

CERM-ESA

East and South African-German Centre of Excellence
for Educational Research Methodologies and Management



Newsletter 1/2021



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Editorial

The past year has been a challenging but also productive and exciting year for the East and South African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management. COVID-19 and the vast global inequality concerning access to vaccination and medical provision is worrying us as partners in the North and the South and the ongoing shutdown of our institutions is posing severe challenges, especially to our students.

At the same time, the increased digitalisation of our cooperation has brought us even more closely together in our daily activities. We have launched a number of new online courses and activities in our capacity building and academic programmes and are learning something new almost every day about online pedagogy, learning designs and the management of technology-enhanced teaching. CERM-ESA is pleased to be part of the DAAD-launched 'Digital Initiative for the Centres of African Excellence – DIGI-Face', where we work in teams under the leadership of the University of Applied Sciences Kehl and the Nelson Mandela University. The aim is to establish a platform and learning management system as well as modules and capacity building courses to support digitalisation and technology-enhanced teaching and learning at all the DAAD funded Centres of Excellence in Africa. Meeting the digitalisation challenge, which has been propelled by the COVID-19 crisis, as a team, is a wonderful experience.

In the Academic Programme, eleven new Master's and two new PhD scholarship holders took up their studies at the Centre amidst the crisis, studying from their homes for the first six months. In the meantime, postgraduate students have been allowed back on campus, even though Moi University had to shut down and switch to online mode again.

Meet our new students in this newsletter and read about CERM-ESA's activities in the past year! We also invite you to read about Ayanda's field research experience cruising

the rural Eastern Cape Province to identify ways of teaching sexuality in culturally sensitive ways. We recently initiated an Open Letter to our funding agency, the Federal Foreign Office, to express our concern about Germany's and the EU's blockade to waive intellectual property rights for COVID-19 medication and vaccines. Please read below why we think that this decision jeopardizes our work and partnership and deepens dependencies and inequalities between us.

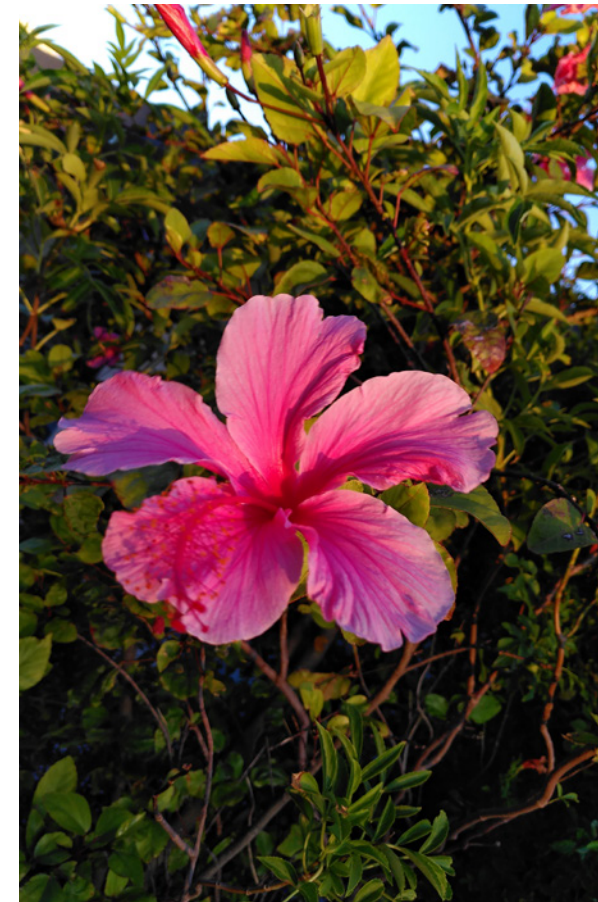
Enjoy reading our newsletter and please, stay safe!

Best wishes from CERM-ESA's coordination office,

Susan & Malve

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German-African academic cooperation threatened by Germany's opposition to waive intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines

Open letter to Heiko Maas, Federal Foreign Minister, Berlin

25 March 2021

Honourable Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas,

We are writing this letter because we are deeply concerned about Germany's and the EU's opposition to waive intellectual property rights for urgently needed COVID-19 vaccines.

As scientists from German and African universities, we have been cooperating closely for the goals of sustainable development for many years. Appreciating the kind facilitation of your Ministry, the Federal Foreign Office, we urgently appeal to you to support the initiative to waive intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines.

