

BEBUC Scholarships: Big Evaluation Trip in the Congo

The Excellence Scholarship program BEBUC sponsors brilliant students and pupils in the Congo and accompanies them on their way to a professorship. As a result of the most recent evaluation, a total of 191 scholars are now being supported at 25 Congolese partner institutions of the University of Würzburg.



A new candidate, Céline Mwiza from the high school Institut Metanoïa in Goma, successfully presents herself to the BEBUC Evaluation Committee (from the left): T. Bishola, S. Pöhlmann (upright), V. Mambo, K. Ndjoko, H. Mavoko, V. Mudogo. (Photo: M. Badesire)



This time even two scholars from Butembo received the attractive BEBUC Award: Salomé Kahindo and Mwanack Kakule. (Photo: N. Kivalya)



After their successful interviews: The BEBUC scholars from meanwhile six institutions in Butembo and from Kisangani. (Photo: N. Kivalya)

The latest BEBUC evaluation had taken place in the west of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in its capital Kinshasa, in June 2016. Now, in the course of a big evaluation trip, it was the turn of the other 16 BEBUC institutions – in the east, in the north, in the center, and in the south of the country.

Besides the annual assessment of the already sponsored scholars, circa 50 new candidates were examined this time. After public announcements and information meetings, a preselection of the best applications was carried out by the local BEBUC Committee and finally the actual assessment by the international Evaluation Team took place, with a talk by the candidate and an interview at the blackboard.

This time 18 new candidates were successful (among them ten girls!) and were awarded the attractive scholarship. Together with the successfully prolonged scholars, BEBUC now supports 191 excellent young Congolese at 25 schools and universities in the Congo.

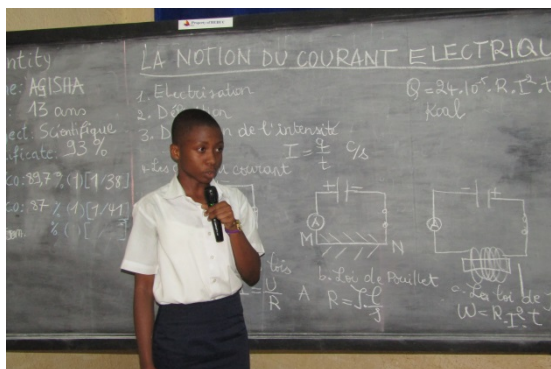
Evaluation in the East

The trip started in Butembo, in the Province of North Kivu, in the east of the country. Here, BEBUC is set up particularly widely, with no less than six institutions: Besides the Université Catholique du Graben, which has been participating in the project already since 2010, two further universities are part of the program (the Université Officielle de Ruwenzori, since 2012, and the Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs, since 2013), as well as two secondary schools (the Institut Kambali, and, still in a test phase, the girls' high school Institut Malkia wa Mbingu), and a primary school (Ecole Primaire Nyuki). Of special interest: Butembo itself is an institutional member of the NGO *Förderverein Uni Kinshasa e.V.*, which organizes the scholarship program.

In Butembo, candidates from Kisangani, in the north of the country, were also examined. The University of Kisangani has been part of the scholarship program since 2014.

From Butembo, the journey continued to Goma, the capital of the Province of North Kivu. Only recently BEBUC, supported by numerous donors from Germany, had provided reference books for the new Faculty of Medicine of the Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs, which has been participating in BEBUC since 2012.

From 2014 on, the high school Institut Metanoïa has been taking part in the program. The cooperation agreement with the



The new BEBUC scholar Noa Agisha from Collège Alfajiri in Bukavu, presenting her scientific talk at the blackboard.
(Photo: A. Bapolisi)



The President of the association CCC, J. Kamundala (second from the left), presenting a solar water cooker to the members of the Evaluation Committee.
(Photo: A. Bapolisi)



The Prefect of the secondary school Institut Metanoïa in Goma, Kakule Kiwiwi, signing the cooperation agreement with the University of Würzburg and BEBUC.
(Photo: M. Badesire)



Happy about their prolonged or newly granted scholarships: The BEBUC scholars of Goma.
(Photo: M. Badesire)

University of Würzburg and BEBUC was signed now, during the solemn certificate ceremony. The team also visited the famous hospital HEAL Africa, which is specialized in the treatment of wounded war victims. It has been cooperating with BEBUC for many years. Another visit was paid to *Congo Clean Cookers* (CCC), an organization founded by BEBUC scholars and chaired by Janvier Kamundala. It aims at a sustainable use of solar energy.

By boat the trip was continued over Lake Kivu to Bukavu, capital of South Kivu. Here, the Université Catholique de Bukavu and the Université Officielle de Bukavu, as well as the secondary school Collège Alfajiri have been participating in the program since 2012. This excellent school has already produced quite a couple of outstanding graduates, among them recently the BEBUC scholar Nathan Okole with his Congo-wide best national graduation, with a specialization in mathematics and physics. The Committee held cooperation talks with the renowned Hôpital Panzi, where sexually abused women are treated.

Trip to Lubumbashi in the South

Since the travel to Mbuji-Mayi, in the center of the country, had to be canceled for security reasons at short notice, the travel from Bukavu continued directly to Lubumbashi, capital of the Province of Haut-Katanga. The University of Lubumbashi has been active in BEBUC since 2013. Only recently, the new Rector, Prof. Gilbert K. Fitula, had visited the University of Würzburg. Also involved in BEBUC is the girls' high school Lycée Tuendele, where a seminar room has just been provided for the scholars. BEBUC now has furnished the room with computers, financed by private donations, like in the other BEBUC centers. For the first time participating was also the girls' primary school with the same name, which – in a test run – presented three candidates.

