

MASTER  
EDUCATIONAL  
QUALITY  
IN DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES



# IMPEQ NEWSLETTER

*WINTER Issue January 2024*

IMPEQ V STUDENTS  
GRADUATE PAGE 3-6

IMPEQ VI KICKED OFF  
WITH 23 STUDENTS PAGE 10-11

GRADUATES  
START PHD PAGE 18

LETTERS FROM IMPEQ V & VI  
STUDENTS PAGES 8-9 & 16-17

UPCOMING CONFERENCE  
IN CAMEROON PAGE 23

IMPEQ VI VISITS  
WITTENBERG PAGE 13-14

IMPEQ GRADUATE  
IN EAST TIMOR PAGE 30

DIGITALISATION, HIGHER  
EDUCATION WORKSHOP PAGE 29

**IMPEQ**

Educational Quality in Developing Countries

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Dear IMPEQ students,  
dear IMPEQ Alumni,  
dear friends of the Master's program,

with this newsletter, the IMPEQ team wishes you all a blessed new year with health and many good days.

This newsletter again provides a good overview of at least some of the IMPEQ-related activities of the last six months.

In September, the attendance phases of two IMPEQ cohorts took place together in Bamberg for the first time: IMPEQ V completed their Master's theses and IMPEQ VI started their studies. This dovetailing was certainly helpful for the students, as the newcomers

were able to gain a clear perspective at the end of the programme and the graduates were able to provide some helpful tips. There is much to read about these experiences in this newsletter. Together we were able to celebrate ten years of IMPEQ - an impressive track record!

A few weeks ago, the Master's programme at PIASS started. We are looking forward to working together on the next modules and are excited about the first experiences. Some students are currently finishing their dissertations, which will be reported on in one of the next newsletters. We hope that you will enjoy reading this newsletter!

**Annette Scheunpflug**  
Bamberg, January 2024



## HAPPY ENDING: IMPEQ V STUDENTS GRADUATE



IMPEQ V students completed their 2 years of training and received their graduation certificates. While the students posed with their diplomas, one student was unable to attend the ceremony due to her baby. The new graduates celebrated their graduation with a party after the diploma ceremony.

The IMPEQ team celebrated the 10th anniversary of the start of the program with double happiness. Students from two different cohorts met for the first time at the same stay in Bamberg. In September 2023, Cohort V graduated, while Cohort VI started the new semester with excitement.

**C**elebrating its 10th anniversary this year, IMPEQ Cohort V students graduated in September. 20 more students successfully completed their two-year master's studies, presented their theses and received their diplomas. At a ceremony in Bamberg, 19 students received their diplomas from Prof. Dr. Stefan Hörmann, Vice President of Bamberg University and Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug. With the graduation of the last cohort, the number of students studying in IMPEQ programs has exceeded 100.

### ONE MORE HAPPY ENDING

Cohort V students started their studies in Bamberg in September 2021. During the IMPEQ IV studies, the IMPEQ team had to cancel in-person meetings due to Covid measures and switched to online education. IMPEQ V, which started with these concerns, completed the entire program as planned without any problems. The students received their certificates of achievement and diplomas and returned to their countries in happiness.

*Continued Page 4*

## HAPPY ENDING: IMPEQ V STUDENTS GRADUATE

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, **Prof. Hörmann** said that he also went to Rwanda during the IMPEQ III training and witnessed the success of the program. Stating that he closely followed the studies and the work of the students, he said, "From now on, you will transfer these skills you have gained to others in the places where you live and work. Thus, the capacity gained will increase exponentially." Underlining that the IMPEQ program is an important part of the international outreach of Bamberg University, Hörmann thanked the representatives of the stakeholder universities for their contributions.

### BEST WISHES FOR THE GRADUATES

Nadine Ebinghaus, representative of Bread for the World, which finances the IMPEQ program, expressed their satisfaction with their contribution to IMPEQ, which has been going on for 10 years. Stating that they are happy to see the progress of IMPEQ graduates and also contribution to educational quality in the countries where they live, Ebinghaus wished the graduates success in the next period of their lives.

### VISION EXPANDED WITH THREE UNIVERSITIES

On the sidelines of the graduation ceremony, officials from IMPEQ partner universities came together in an open table meeting. Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug from the University of Bamberg, the coordinator of the program, said that with the graduation of the fifth cohort, the number of educators and students reached by the impact of the IMPEQ program has exceeded millions. She said that, "I am very proud and first of all thankful to the University of Bamberg for the great support in various forms. I am also thankful to the support of Bread for the World, the three universities for making this project happen and the steering committee for their intensive support." Prof. Scheunpflug added that the vision has expanded even further with the three universities embracing the new master's programs envisaged for their respective universities.

### A BIG MILESTONE TO CELEBRATE

Rector of Evangelical University of Cameroon (UEC) Rev. Prof. Dr. Jean-Blaise Kenmogne talked about the



The happiness of the 5th cohort of graduates was also shared by the 6th cohort of students and former cohort graduates.



Graduating students Vira Banzwa Pendeza (1st L), Marvin Anthony Samanenga (2nd L), Cécile Niyongira (1st R) and Makarios Ngantchui Fandio (2nd R) presented a summary of their work. Afterwards, the students discussed the details of their work with the Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences and Education Prof. Dr. Claus Carstensen (3rd L), Dr. Jana Costa (4th L), Prof. Dr. Barbara Drechsel (4th R), and Dr. Julia Seibert (3rd R).

*Continued Page 5*

## HAPPY ENDING: IMPEQ V STUDENTS GRADUATE

steering committee's work to support IMPEQ in its ten years journey. He told that it was a great joy working together with Prof. Scheunpflug, Bread for the World and partner universities PIASS, ULPGL and University of Bamberg. **Prof. Kenmogne** said that, "Having graduated about 100 IMPEQ alumni who are creating great impact especially in the sub-region of Africa is a big milestone to celebrate and sustain".

### PIASS STARTS A NEW PROGRAM

Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academics, Protestant University of Rwanda **Rev. Prof. Dr. Viateur Habarurema** said that the IMPEQ program co-hosted with the University of Bamberg has gained a well-deserved reputation in the region. Habarurema underlined that students who graduated from the program continue to work successfully both in PIASS and other educational institutions. He announced that, with the quality dimension and trust experienced in working together, PIASS is starting a new Master's program that is almost similar to the IMPEQ concept.

### IMPEQ GRADUATE IS DEAN AT A ULPGL FACULTY

**Prof. Dr. Joseph Wasso Misona**, rector of the Free University of the Great Lakes Region (ULPLG), Goma, DRC, expressed his joy to see the impact and success of the IMPEQ program. Prof. Misona said that at least five IMPEQ graduates are working at his university, including the dean of the Faculty of Education. He also underlined that he is looking forward to the new program based on IMPEQ.

### BFTW WILL CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT

Bread for the World official **Nadine Ebingshaus** stated that the statements made by the officials of the stakeholder universities once again demonstrated the impact and success of the program, which made her once again happy. She also



Continued Page 6

## HAPPY ENDING: IMPEQ V STUDENTS GRADUATE

assured that Bread for the World will continue to support the development of the new Masters's programs at the three universities in the South.

### STUDENTS FORUM

After the speeches of the university representatives, a table talk was held with the participation of IMPEQ V and VI students. In the session chaired by IMPEQ coordinator Frederick Njobati, Costain Gambwe (Zambia), Deogratias Mubaraka (Rwanda), Esther Kahambu Kyuma (DRC), Mengi Mbusa Muhongya (DRC), and Njei Maurine Engonwei (Cameroon) shared their personal experiences of the program's contribution to them. The students stated that they believe that the impact of the changes they have experienced in their professional lives with IMPEQ will continue to increase and they wished success to the students who are still at the beginning of the program.

### DIPLOMA HAPPINESS

After the songs by a choir of students, the diploma ceremony began. The students were called to the stage one by one and presented their master diplomas by Prof. Dr. Stefan Hörmann, Vice President of Bamberg University. The director of the program, Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug, also presented the students with their "diplomas of quality education".

After the presentation of the certificates, the IMPEQ V cohort representatives Makarios Ngantchui Fandio (Cameroon) and Kaunda Mambwe (Zambia) shared their feelings.

### STUDENTS THANKFUL FOR THE PROGRAM

Emphasizing that the program they completed with great excitement has changed their perspective on education, the representatives thanked all university representatives, especially the sponsor of the program, Bread for the World, for their contributions.

