **What is your current job? What are your responsibilities and daily routine? How did your PhD affected your career?**

Now I am lecturer at PUR, Faculty of Education and after my PhD study, I changed my position from the administrative staff to the academic staff. *IMPEQ Team*

## NEW PHD STUDENTS IN BAMBERG

# BARTHELEMY FROM FOURTH COHORT STARTED PHD IN BAMBERG

*While graduates are completing their PhD studies, new PhD students continue to arrive. Barthelemy Muzaliwa Balume from Democratic Republic of Congo, one of the graduates of the fourth cohort (2019-2021), started his PhD studies at the University of Bamberg in 2024. Barthelemy, who plans to do his PhD with a study on English language learning practices in his country, spoke to Newsletter about the change that IMPEQ has started in his life and challenges of academic studies.*

### How did you decide to do a PhD?

Doing a PhD has always been a dream for me. I have always believed that with a PhD, I will have the necessary skills to improve foreign language teaching and learning and help Congolese learners grow as global citizens who can fit into any context. This is the reason for my commitment to the English language teaching and learning in my country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. With the IMPEQ program, through which I did my Masters, I saw the possibility of realizing this dream, thanks to the networks and opportunities offered by the University of Bamberg, through the Chair of Foundations in Education.

### Is it difficult to work and do a PhD at the same time?

Working while doing a PhD is not easy, but the level of difficulty depends on a number of important factors. One of these factors is the workload. The demands of a doctorate can be very high, with research, coursework and publications all making it difficult to manage a full-time job. The other factor is the flexibility of the job. If the job is flexible, for example with remote working or adjustable hours, this can make it easier to juggle.

### How has the IMPEQ affected your life and career?

I am from fourth cohort and IMPEQ has had a great impact on my life. First of all, IMPEQ has allowed me to specialize and professionalize and to contribute to improving the quality of the education system in my country. Thanks to IMPEQ, I now facilitate initial and in-service training for teachers on quality teaching and other related topics. IMPEQ has also allowed me to progress in my teaching and doctoral research, which



Fourth cohort graduate Barthelemy Muzaliwa Balume from DRC, started his PhD studies at the University of Bamberg.

has an even greater impact on improving the services I could offer to my country after my training.

### How did you hear about the IMPEQ?

I had heard about the IMPEQ program through the “Universite Libre des Pays de Grands Lacs” (ULPGL), which is one of the partner institutions of this program. As a lecturer in this institution, I had been informed and made aware of the opportunity to apply for the fourth

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NEW PHD STUDENTS IN BAMBERG

## BARTHELEMY FROM FOURTH COHORT STARTED PHD IN BAMBERG

cohort. I then sought further information from colleagues who had already participated in IMPEQ 2 and 3.

### **What was your colleagues and family reactions to you when they learn that you started a master's degree?**

For relatives and colleagues alike, it was a feeling of joy. For the relatives, it was the realization of an idea that had already been planned and discussed, because many had already suggested that I go to Burundi to do a Master's degree, but we were blocked by financial means. So it was a relief for them to hear that I had been awarded a scholarship to do the Masters. They were even happier to learn that it was to be done in Germany, where quality is assured. For my colleagues, on the other hand, it was a feeling of satisfaction. They saw it as one additional qualified staff and more skills that benefit the whole institution.

### **Were there any difficulties during the program? If so, what were them?**

The major difficulty we encountered during the IMPEQ program was the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic. This disrupted the work we needed to do and the rest of the meetings we were supposed to have. In order to complete the seminar papers, we needed to be in quiet places conducive to intellectual work, with access to a stable internet connection, etc. But with confinement, we were required to stay at home, where the climate was not good for working, and where we could not have access to stable Internet connection. However, there is a good side of it, which is that with the online sessions, we also benefited from several digital skills related to online teaching.

### **How did your family support you during your IMPEQ period and now for your doctoral work?**

My family was a great support, especially morally. Through encouragement and advice, my family helped me to persevere until the end of the program. Sometimes we had several assignments to complete (seminar papers, portfolios, master's thesis), which resulted in almost sleepless nights. Faced with the difficulties, I was sometimes discouraged, but my family comforted me and helped me to regain my morale so that I could

concentrate. For the PhD, my family is still supporting me because it is a big sacrifice to spend months, quarters or even whole semesters away from them. But they understand and continue to encourage me. They manage to avoid any situation that could destabilize my work and try to put me in the best possible conditions.

### **Were there any changes in your work since IMPEQ?**

Changes have taken place in my work, especially at the methodological level of my teaching. During IMPEQ, I learned a lot about effective and efficient learning. I now understand the logic of learning and choose my teaching methods, strategies and attitudes accordingly. The institution also uses me more for the retraining of certain teachers and for the monitoring of certain educational projects. I am also often recommended by the university to help the provincial government with in-service training for primary and secondary school teachers.

### **What is the biggest difference in your life after IMPEQ?**

The biggest difference in my life after IMPEQ is mainly professional. More specifically, in terms of time management and self-organization. Through IMPEQ we learned the need to prioritize (distinguish primary from secondary needs) and to do everything at the right time, and since IMPEQ I have been a fervent practitioner of all these principles of self-organization.

### **Are you still in contact with your colleagues from IMPEQ? If so, how?**

I keep in touch with my IMPEQ colleagues. I have contact details for almost all of them and we often talk about our different projects, each in their own region.

