

MASTER  
EDUCATIONAL  
QUALITY  
IN DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES



# IMPEQ NEWSLETTER

WINTER Issue February 2026

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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,**

This IMPEQ newsletter marks a significant milestone as it is the final edition dedicated to the IMPEQ program. After 12 successful years at the University of Bamberg, we are excited to announce that the program will now be entrusted to our partner universities in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon. This transition reflects our commitment to fostering the Master programs at these universities and expanding opportunities for our students.

In this edition, we will provide a comprehensive overview of the changes ahead and share insights into the final closing of IMPEQ in autumn 2025 in Huye, Rwanda. It was a joyous occasion as we reflected on the achievements and growth that IMPEQ has fostered over the years.

While this is the end of an era for the IMPEQ program as we knew it, it is not the end of our newsletter. Moving forward, the focus will shift to the impressive activities of the four involved universities, as well as the ongoing research and development initiatives led by IMPEQ alumni and academic teams across all collaborating institutions.

We look forward to keeping you updated on these exciting developments and hope that you enjoy this edition as we embark on a new chapter together!

Happy reading!



**In January 2026, the team in Bamberg celebrated to honor the IMPEQ program's legacy. At this opportunity, the IMPEQ team of the 12 years in Bamberg met for the first time: (L to R) Dr Susanne Ress, Prof Annette Scheunpflug, Dr Susanne Timm, Dr Frederick Njobati, Dr Susanne Krogull and Lea Markus.**



## THE FINAL BATCH - IMPEQ VI STUDENTS GRADUATED



After receiving their diplomas, the IMPEQ VI batch students posed happily with the program leaders and managers.

The final batch of IMPEQ VI students completed their theses and received their master's degrees. The ceremony held at Protestant University Rwanda was also the final event of the 12-year IMPEQ program. IMPEQ will now continue independently at three separate universities in Central Africa, in similar concepts.

IMPEQ Cohort VI students graduated in September 2025 and received their master's diplomas. The number of students who completed the program over 12 years, including the 23 graduates, reached 125. The students received their diplomas at a ceremony held at the Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR) in Butare from Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunflug of Bamberg University, PUR Rector Prof. Dr. Olu. Ojedokun, Prof. Dr. Wasso Misona Joseph, Rector of the Free University of the Great Lakes Region (UPLGL – DRC), and Professor Jules-Roger Kuate, Rector of the Evangelical University Institute of Cameroon (IUEC-Cameroon).

### FROM BAMBERG TO BUTARE

The IMPEQ Cohort VI students, who began their first semester in Bamberg in September 2023, completed the following three semesters at PUR in Rwanda. With the graduation of Cohort VI, the IMPEQ program came to an end, and each of the three universities subsequently began offering similar master's programs independently.

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## THE FINAL BATCH - IMPEQ VI STUDENTS GRADUATED



Students expressed their graduation joy through a “cultural event” showcasing themes from their countries' cultures, and partied all night long.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, program director Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug emphasized that IMPEQ, which began 12 years ago, has achieved results that no one could have imagined. Scheunpflug pointed out that the 125 students who graduated over 12 years reached more than 5 million students in the countries where they worked, saying, “Students from 11 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa transferred the experience they gained with IMPEQ to thousands of students in their areas of work. The reach of IMPEQ graduates, who aim to improve the quality of education, is expanding even further as our students take on new assignments”. Scheunpflug expressed her satisfaction with the program's successful outcome despite the Corona pandemic, regional conflicts, and tensions.

Prof. Dr. Olu Ojedokun expressed his satisfaction at PUR hosting such a meaningful ceremony. Pointing out that a similar program to IMPEQ will continue at PUR under the name Master of Education in Education Quality Management (MEQUAM), he said, “We will thus continue to train new teachers who will improve the quality of education.”

### **NEW PROGRAMS WILL CONTINUE**

UPLGL Rector Prof. Dr. Wasso Misona Joseph noted that after 12 years of cooperation, many IMPEQ graduates are also working at the university in different capacities. Noting that graduates have taken on effective roles in their respective fields and shaped education policies, Prof. Wasso stated that UPLGL will continue with a similar concept under the name “Master in

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## THE FINAL BATCH - IMPEQ VI STUDENTS GRADUATED



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1: IMPEQ VI students represented the program by attending the graduation ceremony at PUR.  
2-3: IMPEQ VI graduates posed together after the university graduation ceremony with joy and happiness.  
4: All students were invited up one by one and presented with their diplomas with applause from the spectators.

Education, Leadership and Sustainable Development” (MAELD) after IMPEQ.

UEC Rector Professor Jules-Roger Kuate also emphasized his pleasure at attending the IMPEQ graduation ceremony. Stating that a program serving regional development and peace will continue at UEC, Kuate said, “Following IMPEQ, we are launching the Master in Educational Quality, Peace and Sustainable Development (MEQPDD) at UEC. We believe that students graduating from this program will also make significant contributions.”

### STUDENTS THANKED FOR DEDICATION

Speaking on behalf of the graduating class, Ibrahim Lemven (Cameroon) and Divine Kasimbi (DRC) thanked the staff of IMPEQ for making the program possible. Both students emphasized that the value the program added to them was priceless, highlighting that the knowledge they gained and the experience they acquired would shape their future lives. They closed their remarks with the words of Nelson Mandela: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

*IMPEQ Team from Butare and Bamberg*



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## SUMMER ACTIVITIES IN HUYE: INTENSIVE AND FRUITFUL WRITING WORK

After the face-to-face session in March 2025, online mentoring sessions were undertaken to help IMPEQ VI students make gradual progress in writing their master's theses, particularly when writing the first chapters, developing data collection tools, and collecting data. These online sessions allowed IMPEQ VI students not only to share their concerns but also to receive and give feedback. It was also a learning experience.

### MILESTONES CELEBRATED

As for the three-week intensive session (from 2nd to 22nd August, 2025), it was organized in Huye so that IMPEQ VI students could finalize and submit their master's theses before leaving Butare. To do this, each student developed his or her own work plan. Mentors provided support so that each student could make progress and achieve tangible results. Various strategies were adopted. Individual, small group, and plenary meetings were held. This writing retreat was a time for learning, applying, and mobilizing the skills acquired through the various modules covered previously. Everyone did a remarkable job despite the difficulties encountered. Each milestone was celebrated in a "big" way. In this regard, each student had his or her own list of joy. The teaching staff actively participated in providing support, encouragement, and celebration in one way or another, also to ensure the well-being of the students. At the end of the stay, every student was able to submit his or her master's thesis.

### STUDENTS' IMPRESSIONS

Pressure, a busy schedule, and doubts marked the beginning of this writing retreat session. From the students' perspective, this was a crucial time to focus on finalizing their master's theses, even though three weeks did not seem to be enough. They learned to work in a systematic way—the analysis of the collected data marked also this learning process. To overcome the challenges encountered, the support and guidance of mentors and lecturers were invaluable. Participation in the learning community was helpful in terms of progress in writing. All of this contributed to the achievement of the expected results.



After a period of intense study, the students had the opportunity to visit sightseeing spots in Rwanda, including King's Palace.

In addition, various social events were part of the activities during this writing retreat, including a visit to the Royal Palace Museum, a shared dinner every Friday, and the farewell party. The visit to the Royal Palace Museum in Nyanza was remarkable. It allowed the students not only to relax but also to refresh their knowledge of culture, history, and traditional religion. It was a most captivating cultural experience.