Since the WHO classified the global Coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic one year

ago, the German government and the EU have repeatedly assured their support for international solidarity and the need to make vaccines as a public good available to all people as quickly as possible. As a visible sign of solidarity, Germany granted substantial support to the COVAX initiative that aims to combat COVID-19 globally. However, COVAX alone is not enough to effectively combat the pandemic worldwide. On 2 October 2020, South Africa and India presented a proposal to remove relevant intellectual property monopolies in order to expand and diversify the production of COVID-19 vaccines and support governments globally in their efforts for prevention, treatment and containment. Half a year later, on 10 March 2021, the proposal by more than 100 governments of the global South to use the so-called TRIPS-waiver for COVID-19 vaccines was renegotiated at the World Trade Organisation. We cannot understand why Germany and the EU have decided against suspending intellectual property rights for COVID-19 medication even though this would be the most effective way of ensuring that vaccines can be produced globally, if likewise production capacities in the global South are increased in a concerted effort. This would ensure that not only rich countries have access to these desperately needed vaccines.

As members of the Centres of African Excellence network, funded by the Federal Foreign Office, we are profoundly troubled about the decision to prioritize the interests of pharmaceutical companies in the North over the lives and wellbeing of people in the South. It jeopardizes our and your Ministry's efforts and hard work in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and threatens the good relations we have established between German and African academics, researchers and students. Moreover, it counteracts and threatens various initiatives and policies of the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. As German institutions, we are losing credibility of being reliable, strong and supportive partners that show solidarity when COVID-19 is devastating our partner countries, institutions and communities.

Not keeping the promise of classifying COVID-19 vaccines as a public good follows other decisions by the rich countries to pay COVID-19 support grants only to their own nationals instead of creating global funding and support structures. These fatally flawed

resolutions reveal and deepen inequality, further devastating and destabilising the efforts to establish effective cooperation for global equality and sustainability. They also fail to recognise that our futures are closely interrelated and that people in the North cannot be safe if people in the South are not. Sacrificing what has been agreed on and advanced so far in the Sustainable Development Goals in order to protect the economic interests of a few in this time of global crisis, is a threat to Germany's and the EU's reputation in Africa and the global South at large.

We urge you, therefore, to do everything in your power to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are equally and expeditiously distributed globally: Germany and the European Commission need to unconditionally support the TRIPS-waiver and adopt the proposal to remove relevant intellectual property rights for COVID-19 medical products and, especially, the vaccines.

We hope for your support.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Bernd Siebenhüner – Carl-von-Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

Malve v. Möllendorff – Carl-von-Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

Prof. Dr. Karsten Speck – Carl-von-Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

Dr. Susan Kurgat – Moi University, Kenya

Prof. Dr. John Chang'ach – Moi University, Kenya

Prof. Dr. Paul Webb – Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

Prof. Dr. Proscovia Namubiru Ssentamu – Uganda Management Institute, Uganda

Prof. Dr. Thoko Kaime – Universität Bayreuth

Isabelle Zundel – Universität Bayreuth

Prof. Dr. Ewald Eisenberg – University of Applied Sciences Kehl

Prof. Dr. Andreas Pattar – University of Applied Sciences Kehl

Merlin Kull – University of Applied Sciences Kehl

Dr. Eugenia J. Kafanabo – University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Dr. Hillary Dachi – University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Dr. Stephen Mabagala – University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Dr. Jafari Abdala – University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Juliana Bachilula – University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Cecilia Mertens – Hochschule Flensburg

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Feistel – HTW Dresden

Prof. Dr. Jan Clemens Bongaerts – TU Bergakademie Freiberg

Dr. Jiangxue Liu – TU Bergakademie Freiberg

Dipl.-Hydrol. Susanna Kettner – HTW Dresden

On behalf of the following Centres of African Excellence:

