

Quality education is a worldwide concern and one of the main pillars for sustainable development. Access to education has been in the focus of international as well as national initiatives in recent years, and has seen worldwide improvement. Yet, access to education does not guarantee quality education. In the Global South and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, school dropout, insufficiently qualified teachers, lack of basic competences in literacy and numeracy among primary school graduates among other problems still persist and those challenges need to be addressed. The international discourse on quality education suggests a variety of aspects and strategies on how to change this situation and achieve educational quality at different levels of the educational system, yet studies show that the EFA quality goals are far from being achieved in this region of the world (e.g. UNESCO, 2014).

Many studies have confirmed the key role of teachers in improving teaching quality (e.g. Hattie 2014) and therefore the main strategy to improve teaching quality is the training of teachers. In order to achieve a cascade effect and to reach efficient teacher training, it is important to train educational leadership personnel in educational and specifically teaching quality.

Against this background, the international Master program "Educational Quality in Developing Countries", which serves as a framework to all the contributions in this volume, was established. It aims at providing knowledge and competences in regard to

educational quality but also at promoting research capacities among people from the Global South. This is deemed necessary in order to better understand the challenges in implementing educational quality. The program is presented in the first article by *Susanne Krogull & Annette Scheunpflug*. Apart from the introductory article, four emerging African scholars, all graduates of the program, present their research carried out for their Master's theses, thus focusing on different aspects of educational quality and different levels of the educational system.

*Abraham Tamukum Tangwe* emphasizes on alternatives to corporal punishment in Cameroonian schools. He describes the historical, contextual and cultural problem of corporal punishment in Cameroonian schools. His research reveals how an intervention conducted for student leaders led to a shift in behavior: from using only corporal punishment to the use of alternatives, even though not constantly.

*Christine Nyiramana* focuses on the role of constructive feedback in promoting educational quality in higher education in Rwanda. Her research addresses the problem of inadequate or missing feedback in higher learning institutions leading to students' failure. Her findings reveal that constructive feedback helps teachers to improve their teaching and thus to support students' learning processes.

*Jocelin Raharinaivo-Falimanana* emphasizes on professional learning communities as a means of professional development of teachers in the context of Madagascar. His findings

show how learning communities can contribute to teacher collaboration and teaching quality improvement, but also how the hierarchical culture of the Malagasy society constitutes a barrier for their effective implementation.

*Jean Kasereka Lutswamba* centers his research on the role of school leadership in improving educational quality through constructive feedback in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Addressing failure in retaining best teachers, usage of physical punishment, teacher-centered pedagogy resulting to high repetition and dropout rates, he shows how participatory leadership and constructive feedback to teachers are keys to educational quality improvement.

All contributions of the emerging scholars show that interventions are needed in order to improve educational quality. Besides, challenges with regard to the implementation of educational quality in different contexts become visible, thus underlining the importance of educational research carried out by native researchers.

A further article by *Thomas Prescher and Iana Ganushko* deals with issues of learner-centered vocational training in the Russian Federation.

*We wish you interesting and informative reading and insights into the educational landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa.*

*Susanne Krogull & Christine Nyiramana*

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