The Evaluation Team

Part of the Evaluation Committee under the guidance of Prof. Gerhard Bringmann (Chair of Organic Chemistry at the University of Würzburg), has been, from the beginning, Prof. Virima Mudogo of the University of Kinshasa (and alumnus of the University of Würzburg). Also participating in the Committee were Prof. Karine Ndjoko (Universities of Würzburg and Lubumbashi) and Dr. Hypolite Mavoko (Tropical Medicine at the University of Kinshasa).

New guest members of the Committee were, this time, Sylvia Pöhlmann, President of the foundation Holger-Pöhlmann-Stiftung, which supports, in particular, students of medicine during their training courses, Prof. Vikandy Mambo, previous Rector of one of the universities in Butembo, and Tania Bishola, master student of biology and *Prime Speaker* of all BEBUC scholars.

In the south, the Team was reinforced by the complementary expertise of Coco Mvumina (jurist, BEBUC secretary, and member of the Managing Board of the NGO). Since Gerhard



After the Women Seminar: the female BEBUC scholars from Butembo, with S. Pöhlmann (third from the left), T. Bishola (fourth from the left), and K. Ndjoko (right in the background). (Photo: N. Kivalya)



Visit at the partner hospital HEAL Africa, where a BEBUC scholar M. Mulamba (fourth from left) from the University of Lubumbashi is just performing his training course. (Photo: M. Badesire)



Cooperation talks with the director of Panzi Hospital (from the left): S. Pöhlmann, Al. Bapolisi, Ch. Nalukoma, T. Bishola, K. Ndjoko, D. Mukwege, V. Mudogo, Ach. Bapolisi. (Photo: G. Misenga)



Done: The BEBUC scholars from Bukavu with their typical blue folders. (Photo: T. Bishola)

Bringmann, as already in 2016, could not travel to the Congo for health reasons, he chaired the exams by video conference.

Objectives

The aim of the scholarship program is the recognition of outstanding young Congolese students and their support during their academic career. BEBUC does not only expect brilliant study performances, but also organizational, linguistic, and social skills, as well as ethical values. An important further matter of concern of BEBUC is the promotion of women – and, where necessary, humanitarian and medical help for the scholars. BEBUC stands for equal treatment and protection of minorities – and for democracy.

Democratic Structure in BEBUC

After the evaluations, the scholars of every institution elect a speaker and, where applicable, also additional deputy speakers. Together they form the Speakers' Council, which represents the scholars inwards and outside and which elects, once per year, out of their group a *Prime Speaker*. The fact that democracy functions within BEBUC has recently been proven when they decided by vote of confidence about a speaker who had acted against ethical rules.

Mentoring of the BEBUC Scholars

Besides the selection of the scholars and their financial support, their individual mentoring is a crucial element of the activities of BEBUC – not only during the evaluation, but all over the year. This is achieved by the tutors and, in particular, through the specific mentoring by Karine Ndjoko, who gives valuable individual suggestions for their master and PhD plans and for their return to the Congo.

Further highlights in BEBUC are the joint excursions with outdoor seminars, but also the personal sponsorships and the possibility for attending international training courses.

Funding

The scholarship program is supported by the NGO *Förderverein Uni Kinshasa e.V.* and its, at present, more than 1750 individual and 50 institutional members from 54 countries worldwide, by generous donations, and by the foundations *Holger-Pöhlmann-Stiftung* and *Bayer-Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Bildung*, but above all by the foundation *Else-Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung*, which has been substantially promoting the project since 2010.

Scholarship Ceremonies

As always, the evaluations were concluded by certificate ceremonies at all of the four examination places. In the presence of high-ranking honorable guests from academia and politics, the scholarship certificates were solemnly handed over, as well as sponsorship certificates and personal letters of the sponsors from Europe.

An additional highlight was the award of the BEBUC Prizes for particularly outstanding scholars. This time, the honored



Discussions even during the trip over the Lake Kivu (from the left): H. Mavoko, T. Bishola, K. Ndjoko, V. Mudogo, S. Pöhlmann. (Photo: J. Wayirondaya)



Alain Bapolisi, 'Vice Prime Speaker' of all BEBUC scholars, and Christelle Nanzigi with their joint personal sponsor Sylvia Pöhlmann. (Photo: T. Bishola)



Personal sponsorships even among scholars: Laetitia Kasoki with her sponsor Tania Bishola. (Photo: N. Kivalya)



J. Banza, student of computer science at the University of Lubumbashi, receiving her scholarship certificate (from the left): H. Mavoko, S. Musonge, C. Mvumina, K. Ndjoko, V. Mudogo. (Photo: F. Katebe)

scholars were Salomé Kahindo (economy) and Mwanack Kakule (public health) from Butembo, Janvier Kamundala from Goma (applied sciences and technologies), Gauthier Bahizire from Bukavu (medicine), and Florent Tshibwid from Lubumbashi (medicine). All of them had achieved brilliant study results and had taken care of their fellow scholars. Each of the festive ceremonies was concluded by the Congolese and the German anthems.

Plans for the Future

With 191 scholarship holders BEBUC is now approaching the targeted plateau of approximately 200 scholars. "This high-put development aim gives a chance to a large number of young Congolese to pursue an academic career at a high level – and, thus, to contribute to the reconstruction of their country. The number permits, on the other hand, a continuing intense and individual mentoring, which is so typical of BEBUC", says Bringmann. "At the same time, we find our promoting concept confirmed by the extraordinary results of our scholars and by their international appreciation, as evident from the gained prizes and distinctions."

The next evaluation will take place in the west of the country – and then also in the center.

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On the Scholarship Program BEBUC and the NGO *Förderverein Uni Kinshasa e.V.*:

www.foerderverein-uni-kinshasa.de



A majority of female excellence: BEBUC-scholars from Lubumbashi after the solemn ceremony. (Photo: F. Katebe)