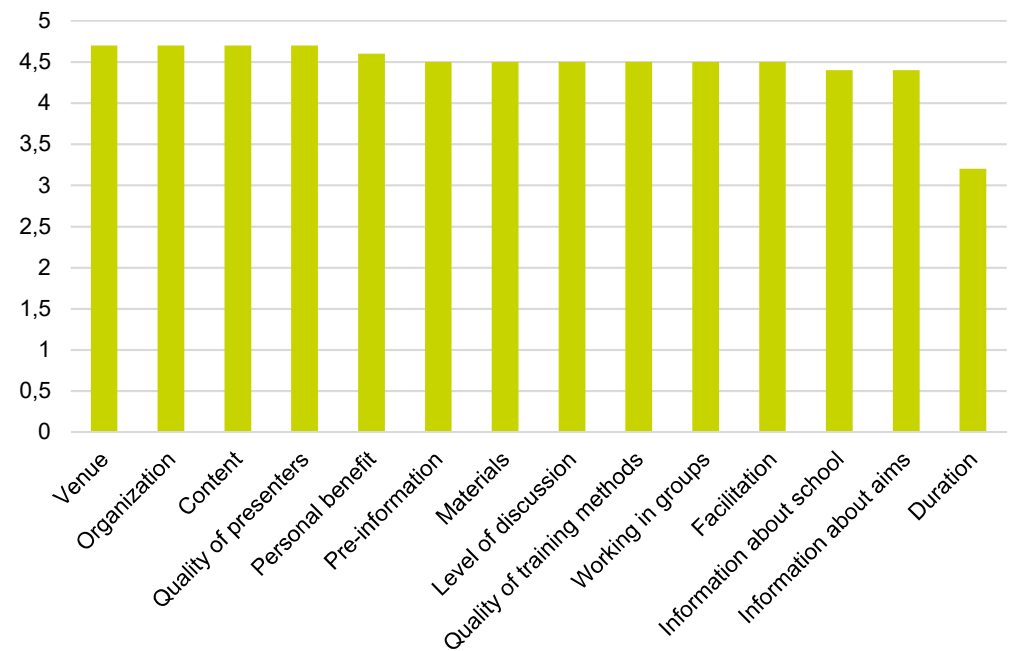
- East and South African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA)
- African-German Research Network for Transnational Criminal Justice (TRANSCRIM)
- Ghanaian-German Centre for Development Studies (GGCDS)
- Kenyan-German Centre for Mining, Environmental Engineering and Resource Management (CEMEREM)
- West African-German Centre for Sustainable Rural Transformation (WAC-SRT)
- Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL)
- West African-German Centre for Local Governance in Africa (CEGLA)

Research School in Port Elizabeth

27 January – 7 February 2020

The 6th CERM-ESA International Research School brought together 20 Master's and 13 PhD scholarship holders, as well as 17 supervisors and project staff from all CERM-ESA partner institutions. The event was hosted by the Nelson Mandela University and Paul, Ayanda, Curwyn, Gugu and Kholisa did a great job looking

after all guests and making sure everyone is comfortable. The programme included lively and engaging sessions on education research methodologies and techniques, research coherence, as well as academic writing and soft skills. Even the lessons that took place during the regular power cuts ('load-shedding') and that left us without in-



ternet and power point became productive lessons (e.g. 'Ethics in the dark'☺) thanks to the creativity of our facilitators.

The feedback from the participants reflect the high level of satisfaction with the Research School. The scores allocated to

the 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Except for the duration of the event (we all would have loved to stay longer ☺), all items received exceptionally high mean satisfaction scores (not less than 4.4 out of 5).

Dorothy Nakiyaga, who had the opportunity to defend her PhD proposal during the Research School, reflects on her experience:

The academic experience was great. I realized I had a long way to go in order to be counted among the academic scholars. I got constructive feedback, which has enabled me to improve my thesis. The various sessions such as research coherence, academic writing, research methodologies in the African contexts and education research for social change gave me a different perspective on how one can conduct good research. In writing my research proposal, I have always worried about how to

conduct the literature review, wondering "how to invite various people to attend my party in order to have a scholarly conversation or to engage in a respectful conversation about a common interest and reach a conclusion about the needs of further investigation" (my research question). Dr. Avivit handled that area so well. After all the sessions, I am changed and more empowered to conduct my research. I would like to thank CERM-ESA and DAAD for having enabled me to attain this special training.



CERM-ESA PhD scholarship holders

COVID-19 impacts: the Centre and its partner institutions in a time of crisis

Right after CERM-ESA attended the kick-off meeting of the 'Digital Initiative for the Centres of African Excellence – DIGI-Face' in Port Elizabeth in early March 2020, all our partner institutions had to shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of activities like the scholarship selection interviews and steering committee meetings were rather easily switched to online mode. Other activities, like the 'Capacity Building for Lecturers and Supervisors (CABLES)' at the University of Dar es Salaam, the research visit of all CERM-ESA PhD scholarship holders to Oldenburg and planned field research in schools could not take place. Instead, DAAD encouraged us to invest in digitalisation infrastructure and capacity building, which we started right away together with the DIGI-Face initiative. The CERM-ESA auditorium was equipped to host international virtual conferences and meetings, two cohorts of lecturers of Moi University's School of Education suc-

cessfully completed the 'Exploring the Online Learning Environment' module, we set forth a number of online courses and support programmes for students and staff and had good experiences with new modes of online graduation and inauguration ceremonies. During the year, solutions were found to many challenges like online examinations and assessments, and we gradually grasped the differences between emergency remote teaching and online teaching and learning designs. However, the task to keep up the academic work away from campus was immense for many students and lecturers. Insufficient internet access and electricity, a quiet space to work amidst family duties as well as the lack of everyday peer support and exchange were among the many challenges faced by our scholarship holders, causing delays and frustrations.