As for dinner every Friday evening, it was an enjoyable moment of sharing and joy. It was also a symbol of unity and love with a cheerful and friendly atmosphere. The farewell party at the end of this session was the last formal celebration as IMPEQ students. It was an opportunity to get together without the pressure of deadlines and celebrate together how far the students had come. It was marked by the celebration of several birthdays of three teaching staff members and one IMPEQ VI student. In short, all these quality moments are unforgettable memories.

*Dr. Onja Tiana Raharijaona (IMPEQ II), Madagascar*

## SUMMER ACTIVITIES IN HUYE: INTENSIVE AND FRUITFUL WRITING WORK



Students tried to relieve the stress of their intense study period by participating in activities together. After short breaks, they gathered energy to return to their intense study pace.

If I had to sum up my experience of writing the thesis, I would say that it was a demanding journey, but one that was incredibly structured and supported not only by mentors but also by colleagues. The central pillar of this adventure was, without a doubt, the guidance provided by the mentors. Their involvement went far beyond simple advice; it was rigorous monitoring, with regular, extremely precise, and deeply individualized feedback. The fact that each of us had a fixed schedule was not a minor detail, but the key to overcoming these difficulties. It guaranteed a sacred space, dedicated to our specific difficulties, where we did not have to compete for attention. These individual sessions, which complemented the group feedback, were invaluable to me personally. They served as essential checkpoints, allowing us to correct mistakes, unblock complex situations, and cross the finish line on time—a truly immense sense of accomplishment. In addition, a surprising and very positive aspect emerged from the group dynamic: mutual support among colleagues on a daily basis. We were not competing, as IMPEQ has always said, but rather cooperating. The constructive feedback we exchanged during our informal meetings and the spontaneous circulation of specialized books, relevant scientific articles,

and other documentary resources created a space for knowledge sharing. This collective intelligence was a tremendous lever for progressing together and greatly enriched the quality of our work.

In addition, there was the “list of joy,” a term I learned. These were moments of grace that illuminated the sometimes arduous period of writing. It was listening to certain songs of thanksgiving, which spoke of resilience and gratitude, and which resonated so deeply with me. It was the surprises concocted by a member of the teaching staff, such as the unexpected tasting of maracuja (passion fruit), which brought a touch of exoticism and freshness to our daily lives.

It was the unchanging ritual of dancing and recreational activities every day at 3:30 p.m., a breath of fresh air that allowed us to let off steam and unwind together. Finally, how could I not mention Cameroon's legendary candies, the very strong ginger sweets? These moments were much more than just breaks; they were ceremonies of sharing and comfort that strengthened bonds and gave us courage for what lay ahead. My other list of joys was role-playing on stage to imitate students, mentors, and teachers. It was really great.

**Epaphrodite Kasitu Katakya (IMPEQ VI), DRC**

FROM THE EYES OF THE STUDENTS

## MY HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN IMPEQ

The story of my holistic development journey in IMPEQ can be understood by comparing my perceptions prior to the program, my learning experience, and my projections after the program.

Before joining this program, I was told that the quality of education in Germany is among the best in the world. However, my perceptions of what quality education entails were very limited. Consequently, I did not have clear expectations of the program. I simply wanted to upgrade my level of education to extend my impact to a wider society with a comprehensive content package. During my learning time in IMPEQ, I got to know how broad is quality education! It was a long but worthwhile journey. Looking back, and seeing the intensive package from this program, new learning and assessment models, the journey was long. However, it was very short due to the fact that IMPEQ team used strategies and approaches to make this journey enjoyable. I will never forget the fun we had in Bamberg, the different excursions, especially in Wittenberg and Berlin, which broadened my horizons, the school visits in different contexts, games, mentoring sessions, PC colloquia, songs, farewell parties, and so many others, which made our learning experience more colorful. I already miss all the wonderful moments we shared.

I see this journey as the best definition of quality education due to a number of reasons. Regardless of our contextual background, IMPEQ has tried to provide all of the necessary conditions to create a highly conducive learning environment, which I have never experienced before. The teachings were not purely academic; other aspects were also taken into consideration, such as emotional, social, and physical aspects, as well as spiritual life. Throughout this process, which involved engaging and active participatory approaches, effective feedback, and individual support, I developed a number of skills which are not limited to research skills, which are helping me to make informed decisions with a critical thinking mindset in my responsibilities. Moreover, I learned the urgency of collaboration instead of competition in multidisciplinary teams. Furthermore, communication skills are one of the powerful competencies I developed as a leader.



IMPEQ VI students are engaged in an intense discussion and evaluation in front of the screen with their colleagues.

Above all, I am an instructional leader who prioritizes the development of my learners' skills. In this context, this has improved my daily practices in the school I am leading. Through teamwork, our school is now one of the top performers in national assessments as a result of collective efforts. In the same context, by focusing on quality as a landscape, students from our school are the ones sharing success stories of the impact of the school on their lives outside the school environment. Some of the tangible indicators are that our school closed the enrollment process before the schools resume due to a long waiting list. This has never happened in the 20 years since our school was established. The school was also chosen as one of eight schools in the country with a conducive environment for vulnerable students. In this regard, we are collaborating with partner schools and organizations that sponsor students, and the process is proving very promising. A recent survey also showed that our students are making an impact on the community, getting scholarships based on merits and having access to job opportunities, among many others. Afterwards, I am very interested in working on educational projects which aim to improve the quality at schools system level and create synergy to make an impact in society at large. Thank you!

**Celine Uwituje (IMPEQ VI), Rwanda**

FROM THE EYES OF THE STUDENTS

## WHAT I LEARNED AND GAINED IN IMPEQ



This article focuses on my experiences with IMPEQ and is divided into five sections. I will first discuss my expectations, then what I gained in terms of knowledge and skills, followed by the learning environment. Next, I will talk about what touched me during my stays in Germany and Rwanda, and finally, I will discuss how it affected my personal and professional life.

### 1. My expectations

My expectations before IMPEQ focused on three aspects: learning a little more about education, taking advantage of the opportunity to travel and discover new horizons, and obtaining another degree.

### 2. What I gained

However, what I gained at IMPEQ exceeded my expectations. In fact, at the end of the various modules, I had gained not only knowledge but also skills. In terms of knowledge, I discovered the different dimensions and aspects of quality education.

I also discovered the indicators of quality teaching. In terms of skills, I am referring, for example, to setting up and running an educational project. I also acquired skills in analyzing the education system based on UNESCO's quality criteria. In addition, I acquired skills in scientific writing, particularly in conducting effective interviews, designing a coding system, and, above all, using abstracts and metalanguage.

### 3. The learning environment

The learning environment at IMPEQ is characterized by a positive learning atmosphere thanks to humani-

stic and tolerant teachers who give students autonomy and individual support through effective communication. It is an environment marked by friendliness and sharing, which is conducive to optimal learning.

### 4. What struck me in Germany and Rwanda

In Germany, I was struck by the school visits where I had the chance to make comparisons, but particularly by the study trip to Wittenberg, the city of Martin Luther, where I had the opportunity to experience what history books tell us about the Reformation in particular. In Rwanda, I was impressed by the lessons I observed during my visits to schools and especially to the Royal Palace, which allowed me to learn about the history of colonization in this part of the country.