### **What is your current job? What are your responsibilities and daily routine?**

My job and position have not changed since IMPEQ, I remain a junior lecturer at ULPGL Bukavu. But in terms of responsibilities, as I mentioned above, I have been given several additional tasks. These include, among others, the retraining of some colleagues in the evaluation of quality teaching; the initial and in-service training of teachers and future teachers in quality teaching, high cognitive activation and effective classroom management. *IMPEQ Team*

NEW PHD STUDENTS IN BAMBERG

## THIRD COHORT GRADUATE MESCHAC IN LINE FOR PHD

**Meschac Vunanga Karhakabire, also from the Democratic Republic of Congo, is another recent PhD student at Bamberg. Meschac, a third semester graduate, manages a large network of schools in his region. Despite his busy schedule, Meschac is not detached from his academic work and told Newsletter about his plans for his PhD studies.**

**How did you decide to do a PhD?**

My decision to do a PhD has been in the back of my mind for a long time, but it came to fruition after I was awarded my Master's degree. This last step was for me an opportunity to improve my performance.

**Is it difficult to work and do a PhD at the same time?**

Doing a doctorate and working at the same time is not easy, but it's up to the candidate to manage his or her schedule well, to be rigorous and disciplined in management, and to program rigorously.

**How has IMPEQ influenced your life and career?**

The IMPEQ program has had a positive influence on my life and career. IMPEQ training has enabled me to improve the way I communicate with others, active listening, to plan time rationally and carry out several tasks. Also, it has broaden my knowledge to open up to the outside world and develop a number of skills for managing school institutions (effective leadership for management, etc.). I develop the ability to live together in an intercultural context and further develop learning communities. I have improved research methods and skills for training teachers in innovative pedagogical approaches to improve the quality of education. I have gained skills to critically analyze the education system and propose innovative strategies.

**What were the reactions of your work colleagues and family members when they learned that you were starting a Master's degree?**

I have heard about IMPEQ through my colleagues who were alumni of IMPEQ. As far as my family and col-

leagues were concerned, it was a great joy and satisfaction, followed by a feeling of encouragement.

The family supported me a lot through encouragement. Sometimes carried away by reading books and other research documents, my family shows a certain patience and understanding linked to prolonged absences and late arrivals at home.

**Did you encounter any difficulties during the program?**

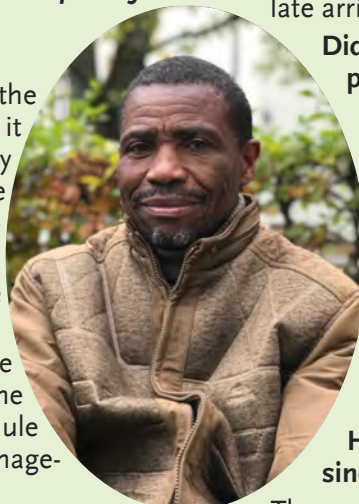
During the program, I encountered difficulties linked to the combination of work and research requirements. Having received authorization from my superiors, I had to reallocate my time in order to carry out my duties as coordinator and continue the program. This was not easy, as at times I lacked sufficient time for research work. So I had to work hard to complete the activities and stay on schedule.

**Have there been any changes in your work since the IMPEQ?**

There were many organizational, relational and administrative changes especially about the planning of activities to be carried out. What I learned during the program improved my performance with rational time management. I learned to be active listener for team building and empowerment. I have learned sharing problems with others in search of solutions because sharing ideas with others brings innovative actions and produce results. I keep in touch with IMPEQ colleagues either online via Zoom, by message or phone call, or in the learning community for PhD students.

**What is your current job? What are your responsibilities and daily routine?**

My schedule is split between work-related activities and research. With so many responsibilities, I try to put the social side aside so that my time is divided between departmental activities and research. My responsibilities and daily routine consist in planning the activities to be carried out, secondly in training and guiding school managers and teachers so that they become aware of the need for quality education in their schools. **IMPEQ Team**



## NEWS FROM THE STUDENTS

# PREPARING THE WAY FOR A NEW SCHOOL YEAR IN CAMEROON THROUGH TEACHER TRAINING

The new academic year 2024-2025 began in Cameroon on 9 September 2024. To prepare the ground, teachers from the Evangelical College in Balatchi, in the West Region of Cameroon, were invited to a one-day workshop at the Evangelical University of Cameroon, located in Mbouo-Bandjoun, by their newly appointed Principal, Pastor Nguieutieu Chimi Syhlamite épse Panguepko of the IMPEQ 6 cohort. She was supported in this activity by Njoya Ernest Claude of the IMPEQ staff, Makarios Fandio, a graduate of IMPEQ 5, and Nono Pierre of the Evangelical University of Cameroon.

### BETTER CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

For five hours, the facilitators instructed the more than 25 participants on the theme of improving the quality of education. In her introduction, Pastor Nguieutieu Chimi Syhlamite stressed the importance of continuous capacity building, inviting her staff to take advantage of the opportunity to gather information and new strategies for the teaching and learning process to put in practice in the new school year. With regard to the facilitators' contributions, Njoya presented the criteria and indicators of a school with a Protestant profile and called on the participants to strive to implement them in their schools. Concerning the sub-theme of effective classroom management developed by Makarios Fandio, the teachers acquired knowledge on the concepts of classroom rules and habits, de-escalation, learner-centred classroom approaches and time management. The topic 'A responsible citizen at the service of a quality school' was presented by Nono Pierre assisted by Pastor Medjialeu Fabrice, a school chaplain of the Evangelical Church in Cameroon.

### EFFECT OF POVERTY AND VIOLENCE

They emphasised that the teacher must be a role model for the learners in order to have an impact on their lives. Using an active and participatory approach, the participants were divided into groups to discuss questions on the four topics, after which discussions were held in a plenary session. Based on the discussions, participants agreed that the day was rich in educational content. However, the challenge of applying the knowledge, techniques and methods acquired in a context of violence and poverty remains.



School leaders attended the event.



The event was supported by IMPEQ students as well as alumni.