A joint webinar with the University of KwaZulu Natal took up the issue of 'Post-

graduate Education in COVID-19 times' and we reflected on the experiences and opportunities for international cooperation to support Master's and PhD students in their research journey. Indeed, the COVID-19 crisis has brought us as members of our different partner institutions closer together in a number of ways and opened our eyes to new modes of cooperative teach-

ing and postgraduate education. However, we have also come to understand more about the limits of digital learning that often lacks adequate means to develop social and emotional aspects in similar ways as cognitive ones. Therefore, we are hoping for real world learning, sharing and exchange again soon!



 **UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL PRESENTS THE 3RD IN A SERIES OF PUBLIC WEBINARS HOSTED BY THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

DIGITALISED WAYS OF DOCTORAL STUDIES IN COVID-19 TIMES: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Meet our new scholarship holders

CERM-ESA's 5th cohort of scholarship holders took up their studies in the midst of the Corona pandemic in September 2020. Hence, they have met many of the CERM-ESA family only virtually and not yet in person. A warm welcome to our new students and also to our alumni, Evans Mos, who secured a DAAD in-region/in-country scholarship to do his PhD with us!

Master's scholarship holders



Atuhaire Annah is a female Ugandan from the Western city of Mbarara. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with

education majoring in economics and geography from the University of Bishop Sturt. She has gained a lot of exposure and experience from the schools where she has taught. It is the same passion, to learn more and expand her sphere of influence, that propelled her to pivot her research study on the role performance of district education departments and their effect on

the performance of government aided secondary schools in Mbarara district.

Explaining the stimulation that spurred her conduct the study, Atuhaire asserted that the broadening gap between responsibilities and role performance of district education officers and the government aided secondary schools had continued to cumulatively stung district's education performances, increased school drop-outs and in the long run, threatens the achievement of the national educational goals.

She hopes that what the research will unearth, detect and recommend will help foster and enhance a systemic and sustainable methodology that will uniquely bridge the role performance gap.



Faith Nyaberi is from Nyamira county in Kenya and a graduate teacher of mathematics and business from Moi University in Eldoret. After the Garissa university terror attack back in 2015 that I experienced, I had lost hope about continuing with my education. But through a DAAD

scholarship and a series of guidance and counselling sessions to overcome the trauma, I was able to complete my undergraduate studies. Receiving the DAAD/CERM-ESA scholarship again was the greatest opportunity I got, as my dreams of becoming a great researcher and a role model to the girls in the community were beginning to validate. My temporary research proposal is called *"The influence of family background and self-efficacy on academic performance of girls in public secondary schools in Garissa county."* By this I want to find out how girls from this region with varied family background factors, unfavourable climatic conditions, a history of marginalization and insecurity are able to excel academically. I also wish to bring about equality with other girls in the country, it's my motivation to see a girl-child from Garissa also competing equitably with the rest. *"Learning is a continuous process of acquiring skills and knowledge"* - advancing technologically, the COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world made learning virtual and hence creating a huge and safe platform of interaction with fellow scholars

globally. My technological skills have been sharpened through the online learning process. Indeed, it is a great move of ensuring that learning is still accessible and continuous at all times.



My name is **Frank Zakaria Mwaluko** and I was born on March 9, 1986, at Manyoni- Singida in Tanzania. I pursued my Diploma in education in 2011 at Mpwapwa teachers college and in 2017 gained my Bachelor's degree in Education (Psychology) from the University of Dodoma, Tanzania. I want to express my sincere gratitude for the DAAD scholarship 2020 award. I was thrilled to learn of my selection and deeply appreciate this support. I am currently a teacher at Makuru secondary school in Manyoni. In his Masters studies I want to find out more about "The Use of ICT in the teaching of Geography in Secondary schools": How can ICT support, when effectively utilized, enhance effective teaching and students' performance? By awarding me the DAAD scholarship 2020,

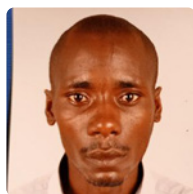
you have lightened my financial burden, which allows me to focus more on the most important aspect of learning. Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community. I hope that one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals.



Niwagaba Isaiah is a Ugandan, born in Kayonzakanungu district, Western Uganda. I am a graduate of Bachelor of

education with business studies of Kyambogo University. I work as an education officer at Nyamiyaga secondary school in Kanungu district. "I was so much excited and grateful upon receiving my scholarship award letter; this is a great opportunity to me from DAAD that will help me realize my long-time dream of becoming an expert in education, specifically educational research. I am so grateful to DAAD via CERMESA for the scholarship at a high sounding University, Moi University". Poor academic performance being a great challenge to most school-going children especially in rural areas, my research will be geared towards the factors affecting students' academic performance. I look forward to teaching and training future educa-

tional leaders in terms of research methodologies, facilitate professional development in academia and management of sustainable institution building and for teachers and school principals to improve education and leadership in schools in my community.