Yannick Biya Boula (Cameroon) and Andrianintsilavo Masoandro Rakotoarimanana (Madagascar), the student representatives of the IMPEQ VI cohort, who just started their studies, also shared how they felt and how much the program would contribute to their not only professional, but to all aspects of their lives.

*IMPEQ Team*



Students received their diplomas from Prof. Dr. Stefan Hörmann, Vice President of Bamberg University and Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug.

## WAITING FOR THE EVALUATION VISITS AROUND BAMBERG



IMPEQ students and staff attended a Sunday service at Erlöser Church. The students sang for the congregation and took a photo with the pastor.

During the evaluation period for their master's theses, the graduating IMPEQ V students took part in tours to interesting places in and around Bamberg. In this context, the students went to the Documentation Center (Doku Zentrum) in Nuremberg, where the brutal events of the Nazi era were exhibited, and learned about the recent events in depth.

### DOKU ZENTRUM IN NÜRNBERG

The National Socialists, who ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945, held their annual party meetings at the Nazi Party Rally Ground in Nuremberg. The site is now a museum of the crimes committed by the Nazis. During the tour, the students learned about Germany's past and witnessed what an autocratic government could do.

### SUMMER CASTLE OF BAMBERG BISHOP

Seehof Castle near Bamberg was also among the places visited. Seehof Castle is a former summer residence and hunting lodge of the Bamberg prince-bishops, which was built at the end of 17th century. The castle is now surrounded by a large garden, an artificial lake, an orangery, fountains and water springs. Students had a great time at this historical place and learned about the history of the place.



The visit to the mosque in Bamberg was useful for learning about different religions and traditions and opened new horizons.

### MOSQUE AND SYNAGOGUE VISITS

Interreligious visits were also part of the itinerary. The students visited the center of the Jewish community in Bamberg and a mosque belonging to the Turkish community. The students learned about the teachings of other religions and discussed their curiosities with the relevant people. *IMPEQ Team*

## LETTERS FROM THE GRADUATING CLASS

# FROM A STRESSFUL STUDENT TO A JOYFUL TOURIST

As the days drew closer to our travel for the final residential stay and consequent graduation, the days seemed to meander. I could not personally wait any longer to get to Bamberg and finalise the writing process that had seen me glued to the laptop for months. I was so glad that I was going to be awarded with a Master's degree, yet finally, I was also not happy with the idea of completing my studies. The IMPEQ program broadened my horizons, enriched my experiences and enabled me to discover new places, meet new people, and surround myself in traditions and cultures entirely different from my own. I also learned the valuable lesson that there is no definite way to live.

### ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING

The teaching and learning environment was calm and conducive. The lecturers and mentors were as accommodating as always. One-on-one mentoring sessions were provided to us, and help was rendered whenever needed throughout the writing process. The staff at the library were equally convenient and helpful. They assisted us in navigating through the highly digitised library, which made our work easier. More so, the uninterrupted internet, clean environment (both on campus and at the hotel), and the wonderful meals made learning and writing more manageable.

### NETWORKING WITH SUMMER SCHOOL

After the all-consuming but worthwhile Master's Thesis writing process, we transitioned to another impressive and bewildering moment of our stay in Bamberg. Firstly, I was privileged to have attended the BATEG summer school together with three of my colleagues. The program featured a diverse array of lecturers, workshops, and activities that encouraged participants to explore the themes of transcultural learning in teacher education. The summer school provided me with a platform to exchange ideas, gain insights, and a deeper understanding of intercultural education, and it also made me develop personal connections, friends, and networking opportunities with scholars and researchers from Germany, France, Finland, Poland and Australia.



Seehof Schloss visit was a memorable moment for the graduating class.

### FINALLY; TOURIST TIME

Then, the mighty IMPEQ V students took a different role as tourists and wandered through the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bamberg and Nuremberg. The exciting activities undertaken included, among others, an excursion in the woods, a visit to the mosque, a trip to Seehof Schloss, and a trip to the synagogue. The most memorable for me was the Seehof Schloss with its splendid water garden fountains, orangeries, the palace chapel, and the spacious park with its well and immaculately cut hedges. *Kaunda Mambwe (IMPEQ V), Zambia*

## LETTERS FROM THE GRADUATING CLASS

# SOUVENIRS FROM BAMBERG



The students found the visit to Doku Zentrum in Nürnberg very informative.

In this article, I am talking about my souvenirs from Bamberg during September, my final semester.

My stay in Bamberg was characterized by a hard-working period. An intensive and deep work followed by prompt constructive feedback to improve my work. These were among my important souvenirs of Bamberg. It was possible because of communication. Communication as the key to any progress was used with my colleagues and my mentors. Thus, feedback was done effectively without complexity because its objective was to help me improve my performance.

### IMPORTANCE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

Furthermore, during this period, I understood the keyword to success: self-discipline. Everything someone needs to do for a given objective should start with self-control through discipline. Therefore, planning my day was my starting point. Avoiding time cheaters, such as touching my telephone every time, helped me manage my time well. The choice of the library as my quiet environment helped me to avoid distraction. I had an extreme motivation to work quickly and finish. Despite these, I had also time with my colleagues for laughs and jokes. This could help me take care of my health.

### MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

My master thesis writing is over! What a great expectation! I am exhausted but very happy to have finished this hard working period successfully! The writing went well, and I was surprised by my good grades. In Bamberg, my principal expectations were to finish my Mas-

ter's thesis writing, pay attention to my mentor's remarks, graduate, and visit some places. After submitting my Master's thesis, there was a one-week free time.

### SPLENDID GUIDES

During this free time, I discovered the beauties of Bamberg and its surroundings. Experienced and well-informed mentors guided us. They were qualified by communication skills while collaborating with students. It was a motivation and a successful tool to reach the goal of the visit. Our tour guides shared their knowledge in an engaging, interactive, and entertaining way. They were always punctual, funny, and organized. These are the souvenirs we got from our guides. One person in particular I would like to thank by name is Dr. Martin Affolderbach. Despite his age, he was a decisive and engaging man. He delivered us the best experience around him and made us comfortable.

Dr. Katharina Scheffner, a multilingual mentor, was a necessity and an excellent quality during the visit. From this tour, I learned about different former stories and cultures of Bamberg and its surroundings. Bamberg, an old town with the most famous buildings and the river path, makes the city beautiful. It was surprising and new for me to find buildings dating back to the Middle Ages and a cathedral of 1011 age in Bamberg. I learned how vital it is to preserve heritage and historic and cultural sites.

*Esther Kahambu Kyuma (IMPEQ V), DRC*

NEW COHORT STARTED

## IMPEQ VI KICKED OFF WITH 23 STUDENTS

Starting class of IMPEQ VI students in Wittenberg.



While the IMPEQ program continues to graduate students, new students are also starting their education. The IMPEQ VI cohort successfully completed their first participation period in Germany between September 5 - 30, 2023. After arriving in Bamberg in different groups, the students happily returned to their countries after the first 25-day participation period.

A student from Cameroon who participated in the program followed the activities online due to her small baby.

### **MASTER'S DEGREE OPPORTUNITY WHILE WORKING**

IMPEQ is a special program where students study while continuing their normal studies. In this context, the excitement of the students who took leave from their jobs and joined the program started before arriving in Germany. Arriving in groups in different cities of Germany, the students were welcomed by IMPEQ team. After settling in their hotels, all the students started to wait excit-

edly for the start of the teaching.

### **4 MODULES COMPLETED**

Classes began on September 5, with four modules of teaching offered to students during the first period. Module 1 introduced theories on the religious and non-religious foundations of school education. Module 2 explained historical and systematic perspectives on the normativity of education, with a particular emphasis on Protestant and Catholic conceptions of education as well as Muslim perspectives. Module 3 provided an introduction to scientific discourses on educational quality, and Module 6 provided an overview of qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as students' knowledge of academic reading and writing, citation styles, and time management.

### **ONE-TO-ONE SESSIONS FOR PERSONAL NEEDS**

The IMPEQ team prepared one-to-one sessions for all

*Continued Page 11*

## NEW COHORT STARTED

# IMPEQ VI KICKED OFF WITH 23 STUDENTS

IMPEQ students to meet their various needs. In addition, mentoring sessions were organized in English and French in two groups every day after classes. Thus, each student was supported individually. Students took an oral and a written exam for Modules 1 and 3, respectively. All IMPEQ VI students successfully passed these exams. Students will prepare a portfolio for Module 2 and a seminar paper for Module 6 by February 2024.