The Principal assured her staff at the end of the seminar that they would not be left alone. Together, with her support and guidance, they will rise to the challenge of improving learners' outcome at the Evangelical College Balatchi. *Njoya Ernest Claude (IMPEQ I), Fandio Makarios (IMPEQ V), Nguieutieu Chimi Syhlamite épse Panguepko (IMPEQ VI), Cameroon*

## NEWS FROM THE STUDENTS

# THE WOMEN'S AND BISHOP DAY CELEBRATIONS IN TANZANIA

After each two years, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese (ELCT/NWD), under its nurturing department with women and children's desks, conducts women's day. Through that day, different women's groups from church districts and few invited presenters from different Christians and non-Christians denominations, among them Muslims, are come together at the diocesan Cathedral in Bukoba Municipality, to attend that event. The intention of that day is to bring women together so that they can show their talents, share their experiences, and learn new insights from each other. Also, during that day, the Bishop, who is the head of the diocese, gets an opportunity to meet women, view their works, talents, and addresses them. Normally, the day is called "Women's and Bishop Day."

Accordingly, this year on 24<sup>th</sup> August, we had a Women and Bishop Day whereby, about 1,800 women attended it. For me, that was my first time to prepare that event. Similarly, during that day, 9 districts, with big numbers of well-prepared women, were presented. The event's verse was from 2 Chronicles 15:7 that reads: "Be ye strong therefore, and not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded". Besides, the theme of the day was "Nguvu ya Mwanamke katika Kukuza Uchumi," literary, "Women's Competency in Breeding the Economy,"

### WOMEN SINGING TOGETHER

Successively, women competed in singing, in noted rhythms, from hymn No. 399 in the ELCT "Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu" hymn book. Normally, we are used to doing it in such a way, so as to make women learn hymns and be contented with them. Also, women had competitions on answering Bible questions from the book of Deuteronomy, chapters 5-9. Definitely, it was very interesting to see how women were well prepared and ready to answer questions, being asked from those chapters. Equally, women who are entrepreneurs, showed what they are doing to generate them incomes. At the end of the day, we then ate together before departing. It was a delicious meal. The event was a wonderful day, to the extent that it made women and anyone who attended it, become very happy and jubilant. .

Still, event ending is also an opportunity to set plans for following event, to be implemented rightly in the coming



Ainekisha Kokulamuka Bulaya (L) attended to the women's and bishop day activities in Tanzania

year. In such views, in 2025 we are planning to continue with seminars concerning nutrition and environmental conservations. This is because, the prevalent data shows that, most children aged under 5 years in Kagera Region, have malnutrition's effects. Therefore, as women and mothers, we feel that we have a responsibility to help young women, through seminars and visits, to prepare balanced meals for their children and their families as well. Also, since women are the most group who are affected by the environmental destructions, we see it better for us in the nurturing department, to create awareness concerning environmental destructions and its challenges. In the immediate and long outcomes, it is anticipated that women will be able to protect environments, both for their families and communities' survivals. **Ainekisha Kokulamuka Bulaya (IMPEQ VI) Tanzania**

## NEWS FROM THE STUDENTS

# THE SANKOFA CONFERENCE FOR THE CIRCLE OF THE CONCERNED WOMEN THEOLOGIAN

I'm extending my heartfelt thanks to the almighty God, who enabled me to attend the Conference Circle for the Concerned Women Theologians in Africa from 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2024. It was the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference and was held at Trinity Theological Seminary, in Legon- Ghana. Members from 23 African countries attended the conference, in which Tanzania was among them. However, despite being an African event, other women with concerns from USA, Netherlands, Switzerland, and UK also attended. Even so, about 50 members managed to send their works and attended the conference through online connections. Likely, some of the brothers with concerns, also joined that conference, mainly to fulfil Mercy Amba Oduyeyo's philosophy, who is the conference founder that, "A bird with one wing can never fly." This means that, a church being led only by men or women, cannot fulfil her mission.

### SINCE 1989

The 6<sup>th</sup> conference aim was to listen to God's voice concerning human's responsibilities and accountabilities for God's creation, in the next year and generations to come. This was done under five agendas: The first was the introductory meaning of the term Sankofa; and how it was started in 1989. Sankofa, is a bird who can turn its neck to 90 degrees and be able to see back clearly. Also, the group had to look back to 1989, the last time when women met in the same venue at Trinity seminary, and set mission and vision that resulted to the current meeting. The second issue was to congratulate the Matriarchy and pioneer mother, Prof. Mercy Amba Oduyeyo on her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. As her response, she addressed with a vibrant speech, embodied with her vision and implementations. Third, it was about 257 presentations and discussions from different papers, which were written by concerned theologians at different sessions. During those presentations, I was among the coordinators. Indeed, I was very happy for that opportunity because, I gained much experiences. Fourth, it was the circle's report from 2019-2024. The report revealed full achievements of the circle's goals, such as huge numbers of more than 500 written and published books. Those who did their best in writing, editing, and publishing were



Ainekisha (IMPEQ VI) attended the Sankofa Conference in Ghana as a representing team from Tanzania.

honoured by the cycle. Lastly, was the award of certificates. The cycle prepared certificates that were given to the rising stars (younger women theologians), especially to those who attended the meeting for the first time, and I was among them.

Apart from that, during the meeting some of us had an opportunity to visit the Castle, in the Cape Coast. This is was another good experience for me, during that time we have learned much about concerning the history of slave trade in West Africa.

### WOMEN'S CONCERNS

I would like to thank the United Evangelism Mission (UEM), for funding me and other 5 women theologians from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, my diocese, the ELCT- North Western Diocese for arranging and allowing me attend the meeting. Also, I extend my sincere thanks to other organisations, among them Bread for the World, for their readiness to facilitate that meeting. In conclusion, from my engagement in the cycle, I discovered that many women have concerns and are ready to bring changes through their writings, publishing, and readings, found in different books, especially those concerns with women's rights. In this regard, I can say that they need to be more encouraged and supported, so that their works reaches many people.