### 5. How it affected my personal and professional life

IMPEQ had a positive effect first on my personal life and then on my professional life. In my personal life, my family noticed changes, particularly in the way I communicate with them. Indeed, the lessons on effective communication, democracy, and constructive feedback have not left me indifferent.

In terms of my professional life, IMPEQ has had an effect on my collaboration with colleagues. I have become more cooperative and tolerant. I communicate in a less aggressive manner, listening more and trying to understand the others. In short, the process of change has begun in my workplace and will continue till the end of my life.

*Frederic Galdavai Kewe (IMPEQ VI), Cameroon*

## THE IMPACT OF IMPEQ: 7 MILLION STUDENTS IN 11 COUNTRIES

Cohort	Number of teachers reached by direct training intervention	Number of teachers responsible for	Number of students responsible for
IMPEQ I and IPEQ II	800	106.000	2.500.000
IMPEQ III	363	68.805	2.144.897
IMPEQ IV	356	32.344	891.409
IMPEQ V	367	14.552	429.700
IMPEQ VI	412	33.451	948.103
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.298</b>	<b>149.258</b>	<b>6.914.109</b>

Through six batches of IMPEQ graduates, the outreach is about 150,000 teachers and about 7,000,000 students in 11 countries.

The International Master's Program in Educational Quality for Developing Countries (IMPEQ) of the Otto-Friedrich-University of Bamberg, in cooperation with the Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR), Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs (ULPGL) in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Institut Université Evangelique du Cameroun (IUEC), has registered important milestones in its 12-year period of running (2013-2025). Besides the more than 120 graduates who have completed the Master, 13 of them have finished PhDs, with 12 more on the PhD journey, creating an active professional capital of change agents.

### FROM 11 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

The IMPEQ students have been drawn from 11 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Burundi, Liberia, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Zambia, Tanzania, Ghana, South Sudan, Cameroon, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo) with competencies developed in various domains, not limited to school qualification in educational quality, leadership, project planning, and research. Additional topics such as inclusion, education for sustainability, democracy, and peace have been integrated into the program. During the IMPEQ program, evidence-based trainings related to educational quality have been organized by students of each cohort within a duration of two to three days.



Through these trainings, the six IMPEQ cohorts (IMPEQ I to IMPEQ VI) have had an outreach of about 150.000 teachers and about 7.000.000 students in 11 countries.

### ALUMNI REACHING TEACHERS

The analysis above does not include the training carried out by the Alumni in the framework of the Innovative Fund project. The qualification and commitment of IMPEQ students give hope and have demonstrated a successful landmark in making a difference through educational quality in the challenging context of Sub-Saharan Africa across early childhood, primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education system levels. **Dr. Frederick Njobati, Bamberg**

## FROM IMPEQ TO ELID: MASTER'S PROGRAMS STARTING AT THREE AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES



Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug (L), Dr. Frederick Njobati (C) and Lea Markus (R) handing over IMPEQ to PUR, ULPGL and IUEC Rectors

Since 2013, the University of Bamberg in collaboration with three African universities, PUR (Rwanda), ULPGL (DRC) and UEC (Cameroon) under the financial support of Bread for the World has run International Master's Program "Educational Quality in Developing Countries". In six cohorts, more than 120 quality experts from 11 African countries graduated and are serving in different capacities, including but not limited to school coordination, university lecturers, members of parliaments, teachers, and teacher trainers. During the graduation of the sixth cohort at PUR on 2nd October, 2025, which not only marks the end of IMPEQ but also a new joint journey of partnerships for educational quality, a new form of collaboration was likewise launched. As a continuity of educational quality in a new form of partnership, the project "Educational Leadership Implementation and Development" (ELID) in developing countries at Christian schools and universities in Sub-Saharan Africa was developed and has financial support from Bread for the World. In this project, the capacity building is done via three

accredited master's programs, namely:

- Master of Education in Education Quality Management (**MEQUAM**) at PUR, Rwanda
- Master in Education, Leadership and Sustainable Development" (**MAELD**) at ULPGL, DRC
- Master in Educational Quality, Peace and Sustainable Development (**MEQPDD**) at UEC.

Under the funding of Bread for the World via scholarships and self-sponsorships, 110 students were registered and started in three respective programs. The cooperation of the University of Bamberg with three universities will continue via mentoring teaching staff and mentors, teaching common modules similar to those of IMPEQ, as well as quality assurance.

As a new perspective, ELID is expected to strengthen not only South-North but also South-South cooperation in the process of educational quality development, mutual learning among students and staff in partner universities, possible partnerships in research and community outreach for the benefit of Protestant education in Africa.

**Dr. Emmanuel Niyibizi, Rwanda**

## PHD COLLOQUIA AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN POST-IMPEQ

Current and prospective doctoral students participated in the PhD colloquia conducted under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug.



PhD colloquia and collaborative learning communities (CLCs) have become essential pillars of modern doctoral education, offering structured spaces where emerging researchers refine their scholarship, build professional identity, and find the social support many need to complete the long academic journey. Beyond the International Master's Program of Educational Quality (IMPEQ) at the University of Bamberg, a significant number of graduates have either completed doctoral studies or are currently engaged in doctoral programs. As students progress through their graduate programs and adopt hybrid learning models, these colloquia and CLCs serve as both academic engines and social anchors for doctoral candidates.

Typically, a PhD colloquium is organized as a seminar, workshop, or structured presentation, thereby providing a forum in which students share research-in-progress and receive focused feedback from peers and supervisors. These sessions are invaluable in promoting collaborative problem-solving, critical reflection, and scholarly dialogue, with the objective of assisting students in enhancing their argumentation, refining their methodological choices, and refining their academic communication skills.

Collaborative learning communities, which are intentionally structured peer networks, are another such example. In these communities, the post-IMPEQ PhD students work together to co-construct knowledge and

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## PHD COLLOQUIA AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN POST-IMPEQ

support one another's academic growth. Through sustained interaction, whether in-person or online, members engage in the exchange of ideas, the resolution of challenges, and the establishment of mutual accountability, thereby cultivating a collective responsibility for learning.

### **Improving research quality and output**

Regular cycles of structured feedback are integral to the functioning of these communities. The presentation and revision of work in iterative rounds has been demonstrated to facilitate the refinement of research questions, the improvement of data collection instruments, and the fortification of analytical frameworks among students. In the post-IMPEQ doctoral studies, colloquia are utilized to provide students with guidance at each stage of their learning journey, including early conceptualization, methodological design, data analysis, interpretation, and chapter drafting.

Digitalization has facilitated increased access to these spaces. Virtual and hybrid colloquia have been developed to accommodate geographically dispersed students, integrating synchronous discussions with asynchronous pre-reads and written feedback. The outcome is a more flexible yet academically rigorous environment that enhances publication readiness and improves the overall quality of doctoral output.

### **Social and psychological support**

Beyond the academic benefits, CLCs play a crucial role in supporting doctoral well-being. The doctoral journey is frequently characterized by solitude, uncertainty, and variable motivation. Peer communities have been shown to offer a sense of belonging, emotional reassurance, and mutual accountability. Doctoral students involved in learning communities consistently show a stronger academic identity, greater persistence, and reduced feelings of isolation. For the researchers, these networks function as critical resources, providing a crucial source of motivation during the most arduous phases of research.

### **Best practices that strengthen the experience**

Successful colloquia share clear goals, expectations, and confidentiality norms and establish a professional

and trusting environment. Rotating roles such as presenter, discussant, distribute responsibility and help students build diverse scholarly competencies. Blending oral presentations with circulated drafts deepens the quality of critique, while supportive supervisor involvement ensures constructive rather than hierarchical feedback.