### SUPPORT WITH EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In addition to their academic studies, the students participated in a series of extracurricular activities designed to contextualize the importance of quality education and embed it within broader development efforts. You can find news about the Wittenberg and Berlin trips and school visits in this context on the following pages of the newsletter.

### SECOND BLOCK IN APRIL

The whole program is planned to be in five blocks organized in both online and face-to-face formats, and the next second block will take place in April 2024 in the online format. The teaching in the second block will cover Modules 4, 9, 7, and 8. During this period, quality education in the classroom and school will be examined, as well as theory and practice in the education system. Students will receive training on school quality improvement and discuss how to initiate change within a school system.

### THIRD BLOCK WILL BE FACE-TO-FACE

The training in qualitative and quantitative research methods will continue to equip students with the necessary knowledge to conduct their Master's thesis research in the second year of the program. In order to deepen the concepts learned in a more interactive and practical way, the 3rd block is planned for June 2024 as a face-to-face participation. This will take place at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) in Rwanda. During the June 2025 attendance, students will participate in an intensive writing retreat as well as oral exams for both Modules 4 and 8 and the realization of seminar assignments for Modules 7 and 9. *IMPEQ Team*



Self learning was an important part of the IMPEQ program.



The songs sung together between classes were the relaxing moments.



In addition to lessons, students had the opportunity for leisure.

## TRADITIONAL WITTENBERG VISIT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF MODULE 2



The most meaningful point of the visit to Wittenberg was the visit to the Castle Church where Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses.

IMPEQ VI students have visited the city of Wittenberg as part of the program. With this visit, students found a chance to see the town where the Reformation started. The city visit is a part of Module 2, Education and Normativity 2, a course by Dr. Martin Affolderbach, Prof. Dr. Viateur Habararema, and Prof. Dr. Kakule Molo. This module is based on the historical and systematic perspectives on normativity of education, placing special emphasis on the Protestant and Catholic understanding of education and Muslim perspectives.

### HOME OF MARTIN LUTHER

Wittenberg is home to the Castle Church, where, in 1517, Martin Luther outlined his thoughts on some events about the church of the time. This text, known as "Martin Luther's 95 Theses", has an essential place in the Reformation tradition. Following this event in 1517, the Reformation began, leading to significant changes not only in the Christian World but also in cultural and intellectual matters worldwide.

### STILL OPERATING PRINT SHOP

As part of the Wittenberg tour, IMPEQ students took a tour of Martin Luther's house and visited the Castle Church. Then, they visited the workshop of the painter Lucas Cranach, who greatly impacted the rapid spread of the German Bible, one of the most significant changes that came with the Reformation. In the workshop, they also watched the demonstration of the artist, who was still using the printing technique at the time of Martin Luther.

### LUTHER GARDEN VISIT

Students attended a Sunday prayer in the Luther Garden, which was created with the contribution of churches from around the World. Asisi Panorama Hall, which showcases Wittenberg before and after the Reformation, was among the impressive moments of the city tour. Panorama provided students with detailed data to understand the period before the Reformation and how Martin Luther's ideas evolved.

*Continued Page 13*

## TRADITIONAL WITTENBERG VISIT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF MODULE 2



The visit to the Bread for the World headquarters in Berlin was very fruitful, both to get to know the sponsor of the program and to learn about its policies.

### THEORY AND PRACTICE TOGETHER

During the two-day trip, students continued to learn on the Reformation's impact on education. At the end of the trip, students are required to prepare a report about their observations and impressions of the city tour, which has an essential place in the Christian World.

### BREAD FOR THE WORLD CENTER IN BERLIN

After the Wittenberg tour, the students went to Berlin to visit the Bread for the World headquarters, the program's sponsor. During this visit, students learned more about the program and funding structures of Bread for the World. They received a lesson about fundraising, how to do it, and the importance of it. They further deeply discussed the Protestant Reformation heritage perspective of Bread for the World and education for justice and peace.

### GERMAN PARLIAMENT AND HISTORIC PLACES

After the Bread for the World headquarters visit, a small city tour was the last point of the Berlin program. The students had a short city tour under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug. Bundestag, the German parliament, the monument to the



German Parliament Building

Roma and Sinti community who were massacred during the Second World War, and one of the symbols of the city, the Brandenburg Gate, were among the main stops of the short city tour. After the fast-paced and tiring tour, the students returned to Bamberg from Berlin.

*IMPEQ Team*

## IMPEQ VI STUDENTS VISIT GERMAN PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS

During their stay in Bamberg in September 2023, IMPEQ VI students had the opportunity to visit different schools on two mornings. One was the Luise-Leikam primary school in Fürth, and the other was the E.T.A Hoffmann secondary school in Bamberg.

### INSIGHT TO TEACHING

These visits allowed students to reflect on what they had learned in practice and compare with schools in their home countries. During the visits, the students were first given a guided tour of the school buildings, where they could see the school grounds. The IMPEQ students were then able to sit in on different classes in small groups, giving them an insight into the day-to-day teaching in the schools.

### INDIVIDUAL EXAMS

At the Luise-Leikam Primary School, this took place either in years 1+2 or 3+4, as the classes are taught together. Pupils can take their exams individually and flexibly during the school year; only the end-of-year exam is designed so that promotion to the next grade can be tested in a comparable way. This was a fascinating approach for the IMPEQ students, as it initially sounded like a lot of work for the teachers. However, as two teachers always teach the classes, this individual approach to the students is possible. In addition to the regular classrooms, the students were also interested in the music, art, and drama rooms, which provide space for the students to develop. In a subsequent question and answer session, the students asked how the private Luise-Leikam Primary School compared to state primary schools. The students also reflected on what they had seen in the light of their own experiences in schools in their home country and took away some ideas for improving the quality of teaching.

### HIGH SCHOOL VISIT

During their visit to the E.T.A. Hoffmann Gymnasium in Bamberg, the students were able to attend class 11 English lessons and gain an insight into what goes on at the school. Again, the students were very interested in the school facilities, especially the art and music rooms. The students could not only compare their impressions between the two types of schools but also reflect on them



School visits and trips to other cities, which were part of the program, gave the students an opportunity to broaden their horizons and provide them with practical experience to take back home.

in the context of their own education system. Overall, the students enjoyed the school visits very much and look forward to returning their impressions to their home countries and implementing them in their schools. With this opportunity, the IMPEQ team thanks the schools again and looks forward to further collaborations and school visits with our IMPEQ students.

*Lea Markus, Bamberg*

## EXPERIENCES OF THE ONLINE STUDENT FROM CAMEROON

Nguieutiu Chimi Syhlamite is a student of IMPEQ VI who was not able to make the trip to Bamberg for the first meeting, which took place in September 2023. She, who had a baby too young to leave behind, was able to follow the lessons online via Zoom. She followed all the training activities from the Université Evangélique du Cameroun (UEC) right up to the examination. In what follows, she shares her own experience.

### STAYING AT CAMEROON

“My first stay as part of this training took place at the UEC located in Mbouo, a village in the Bandjoun district. Initially scheduled to go to Rwanda because of my baby, who was less than six months old, I had to attend the first training session in Cameroon in the company of Claude Njoya, General Secretary of the UEC and also a member of the IMPEQ team.

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR BOTH THE BABY AND ME

I arrived in Mbouo on 5 September 2023, accompanied by my husband, and we were welcomed by a dynamic team led by Claude Njoya and installed me in the guest house. It was this residence that served as my accommodation, restaurant and study room throughout my stay, as all the arrangements were made to ensure that the baby and I, as well as his babysitter, lacked for nothing. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my gratitude to the UEC for their support. The welcome I received gave me back my confidence, and I began to believe that even if I am not in Bamberg I can follow the same course as those who are there, thanks to the distance learning facilities available to me (computer, internet, video projector, giant screen, etc.).

### MISSING PARTS: EXCURSIONS AND THE MOOD

As far as the course is concerned, I can safely say that it went well, because at the end of the course I successfully completed the exams to which I was subjected. But before being evaluated, I took most of the online courses and the PC colloquium face-to-face. As far as the online training was concerned, apart from network disruptions, my only difficulty was the language. Each time I had to look up the translation of key words to get a clear idea and a good understanding of the lesson being taught. Another thing I missed, even though Claude was there,



Syhlamite (R) stayed in Cameroon and Claude Njoya (C) was in charge of the needs of Syhlamite and her baby.

was the group work, the exchanges with the other students and the excursions to Wittenberg and Berlin. I have also noticed that training with IMPEQ is dense and rigorous, which shows the seriousness and determination of the supervisors. I was worried that I would not be able to live up to the expectations of the coaching team. It was not easy for me to get to the training room early. My mentor Claude was always ahead of me. It was a big challenge for me in terms of punctuality.