*Ainekisha Kokulamuka Bulaya (IMPEQ VI) Tanzania*

## NEWS FROM THE STUDENTS

# MY NEW WORK AND HOW TO ORGANIZE FOR IMPEQ STUDIES AS A MOTHER

In July 2024, I was recruited at the Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity of Madagascar (FAPBM), which is a funder for conservation activities in Madagascar. I am the coordinator of competency development project. The beneficiaries are managers of land and marine protected areas (PA/MPA) and local communities (CLP). This project is funded by the Hempel Foundation. This is the first in terms of implementation for the FAPBM. The goal is to develop continuing training for protected area managers and to develop an environmental education program for schools. My mission is to develop a training program for PA/MPA managers and CLPs and to design an environmental education program adapted to Madagascar's biodiversity conservation system. I signed a 2 years contract for the inception and pilot phase of this project.

### NEW TRAINING NEEDS

Since taking up this job, I have focused on preparing the input for the training program. There are the evaluation of previous training programs provided by national and international NGOs for PA/MPA managers and CLPs; the identification of new training needs as training center, designers and trainers, modules and subject; the identification of methodology, teaching methods, the design of educational tools....

### MODULS OF IMPEQ HELPED ME

To carry out the tasks related to these activities, I am deeply grateful to the IMPEQ program. It has allowed me to develop perfect working tools such as reflection, communication and a look at quality. These help me to adapt and harmonize my passion at work. I am able to improve my skills better with more confidence. Each module that I already acquired is important to me. Many contents help me to control, to nourish and awaken my reflections and my skills for adaptations, for bringing



Masoandro (L) meeting with local communities for environmental protection.

innovation and new ideas such as the lesson about normativity in favor of biodiversity conservation jargon; the aspects of the quality education in conservation of biodiversity; all the modules on measures and documentation helped me a lot in understanding scientific evaluation documents; in collecting data in the field and analyzing these data, etc. The change game with the support of communication

aspects and feedback, which allowed me to move forward despite the challenges that I faced with the difficulties of administrative procedures, the failures of my first lobbying at the government and NGO level.

### KEY TO SUCCESS: TIME MANAGEMENT

Actually, I am faced with a serious dilemma in organizing my time. In addition to this work, I am still a student at IMPEQ, a volunteer teacher for 8 hours of classes at my husband's school and a mother of four children. To go to work, I have to leave home at 5:30 in the morning and I return around 7:30 in the evening. I go on a mission most of the time for about five to ten days. In general, I could manage my time for my professional and education activities. I have learnt not to bring work for FAPBM at home. About my study organization, I use my daily bus journey to reading the documents needed for the IMPEQ module activities. My break times at the office are dedicated to writing down the ideas received from the readings. At night, I try to compile the ideas and make connections of them. For school, I sometimes do my preparation for teaching at night. The most regrettable thing for me is that I have not yet managed to find stability to take care seriously of my children. I don't respect some roles of being a mother. What happen now is my mother replace me; she takes my role of taking care of my children. It helps me but it doesn't mean that it is really good.

**Andrianintsilavo Masoandro Rakatoarimana (IMPEQ VI) Madagascar**

## ALUMNI NEWS

# LEADING THE WAY IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Since 2020, Nyakato Bible College has been at the forefront of promoting tree planting initiatives as part of its commitment to environmental sustainability. The journey began after seeing the Luther Garden and how various religious leaders honoured Martin Luther by planting trees during the IMPEQ 2019 study visit. I thought it would be good to start this at Nyakato Lutheran Bible College because it is part of our Lutheran heritage, environmental stewardship and teaching good environmental stewardship to students who are being prepared to become church leaders. We started by planting a small garden with fruit trees. Each guest who visited the college marked their presence by planting a tree, a practice that has now become a cherished tradition.

### THREE THOUSAND TREES

In 2021 and 2022, the college expanded its efforts by inviting key leaders from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) and international partners to join the initiative. Working with the government, which generously provided some 3,000 trees, the college planted trees throughout the campus and surrounding areas. The campus, which includes a hospital, a psychosocial support centre and a recreational area known as Charming Bungalow, now boasts lush greenery that stands out in Nyakato. The tree-planting initiative was warmly welcomed by church leaders, including bishops from the Lake Zone and retired ELCT Presiding Bishop Dr Frederick Shoo. In addition, all ELCT general secretaries have visited the campus, each leaving a lasting legacy by planting fruit trees in the college garden. Partnership leaders from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Dan-mission, the Ecumenical Work of the North Church and friends. Today the garden thrives with avocado, orange, lime and tangerine trees. It is a symbol of unity and sustainability.

### A TREE IN DENMARK

The initiative has also spread beyond Tanzania's borders. As principal of the college, I had the honour of planting a tree at Danmission's headquarters in Denmark, as a gesture of gratitude for their support and as a testament to Nyakato's leadership in environmental conservation.