The training of students in facilitation and constructive critique by supervisors and mentors has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on the strength of these communities. The communication and leadership skills that participants develop through this training are essential for progress in their academic work.

### **Overcoming persistent challenges**

Despite their numerous benefits, colloquia and learning communities are confronted with well-documented challenges, including uneven participation, time constraints, and variability in the quality of feedback. In response to these challenges, the PhD colloquia and CLCs have adopted a range of innovative approaches, including role rotation, the formation of mixed-experience groups, asynchronous learning options, and peer only sessions designed to mitigate power dynamics. The implementation of these strategies is conducive to the establishment of inclusive and equitable environments, wherein all voices are able to contribute in a meaningful and productive manner.

### **Conclusion**

PhD colloquia and collaborative learning communities have been shown to have a significant impact on the development of scholars beyond IMPEQ. These communities of practice, in essence, serve as conduits for the dissemination of tacit knowledge concerning a range of subjects, including writing, publishing, conference engagement, and academic life. In these collaborative spaces, students have undergone a transition from learners to independent researchers. This transition has resulted in the acquisition of two key competencies: academic competence and professional confidence. These competencies have been essential in the success of students in the world of scholarship.

*Essaw Samgwa'a (IMPEQ III), Cameroon*

## CONFERENCE ON COLONIALISM, MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE



More than 100 educationalists, theologians and experts attended the conference for “Colonialism, Mission and Responsibilities for the Future” held in Kibuye, Rwanda. While participants discussed about the future collaboration possibilities, IMPEQ graduates presented their works.

Colonialism, Mission and Responsibilities for the Future was the title of the conference, held at 6-10 October 2025 in Kibuye, Karongi district, Rwanda. It was part of an ongoing collaboration between the Eglise Presbytérienne au Rwanda (EPR), theologians from the Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR) and the Ruhr-University in Bochum in Germany. For this conference in particular, the leading team was expanded to include educational scholars from the Otto-Friedrich-University in Bamberg, Germany.

### **HISTORY OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN RWANDA**

A brief overview of the program reveals contributions from a variety of perspectives with different objectives: While the framing was done by theologians, also church and community leaders welcomed the more than 100 participants and emphasised the importance of exchanging experience and knowledge in a peaceful environ-

ment. This enables critical discussions about past, present, and future developments to come to the light while learning and debating about mission, colonialism, and their entanglement, and strengthening ties. Reflecting on power structures, the impacts of historical developments, present situations, and turning points, and especially taking homegrown solutions into account is a project, that is connected to responsibilities itself. Altogether, four sections were held over the course of the event, bringing theology, church policy, eyewitness experiences as insights into education related to mission and missions on the table.

A first panel, German Colonialism in East Africa and Christian Missionary Activities, featured contributions from theologians and (former) missionaries. It focused mainly on German influences and legacies, such as the missionary profile of the von Bodelschwingh family, the spread in inculturation of Christianity in Rwanda co-

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## CONFERENCE ON COLONIALISM, MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

ming through German missionaries from Tanzania, and the introduction of diaconia in the Bethel tradition with the establishment of a sanatorium.

### CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Another panel, Processes of de-colonization in East-Central Africa and the role of mission churches and their 'missionaries', was divided into two parts. The first part was more theoretical, covering ethics, concepts of liberation and loyalty, and colonialism and mission in the context of critical development studies, and offering some outlooks on developments toward a common future. The second part provided an opportunity for stakeholders and mission actors to share their memories from the past few decades. The example of UEM clearly demonstrated the shift in ideas and practices from hierarchy to equality.

The third panel, 'Theological Challenges and Responsibilities of the Church in the Context of Post-Colonialism, brought together theological scholars from different continents. They reflected on biblical experiences and concepts as intercultural encounters and Christian foundations for environmental ethics. They also asked how the post-colonial pathway could lead to greater justice.

'Responsibilities in Education toward a Decolonized Future: Historical Traces and Pathways into the Future' was the guiding framework for a panel with contributions from education. The first section discussed fundamental questions: Annette Scheunpflug (Otto-Friedrich-University, Bamberg) explored the structural double asymmetry of missionary education based on the knowledge, experience, and maturity gap between teachers and students, as well as the distinction between Christians and non-Christians. Amalgamating with the dual function of modern education systems, which is to educate individuals to make their own decisions as a responsible members of society while also benefiting its functionality and development. These asymmetric structures challenge the professionalism of educators. This outline also provides evidence of the long history of professionalism in Christian education. Serving the individual and serving the community at the same time, while reflecting on the occasional contradictions of this dual-

ty. Ultimately, we saw that the responsibility for the professional development in changing and challenging conditions is not a new topic, but an ongoing experience, also to be considered for the future.

Jean Kasereka (ULPGL DR Congo, Baptist Community in Central Africa – CBCA) introduced the history of the Congolese education system, focusing on the Great Lake region. He began his presentation by outlining the legal frameworks, and provided an in-depth overview of the relationship between the educational history at the state, legal and systemic levels and the history of church-guided education. This presentation made it clear that the mission and the church had their own agendas, which were realised in different ways due to the current political framework. This has enabled churches to fill the gaps left by governments, both colonial and post-colonial, and to offer access to education to as many people as possible.

### ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE BUT HOW?

Kakule Bulaya Jumapili Eraste (CBCA, Butembo, DR Congo) demonstrated the importance of a particular field of learning through his substantial insight into the research of his completed doctoral thesis. He asked how and what church leaders learn in global encounters. His results are significant as learning mostly remains implicit, despite there being many occasions, investments and impacts that could be prepared for and supported. Learning orientations range from those oriented towards personal well-being, one's own ministry and the local society, to organisational change and world society. This means that everyone learns something, but the impact on society varies widely and there are challenges in applying knowledge acquired globally. Susanne Timm (Otto-Friedrich University, Bamberg) moved away from church-related education to educational activities originating from other forms of vision, namely the concept of the 'New Man' in a socialist context. She outlined this historically developed ideal and compared it with related politics in countries of the former Eastern bloc during the Cold War. She focused on two examples from East Germany: a children's home for Namibian refugee children in cooperation with SWAPO and a large boarding school for Mozambican youths.

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## CONFERENCE ON COLONIALISM, MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

These examples particularly demonstrate the challenges involved in interpreting and ultimately evaluating historical projects that may have been initiated for political and humanitarian reasons, resulting in chaotic situations that had a significant impact on the lives of children and young people.

### PERFORMANCES BY RWANDAN ARTISTS

Within a second panel on education contemporary situations with outlooks into the future were presented, mainly to demonstrate how legacy could be responsibly transferred into a fruitful future. Emmanuel Niyibizi (Protestant University of Rwanda, Rwanda) began by providing insights into the Rwandan curriculum and offering suggestions for gradually changing the framework towards solutions connected to Rwanda's rich history and cultural traditions.

Onja Raharijaona (École Normale Supérieure, Madagascar) provided an overview of Madagascan schooling pathways and their intertwining with colonial, church and political history. In this context, the poor development and provision of state education in particular gives rise to an obligation for churches to advocate for the right to education for all and to provide high-quality inclusive education beyond the scope of their own church. Against this backdrop, training programmes for educators can be regarded as a key area of work and a vital contribution by churches because teachers are essential for improving the quality of education. However, this requires strong partnerships, including financial ones.