Nuwamanya James comes from Ibanda District, in Western Uganda. He holds a both a degree and diploma in

education – secondary, where he specializes in the teaching of English language and literature in English, from Kabale and Kyambogo Universities respectively. In addition, he went for training in Runyankore/Rukiga language orthography. Landing on the DAAD scholarship made me inexplicably overjoyed because it was a dream come true, to acquire education on an international level. I had sought an avenue through which to teach in higher institutions of learning. So, the Master of Education in Research became the obvious avenue through which to acquire my dream. As someone who has taught in both government aided and private secondary schools, I got intrigued into researching the reasons why the private secondary schools are per-

forming extremely better than government secondary schools. A teacher may be working in both kinds of secondary school, using the same content, but at end of year, the government secondary school students report very poor results compared to their counterparts. That is why research focuses on "The Reasons behind the big discrepancy in academic performance between government aided and private secondary schools: A case of selected secondary schools in Ibanda District, Western Uganda." I am fully convinced that my research will help the Ugandan educational stakeholders to do all that is necessary so as to register a reasonably good performance when compared to the privately owned secondary schools.



Keino Ezekiel Kiprotich hails from Uasin-Gishu county in Kenya and graduated with a Bachelor of education in History and Religion from Moi University. Upon receiving the scholarship award it was like a dream come true to his academic journey. He thanks both DAAD and CERM-ESA for awarding him the scholarship. His proposed research topic interest focuses on school based and so-

cio-cultural factors on students' academic performance in the new normal learning environments. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world of education has been put upside down – however, it is a great experience to have learning in different scenarios rather than only the former normal one (face-face). Transferring teaching and learning to the new context is not that easy when going beyond remote teaching. Education now exists far beyond the classroom and that remains a noble experience to me.



Naomi Wanjiku Mworia is a graduate of Moi University-Kenya, with a Bachelors of Education degree-English lan-

guage and literature. Upon receiving the award she said "I am overwhelmed with joy having been granted this opportunity to further research on an area close to my heart-School related Gender Based Violence and the practical role of teachers in curbing it." She has developed profound passion in mentoring young girls to be the best they can be academically and socially, as they are the cornerstones of national development. However, one ardent problem in Kenya and even globally, is that of School

related Gender Based Violence (SGBV) especially against girls. Her passion towards this area started when she was volunteering as a teacher in a local school in her community. She saw a great need- girls were undergoing gender based violence in the schools around. This challenged her to find a lasting solution. She believes that teachers have the key to unlocking solutions to this problem. She'd love to do research on the role of educators in curbing SGBV. This Masters research will greatly equip her in this light. With a sudden shift away from face to face classes due to Covid-19, learning has been through the online learning platforms. This has been an enlightening experience for her and an opportunity to learn new technological learning tools.



Prossy Nassuna is from Wakiso district, central Uganda, with a Bachelor of Education with Business Studies from Kyambogo University. I have worked as an Assistant Education Officer in several schools in Wakiso district, the last one being Rock of Jehovah secondary school where I served as the head. I was delighted to have received the golden opportunity for

the DAAD scholarship through CERMESA community, as the Master's degree would provide a firm foundation for my scholarly journey. Becoming an educationist, a researcher, I will gain a lot from this scholarship as well as contribute to the society and the country at large through improving educational research, policy making, implementation and review for better quality of education among teen mothers. My research interest originates from observations made in the community where I live and my previous employment of working with CRANE (NGO that deals with Girl Education Challenge) where girls are dropping out of school due to various factors but my emphasis will be on teenage pregnancies and attainment of education. I hope that after carrying out my research with the preliminary title: "Impact of teenage pregnancies and motherhood on attainment of education in secondary schools in Kakiri sub county, Wakiso district, Uganda", strategies to help teen mothers to return to school and attain their academic goals will be realized through my research findings and recommendations, hence reducing the high level of marginalization they face in their societies. Conclusively, I sincerely appreciate DAAD because by the end of my course I would have acquired

the research knowledge and skills to achieve my academic dream and in the future I want to become a professor and fight for the rights of a girl child given the fact that "you educate a girl; you educate a nation."



My name is **Sheila Chepkirua**, a Kenyan citizen, born in the year 1991 in Kericho County. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Education Arts from Moi University where I graduated in December 2014. I have worked at Moi University as a school Administrative Assistant since 2015. My area of research interest is on educational management and policy. I am grateful for the award of the DAAD scholarship. In the new normal of our society with the Covid 19 pandemic, the education sector has greatly been affected like all other sectors. This therefore means we all have to accept the new normal and come up with new ways and means to cope. For instance, we have had to have our online classes since September when the semester began. This experience has been exciting and demonstrated that indeed we are stronger than we think as a people and can work out our challenges. I am grateful to CERM-

ESA for enabling us to go on with our learning despite not being physically in the University.