My expectations were met beyond anything I could have hoped for. And I think that online training is an alternative that transcends the barriers of distance and the risks associated with travel.

### LOOKING FORWARD FOR THE RWANDA STAY

My impressions are very good and I am really happy with this first part of the training, while hoping that on future occasions I will be able to meet up with the other students. Thank you once again for this training opportunity that the University of Bamberg has offered me and for all the measures it has taken to make it possible.”

*Nguieutiu Chimi Syhlamite (IMPEQ VI), Cameroon*

## LETTERS FROM THE STARTING CLASS

# LEARNING IN LESSONS, LEARNING ON EXCURSIONS

The September, 2023, stay in Bamberg was special to all students. The university hosted IMPEQ V and IMPEQ VI at the same time for the first time in its history. The stay was under strict time management everyday, and this instilled a serious sense of responsibility in students. Ensued from the interaction of students from Madagascar, Cameroon, South Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, was the sharing of academic and socio-cultural knowledge. In a nut shell, the stay was superb.

### EXPECTATIONS

I expected to receive learning materials that included a laptop to ease the teaching and learning process. At the end of the stay, it was expected that we would have different understanding of quality education.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment was very conducive. Teaching was excellent as it used student centred methods that enhanced acquisition of concepts. Lecturers were so friendly and treated students very well to an extent of going down to the level of students. This was a big lesson worthy learning as teachers in the manner we handle learners.

### VISITS

We had visits to two schools in two groups; one group visited only one school while the other group visited both schools. From the visits, we learnt contextual lessons ranging from learner behaviour to the management of schools. The visit to Wittenberg, the home of Martin Luther, the city where protestantism started was a memorable event. Seeing Luther house, some items used by Luther such as the Bible and the pulpit, Lucas Cranach's workshop, the Castle church and the Luther garden was like a dream never ever dreamed of. Different lessons were drawn from each of the mentioned features but most notable ones were the sacrifice of protestantism advocates and the ecumenism symbolised by the Luther garden. The visit to Berlin was also memorable in that we had an opportunity to see the office of The Bread for World, the leading office in sponsorship for IMPEQ. Still in Berlin, we visited the memorial site for the holocaust whose aims was to promote human rights and peace.



Roma-Sinti Holocaust memorial in Berlin



Centuries old printing house still working from Luther's time in Wittenberg.

### CARE BY THE IMPEQ TEAM

The report cannot be complete without mentioning the extraordinary care of IMPEQ team rendered to the students. One of the Cameroonian students who did not receive their luggage upon arrival at Frankfurt Airport. They received their luggage a few days later. It was during that time when the IMPEQ team rendered remarkable care needed by the students.

**Constain Gambwe (IMPEQ VI), Zambia**

## LETTERS FROM THE STARTING CLASS

# FULL OF NEW EXPERIENCES WHAT A WONDERFUL STAY

No existing words can explain my journey in Bamberg as my first time to travel out of my native country, Rwanda! It is a learning experience in most of corners of life especially in education sector as my career. I learned a lot from day one to the last day of my stay. I was impressed by the exceptional hospitality of IMPEQ team. The team was so professional in terms of practical examples of teaching methodologies which helped us to be more independent as well as responsible for our own studies. I was surprised by how humble and flexible they are! I felt the impact of caring others who seem to be under you which is the lesson I truly went back home with.

### CHANGING THE MINDSET

Visiting the two schools was an additive value to what we learned in class because I learned that quality education does not depend on how much you invest in the education system but it is all about changing the mindset towards what you want to achieve and stay optimistic to your goal. I was mostly inspired by the statement of the Headmistress of the primary school “let them feel successful”. After that time, I always reflect on what am doing in this regard by asking myself how is it going to let others feel successful? Before visiting the secondary school, I was not really understanding what being autonomous mean. But after observing few lessons, I realized what it means from the behavior of students and how responsible they are.

### THE MEANING OF REFORMATION

The excursion to Wittenberg has been an emphasis to understand the meaning of reformation and it opened up my eyes to see and seek to understand the strengths that are hidden in working together. It really gave me a homework to reflect every time on what am doing and how I am doing it to leave the legacy to my next generation. The visit to Berlin especially Bread for the World stimulated me a lot in terms of understanding sponsorship struggles they undergo to support this IMPEQ program and strategies as well as innovations they use will made me to work as a seed which grow and reproduce more seeds. Therefore, I am aiming at making an impact in my home country, I promise!



Women students with the statue of Luther's wife Katharina von Bora.



Friday Sunday Prayer at Luther Garden in Wittenberg.

I can not forget a specific skill I developed in my stay which is time management. This is different from how I was before am now good at organizing my work based on prioritizing, my workmates can testify this! Be blessed dear IMPEQ team, I miss Bamberg and my fellow students. What a wonderful moment!

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

## NEW BATCH OF PHD STUDENTS STARTED FOR THEIR STUDIES

While the number of IMPEQ graduates exceeds 100, the number of post-IMPEQ graduates pursuing a PhD also increases. In this context, four new students have started their PhD studies. Four students, two IMPEQ III and two IMPEQ IV graduates kick off their doctoral studies in Bamberg.

IMPEQ III graduates Essaw Samgwa'a (Cameroon) and Siberi Kavira Kivatsi (DRC) and IMPEQ IV graduates Jusline Kavugho Madirisha (DRC) and Sitima Joyce Justin Mana (South Sudan) enjoyed their beginning of their new scientific journey.

### PRACTICE OF COMMUNICATION

Siberi, who is now teaching at ULPGL- Butembo, plans to work on "Practice of communication of teachers in higher institutions in societies facing development difficulties and violent wars. Case of Butembo, DRC". In her master's thesis, she researched "Perspective of university teachers on feedback: Case of a university in the DRC".

### EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Essaw, who is at the moment the principal of a Presbyterian secondary school in Bafut, Cameroon, and a teacher educator with ISTEP Cameroon, will focus on the "Education in emergency situations: A qualitative study on experiences of school leaders in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon". His master's thesis was about "Professional capital: Perspectives of secondary school principals in the North West Region of Cameroon".

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Jusline, who is working at ULPGL Butembo (DRC), as an assistant in the Rector's office, as a teacher in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, and as a teacher trainer, will focus on the professional development of teachers. Her Ph.D. topic will be "Professional development of teachers in a situation of shortage of teaching training: Self-understanding of teaching methods in universities in the DRC". Her master thesis was about "The practice of clarity in the subject of teaching in the



IMPEQ III graduates Essaw Samgwa'a (2nd L) and Siberi Kavira Kivatsi (2nd R) and IMPEQ IV graduates Jusline Kavugho Madirisha (R) and Sitima Joyce Justin Mana (L) started as the new batch of Ph.D. students.

universities of the DRC: case of ULPGL Butembo"

### DIGITALIZATION IN FRAGILE SITUATIONS

Sitima, who is an education coordinator in NRC-South Sudan, will work on the topic of, "Technical Vocational Education and Digitalization in Fragile Situations: The Case of South Sudan". Her master's topic was "Investigating Application of TVET Policies on Teacher Training in the Republic of South Sudan". **IMPEQ Team**

## GPEN REFORMATION CONFERENCE IN KOFORIDUA-GHANA



GPENreformation and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana organized an International conference on the issue of Digital innovation in Ghana.

From November 5-10, 2023 in Koforidua (Ghana), the GPENreformation and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana organized an International conference on the issue of Digital innovation. This event focused on the theme “Seeds of Hope in Complex Times – Protestant Education in the Digital Age”. It was a great occasion to reflect how to complement, enrich and transform education by opening up new educational opportunities. Based on the fact that digitalization can improve education administration and governance, strengthen inclusion and improve the quality and relevance of learning, students need more than an education focused on technical abilities. Their needs extend to social skills relevant to effectively managing digital tools and techniques. For this to be achieved, there is need as to address the disparities in access to reliable internet around the globe as well as the distribution of technology and software, which are still difficult to come by in many nations.

### USING TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING

To conduct reflections with global education stakeholders on the use of technology tools for teaching, under the

main theme of the conference, several sub-themes were developed. The first day was devoted to the protocol ceremonies opening the conference with several religious, academic, cultural and even political authorities from the eastern region of Ghana. After this ceremony, we made the introductory point and a work on the “Global Pedagogical Network – Joining in Reformation” with the organizing team.