Tree planting in Tanzania



Tree planting in Denmark

This initiative has been further recognised and supported by the Church Climate Action Partnership project, which funds and strengthens the environmental efforts of the East of Lake Victoria Diocese. Inspired by Nyakato's example, several parishes within the ELCT dioceses have launched their own tree planting campaigns. These efforts are in line with the global vision of Luther Garden, which emphasises environmental care as an expression of faith. Nyakato Bible College is now a beacon of green in Mwanza and a model for environmental stewardship in the region. Through these efforts, we continue to promote sustainability and celebrate God's creation in a tangible way. **Mimii K. B. Rubindamayungi (IMPEQ IV) Tanzania**

## ALUMNI NEWS

# HUMBLLED BY GRACE: A JOURNEY OF FAITH AND DUTY

Receiving the message on the afternoon of June 1, 2024, precisely at 13:49, I was unaware that my professional life was about to undergo a profound transformation. The individual on the other end of the line articulated a series of statements that initially rendered me momentarily speechless. I had been appointed to the position of Education Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC). My immediate response was a combination of disbelief and awe. The position was not one that I had actively sought, yet I was unable to decline it and effectively assumed the role on July 23, 2024. The appointment conveyed an unmistakable sensation of divine calling and obligation. I found myself pausing, overwhelmed by the considerable trust placed in me by the church's hierarchy and, most importantly, by God.

The PCC has four fundamental ministries - the preaching, healing, teaching and liberation ministries. Just as the other ministries that had measured impacts in Cameroon and beyond, the teaching ministry has historically served as a model for transformative education and spiritual enlightenment in the Cameroon educational landscape. I have long admired its dedication to guiding young minds and fostering the transformative development of learners for global citizenship. This aligns with the assertion of Nelson Mandela that: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." To now be tasked with leading this initiative is a privilege beyond measure, and it demands a commitment to prayer, focus, and reliance on divine guidance. In assuming this role, I am acutely aware of the responsibility to uphold the tenets of the Protestant profile of education while advancing lifelong learning and holistic quality education. My conceptual vision is focused on developing the of quality of education in the Presbyterian Education Authority (PEA) system schools by leveraging the potential of digital technologies and fostering strategic partnerships across all educational institutions under the PEA umbrella. This approach aims to ensure equitable access to high-quality, holistic education for all learners, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to flourish in the highly-complex and interconnected world of the twenty first century. This

vision is rooted in the following pillars: Digital integration and innovation, Partnerships, projects, and networking, Equitable access to quality education in a compassionate and violence-free environments, Teacher support, empowerment and professional development, Lifelong learning, skills development and global social justice.

My journey to this point has entailed a process of preparation that was not always evident at the time. From my formative years as a teacher and teacher trainer to the leadership roles I have held in educational and church settings, I can now discern how each experience was contributing to my preparation for this moment. I am also aware that I must put on the learning garment in order to be effective and effectient. As John F. Kennedy, former president of the United States of America posits: "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." I am therefore resigned to driving the change that the PEA needs to improve the leadership and learning outcomes throughout the system. I assume this role not oblivious of the fact that I cannot rely on the strength of my own abilities. It is solely by grace (*sola gratia*) that I am prepared to serve.

In contemplating the forthcoming journey, I am imbued with a profound sense of gratitude. I am grateful to the church leadership for their confidence in me as well as to my family and mentors who have consistently supported me, and to God, who continues to direct my steps. Furthermore, I am keenly aware of the significant responsibility that accompanies this role coupled with my PhD research project with the University of Bamberg, Germany. The PCC's educational mission is of paramount importance in shaping the future of our communities and nation. It is my hope that I will serve faithfully, with wisdom, integrity, and a heart rooted in service. I am reminded of the words of Proverbs 3:5-6: "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*" This scripture will serve as a guiding principle as I navigate the tasks ahead.

To all those who have offered words of encouragement and prayers, especially my IMPEQ family, I express my gratitude. I count on your support and collaboration to uphold the PCC's legacy of excellence and faith. As I assume this esteemed role, I am humbled, yet prepared to serve with all my abilities. May His will be done!

**Essaw Sangwa'a (IMPEQ III) Cameroon**

## ALUMNI NEWS

# QUALITY EDUCATION, FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

One year after my Master's degree in Quality Education at the University of Bamberg, I was appointed at the beginning of this school year as Head of the Cellule d'Appui à la Qualité de l'Éducation at Collège Alfred Saker (CAS). This position was created at the recent General Synod of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon (EEC) to promote quality education in the church's secondary schools. My role is to draw up and implement the institution's quality policy, organize training courses, monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. It is this new role that gives me the opportunity to attend, on the one hand, the pedagogical meeting of the EEC's secondary schools with the Vice-principals, and on the other, the National Technical Committee for the start of the new school year, bringing together all the school heads and regional inspectors.

### QUESTIONS ANSWERED

During these two meetings held on 29 and 31/10/2024 at the Direction de l'Enseignement Secondaire, Universitaire et de la Formation Professionnelle (DE-SUFOP), I was in charge of preparing and presenting a paper entitled: Quality education: a key factor for learner success. The aim of this presentation was to raise participants' awareness of the importance of quality education for learner success, and to encourage them to implement innovative educational practices. The presentation, which focused on the key elements of quality education, was well received by the audience. At the end of the presentation, questions were asked about training and the implementation of this new concept in all EEC schools. In response, it was said that this moment of exchange constitutes an impetus for future actions to be carried out in view of its practice. In addition to exchanges on quality education at meetings of this kind, the setting up of a pedagogical camp was announced, as was the progressive training or invitation of the Education Quality Manager to the various establishments. In the meantime, the hosts were urged to reflect on and implement this with the few means at their disposal in their respective school structures. Aware that change is



Magliore (R) is a fifth batch graduate of IMPEQ and now she is serving as a quality education in secondary schools in Cameroon.

urgent and imperative for our schools in view of mediocre academic results, dilapidated infrastructure, low enrolment and the loss of identity of EEC schools, the head teachers and vice-principals pledged to implement quality education in their environment. The presentation was made in the presence of Mr. Fandio Makarios (Executive Secretary of DESUFOP, IMPEQ prizewinner) and Mr. Njoya Ernest Claude (General Secretary of the Université évangélique deu cameroun (UEC), teacher and IMPEQ prizewinner). All three IMPEQ ambassadors, along with Yannick Biya Boula, Florence Kenne Tameli and Nguieutieu Chimi Syhlamite, IMPEQ VI students, are committed to spreading quality education throughout the EEC's schools.