I am **Susan Meli** from Machakos county in Kenya. I am a graduate teacher in Geography and Kiswahili and Primary Education. It was such a great joy and honour to receive the good news of the scholarship award. I perceive this scholarship as a God given chance to enable me climb the ladder of education and fulfil my dream of being an educationist and researcher in the field of education. My preliminary research topic is on the analysis of student support mechanisms in online learning at selected universities in Nairobi County. The online mode of study is being tried from primary to university level. However, there exist challenges of lack of infrastructure, skills acquisition by teaching staff and students' low level of preparedness to undertake courses offered online by their universities. The intended outcome of the study is to find ways of mitigating the online learning challenges and help the community at large appreciate the transition from the normal face to face learning to virtual learning.

PhD scholarship holders



My name is **Carolyne Bundotich** and I am from Elgeyo-Marakwet County, Kenya. I am a Mathematics and Business Studies teacher with a Master of Philosophy degree in Sociology of Education from Moi University and a Bachelor of Education degree from Nairobi University. I will be forever grateful to DAAD for the scholarship, which has enabled me fulfil my dream of pursuing my PhD and that will make me a better educator informed by research. My desire to study sociology of education arose from serving in the guidance and counselling department because most of my clients' problems could be linked to their social lives and backgrounds. I have researched on parental alcohol abuse and

students' social behaviour. Covid-19 has made me embrace technology, I have been able to attend my classes despite network and technical challenges. I am looking forward to my research journey with CERM-ESA!



Evans Mos is a professional educator with close to 6 years of teaching experience. He is currently a Research Officer at Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) where he also offers consultancy on resource mobilization and partnerships. He recently worked as an Education Officer (Intern) in the Ministry of Education where he was assigned duties in the Taskforce on Curriculum Re-

forms. Mos holds a Master of Education in Research degree from Moi University which he attained under the DAAD/CERM-ESA scholarship. He has a strong background in early childhood and primary education and is also currently pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Curriculum Studies in the same university on DAAD scholarship. As a proud alumnus of CERM-ESA and a member of the African Excellence Network (AEN), he strongly believes that quality educational research is a powerful tool for social change. His academic interests are in research methods, teacher education, early childhood pedagogy, curriculum design, academic writing and organizational administration. Mos has strong bias towards children hence his working PhD topic, 'Thinking with the eyes':

A visual-arts approach to developing creativity and imagination among learners in selected Kenyan preschools. He seeks to explore how visual arts material could be used to stimulate creativity and imagination among preschoolers in Waldorf schools. At a time Kenya is experiencing curriculum reforms by way of adopting a Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), Mos believes his study would potentially impact the pedagogical practices used with children in various learning environments, contribute to Africa's Agenda 2063, and help with the acquisition of the 21st Century Skills for application in multiple settings. Hence, he envisions adding value to the education system of his country.

DIGIFACE CERM-ESA Cooperation: Online Courses for CERM-ESA students and staff

Here at CERM-ESA Moi University, a Centre of Excellence in East Africa, we have grown to appreciate the struggles, windfalls and success that come with affording education to students and staff. As tutors, we have learnt that as we endeavor to teach our fellow colleagues, we are poised to learn from them as well in order to cater and personalize online content that aims for a higher standard of living. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect education verticals and forces centres of education to review their own response to academic teaching structures. Even though the pandemic has caused substantial and unprecedented social isolation, connecting via the internet has brought about a new normal in social interaction.

Our goal has and will always be to improve the degree of knowledge on e-learning to the various participants that are willing to connect and learn while simultaneously creating an inclusive environment



CERM-ESA staff members of Moi University meeting for the DIGI-Face regional workshop

where quality education is a standard rather than a privilege left to those of ample means. Through close corporation with DIGIFACE partners, CERM-ESA has been able to acknowledge that a radical shift in thinking is necessary to push the needle forward in respect to the speed at which

the education system requires modernization in addition to elaborating the need for this particular response to education.

In the mid of the year 2020, the Centre was able to offer two online courses to 3 cohorts of postgraduate students and 2 cohorts of staff on the courses 'Academ-

ic Written and Graphic Presentations' and 'Exploring the Online Learning Environment' respectively. In the beginning of this year, CERM-ESA staff set aside time to attend an internal workshop with the aim of improving on our previous courses, where we discussed in depth about the huddles faced by different participants in previous courses. This opened our eyes and minds to consider several broad solutions that sought to alleviate common problems faced by the learners and thus we developed an entirely Centre driven solution that the learners would use as they navigate the world of e-learning.

This experience brought a renewed drive to establish our position as a renowned Centre of Excellence within the halls of Moi University, giving added confidence to the academic staff, students and the various stakeholders concerned as to the higher purpose of increasing the quality of education.

