



Contribution ID: 49

Type: Oral Presentation

Education for development - “being transformed to transform”

Monday, 1 October 2018 15:20 (20 minutes)

Despite vast natural resources and foreign investment, the Democratic Republic of Congo is among the world’s least developed countries. Physics education has a crucial role to play in developing Congo in order to cultivate expertise in the hard sciences and engineering, which is paramount for creating value-adding industries, a domestic technical workforce, and the general problem solving skills and creativity that are natural by-products of the physics classroom.

However, even with a high quality physics classroom, Congo is faced with the problem of brain-drain where the best and brightest of the young Congolese talentpool leave for more promising work in the west and elsewhere in more developed parts of Africa. Therefore, the challenge is twofold - how do you develop a high quality STEM program in Congo that does more than just empowering an elite few to escape their situation without changing it?

In our university physics classroom, we are aiming to implement pedagogy based on the philosophy “being transformed to transform”. In this manner, our program aims to create strong ties between the students and the local community, so that the students learn content and thinking skills by solving real problems in the community and by imagining ways they can change their situation. In addition, by cultivating a love for problem solving, students will be motivated to stay where there are many difficult problems to be solved. Through contextualizing the classroom experience and the overall university experience, we are seeing alumni remaining engaged in their local community and even returning to it after achieving post-graduate degrees outside of Congo.

Apply to be considered for a student award (Yes / No)?

No

Level for award (Hons, MSc, PhD, N/A)?

N/A

Primary author: Dr LAWSON, Benjamin (l’Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo)

Co-author: Mr VITSWAMBA, Othy (l’Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo)

Presenter: Dr LAWSON, Benjamin (l’Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo)

Session Classification: Parallel Session 1

Track Classification: Track A - Physics at University