**Clodis Magliore Nguessom Fokam (IMPEQ V)**

## CHRISTINE IN RWANDAN PARLIAMENT, PENINE IN RWANDAN SENATE

**A** graduate of IMPEQ who freshly earned her PhD in Foundations of Education with focus on quality teacher education, Dr. Christine Nyiramana is elected a member of Rwanda Parliament since August 2024. In addition to teaching in education related courses, Dr. Christine served at different capacities respectively as coordinator of different projects including International Master's Program "Educational Quality in Developing Countries (IMPEQ) for around 10 years and Resilience of Educational Institutions through Digitalisation – A reaction to Covid-19 Great Lakes Region (ReDiCo). Additionally, she served as Vice Dean of the Faculty of Education and the dean of the Postgraduate School at Protestant University of Rwanda. In all her different responsibilities, she witnessed commitment and dedication to improve educational quality.

In the parliament of Rwanda, she is a member of the "Standing Committee on Education, Technology, Culture, sports and Youth" of Rwandan parliament whose main responsibilities include among others learning and teaching at all levels of education and special needs education, as well as research. With her dedication, huge experiences and expertise in educational quality we hope that, in collaboration with the team of parliamentarians, there are possibilities of contributing to educational quality improvement. She joined another IMPEQ Graduate, Benoit Senani IMPEQ I), who is serving as a member of Parliament for the second term. We wish her successful new responsibilities.



Former IMPEQ Coordinator and first batch IMPEQ graduate), Dr. Christine Nyiramana (L) elected to the Rwandan parliament



**I**n September 2024, Prof. Dr. Penine Uwimbabazi was elected senator representing non-state higher learning institutions in Rwanda. Being an active researcher and member of professional and academic networks at national and international levels, she brings huge academic and administrative experiences to the senate which would contribute to the successful completion of her new job. Prof. Penine is a member of the senate standing committee of Economic Development and Finance.

Prof. Dr. Penine Uwimbabazi joined Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) cum Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR) since 2013 after completion of her doctoral studies in Policy and Development studies at the university of Kwazulu Natal South Africa. Since then, in addition to teaching responsibilities, Prof. Dr. Penine served at different levels of academic and administrative positions within the same institution. She served respectively as Director of Quality Assurance, Deputy Vice chancellor for Academics and Research as well as Vice chancellor. We wish her success in the new responsibilities.

## DAAD PROJECT LEADERS EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES IN DAR ES SALAAM CONFERENCE

The DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) invited representatives of partnership projects between higher education institutions of Germany and Sub-Saharan Africa to Dar Es Salaam/Tanzania for an exchange of experiences. The University of Bamberg, the Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR) and the Université libre des Pays des Grands Lacs (ULPGL) have been able to participate in the funding programme since 2015. Following this experience, Emmanuel Niyibizi (PUR) and Susanne Timm (University of Bamberg) joined this fruitful conference.

Stakeholders of organisations (DAAD, German Foreign Ministry), specialists in higher education, and leaders of some projects gave keynotes: They introduced into the framework of this funding programme, the importance of education-focused cooperation, especially higher education for all partners, and the role of academia within societies. Following the program of the United Nations, the funding line is centred around the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals. For this we learnt that even though the contextual landscapes of knowledge, administrative rules, and working conditions for institutions of higher education are quite different, a common umbrella as the SDGs provides activities with a shared vision, and opens up opportunities for change.

While our partnership concentrated on teacher education, other projects are more specified within the health sector for which dealing with pandemics is still a major topic, or within technical areas, e.g., technics for water cleaning. We realized that technical universities and universities of applied sciences play a major role within this funding line.

We ourselves shared experiences during a panel discussion on conditions of success for partnership projects and the market-place-like brief presentation of all projects. We pointed our focus on our communalities, the improvement of teacher education by its internationalization and the successful finished PhD of colleagues. The latter are expected to bring forward teacher education within their institutions and also in the field. Next to this, research capacity has been strengthened with the support of the DAAD funding. Knowledge is growing, but also spread! We learnt that our ongoing experiences of



Dr. Susanne Timm (L) and Dr. Emmanuel Niyibizi (R) sharing experiences during the Dar es Salaam conference.

using different channels for communication, is not so self-evident as our praxis. Other projects struggle in this regard. There are other aspects of our partnership that make it special: First, there is the focus on reciprocal learning. Another topic is the relation of theory and praxis, or the evidence-based push-forward of teaching and teacher education. This can be seen in all the research and implementation done concerning quality education. Another aspect of our profile is the integration of different stakeholders. For example, we brought together not only academic staff but also specialists from the library and the IT-centres of the concerned universities as well as professionals on didactics of higher education. This expansion in turn benefits the thematic line of the partnership project, while integrating modules on learning of the impact of digitalization to teaching and learning. Last but not least, we are three universities involved in the partnership, and the relation between PUR and ULPGL is a corner stone for our triangle. **Dr. Susanne Timm, Bamberg**

## ANNETTE SCHEUNPFLUG HONORED WITH A SECOND Dr. h.c.



On 14th November Annette Scheunpflug invited staff members and IMPEQ-colleagues to a reception at her university chair at the occasion of her second Dr. h.c. (L) Award of the Dr. h.c. Certificate by the President of the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) (R)

In October this year, Prof Annette Scheunpflug was awarded her second honorary doctorate, this time by the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in Odense. This is to honour Annette Scheunpflug's achievements in the field of theories of didactics. The programme for the awarding of this title included a full-day thematic workshop and a panel discussion on the issue of promoting scientific excellence the following day. This panel discussion was followed by a ceremony with several hundred invited guests and an evening gala with around 2,000 students in the university's spacious premises. Together with Annette Scheunpflug, a physicist from Harvard, an economist from Boston and a public health scientist from Sydney were honoured.