Cruising through rural Eastern Cape with CERM-ESA

By Ayanda Simayi



It became clear to me, while driving along the plains and valleys of the rural Eastern Cape in search of new knowledge about how teachers from indigenous Xhosa communities experience teaching sexual concepts to learners of the same culture, that research can be truly inspirational. I was travelling across these areas to conduct fieldwork for my study “a culturally responsive strategy for teaching sexual concepts in Xhosa rural secondary schools”. My target group was teachers in rural secondary schools more than 900 kilometres away from my base at the Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth. The study setting was remote, rural and poor secondary schools in the Engcobo district. The visuals below are a reminder that teachers

participating in this research are living and teaching in schools that are scattered along sparsely situated villages where poverty is made visible by the dilapidated mud homes and lack of running water and sewerage systems.

Travelling to these areas was necessary to give a voice to the teachers who work there. However, working in far-flung rural areas requires financial support, and diligent academic supervision to ensure that research bears fruit and it is with much gratitude that I was able to take my research journey - a journey made possible through funding from the East and South African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA).

Once I had analysed my findings, additional funding allowed me to cruise back through the rural Eastern Cape to do participant confirmation, as required by my Participatory Action and Learning Action Research (PALAR) research design. The intention of this phase was to confirm my findings and to provide the teachers with materials to support their teaching, in this case, CERM-ESA engraved folders, human reproductive charts showing foetal development, a female reproduction model, and COVID-19 protective equipment in the form of masks and sanitising liquid.

This phase of PALAR also includes participant confirmation celebrations. The image below shows the teachers celebrating but, in accordance with the guidelines

of my ethics clearance certificate from Nelson Mandela University, the identity of the participants is protected and, as such, I am the only one identifiable in the picture.

Another aim of the participant confirmation procedure is also to extend group knowledge to a wider audience. However, covid-19 lockdown restrictions prevented public gatherings and my presentation was restricted to a smaller audience.

I am delighted to say that my research has brought changes in the way in which teachers think about teaching sensitive sexual concepts to learners of the same culture in their rural schools. Thank you CERM-ESA for bringing change to the social and professional lives of rural teachers and making my PhD cruise possible.

Professional teacher development programme: CERM-ESA's new online module on Early Childhood Development

As reported in our newsletters before, early childhood education is not as much in the focus of education policies and teacher training as compared to primary, secondary or higher education in Kenya, like in most other countries of the world. This means, for instance, that early childhood teachers hardly have any opportunities to participate in professional development programmes and exchange opportunities with their colleagues in other institutions. Since the originally planned three-phase (face-to-face / in-school / face-to-face) CERM-ESA programme for early childhood educators could not take place due to corona, we initiated an online programme on early childhood development. This programme was rolled out to a first group of 15 early childhood educators in October / November 2020. Putting the course together was something new for us in the way that instead of having one re-

sponsible expert create the full course, we had two Moi University lecturers and two NGOs planning, designing and creating the different units for the course.

Before we offered the module, Dr Philomena Chepsiror of Moi University, one of our experts in designing the course, organised two Zoom sessions to introduce the 15 participants to Zoom and moodle, as this was still new terrain for the teachers. This proved very helpful for the smooth running of the course over the following eight weeks. After that time, most participants stated to be confident in digital learning and interaction.

Even though some technical problems occurred for most of the teachers in the course of the module, the majority stated that they liked the weekly Zoom live sessions very much. The module content, ranging from the foundations of learning to preparing the outdoor and indoor kin-



dergarten environment, as well as ways of stimulating creative play and psychomotor activities, received very positive feedback. But the teachers not only liked the content, they also commended the interaction with colleagues and regular online meetings during the time where everyone was at home and all schools were closed. One teacher said: "Connecting with colleagues and learning despite the challenges facing the country was a great experience and made us not feel isolated." Based on the course evaluation, the CERM-ESA team drew a positive balance, but concluded that professional teachers' development courses will have more impact if they are taught in a blended format including in-school phases where the teachers can practice what they learn in the course. We are hoping that this will be possible again soon.

New Academic Programme at the Centre: Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Research and Evaluation

Moi University's School of Education in collaboration with CERM-ESA are in the process of developing a curriculum for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree in 'Educational Research and Evaluation' to be launched before September 2021. Such a programme is needed as the field of education is becoming increasingly globalized, with rapid changes brought in by reforms that promote 21st Century skills as well as the 4th Industrial revolution competencies. With these trends, it is inevitable that the current educational managers and practitioners should be exposed to advanced educational research and evaluation skills in order to cope up with emerging educational problems.