The following themes were then developed, in addition to the workshops: (1) Evidence and Consequences for digital Learning about Boundaries by Dr. Susanne Timm (Germany) and Frederick Njobati (Cameroon), (2) Impulses on Digitality in Protestant Schools in Ghana by Kwadwa Gyamfi and Rev. William Charnor (Ghana), (3) Impulses on Digitality in Protestant Schools in different Countries/Continents by Gerson Mgaya (Tanzania/Africa), Nathan Krieger (Brazil/South America), Eljay Abadiano (Philippines/Asia), Christine Behnken and Thomas Giesa (Germany/ Europe), (4) Vision for Christian Education in a Digital Age by Bernhard Bull (USA), (5) Impulses Digitalization of education after Covid-19 :

*Continued Page 20*

## GPEN REFORMATION CONFERENCE IN KOFORIDUA-GHANA

an initiative by 5 educational institutions in the Great Lakes Sub-Region by Dr Christine Nyiramana (Rwanda), (6) What does climate-neutral and human rights-compliant Digitalization Strategy look like by Claude Ernest Njoya (Cameroon) and Rev. Samuel Mutabazi (Rwanda) and (7) Theological-ethical Aspects of Digitalization by Birte Platow (Germany).

### **PARTICIPANTS FROM 4 CONTINENTS**

As far as participation is concerned, the conference consisted of 60 GPENreformation members and ambassadors from 4 continents (Europe, Africa, America and Asia) and 15 different countries; 40 teachers and education officials from Koforidua, Ghana.

However, several Ghanaian authorities, including the regional minister of education of the eastern region took part in the opening ceremony of the conference. Secondary school students grouped in choir and brass band, and the traditional team of the customary chief also participated in the same opening ceremony.

### **OPPORTUNITY TO MEET IMPEQ GRADUATES**

This conference was also a good reunion for some IMPEQ alumni. All cohorts represented; the African quality education elite from the International Master Program of Educational Quality in Developing Countries was made up of 21 people: 9 IMPEQ I members, 1 IMPEQ II member, 1 IMPEQ III member, 8 IMPEQ IV members and 2 IMPEQ V members. Several interventions were made by IMPEQ alumni on digitalization in their respective institutions and with IMPEQ. In addition to the opening remarks (which involved Frederick Njobati from IMPEQ I) and the presentations (by Christine Nyiramana and Claude Ernest Njoya, both from IMPEQ I), another aspect of the visibility of IMPEQ was the involvement of Ivy as the main organiser of the conference and Linda (both from IMPEQ I cohort).

### **SINGING SONGS TOGETHER**

About the general atmosphere, the conference was not only a moment of reflection on the challenge of the moment, but also a good moment of entertainment for all participants. A choir of students from a local school enhanced the conference with African songs. Their smooth and flexible voice system soothed the minds of

conference attendees. Also, a school brass band and a folk group cheered up the conference. Traditional dances accompanying the customary chief who also honored the opening of the conference with his presence were a good time for everybody. All conference participants also had the privilege of being invited to the residence of the regional minister of the Eastern Region of Ghana for a joint dinner. On this occasion, after having eaten well and danced, gifts of porcelain pots and kente scarves were given to all participants from the regional minister, as a souvenir of their stay in Ghana.

### **VISITING PLACES IN ACCRA**

The international participants also had the chance to pay visits to some popular and targeted locations in Ghana. In Accra, they visited the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. As the majority of these participants testified, it was for them the first time to see the view of an ocean up close. The conference was also punctuated by visits to schools and excursions to the Aburi Botanical Gardens, the Bunso Abofeteum, the Canopy Walk Way, the Cocoa Research Institute, and the Boti Falls.

### **TEACHERS SHOULD CONTROL IT**

The summary and take-home message of the conference in general would be that using technological aids at school can be greatly beneficial for students. In fact, these aids allow them to participate fully in class by helping them to overcome difficulties linked, for example, to reading, writing or calculations. The use of these tools trains students to better understand or communicate in writing, to decode their reading, and to organize and structure information. However, it must also be controlled by teachers.

### **TECHNOLOGY FOR CREATIVITY**

Children use technology for the majority of their play, significantly limiting the challenges to their creativity and imagination. The teacher therefore has the duty to direct the use of the latter towards important and necessary learning purposes. Also, there are significant disparities in access to the internet and technological tools; but while this is being addressed, teachers even in schools devoid of these tools should do something to develop digital skills in their students. *Ernest Claude Njoya (IMPEQ I), Cameroon*

## FOCAL POINTS OF GPEN REFORMATION CONFERENCE IN KOFORIDUA-GHANA

The 2023 conference of the Global Network of Protestant Schools took place in Koforidua, Ghana, from 5 to 10 November 2023 under the title "Seeds of Hope in complex Times - Protestant Education in the digital Era". Launched in 2017, in the anniversary year of the Reformation, the network has grown steadily since then, now connecting more than 1000 Protestant schools and educational institutions worldwide are connected. At the conference more than 90 participants from 16 countries met, they exchanged ideas, learned, celebrated and enjoyed the intensive time. Most of the participants were teachers, head teachers, managers of educational organisations, pastors or leaders from Protestant churches in the region. Other continents were also represented with a few representatives from North and South America, Europe and South-East Asia. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana was largely responsible for the local organisation of the conference, in addition to the GPENreformation coordination office at the EKD/Germany.

The conference had five focal points:

### **SOCIAL CHALLENGES OF DIGITALIZATION**

1. Thematic inputs to the theme were given through three presentations: Frederick Njobati and Dr. Susanne Timm (Otto-Friedrich-University, Bamberg, Germany) introduced the theme of the conference with a paper outlining the social challenges of digitality and digitalisation. They elaborated on the social challenges in the change of knowledge structures and forms and finally presented the consequences for pedagogy and schools for discussion. Dr Bernard Bull (Concordia University, Nebraska, USA) spoke in a video contribution on "Good Approaches to innovative Protestant education in the digital era", which he developed from the perspective of media studies and the history of religion: religion has always expressed itself in the media and has been close to media innovations in its socio-theological development. Prof. Dr. Birte Platow (Technische Universität, Dresden, Germany) gave a recorded lecture on theological and ethical aspects of digitalisation. She referred to the quality enhancement of individual teaching and learning processes through digital support, but also warned against the elimination of personal relationships



Dr. Susanne Timm and Frederick Njobati were keynote speakers of the GPEN Reformation Conference in Koforidua Ghana.

of trust through standardised learning techniques. More dialogue with the individual speakers, question and answer sessions and critical discussions would have been good for the sustainability of the contributions.

### **REPORT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES**

2. Participants of the conference, some ambassadors of GPENreformation, some members of the Council and some "only" members of GPEN, presented very different approaches to how digitality is already being processed and integrated in the context of Protestant schools. The exemplary reports from and about practice came from various contexts (Brazil, the Philippines, Germany, Rwanda, Cameroon). The spectrum of impressive presentations ranged from individual schools to an international research network, from the presentation of digital learning tools to a multi-year research strategy, from international student exchanges to the ecological

*Continued Page 22*

## FOCAL POINTS OF GPEN REFORMATION CONFERENCE IN KOFORIDUA-GHANA

footprint through the use of computers. It became clear that digitality and digitalisation in schools and education is a multidimensional, complex phenomenon that offers many starting points for addressing the overall context.

### WORKING GROUPS

3. Moderated working groups over the course of the days served to jointly develop and work on theses for the digitalisation of Protestant schools. In the beginning, the exchange about specific situations led to the identification of crucial points, because it is also true for this context of digitality and digitalisation that they are subject to different conditions in different contexts and thus also different requirements for concretisation. This concerns not only material aspects, but also those relating to the qualification of teachers, the school-cultural conditions in dealing with digital devices, the regionally specific understanding of the tasks and functions of teachers (e.g. the strength of the control of learning processes). The theses focus on a comprehensive view of the overall process, specific perspectives on teachers and pupils, ethical principles and, finally, infrastructural conditions. The theses were worked on in several rounds. They could not be finalised, but will continue to be processed by the coordination office at the EKD in Hannover/Germany. The Ambassadors will also continue to work on their content in their forthcoming meetings.