Frederick Njobati (University of Bamberg, Germany, and Cameroon) presented insights on homegrown solutions, focusing on innovative pedagogical approaches. He started by examining historical traces. Next, he presented empirical data from Rwanda, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. He demonstrated that church-run schools continue to drive innovation, as the church leadership bodies in all three countries have adopted new educational paradigms, namely participatory and active pedagogy, and learner-centred approaches in teacher training programmes. By adapting to the specific context, these programmes can have an impact as homegrown solutions, although there is still room for

further development of pedagogy for liberation and taking responsibility as a transformative process. Charles Gahutu (PUR, Rwanda) concluded the session by contributing to the discussion on teacher training. He described the current situation in Rwanda and its historical roots, outlined the contribution of the churches through various teacher training formats, and presented future perspectives. He focused on how quality can be systematically improved, how international developments such as the strengthening of the SDGs can be incorporated, and how a post-colonial Rwandan profile can be developed simultaneously.

This panel in particular made it clear that the asymmetry highlighted at the outset exists not only between teachers and students, or between Christians and non-Christians, but also in a global context, where further asymmetrical relationships must be addressed reflexively.

The programme included an evening lecture by Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, the moderator of the World Council of Churches, on the Council's peace initiatives and the power of unity in difference. There were also cultural performances by Rwandan artists and many opportunities for interaction and encounter. Thanks to the variety of the programme, all participants had the chance to gain new insights and inspiration for their own work, and to learn through exchange and confrontation – especially because the conference was characterised by a shared spirit of reconciliation. The conference concluded with a joint statement. The following paragraph shows the potential impact of the conference: “The participants gathered at this international, interinstitutional, interdisciplinary and intergenerational conference emphasized that studying together, discussing and speaking out in solidarity represents a decolonized theological stance, while silence on the various historic and ongoing asymmetries reflects the continuity of the dependency on Western narratives and carries on hegemonial knowledge structures and other global imbalances.” *Dr. Susanne Timm, Bamberg*

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## 9TH IMPEQ CONFERENCE: EDUCATIONAL QUALITY - A TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS



The title of the latest in the regularly held IMPEQ conferences was “Educational quality: A transformative process” and the event was attended by educational scholars, and IMPEQ graduates. Participants from the MEQUAM also participated in the conference.

It has become a culture that every IMPEQ batch is concluded by a conference. The conference organisation keeps rotating among the three African partner Universities, namely Université Libre des Grand Lacs (ULPGL), Université Evangelique du Cameroun (IUEC) and Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR). The organisation of the 9th IMPEQ conference was thusly entrusted to PUR. The conference took place on October 1, 2025. It was a one-day conference and it was organised under the guiding theme of ‘Educational quality: A transformative process’. Participants were provided with a room to discuss the role of quality education in shaping societal transformation in the digital era. The opening remarks were given by Prof. Dr. Olu Ojedokun (Vice Chancellor of PUR). He appreciated the work done by IMPEQ over the whole period of 12 years of existence. Similarly, he paid tribute to the partnership between three sister African universities (already menti-

oned above), together with the University of Bamberg (Germany). He also reminded the contribution of Bread of the World, the funding partner of all activities done in the framework of IMPEQ. He went on recognising the participants coming from varied professional and academic backgrounds. The whole conference was graced by the presence of Prof. Dr. Penina Uwimbabazi (the former vice Chancellor of PUR and serving today as a Senator in the Rwanda House of Senate). Besides, other high-profile leaders were recognised, including Prof. Dr. Jule-Roger Kuiate, Prof. Dr. Joseph Misona Wasso, respectively vice chancellors of UEC and ULPGL. The keynote speech was delivered by Professor Dr. Annette Scheunpflug. First she highlighted the existing challenges to education in the shape of access, equity, quality and efficiency. She underscored the costs of the bad quality and poor organisation of

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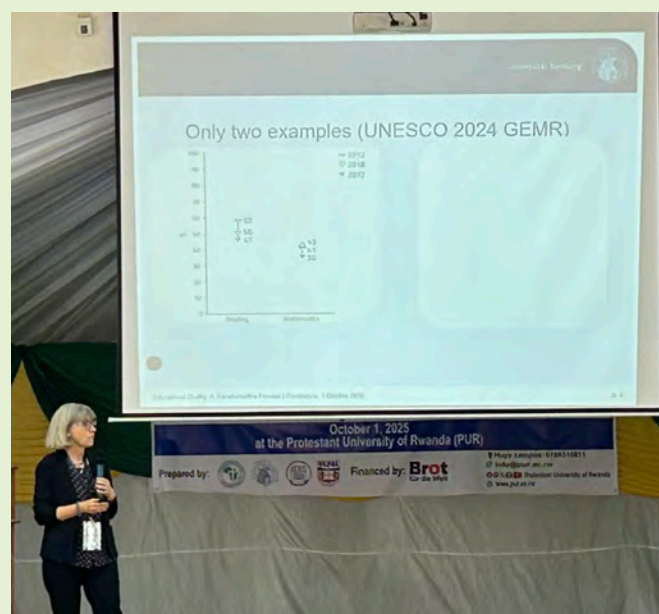
## 9TH IMPEQ CONFERENCE: EDUCATIONAL QUALITY - A TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS

education, which goes beyond the waste of limited financial resources to include life chances, hope and self-esteem on the side of learners. Secondly, she talked about the specificity of the Protestant education which stands out by its emphasis on the intersection between theology and pedagogy. Thirdly, she underlined the need for the transformation. This call was specifically addressed to the educational leaders from different layers of the education system administration. Their work and efforts should be geared towards the improvement of learning for students. Lastly, she reminded the achievements of IMPEQ within 12 years of its existence. Basically, 125 educationists have been trained in the framework of IMPEQ, and the learning of around 1,2 million students has been affected in different countries of Africa, including Rwanda, DRC, Tanzania, Burundi, Zambia, Madagascar, Cameroon, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Ghana. She also reiterated that the conference coincides with the end of IMPEQ; however, it is not an end as one might think, rather the program transitions to African Master programs locally organised in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon.

### **SYMPOSIUM ON DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

In the framework of the symposium, graduands from IMPEQ VI and Master of Education in Educational Quality Management (MEQUAM I) were offered space to present the findings of the studies they conducted on different dimensions of educational quality in Africa. Relevant topics were explored in different contexts and situations, including faith-based education, private education, calm areas, and conflict zones. Similarly, different levels of education, including pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary were targeted by researchers in different African countries. All topics addressed in the symposium are recaptured below:

– Professional Learning Communities in a Conflict Context: Perceptions of Protestant Secondary School Teachers in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by Divine Namavu Kasimbi (IMPEQ VI)



At the conference, Prof. Annette Scheunpflug gave a detailed presentation based on data about how education affects society.