Various workshops and meetings with both national and international stakeholders have been held to develop the pro-

gramme. The stakeholders have passionately given their inputs towards fine-tuning the drafts. Speaking in one of the workshops, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics, Research and Extension, Prof. Isaac Kimengi, hailed CERM-ESA together with the School of Education for developing the curriculum and thanked the partners for their cooperation. He called on the teaching staff to work towards excellence in the programme. The same sentiment was echoed by the Quality Assurance Director, Prof. Michael Korir, in the event attended by the senior faculty members in the School of Education. Key in their speech was the rationale of the programme 'exposing students to advanced knowledge and skills on educational research and evaluation by using an approach that will help to produce skilled educational managers, leaders, pol-

icy-makers, practitioners, consultants and researchers for critical thinking and solving of emerging challenges in the educational sector.' The programme, therefore, is aimed at preparing educational research and evaluation specialists with a theoretical background and practical orientation sufficient to teach at universities and participate in research and evaluation activities locally, nationally and globally.

The Doctor of philosophy in Educational Research and Evaluation is a multidisciplinary program that seeks to evaluate complex educational and social problems through the integration of multiple theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary

lenses. This degree programme prepares scholars, practitioners, researchers and consultants for careers in educational research and evaluation. Emerging trends in education in the 21st century, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic experience and its effect on the educational sector require dynamic experts in Educational Research and Evaluation.

CERM-ESA through the leadership of Prof. John Changach who is also the Dean, School of Education wishes to thank all the stakeholders for their input so far and pledges to see that the programme becomes a success story.



Moi University School of Education staff at a workshop to develop the PhD in Education Research and Evaluation Programme

CERM-ESA calendar of events February – September 2021

Date	Activity	Location
February – May 2021	Strengthening Postgraduate Research Supervision Online Capacity Building Programme for supervisors and lecturers of the Centres of Excellence in Africa	learn.digiface.org
April 2021	DAAD / CERM-ESA final selection for Master's and PhD scholarships	Online
May 2021	Academic written and Graphic Presentations Multipliers' course for future facilitators of the generic online module	learn.digiface.org
Weekly	CERM-ESA family informal get-together via Zoom	Online
Weekly	Colloquium for Master's and PhD scholarship holders in support of the research process (inputs, proposal and results presentations, exchange)	Online
May – July	Publishing your Research Online Capacity Building Programme for researchers of the Centres of African excellence	learn.digiface.org
June	Workshop: revision of CERM-ESA's Master's programme	Centre / online
August - October	Achieving Research Coherence Online Capacity Building Programme for postgraduate students of the Centres of African Excellence	Centre / learn.digiface.org
August – November	Early Childhood Development Blended Learning Teachers' Professional Development Programme for early childhood educators	Centre / learn.digiface.org
September	Inauguration of the new PhD programme in Education Research and Evaluation	Centre / Moi-U
13-24 September	7 th CERM-ESA International Research School	Centre / online

CERM-ESA in Brief

Funding period: 2014 – 2023

Funding volume: 3.4 Mio EURO

Funding Agency:

DAAD

Deutscher Akademischer
Austauschdienst (DAAD)
with support of the
Federal Foreign Office (AA)



Federal Foreign Office

Homepage:

www.cermesa.uol.de

Project Partners



Moi-University, Eldoret and Nairobi

www.mu.ac.ke

The Moi University School of Education is based in Eldoret and offers various undergraduate and postgraduate courses. It plays a vital role in educational development in the region.



The Nelson Mandela University

www.nmmu.ac.za

The NMMU is one of the leading universities in the field of teacher education and education research in South Africa. It cooperates with universities all over Africa and beyond.



University of Oldenburg

www.uni-oldenburg.de

The University of Oldenburg builds on an almost 200-years long tradition in teacher education and is known for excellent, research-oriented study programmes in initial teacher education and the professional development of teachers.



Networking Partners

<http://www.umi.ac.ug/>

<https://udsm.ac.tz/>

The Uganda Management Institute and the University of Dar es Salaam complement CERM-ESA research, teaching and staff development with specific expertise in educational and management sciences.



CERM-ESA Programmes

CERM-ESA has four major programmes that run concurrently.

1. The objective of the **Research Programme** is to build research capacity in the partner Schools of Education for sustainable institution building and excellent, innovative educational research in, about and for Africa.
2. The **Academic Programme** includes scholarships for postgraduate students in East and South Africa and focuses on teaching and training of future leaders in terms of research methodologies, innovative management solutions and instruction techniques on Master's and Doctoral levels.
3. The **Capacity Building Programme** offers opportunities for academic, teaching and administrative/management staff of all partner Schools of Education to further their education through professional development courses and workshops.
4. The goal of the **Teachers Professional Development Programme** is to support teachers and principals to advance their competencies in relevant areas of educational practice, curriculum implementation and management in their local contexts.

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