### LEARNING ABOUT GHANA

4. A fourth important area of the conference was the immersion in the specific situation in Ghana. This was wonderfully orchestrated by the local preparatory committee, led by Ivy Asantewa Owusu (Graduate of IMPEQ 1): There was a phenomenal ceremony at the opening, which effectively underlined the close interweaving of political, ecclesiastical and traditional authorities that is specific to Ghana. This ceremony was framed by cultural contributions from the country's Protestant schools, which carried their own weight: This also reflected a



special relationship between the Church and local traditions, which gained an impressively deep expressive power. A whole day was devoted to school visits, which seemed to be limited to the visual level of flying visits. However, even brief glimpses of the style, the pedagogical and Protestant culture in the institutions, the efforts and their successes and finally, the situatedness of the schools become vivid and comprehensible. For example it is important to know that a greater

proportion of schools in Ghana is faith-based, most of which receive financial support from the state.

### NETWORKING

5. The importance of informal exchanges between the participants cannot be overemphasised, be it at meals, during breaks, in the evenings or during joint activities outside the formal programme. This is just about friendships, but about building and maintaining collective relationships that enable, facilitate or professionalise action: This is where peer learning takes place, an unplanned exchange of ideas, but also the relativisation of one's own point of view, as it is confronted and enriched by other perspectives and experiences.

The organisers deserve special thanks and recognition for having prepared and conducted this conference with such care, despite all the distances and other challenges. It will have been beneficial to all! The five focal points at the conference demonstrated the vitality and importance of the network, especially for working together on the future direction of Protestant schools worldwide.

Further information can be found on the website <https://www.gpenreformation.net/de/networkactivities/conferences/conference-in-ghana-2023/>. The password for the non-public area <https://cloud.rpi-virtuell.de/index.php/s/wkg3cyTj3mbpkS/authenticate/showShare> can be requested at the e-mail address [team@gpenreformation.net](mailto:team@gpenreformation.net).

*Dr. Susanne Timm, Bamberg*

## UPCOMING IMPEQ CONFERENCE IN CAMEROON



Due to COVID, the previous IMPEQ conference was held online. The last conference with participants was held 4 years ago in Rwanda.

The 8<sup>th</sup> IMPEQ Conference will take place in Cameroon from 20 to 22 February 2024. It will bring together around 120 participants around the following main theme: "The profile of the Protestant school: Contribution to quality education and justice".

### IN COOPERATION WITH 3 UNIVERSITIES

Funded by Bread for the World, this 8th edition will be organised in Douala by the Université Evangélique du Cameroun (UEC) in partnership with the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) of Rwanda, the Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs (ULPGL) of DRC, and Otto-Friedrich University of Bamberg (UNIBA) of Germany. The conference will be held in French and English, with the possibility of summary translation.

### LINKING SCIENCE AND PRACTICAL ISSUES

Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. h.c. Annette Scheunpflug, the conference organising committee is made up of Frederick Njobati (University of Bamberg, Germany), Claude Ernest Njoya (UEC, Cameroon), Dr. Christine Nyiramana (PIASS, Rwanda) and Lea Markus (University of Bamberg, Germany).

With around two months to go before the event, the preparatory work is well under way. Indeed, based on the resolutions of the last session of the Steering Committee held on 28.09.2023 in Bamberg, Germany, it is planned that the proceedings will take place over two days: on the first day, the opening will focus on the advocacy dimension and will include stakeholders from the church and government; on the second day, the emphasis will be on workshops linking science with practical issues.

There will also be an exhibition of posters on the work carried out by IMPEQ students as part of their graduation process.

### GRADUATES WILL CONTRIBUTE

In terms of design, the Organizing Committee is actively working on the development of the concept note for the said conference in order to present the context and justification, objectives, expected results and planning of activities. A call for contributions is planned to allow participants to submit articles which, after validation, will be presented at the conference.

*Ernest Claude Njoya (IMPEQ I), Cameroon*

## BRIDGING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND MULTILINGUAL COMPETENCES

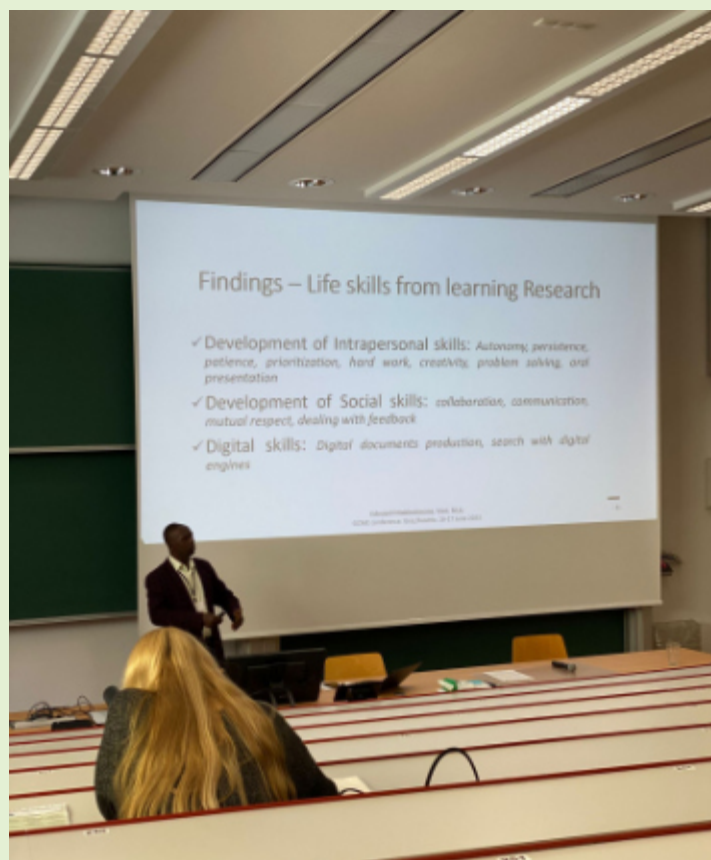
The conference on GCMC took place from 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at the University of Graz in Austria. It aimed to bring together teachers, teacher educators, students, scholars, and researchers to present and critically discuss the topics that bridge global citizenship and multilingual competences in languages and different subjects. As the development of the earth in different sectors of life increases, especially transport and communication technology development, people become not only local or regional but also global citizens where people from different regions of the world are connected despite the distance.

### TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION NEEDED

Those people need to interact and cooperate despite the limitations of their background languages and being a multilingual open the door to the interaction with a diversity of people. Therefore, the multilingual competences are relevant in developing the global citizen to be integrated into the global community successfully. For getting those competences, a transformative education may be needed for developing competences for a successful global citizenship. In this perspective the conference at Graz was organized and publishes the call for papers. When the GCMC published its call for papers, Edouard Ntakirutimana, an IMPEQ graduate and a PhD student at the University of Bamberg applied and his paper was selected for presentation.

### CONNECTION WITH SCHOLARS

During the conference, he contributed with a paper entitled "Research for life skills: a contribution to global citizenship education in Rwandan universities", a topic linked to his PhD research theme. The GCMC gathered different scholars from different universities from across Europe, as well as some from Asia, America and Africa continents. By participating in this conference, Edouard not only learn from the feedback from the questions addressed to him during the presentation but also from the presentations of others scholars as well as sharing experiences. In short, this conference on bridging global citizenship and multilingual competences facilitated the connection with scholars sharing the teaching materials and knowledge developed focusing on developing a global sustainable community. *IMPEQ Team*



Edouard Ntakirutimana, an IMPEQ graduate and PhD student at University of Bamberg, presented his research at the conference held at University of Graz, Austria.



## PIASS TRIPLE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

“We are celebrating the reality of those dreams of the people who dreamed in fifty-three years ago. It is a pride to be together to celebrate golden jubilee of 53 years of our beloved institution. Throughout five decades and three years, our institution has been an inspiration of knowledge and beautiful garden of intellectual growth.” It was said by PIASS Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Penine Uwimbabazi when she was welcoming guests who joined PIASS to celebrate Triple Anniversary on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

### 53RD ANNIVERSARY

Triple Anniversary (TA) was an astonishing event in which Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) was celebrating 53 years of its existence from 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The celebration was made by three main parts, which was the reason why it was done in 3 days. The first part was Justification of Triple Anniversary, second part was the 10<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony, the third part was Thanksgiving and Prospects for the Future.

### JUSTIFICATION OF TRIPLE ANNIVERSARY

Triple Anniversary was an opportunity to reflect upon the remarkable achievements of the institution and to commemorate academic excellence, spiritual growth and social impacts of PIASS. “The history of the Butare School of Theology (Ecole de Théologie de Butare – ETB), set up in 1970 and upgraded to the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Butare in 1990, then evolving towards the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (2009–10) and soon the Protestant University of Rwanda, can be considered a vocal embodiment of that declaration.” (Gatwa & Musemakweli, 2023).