- Good Learning Climate Management in the Context of War. Perceptions of Primary School Teachers in the North West Region of Cameroon by Ibrahim Lemven (IMPEQ VI)
- School leadership and its influence in creating a conducive classroom climate. A case study of G.S Ndora in Gisagara district by Florence Bucyedusenge (MEQUAM I)
- Working Conditions and Quality Teaching: Teachers' Experiences in Private Secondary Schools in Rwanda by Valens Sindikubwabo (MEQUAM I)
- Assessment of University Students' Work in The Age of AI-Assisted Solutions: Experiences of PUR Lecturers by Rene Nezerwa Nahayo (MEQUAM I)
- Cognitive Activation by tasks in Rwandan secondary schools: analysis of tasks given to the students in the geography and environment subject. A case study of secondary schools in Kinazi sector, Huye district by Bernadette Ahishakiye (MEQUAM I)

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## 9TH IMPEQ CONFERENCE: EDUCATIONAL QUALITY - A TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS

– La Clarté et la Structure de la Connaissance dans la Pratique Éducative et au Développement des Pré-concepts au niveau de la Petite Enfance : Cas de l'École Non-gouvernementale, Harmony - Alarobia Amboniloha, Madagascar by Andrianintsilavo Masoandro Rakotoarimanana (IMPEQ VI)

– Effective Classroom Management: Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers in Kigali City, Rwanda by Celine Uwituje (IMPEQ VI)

### **Paper presentation by IMPEQ Alumni**

Involvement of MEQUAM graduates in the presentations was a particular component of the 9th IMPEQ conference. However, the conference stood out by offering a space to IMPEQ alumni to present their papers as well. To remind the reader, a number of IMPEQ alumni coming from different cohorts have already completed their PhDs. The conference was an opportunity for some of them to share the findings of their PhDs, but others presented further scientific works they conducted after their graduation. This is a visible testimony of IMPEQ outcome showing the impact of the program on the organisation and shaping of the education landscape in Africa. The following papers were presented in parallel sessions:

– La communauté de pratique et amélioration de la gestion de classe: Perceptions des enseignants du primaire à Madagascar by Dr Onja Tiana Raharijaona

– Pratiques pédagogiques dans l'enseignement supérieur en RD Congo à l'ère du basculement au système Licence-Master-Doctorat by Dr Roger Muhindo Binzaka

– Les héros dans l'ombre : Leadership scolaire et qualité de l'éducation dans un contexte de précarité Dr Jean Kasereka Lutswamba

– L'empreinte carbone et l'intelligence artificielle : implications dans le façonnement du paysage de la qualité de l'éducation by Dr. Ernest Claude Njoya

– Enjeux anthropologiques de la promotion d'une éducation de qualité pour le changement en Afrique Sub-saharienne : Cas de la RDC by Prof. Semerita Kavira Kamundu

– Protestant School Leaders: A Qualitative Research about their Self-understanding: Case of Protestant Secondary School Principals in Cameroon by Dr Frederick F. Njobati

– The role of the church in school management and the implication for teaching quality: Perceptions of school leaders in Rwanda by Dr Etienne Uwajiwabo

– Synergistic Collaboration of the Government and Rwandan Educational Institutions in Minimizing the Dynamics of Student Violence by Dr Abraham Tamukum Tangwe

– Perceptions of teachers on the change in schooling: An empirical case study of Rwanda by Dr Charles Gahutu

– Learning of Protestant church's leaders from global encounters: a qualitative empirical study from the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo by Dr Bulaya Jumapili Kakule

It is worth noting that, besides the aforementioned presentations, other activities were organised in the framework of the conference, including table talks (IMPEQ steering committee members, IMPEQ VI and MEQUAM I students) and poster presentations (All IMPEQ VI and MEQUAM I students)

### **Conclusion**

The 9th IMPEQ conference, organised in Rwanda, coincided with the end of the program. IMPEQ started in 2012, counted a number of cohorts and the sixth one graduated in the wake of the conference in Rwanda. Different cohorts were represented in the conference in different capacities. IMPEQ alumni hold different positions in their educational systems across the continent (teaching, teacher training, leadership, decision making, and faith-based education coordination). Additionally, the conference showed that IMPEQ alumni are also promoting education in Africa through research. They are generating knowledge in different dimensions of educational quality and, by this, their works are worth being praised since the region of Sub-Saharan Africa has always been labelled as lagging behind when it comes to research. **Dr. Charles Gahutu, Rwanda**

## GPEN TEACHER ACADEMY: 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 were reflected on. A structure for a six-part webinar series was quickly developed, the overarching topic for the first run identified as „Digitalization and Protestant Schools“ (<https://www.uni-bamberg.de/allgpaed/gpen-teacher-academy-gpen-tac/inar-series-digitalization-and-protestant-schools/>), and the implementation was set in motion. 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 professionals connected to school and teaching.

### WEBINAR SERIES

Dealing reflectively with digitalization has to be seen as one focus point 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.

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 part-



Hundreds of participants who took part in the 6-week online training series were awarded a “certificate of participation”.

nership”. 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. 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, headmasters 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 than 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.

**Dr. Susanne Timm, Bamberg**

## ALUMNI NEWS

# IMPEQ GRADUATE AT INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN BURKINA FASO



Frederic Galdavai (IMPEQ VI), who participated in the symposium titled “Challenges and opportunities for educational sciences in Africa in the age of intelligence” in Burkina Faso, gave a presentation on inclusion in Northern Cameroon.

IMPEQ VI graduate Frederic Galdavai participated in the International Symposium of the African Network of Researchers and Teacher-Researchers in Education Sciences (RACESE) held at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Burkina Faso. From October 15 to 17, 2025, more than 100 participants from 11 countries presented their research and works. Galdavai presented on the theme: “Physical education and sports practice by students with disabilities in the era of inclusive education: current situation and prospects in northern Cameroon”.

This conference is the first international conference organized by RACESE and was held under the theme: “Challenges and opportunities for educational sciences in Africa in the age of intelligence”. It brought together teacher-researchers, teachers, doctoral students, practitioners, and decision-makers. Given its importance, it was held under the patronage of the Minister of Higher Education of the host country. The event focused on several themes, one of which was inclusive education. With plenary presentations at the beginning and end, the conference was attended by around 100 researchers from several African countries, including two from Cameroon. The various workshops took place simultaneously, and each presentation was followed by a dis-

cussion. Galdavai’s presentation attracted particular interest, as it shed light on certain educational concepts and methods, such as individual support, which is one of the key concepts in indicators of teaching quality in an inclusive context.

Galdavai’s presentation in RACESE Symposium was structured around three points: the context and issues, the objectives of the communication, and the results and implications. With regard to the context and issues, the presentation began by outlining the international context of inclusion, followed by the national context and finally the reality experienced in schools in northern Cameroon.

With regard to the international context, scientific discourse reveals a notable evolution in legislation relating to the issue of inclusion. These include the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994), which promotes access to mainstream schools by taking special educational needs into account, and Education for All (UNESCO, 2002), which considers education for people with disabilities to be a right. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015) aim to ensure access to quality education for all, with the possibility of lifelong learning. At the internatio-

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## ALUMNI NEWS

# IMPEQ GRADUATE AT INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN BURKINA FASO

nal level, the theory of universal accessibility is emphasized. At the national level, Law 2018/014 of July 11, 2018, stipulates that physical and sports activities are a right for all. Although northern Cameroon is marked by precariousness and a security crisis that does not favor the schooling of persons with disabilities from vulnerable families, in recent years there has been an increase in the number of persons with disabilities attending mainstream schools. However, despite the robust international and national legislative framework, the local reality in northern Cameroon reveals that students with disabilities are still excluded from physical education and sports (PES) in the mainstream schools where they are enrolled.

The research aimed to assess the current situation regarding physical education and sports (PES) for students with disabilities in northern Cameroon and to reflect on the prospects for inclusive physical education and sports in mainstream schools.