### 20 PERCENT FOREIGN STUDENTS

The University of Southern Denmark was opened in 1966 and has four other campuses in southern Denmark



in addition to the main campus in Odense. Today, 27,000 students study there in around 115 different study programmes in the fields of the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, health sciences and engineering. Around 20 percent of the students come from abroad.

### WHAT IS HONORARY DOCTORATE

An honorary doctorate is awarded by universities for special achievements. The abbreviation „Dr. h.c.“ refers to the Latin term 'Doktor honoris causa', which means 'doctor for reasons of honour'. For Annette Scheunpflug, this is the second time she has been honoured with the „Dr. h.c.“, following the award of this title by the University of Oulu in Finland three years ago. Both honours are linked to the expectation that further collaboration on joint projects will take place in the coming years.

*IMPEQ Team*

## “WOMEN DEFEATING HUNGER” EXPLAINED IN BAMBERG



Ms Gloria Nimpundu's interesting presentation was followed by a lively discussion and Q&A session in which the participants from the IMPEQ context, who were connected via ZOOM, also described their own social contexts and reflected on them in the context of the project.

As part of the seminar: 'Theories and goals of the 2030 Education Agenda' by Dr Mark Wenz, a guest lecture by Ms Gloria Nimpundu from Burundi was offered in cooperation with Bread for the World and Diakonie Bayern on 28.11.2024. The topic of the lecture was the content and results of the project: 'Women defeating hunger' by Ripple Effect Burundi.

On the one hand, this project addresses the prevailing situation of malnutrition in Burundi. According to Bread for the World, 'every second child under the age of five in Burundi is undernourished or malnourished. Ripple Effect Burundi, [...] supports smallholder families in providing themselves with sufficient and healthy food. The project focuses primarily on women'.

As part of the presentation and discussion, aspects of SDG2 were analysed and reflected on with questions of education and the provision of education (SDG 4) under the challenges described in Burundi. Although the project is specifically aimed at combating hunger and malnutrition, by addressing women it has a far-reaching influence on changing gender roles in society,



social cohesion in the community and, of course, on improving living conditions. So the holistic approach of the Project addresses:

- Sustainable agriculture: share knowledge with communities on how they can make their land productive and biodiverse, helping them to build food security in a climate-positive way. The training is focused on the resources they own and those gifted by Ripple Effect donors.
- Gender & social inclusion: The Project actively involves marginalized and excluded people. The work embeds transformational changes in workloads, decision-making and respect, enabling members to work together more harmoniously and productively.
- Enterprise development: Once farmers are food secure, program encourages them to see their farm as businesses, to generate diversified income and create stable futures. The Project supports them with techniques and networks to help grow their revenue and provide for their families. **Mark Wenz, Bamberg**

## “BREAD FOR THE WORLD” OPENS 66TH FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN IN BAMBERG



Bread for the World's fundraising campaign was launched in Bamberg Concert Hall. The event was attended by IMPEQ students and alumni.

The organisation „Brot für die Welt“ („Bread for the World“), the development agency of the Protestant churches in Germany, was founded in 1959. In 2023, for example, BfdW supported 2,905 projects in 87 countries. The IMPEQ programme and numerous other projects have also been and continue to be supported by „Bread for the World“. This agency calls for new donations every year at the first Sunday in Advent.

This year the launch of a new fundraising campaign took place in Bamberg under the motto ‘Sowing Change’. The following reception provided a good opportunity for professional exchange. On Saturday, 30 November, „Bread for the World“ held an official reception in the concert hall of the famous Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, which was attended by several hundred guests. A well-known German TV presenter, Dr Eckart von Hirschhausen, who is very committed to global justice and climate and environmental protection out of his Christian conviction, moderated the event. His thesis is that there can only be healthy people on a healthy planet.

The commitment to sustainability also has economic reasons, he said, because ‘the most expensive thing we can do now is doing nothing.’ That evening, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra joined by a Bamberg choir performed a charity concert with great music. On Sunday morning, the 1st Advent, a church service was held in Bamberg's St. Stephen's Church to officially open the new fundraising campaign, which was broadcast on the 1st German television programme. The President of „Bread for the World“, Reverend Dagmar Pruin, and the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Christian Kopp, led the service, in which Gloria Nimpundu also presented the aforementioned project in Burundi. This event was a great opportunity to recognise and experience the role of the IMPEQ programme and other projects in Central Africa in the context of the new „Bread for the World“ campaign.

**Martin Affolderbach, Nürnberg**

## IMPEQ GRADUATE ATTENDS GLOBETHICS DOCTORAL SCHOOLS IN INDEONESIA



IMPEQ alumnus and PhD student Edouard Ntakirutimana participated in the “Globethics Doctoral School” event in Indonesia. The event’s main focus was to reflect “Inclusive peace and responsible governance”.

The Globethics Doctoral School (GDS) 2024 was an intensive program organized by Globethics and hosted by the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 25<sup>th</sup> September to 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024. It welcomes doctoral candidates and professors from different continents to reflect collaboratively on theme of “Inclusive peace and responsible governance”. Edouard Ntakirutimana, a PhD student at University of Bamberg and one of the IMPEQ alumni participated in this outstanding program.

### WHOLISTIC PEACE

GDS 2024 addressed different themes including “thinking pluralisms; sustainable development and human rights; democracy, state and civic responsibility; ethical leadership and social justice”. The debates were facilitated by expert scholars who were deep in the discussed domains. What was very important in this program was the way of reflection about the aforementioned topics. The way peace is reflected in a wholistic understanding, especially connecting peace to democratic, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability. The sessions were organized in forms of learning

through lectures, discussions, academic writing and excursions in cultural and environmental sites.