### FROM ECOLE TO INSTITUTE

Therefore, on this day PIASS celebrated its growth and how it evolved from Ecole de Théologie de Butare – ETB, to the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences –PIASS. It was an opportunity to recognize all the dedication and commitment of pioneers and founding churches who established this institution, notably Victor Philidius who was the first Rector of ETB. In addition to that, a special gratitude was addressed to PIASS partners who accompanied the institution throughout its



Prof. Dr. Penine Uwimbabazi, PIASS Vice Chancellor (1st R), Rev. Pascal Bataringaya, PIASS Chancellor (2nd R), Bishop Jered Kalimba, PIASS Council Chairperson (3rd R), Bishop Samuel Kayinamura, PIASS Legal Representative (3rd L), Rev. Prof. Dr. Elysée Musemakweli – PIASS Former Vice Chancellor (2nd L), and Prof. Dr. Dr. Günter Thomas from Germany (L) cut the cake together.

journey of transformation and sustainability. Due to their efforts and their unwavering support since the beginning until today made PIASS an environment of enlightenment, learning and discovery. The day was marked by recognizing PIASS alumni community from ETB to PIASS, who have paved a way and inspiring others to follow their footsteps.

### COMPETENCE BASED TEACHING

Moreover, the celebration was a milestone to the acknowledgment of the PIASS's ecumenical background that is inspiring its commitment to foster the interfaith dialogue and collaboration with different institutions, gender promotion, inclusive education and competence based teaching.

*Continued Page 26*

## PIASS TRIPLE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

### 10<sup>th</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY

One of the milestones of the celebrations of PIASS Triple Anniversary was the 10<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony which was celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023 (second day), with 621 graduates were awarded with bachelor's and master's degrees. Among 621 students who graduated on this day, 328 (53%) of them were women, while 293 (47%) were men. These statistics include, our first 7 graduates of Master's programs of Theology in Community Care and Development, and Christian Ethics and Leadership, 12 students from the Faculty of Theology were awarded with Bachelor Degree with Honors in Protestant Theology, 43 students from Faculty of Development Studies and 541 graduates from the Faculty of Education.

In her speech, The Vice Chancellor of PIASS Prof. Dr. Penine UWIMBABAZI said that "We are very confident that you are carrying with you enough knowledge, skills and competences gained from PIASS. As you step into the market world, PIASS encourages you to continue embracing learning as a lifelong pursuit, and know that education is not confined to a classroom, but it exists in every aspect of life." Since 1970s PIASS has produced more than 2860 students who are serving their communities in different angles of life.

### THANKSGIVING AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

The last day (8<sup>th</sup> August 2023) of PIASS Triple Anniversary celebration was marked by thanksgiving and cutting the cake for 53 years' anniversary. It was a joyful day as the management of PIASS recognized the efforts of different actors and partners (individuals and organizations) who played and still playing an immense role in the development and sustainability of the institution.

The history of PIASS of 53 years is worth reading. Therefore, a historical, cultural and academic investigation was carried out, then the collection of essays was put together in a monograph named "SEEDS OF BLESSING FROM ETB TO PIASS: History, Institutional Development and Achievements of PIASS." This monograph that recounts the ecumenical trajectory and partnership between the churches within Rwanda, Africa, Europe and



While the students celebrated their graduation with happiness, the university administration was proud to give their 10<sup>th</sup> graduates.

most recently North America and Asia was launched on the last day of the celebration.

On this day, The Governor of Southern Province inaugurated three laboratories of PIASS. These are; Water Testing Lab, Surveying Lab and Soil Testing Lab. They are all located in the Green Technology Building, and they well built in partnership with Bread for the World. as a symbol of continuity and prosperity, 53 trees were planted. These trees consist of fruits & ornamental trees, and will also serve in keeping our Campus green.

The celebration was an opportunity to reflect on journey PIASS has gone since its beginning until today. It showed that working together is a key to success. It was a moment not only to embrace the achievements but also to reflect on challenges the institution faced. Moreover, it built a connecting bridge between past, present and future by bringing different people for a common purpose. With this celebration PIASS renewed its commitment to cooperation with its partners, and its dedication to quality education.

**Serge Muvunyi (IMPEQ VI), Rwanda**

CEDRE AND AEGIS TRUST

## TWO DAY WORKSHOP ON PEACE AND VALUE EDUCATION

The PIASS Centre for Didactics and Research in Education (CEDRE), together with AEGIS TRUST have teamed up together and organised a two days' workshop on Peace and Value Education. The workshop took place from the 25-26 October, 2023 and was opened by the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academics (DVCA), Rev. Dr. Viateur Habarurema. In his opening remarks, the DVCA appreciated the initiative that was spearheaded by the centre for didactics and research in education (CEDRE). He extended greetings from the management of PIASS to the team from AEGIS TRUST and wish for such training not to be limited only to the staff of PIASS but to be extended to the entire community of PIASS, especially the students. He was advocating such training to be introduced to the final year and especially, theology students in PIASS. With this warm welcome to the team of trainers and participants, he declared open the two days' workshop. The training was guided by a team of trainers led by Appolon Gahongayire. In this report, I will briefly explore the content of the workshop (which was delivered in Kinyarwanda), lessons learned, and the impact of the learned lessons to the work of the staff that attended the workshop and moving on with future endeavors of such training.

### CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

The meeting started on 25 to the 26 October. It was led by AEGIS TRUST, an international organization dedicated to preventing genocide, and mass atrocities through peace education. The inspiring Aegis Trust training workshop, was an in-service initiative for teachers of all the different Faculties of PIASS. The training by AEGIS TRUST in regards to the genocide memorial was well structured using a story-telling methodology to promote empathy, critical thinking and personal responsibility to help prevent identity-based violence and encourage action to build peaceful and inclusive communities. The workshop was designed to equip teachers, student, and PIASS leaders with the tools and skills needed to shape the minds and hearts of the next generation of peace builders and ambassadors to maintain sustainable peace and social justice. Training focused on imparting knowledge about Rwanda's history, with special

emphasis on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, equipping these teachers, student and PIASS leaders with strategies to integrate Peace and Value Education into the curriculum.

This was concretely demonstrated by exploring the 10 stages of preparing the genocide which were; Classification, Symbolization, Discrimination, Dehumanization, Organization, Polarization, Preparation, Persecution, Extermination and Denial. The training also underscored the importance of nurturing critical thinking and empathy in learners, emphasising the role of forgiveness in fostering peace and resolving conflicts.

### WIDER POSITIVE ATTITUDE, BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

Beyond the historical perspective, the training also underscored the role of gender in peace building. Here, the participants shared their perceptions on gender and were wondering why the concept of gender is synonymous to females. AEGIS TRUST aims at, embedding transformative approaches to gender within public institutions and civil society organisations, that would influence wider positive attitude and behavioural change. By so doing, it sought to support outstanding youth civil society organisations or youth groups to integrate promotion of gender equality and positive forms of masculinity in their existing initiatives. Promoting positive forms of masculinity is an important contribution to a stable and peaceful future for Rwanda, helping to achieve gender equality and end violence against women and girls. This to AEGIS TRUST, will help achieve the project's aims of engaging men and boys as allies to women and girls in fighting gender-based violence, discrimination and inequality, transforming popular gender norms to support more positive masculinity and greater tolerance for gender diversity.

### IMPLICATIONS ON QUALITY EDUCATION

The training by AEGIS TRUST was carefully crafted in regards to the quality methods of training. They adopted the participatory methods of group work, brainstorming, critical thinking, individual reflections, warm up and constructing knowledge from the different didactic tools like charts and different words to develop the diverse concepts of the workshop. Bloom taxonomy was utilised

*Continued Page 28*

CEDRE AND AEGIS TRUST

## TWO DAY WORKSHOP ON PEACE AND VALUE EDUCATION

to examine the different stages involved in identifying knowledge development but most importantly, to use it. This was used to orientate the reflections that can usher positive values, the choices we make and taking action by not being a passive bystander in the face of unorthodox actions like the sad episode of the genocide in the history of Rwanda. Implicitly, this knowledge guide was essentially to guide the reflection of the genocide taking cognisance of the level of learners each time it was utilised.

