BEBUC press release of February 6, 2018

BEBUC: Now 192 Excellence Scholars in the Congo

Once again outstanding BEBUC scholars and new candidates have been evaluated in the Congo. This time the interviews took place in the capital Kinshasa and in Mbuji-Mayi, in the center of the country. As a result of the evaluation, 192 young Congolese are now being supported by a BEBUC scholarship.

The aim of the scholarship program is the recognition and support of brilliant students and excellent pupils in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The selection is achieved by a multi-stage process, at first on the basis of the application files, then followed by a personal evaluation on site. Besides the subject-specific expertise, also their personality, language skills, and future plans play a role.

This time it was the turn of the BEBUC partner institutions in the west and in the center of the Congo, where a total of 20 candidates had been preselected (out of initially 84 applications). Likewise examined were the already supported 67 scholars, because these must face such evaluations every year and have to defend their study results. As always, a big scholarship ceremony formed the solemn conclusion in Kinshasa and in Mbuji-Mayi.

Altogether, including the scholars in the other parts of the Congo – in the east, the south, and the north – and with the more than 30 master and PhD scholars currently studying abroad, BEBUC supports today more than 190 outstanding young Congolese.

The Evaluation Committee

The Selection Panel has been constituted, for a long time already, by Professor Gerhard Bringmann (chair) from the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the University of Würzburg and Professor Virima Mudogo from the University of Kinshasa (and alumnus of the University of Würzburg), complemented by Professor Karine Ndjoko (guest professor of the University of Lubumbashi) as well as Dr. Hypolite Mavoko, ‘re-entry scholar’ and applicant for a professorship at the University of Kinshasa. Further participating were the BEBUC tutors Damien Tshibangu (chemistry) and Vivi Maketa (BEBUC scholar and PhD student in the field of tropical medicine) and, in Kinshasa, Coco Mvumina, jurist and member of the Panel of the NGO Förderverein Uni Kinshasa e.V.

Evaluation in Kinshasa

The largest part of the evaluations were the exams in the west; here a total of 72 students from four universities in Kinshasa (Université de Kinshasa (Université de Kinshasa, Université Protestante au Congo), Mbanza Ngungu (Université Kongo), and
Visit to the Vice President of the University of Kinshasa
(from the left): Tutor D. Tshibangu, K. Ndjoko, Vice President C. Musao, V. Mudogo (former Vice President there).
(Photo: R. Zimango)

Vice Speaker of all BEBUC scholars of the Université Protestante au Congo: Bill Sabwa, student of medicine, gives a report about his past academic year.
(Photo: F. Bangelesa)

Beaming with joy: Bénédicte Mayoko, student of medicine at the Université de Kikwit, is happy about the prolongation of her BEBUC scholarship. (Photo: F. Bangelesa)

Kikwit (Université de Kikwit), as well as pupils from the primary school Vabatu Ngoma and from the secondary school Mont Amba in Kinshasa were examined. As always, the democratically elected speakers of the scholars as well as the evaluations of the tutors and the BEBUC secretary were scheduled, followed by a visit to the German Embassy and the women’s seminar held by Karine Ndjoko.

Evaluation in the Center of the Country
In Mbuji-Mayi, the capital of the province Kasai-Oriental, the evaluation should already have taken place in 2017, but it had been delayed for security reasons. The situation in the Congo is presently not easy. All the more remarkable is the throughout positive development of the scholars under economically and politically so difficult conditions, in particular thanks to the intense mentoring, also by email and video conference.

Ten Years of BEBUC
During the scholarship ceremonies, particular emphasis was placed on the successful existence, for 10 years already, of the Excellence Scholarship Program BEBUC, which started its work on April 1, 2008, beginning with the selection and support of the first four bachelor scholars from chemistry and pharmacy. Three of these young scientists have developed exceptionally well, one of them has already passed his PhD exam, the other two will follow soon, all three at the University of Würzburg.

BEBUC owes its continuous, rapid development also to the constant and generous support by the German foundation Else-Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung. "We are extremely grateful to the foundation and to all who support us so efficiently, among them also the foundation Holger-Pöhlmann-Stiftung, the Bayer Foundations, and the nearly 1,900 members of our NGO as well as all donors and personal sponsors", says Bringmann.

The innovative work and great achievements of the scholarship program have already been honored, among others, by the Gusi Peace Prize and the Médaille du Mérite Civique 1ère Classe (Civic Medal First Class) of the Congolese People in Gold to Gerhard Bringmann and to Virima Mudogo.

Scholarship Ceremony in Kinshasa
The scholarship certificates were handed over in a solemn ceremony, this time, for security reasons, not in the Assembly Hall of the University of Kinshasa, but in the big BEBUC seminar room. The University of Kinshasa is, after all, the institution where ten years ago everything started. It is also the institution with
the highest number of scholars (at the moment 28 there and 24 further students currently pursuing their advanced studies abroad): bachelor, master, and PhD students, presently one re-entry scholar and even some of the first ‘BEBUC professors’ – and, in addition, scholars from the above-mentioned schools and also those from Kikwit und Mbanza Ngungu.

In their talks, the representatives of the Congolese Ministry of Higher Education and of the partner institutions, and also the speakers of the scholars emphasized the importance of the scholarship program for the future of the Congolese universities and, thus, for the development of the country.

**Ceremony also in Mbuji-Mayi: A New Partner School**

In Mbuji-Mayi, the Université Officielle de Mbuji-Mayi and the secondary school Institut Mpokolo, with its focus on economics, have so far been involved. More recently, also the scientifically oriented secondary school Institut Kristo Mfumu (that is Tshiluba and means, in English, "Christ King") has been participating in the scholarship program. During the scholarship ceremony, a partnership agreement with BEBUC and with the University of Würzburg was solemnly signed, the school is now thus officially a partner institution.

**Outlook**

With its current support of more than 190 outstanding young Congolese by the coveted scholarship, BEBUC has nearly reached its scheduled goal: a plateau of about 200 scholars. The next evaluation will routinely take place soon, then again at the partner institutions in the east (Butembo, Goma, and Bukavu), in the south (Lubumbashi), and in the north (Kisangani) of the country.

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Information on the Scholarship Program BEBUC and the NGO Förderverein Uni Kinshasa e.V.:

www.foerderverein-uni-kinshasa.de
Signing the new cooperation agreement with the University of Würzburg and BEBUC, assisted by Tutor D. Tshibangu: Sr. Marie-Françoise Mukadi, Director of the secondary school Institut Kristo Mfumu in Mbuji-Mayi. (Photo: H. Mavoko)

After successfully passing the exam: the new and the prolonged BEBUC scholars from Mbuji-Mayi. (Photo: C. Tshibola)

Proudly presenting the characteristic blue BEBUC folder: D. Ndaya, student of law, at the ceremony in Mbuji-Mayi. (Photo: V. Maketa)

Done: happy BEBUC scholars from Kinshasa, Kikwit and Mbanza-Ngungu after the solemn ceremony in Kinshasa, holding the typical blue folders. (Photo: F. Bangelea)