### TEACHING TOLERANCE

As example, one of the sessions was about democracy and leadership, we reflected on Pancasila, the core ideology of Indonesian government based on one God, Indonesian nationalism, humanitarianism, democracy and social justice. This ideology has successfully facilitated tolerance between people and religions in that Muslim dominated country, to the point where Muslims and Christians live in harmony and even in some cases they use the same building for doing church activities. This shows the effort to build inter-religious tolerance, although there is still room for improvement to create a space for those who do not believe in one God, and to reduce nationalism to give way to globalism. Considering the dynamism of today’s society, with its technological and artificial intelligence innovations, it is necessarily to rethink about what literacy should be developed, new spaces of gathering, and above all ethical leadership that allows dialogue to ensure sustainable development.



*Continued Page 30*

## IMPEQ GRADUATE ATTENDED GLOBETHICS DOCTORAL SCHOOLS IN INDEONESIA

In the context of linking peace to the environment, we visited a village with many lower income people near the river. Through participatory methods, the people of the river village are empowered to keep the river clean by planting the trees around the river and around their house, and to recycle the used materials of their homes to be reused. In addition, they are educated on how to keep themselves arrive by not being killed by the river flood during the rainy seasons. One of the adages I read on the river village street walls is “When we heal the earth, we heal ourselves “David Orr”. This could be a goal to keep our environment safe for ensuring ourselves secure.

### VISITING UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

For the cultural excursion, we visited the traditional religious sites, the museums and attended the traditional entertainment. Borobudur temple which is the largest Buddhist temple of the world, build in 9<sup>th</sup> century, now it is a UNESCO world heritage site. I was impressed on how the people of the time educated their children about all sector of life. Through the temple they could educate the child as well as the adult how to behave in the society of course as well without harming the environment in order to respect God the creator. We participated in the traditional performance by Ramayana ballet in historical area of Hindu temples. This is very important traditional dance that converts the Hindu epic of Ramayana.

### “SUSTAINABLE PEACE EDUCATION”

With writing sessions, I wrote a paper entitled “Perspectives of primary school curricula towards sustainable peace education in post-genocide era” in collaboration with Dr. Emmanuel Niyibizi. This paper was submitted to Globethics higher education journal for being published.

In short, it was a wonderful learning opportunity. As conclusion, sustainable peace is reflected not only in the absence of war, but in how we live with ourselves, with others, and with the environment, not only for our egoistic interests but for the whole world community.

*Edouard Ntakirutimana, Bamberg*



Edouard Ntakirutimana visited a village with low income people who are planting trees to keep their river clean.



“Globethics Doctoral School” event’s main theme is to reflect “Inclusive peace and responsible governance”, especially in multicultural countries.

## GPEN TEACHER ACADEMY FOCUSES ON “DIGITALIZATION AND PROTESTANT SCHOOLS”

Late autumn 2024 the idea to start a GPEN Teacher Academy was born. Initial reflections were shared among Annette Scheunpflug, Wim Kuiper, Frederick Njobati and Susanne Timm, topics and forms reflected. A structure for a six-part webinar series was quickly developed, the overarching topic for the first run identified as „Digitalization and Protestant Schools“, and the implementation was set in motion. The idea of GPEN Teacher Academy was further discussed in the GPEN Activity and Encounters Steering Committee to get a shared understanding as well as connect to the Koforidua Statement on digital education in protestant schools. To put this project in practice more people with their ideas, expertise, and readiness came in, not to forget the colleagues who use their networks for announcements, the technical support by a colleague of Bamberg University and accompanying support of the sessions by student assistants. Thanks to all their contributions this project developed toward a qualifying network for inputs, reflection and exchange! And this network is open to all professional connected to school and teaching.

### FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dealing reflectively with digitalization has to be seen as one focal points of future orientated quality education. Because of this, the aim of this series is to introduce step by step into the complexity of digitalization with its societal impacts, school related effects, and into teaching relevant dimensions. Nobody will be a technical professional in the end, but people participating get the chance to identify crucial aspects for their professional development. It is a format of continuing and permanent education with low conditions of access and no prerequisite for registration.

### ACCESS TO TEACHING MATERIAL

So far, four specific topics have been presented: “Artificial Intelligence and the Challenges of Promoting Democracy and Human Rights in Schools”, “Digitality as new framework and challenge for schooling”, “Being a professional in the digitalized world”, “Globalization and dealing with complexity: The example of the digital



footprint”. Two more sessions will follow in the framework of this series: “Digitalization for praxis in schools”, and “Sustainability for actions – school partnership”. Some meetings are more theoretical, others more on the practical side, some more on a general level, others offer more details. After a session, people who registered for the webinar get the material used during the session and access to a recording.

### 268 PARTICIPANTS FROM 17 COUNTRIES

The GPEN Teacher Academy meets with a great response. Up to 268 participants from more than 17 countries registered, sometimes there is one registration, but more people sharing the transmission. Most participants are coming from Cameroon (around 50% of all), only few people register from outside of Sub-Saharan Africa. More men (around 60%) are participating, and a wide range of positions: teachers and teacher educators, headmaster and persons from the school management, and church responsible persons show interest as well. With this interest, the GPEN Teacher Academy can be seen as a successful undertaking. We are sure that this derives more from the content and structure, then this would be our award. Next to the actual urgency of the topic we see the good routine of learning and working in networks through IMPEQ as a highly important foundation for this experience. **Frederick Njobati, Susanne Timm, Bamberg**

## IMPRINT

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