### IMPACT OF THE LESSONS LEARNED

The training by AEGIS TRUST acted as a beacon light reminder of the importance of activating methods in the teaching-learning process. The methods used were participatory, engaging and instructive. The teachers who actively took part in the training workshop understood the importance of conveying values in education, measuring the knowledge dished out with diverse methods like story-telling, brainstorming, group interactions, pair reflection, critical thinking, play and peace education. These diverse methods came as a boost to the repertoire of the different lecturers as they are going to use some of these methods to enhance their teaching strategies. Moreover, it provided an opportunity to the lecturers of PIASS to sharpen their skills on peace education in the absence of all forms of violence, thereby, promoting inclusive living and communities.

### FOR TEACHERS DEVELOPMENT

Furtherance to this, the teacher's professional development was enhanced with the workshop. They were encouraged to use the knowledge gathered to sensitize different persons in their different communities with the values acquired. By so doing, they are expected to ensure peaceful interaction by shunning violence. This in itself will reflect the values of living together and disregarding hate speech and promoting cohesion and togetherness. Over and above all, this training helped the teachers to renew their understanding of these concepts and hence, developing their skills in handling issues and challenges of peace education, thereby, renewing their knowledge base and providing evidence of their continuous professional development and getting up to speed with new



PIASS Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academics Rev Dr. Viateur Habarurera together with PIASS staff in the workshop on Peace and Value Education.

knowledge.

This workshop organized by AEGIS TRUST provided the staff of PIASS with the opening to refresh their knowledge of Peace and Value Education with the use of different methods. Hence, the core elements of educational quality could be identified in the content of the workshop. Facilitation was well structured and provided a take home to colleagues who were in attendance. This session of the workshop started with fun games to allow learners to start the day with sharpened minds by play. It enhanced and gave to the learners the opportunity to imbibed what was new to them and this was effectively attained. Above all, CEDRE also organized the signing of an MoU with NEVER AGAIN Rwanda and PIASS. Details will be reported in the next edition of the newsletter.

**Dr. Abraham Tangwe (IMPEQ I), Rwanda**

## WORKSHOP ON DIGITALISATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION



Dr. Susanne Timm (L), Michael Ajuamungu (2nd L) from ULPGL-Goma, Janvier Nsengiyumva (3rd L) from PIASS, Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug (4th L), Dr. Emmanuel Bizimana (3rd R) from PIASS, Edouard Ntakirutimana (2nd R) from PIASS, Sister Tcheusi Sadiki (R) from ULPGL-Goma.

From 11 to 21 October, the University of Bamberg organised a workshop on digitalisation in higher education for four people from PIASS (Rwanda) and ULPGL (DR Congo). Each university delegated one professional from the IT department and one from the teaching department. The common idea for this old and now realised plan was to bring together people from different sectors who don't have much contact with each other in their daily work, and to offer both common and specialised impulses. Through this format, the interrelationship of both aspects, the technical and the didactic, and their interdependence, should become visible to all. A mutual understanding of working methods and challenges should also be promoted by working and learning together.

### COMPUTER CENTRE AND IT DEPARTMENT VISITS

The ten-day programme offered a fruitful variety of insights, starting with an overview of the digital structures at Bamberg University, which not only support the administration but also promote effective use of time for teachers. The technical side could be explored in more detail with the support of the university's computer cen-

tre and IT department, and teaching issues were developed and reflected upon in an extra workshop given by specialists from the Centre for Higher Education Didactics or in the computer labs for teaching and learning.

### DIGITAL LEARNING CULTURES

Additional and in-depth information was provided by all departments of the university library, by a coordinator of an extended research programme at the university on digital learning cultures, and by the chief administrator of the university's homepage: Already the detail that there are more than 30,000 autonomously filled pages shows that everyone who works at a university needs skills to do his or her job. The fact that colleagues from the Global South who are on site in Bamberg were available to provide continuous support contributed significantly to the success of the event.

The most important message for everyone was: No one can do their job alone: The more communication, the better and more effective the results. This starts with cross-university technical solutions and does not end with joint teaching and peer counselling.

*Dr. Susanne Timm, Bamberg*

## IMPEQ GRADAUTE STARTS SERVING IN EAST TIMOR FOR PEACE EDUCATION

On the 28th of September 2019 at 8 a.m., bound by sound and time, I remember Professor Dr. Annette Scheunpflug entering the class with a cord and a pebble tied on its edge. The question she asked after the pleasantries of the first day was, "Who knows this, and what is it used for?". I was in awe because I did not know and, good enough, some of my friends knew what this was. They said it is used by builders to check the foundations when constructing. It is used to make sure the foundations are strong. This was the entry point to looking at normativity of education. This was my first day of class as an IMPEQ 4 laureate.

### THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

From this day on, my reflections became deeper on different forms of education and seeing the world through other eyes. When I went back to Cameroon to work at the ISTP Early Childhood Education Center, I appreciated the role of traditional education (education gotten through initiations for different groups according to ages) and different initiation rites in the villages as well as in the Christendom. These were all foundations of education that needed to be understood and appreciated for their contributions to education.

### LEARNING BY OBSERVING

The culmination of different experiences and the continuous reflection in IMPEQ have supported my journey in aspects of educational quality. The IMPEQ program thus stands tall in reflecting education in different contexts. With experience reflecting education in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, and Germany, I have learned that cultures and people are structured in how they educate in different ways. Sometimes, for me, the biggest learnings from these structured ways come when I am an active observer, thus reflecting on supporting thought processes through these different ways.

### FROM CAMEROON TO EAST TIMOR

At the moment, I am serving in East Timor, a country I never dreamed of ever visiting or working in, and today I am there. In my new position as an expert in supporting peace education and teaching methodologies for a young country, I am convinced that reflecting on the experi-



ences and the foundations of education for the people of East Timor becomes more beneficial in life-long learning. Serving within the German Civil Peace at an international level leverages my different experiences and brings out the effervescence of intercultural communication. Working in a context that has ashes of a violent and heavily burdened past, especially fueled by unjust wars and colonialism, it is important to draw from these pasts in order to contribute to the present future.

### IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL LEARNING

Having studied during the heart of COVID, we learned mostly remotely. This was also a moment to deepen our understanding of digital learning and its contribution to a changing world. These experiences help today shape how I perceive lifelong education for people. I am a firm believer in Maimonides' adage, which states, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." — Maimonides.

Conclusively, coming from a background of nonviolent communication, it is my desire to support learners in having heartfelt minds and mindful hearts, especially in a world where the fabrics of human connection are depleting by the day. Therefore, with the ISTP belief, "Little is more," I journey on this path with resonance of this belief as I contribute my own quota to quality.

**Godlove Dzebam (IMPEQ IV), Cameroon-East Timor**

## ADVANCING THE COURSE OF IMPEQ THROUGH DONATIONS

Putting smiles on the faces of others through donations is a self-sacrificing and virtuous act which is incredibly energizing and can make the donor feel happier and more fulfilled. It can even be more rewarding when one donates to people they do not know.

The different batches of IMPEQ have received different forms of donations especially clothing to support their stay during the varied seasons in Bamberg. These donors are not known to the students. One of such solidarity action has been the “Pencil bag donation to IMPEQ V and VI students” by Frau Bettina Bruchholz (the mother of Dr. Susanne Ress). The uniqueness with these pencil bags is that she produces them by herself, by recycling materials. Frederick Njobati (on behalf of IMPEQ team) in handing the pencils expressed that this gesture, in addition to being in solidarity with IMPEQ students also all showcases a sustainable example that provides learning opportunities and possibilities for the students to reflect what this means for their respective communities and countries. This way of showing solidarity to the IMPEQ’s mission even when the donor does not know the individual students is what is fulfilling not only to her as donor but is motivating and invigorating to the students. This added a huge smiles on the faces of IMPEQ VI students who expressed their joy and thankfulness.

### WASTE IS NOT WASTE

The lessons to learn from the Pencil bag donation to IMPEQ VI students transcends the very fabrics of Sub-Saharan African societies in particular and Africa in general. So much waste is generated, yet disposed of in unsustainable ways that poses a big challenge to the environment, flora, fauna and water resources above all to climate change. There is the urgency for reflected discussions on sustainable recycling of the kinds of materials which apparently does no longer look valuable in the eyes of many, yet with important economic and environmental potentials if value is added to them through proper management. This is where IMPEQ students and alumni being change agents need to jump into the recycling bandwagon in their respective countries and reflect change and support beyond their neighbourhoods.

*Essaw Samgwa’a (IMPEQ III) Cameroon*



Bettina Bruchholz (R) donated pencil bags to the IMPEQ students. Pencil bags are made from recycled materials/ In this way students learned not waste material but use them for various reasons.



## IMPRINT

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