The results show that learners report having the potential to participate in PES and that others want to make it their future career. In the classroom, both able-bodied and disabled students attend theory classes. However, when it comes to physical exercise, only able-bodied students actually participate in physical education. Disabled students are thus considered observers and spectators. Indeed, some teachers still have mixed perceptions of inclusion. In addition, the infrastructure in some schools is still inadequate, as are teaching methods and teaching materials. Furthermore, teachers are not trained in the field of inclusion. These results imply a paradigm shift and a change in teaching methods. Indeed, according to scientific discourse, the concepts of disability and inclusion deserve a change in perception.

Inclusion does not mean equality or equity, but justice. Equality is the principle that everyone should be treated the same, with the same dignity, and have the same rights and duties (UN, 1948). Equity means giving everyone every opportunity to succeed despite their differences (Mantovani, 2024). Justice, however, refers to a process whereby efforts are made to ensure that everyone, regardless of their experiences, can realize their potential in life (United Nations, 2025). When it

comes to disability, we must now move from the concept of disability to the concept of disability status and social disability in societies.

According to the WHO, a person with a disability is someone whose physical or mental integrity is temporarily or permanently impaired, either congenitally or as a result of age, illness, or accident, in such a way that their autonomy, ability to attend school, or ability to hold a job is compromised. This reflects the medical model of disability. A situation of disability, on the other hand, is the result of an interaction between a person's impairments and their environment (WHO, 2023). According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (2006), the issue of inclusion emphasizes the interaction between learners and the different levels of their environment (classroom, school, family). This reflects the social model of disability.

When societies (the state, schools, teachers, etc.) fail to adapt their attitudes and practices to the specific needs of individuals, this reflects what can be called the social disability of societies. Indeed, for Olivier (1990), disability results from the unsuitability of the environment and discriminatory social representations. In education, it encourages a rethinking of school buildings, teaching tools, and the quality of teaching. The social model of disability considers social and environmental barriers as factors that prevent individuals from participating fully. This reflects the ecological model of disability.

These findings also imply a change in teaching methods. This mainly involves individual support. Individual support (NEA, 2019) is a teaching method that involves diagnosis, diversification of activities for different students, freedom of choice, and organizational and material support. Ultimately, the exclusion of students with disabilities from physical education classes raises issues of social justice and social disabilities in society. In the context of inclusive education, the participation of students with disabilities in physical education classes requires a change in perceptions of inclusion and disability. It also requires the adoption of appropriate teaching methods that promote the realization of everyone's potential without discrimination of any kind.

**Frederic Galdavai Kewe (IMPEQ VI), Cameroon**

## ALUMNI NEWS

# IMPEQ II GRADUATE ROSY HAS STARTED HER DOCTORATE IN UGANDA



Rosy Kyakimwe Kaliki is seen at a teacher's training event which she held about the quality education in Democratic Republic of Congo.

**R**osy Kyakimwe Kaliki is a graduate of the second batch of IMPEQ students. Having taught in the DRC for many years, Rosy is trained as a higher education teacher and school advisor, and she has experience in training teachers. Rosy has now decided to continue her academic career following the experience she gained with IMPEQ and has begun her doctoral studies at Kampala International University in Uganda. Rosy, who took a break from teaching and moved to Uganda, is now fully focused on completing her PhD. Rosy shared both her experiences during the IMPEQ process and what she has experienced during her doctoral studies.

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

My decision to pursue a PhD grew gradually from my academic and professional experiences. After completing the IMPEQ master's program, I developed a dee-

per interest in educational research, particularly in improving teaching and learning practices in mathematics education. The program helped me realize the importance of contributing knowledge that can support teacher educators and educational systems in my context. I therefore decided to pursue a PhD in order to strengthen my research skills, deepen my expertise, and make a meaningful contribution to mathematics education in Africa.

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

Yes, it is difficult to work and pursue a PhD at the same time. A PhD requires sustained focus, intensive reading, writing, and reflection, which can be challenging to balance with full-time professional responsibilities. This is why I made the decision to reduce and eventually stop my work commitments in order to fully concen-

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## ALUMNI NEWS

# IMPEQ II GRADUATE ROSY HAS STARTED HER DOCTORATE IN UGANDA

trate on my doctoral studies and I am currently no longer working in the DRC, as I am now based in Uganda. My PhD program involves presential (face-to-face) courses, which require my physical presence. To manage my studies effectively, I decided to pause my professional activities and focus entirely on the PhD while residing in Uganda.

### **How did you hear about the IMPEQ, and how has it affected your life and career?**

I heard about the IMPEQ program through alumni from IMPEQ Cohort 1. They shared their experiences and encouraged me to apply, highlighting the academic rigor and professional growth the program offers.

The IMPEQ program has had a significant impact on both my life and career. Academically, it strengthened my critical thinking, research skills, and understanding of education. Professionally, it transformed my teaching practices and increased my confidence as an educator and mentor. Personally, the program motivated me to aim higher academically, which directly influenced my decision to pursue doctoral studies.

### **What were your working colleagues' and family members' reactions when they learned that you were starting a master's degree?**

The reactions were mixed. Some colleagues and family members strongly encouraged me and supported my decision to continue my studies. Others were more hesitant and discouraged me, believing that advanced studies are mainly for younger people. However, I remained motivated and focused on my academic goals.

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

There were some difficulties. These included social challenges related to balancing academic work with personal responsibilities, as well as communication challenges with some mentors. Despite these difficulties, I learned to adapt, seek support, and remain resilient, which strengthened my academic and personal growth. My family has been very supportive throughout both the IMPEQ program and my doctoral studies. They gave me the time and space needed for studying and supported me financially, morally, and emotionally. Their encouragement has played a crucial role in my academic journey.



Rosy Kyakimwe Kaliki

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

Yes, there were significant changes in my work after the IMPEQ program. I became more reflective in my teaching practice and adopted new and more effective teaching methods. I also became more intentional in linking theory to practice and supporting other teachers through professional development activities.

The biggest difference in my life after IMPEQ is the overall improvement in my academic, professional, and personal development. The program broadened my perspectives, strengthened my confidence, and opened new academic opportunities, including my current PhD studies.

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

Yes, I am still in contact with my IMPEQ colleagues. We interact during physical workshops when possible and regularly communicate online through WhatsApp calls, emails, and other digital platforms. These interactions allow us to share ideas, resources, and professional experiences.

### **What is your current job?**

I am trained as a higher education teacher and school advisor, and I have experience in training teachers. However, since I started my PhD studies, I have temporarily stopped all professional activities in order to fully concentrate on my doctoral work and meet the academic demands of the program. **IMPEQ Team, Bamberg**

## ALUMNI NEWS

# CONFERENCE ON “EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: A LIFELINE FOR THE FUTURE”

IMPEQ graduate Joel Wani Elias Kaka participated in the conference on “Education in Emergencies: A Lifeline for the Future”. This international conference, hosted by Finn Church Aid and the University of Helsinki, which took place in Helsinki. This event gathered global experts, policymakers, and educators to address education in crisis, focusing on funding, policy, and practical solutions for children in emergencies.

The conference focused on addressing the underfunding of education in emergencies and developing strategies to support children in conflict and disaster zones. Over 400 delegates, including UN agencies, civil society, and ministers attended the conference, including IMPEQ graduate Joel Wani. He reported about the conference for the Newsletter:

This two-day international conference, hosted by Finn Church Aid and the University of Helsinki, Finland, was an opportunity to connect with leading experts, educators, academia, and policymakers shaping the future of education in emergencies and protracted crises. I was privileged to attend this international conference. I wish to thank France Expertise for inviting me to be part of those making solutions to problems affecting education globally. The topics covered during the two days included: Education as a lifesaving and life-sustaining action, Supporting teacher well-being and professional development in crisis contexts, Role and impact of the Global Education Cluster: for increased accountability and transparency among others.

It was an honour for me to be one of panellist among some of four (4) funded projects of France Expertise through funding from European Union. The interactive fire chat was a session to discuss what it takes to support teachers in the most challenging crises context especially in South Sudan through our project “Inclusive Teacher development”. This session was anchored in the broader vision of the Regional Teachers' Initiative for Africa (RTIA), which is committed to investing in and for teachers and the teaching profession in a holistic manner. RTIA seeks to build stronger, more resilient education systems by: Supporting national and continental teacher policies and strategies, Improving tea-



Joel Wani (L) made a presentation at the Helsinki Conference.

cher education and professional development, Enhancing research on teachers and teaching, Fostering cross-country and cross-continental partnerships and strengthening advocacy for the rights, safety, and professional growth of teachers

The Teachers in Crisis (TIC) component of RTIA specifically focuses on crisis-affected geographies – where education is disrupted by conflict, displacement, or disasters. RTIA builds on lessons learned and leverages the foundation laid by the EU’s earlier BRiCE programme – bridging emergency education needs with long-term system strengthening – but directs it specifically toward the teaching workforce as the linchpin of resilient education systems. The conference ended with a call for action for funding for education in emergencies.

By attending this conference, I have gained new knowledge and skills that can be used in supporting the enhancement of teachers' capacities. I wish to thank the IMPEQ leadership for making me who I am today and for their positive contribution in my life. Because of the knowledge and skills I acquired through studying at the University of Bamberg, my College has become the leading teacher training institution which provides quality training for teachers in my country.

**Joel Wani Elias Kaka (IMPEQ II), DRC**

## ANGEL CONFERENCE IN BERLIN ON GLOBAL EDUCATION CHALLENGES

The Academic Network of Global Education and Learning (ANGEL) Conference 2025 was hosted at the Humboldt Forum in Berlin from 4-6 June 2025, and was dedicated to policy research on Global Education and Learning. The conference explored the relationship between Global Education and democracy, peace, human rights, sustainability, and global social justice, with a particular focus on the nexus between policy and practice. Over the years, the ANGEL conferences have evolved into a pivotal event for Global Education research, providing a platform for showcasing policy-related research and fostering exchange and joint reflection among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. The conference was designed to promote dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, explore international policy frameworks and their implications for Global Education, and provide researchers with a platform to present their work while engaging in meaningful discussions with experts and peers. Additionally, the conference aimed to support and nurture Early Career Researchers, ensuring that new voices were heard in the ongoing conversation about Global Education. The ANGEL Conference 2025 was also closely aligned with the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050, which sets out a shared vision and definition of Global Education. The conference reflects the Declaration's commitment to supporting research as an essential enabler of better, research informed policymaking. Participants engaged with a wide range of topics, including the role of Global Education in strengthening democracy; developing a culture of peace and conflict prevention; placing human rights at the centre of education; shaping visions, understandings, and pedagogical approaches to social justice and sustainability; and advancing the decolonisation of Global Education. By fostering reflection on these critical issues, of interest to both researchers and policymakers, the conference aimed to strengthen the connections between research and policy. The ANGEL Conference 2025 was organised by GENE and ANGEL, in partnership with the German Federal Ministry for Economic



Graduates Barthelemy Muzaliwa Balume (2<sup>nd</sup> L) (IMPEQ IV) and Abraham Tamukum Tangwe (3<sup>rd</sup> L) (IMPEQ I) participated in the panel discussions at the ANGEL Conference organized in Berlin.

Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Engagement Global, the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg, the Institute of Education, London (UCL's Faculty of Education and Society). It was kindly hosted by the Humboldt Forum, with financial support from BMZ, the European Union, and GENE Member States.

ANGEL Conference 2025 focused on research and evidence regarding how Global Education and Learning contribute to democracy, peace, human rights, sustainability, and global social justice, and on the crucial role of research for policy and practice. It showcased policy-related research work in the field, provided a platform for sharing new research and fostering joint reflection among over 250 researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. As the world faces wars, genocide and conflicts, environmental crises, rising inequality, and threats to democracy, human rights and international solidarity, the key findings and policy insights shared at the conference and summarised in this report deepen our understanding of how research-based Global Education policy can contribute to a more peaceful, just and sustainable future.

**Dr. Susanne Timm, Bamberg**

## BEYOND THE SDGS: A NEW YEAR'S CALL FOR LISTENING TO COUNTRIES' EXPERIENCES

Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM) Director Manos Antoninis in his early 2026 World Education Blog post, calls for a radical shift in global education, urging a focus beyond 2030 SDG targets by listening to country-specific experiences. The summary below gives the highlights of the report (Antoninis, 2026) in the framework of the IMPEQ Newsletter.

The text reflects on global education commitments at the onset of 2026, questioning the narrative that technical frameworks like the SDGs can replace political will. While SDG 4 successfully broadened policy focus to equity, inclusion, learning, sustainable development, and lifelong learning, it also encouraged unrealistic targets that ignore countries' actual pace of change. For example, repeatedly postponed deadlines for universal primary education (from 2000 to 2015 to 2030 and beyond) expose a persistent gap between rhetoric and reality. This gap has consequences: firstly, it undermines the credibility of international agendas, secondly, it weakens support for development aid, and thirdly, it fosters distrust among those such efforts aim to help. As a result of the unrealistic targets this could suggest a different approach. The text argues for a shift from universal, top-down education targets to nationally owned, context-sensitive approaches as imposing one-size-fits-all goals already shows ineffectiveness. On the contrary, countries should agree on shared principles (like equity) while setting and reporting on their own targets that reflect local realities. International monitoring should highlight progress without dictating solutions. Genuine advances often occur away from global spotlights, and indicators can misrepresent success or stagnation. The next GEM Reports will focus on countries improving faster than average, examining their diverse situations. This builds on the SDG 4 Scorecard's country-owned benchmarking as a foundation for future agendas. Coming out with targets requires inclusive conversations with the countries concerned and not making decisions without them.

The text introduces the next three GEM Reports, organized around three core questions: Who learns? What is learnt? Why learn? These correspond to access, quality, and relevance in education, which must advance to-



gether to realize SDG 4's vision of inclusive, effective, and meaningful learning. The author concludes by arguing against one-size-fits-all global policies, emphasizing that real progress comes from understanding diverse national experiences rather than imposing uniform "recipes." This approach is framed not as lowering ambition but as increasing honesty, shifting from top-down targets to bottom-up, context-aware, country-owned educational change driven by genuine curiosity about how progress actually occurs.

**Summarized by Dr. Frederick F. Njobati, Bamberg**

Antoninis, M. (8th January, 2026), Beyond the SDGs: A New Year's call for listening to countries' experiences, World Education Blog, <https://world-education-blog.org/2026/01/08/new-years-call-for-listening-to-countries/>

The full and original report can be accessed at: <https://world-education-blog.org/2026/01/08/new-years-call-for-listening-to-countries/>

## IMPRINT

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