

Reaction to the onboarding process.



First of all, a big thank you to the well-organised and motivated DIGI-FACE team comprising Sonja and Hannes who supported us throughout. Thanks also to Koshala for the great supervision of the Moodle course in preparation for future tasks as centre IT Manager. I found the meetings a great opportunity to get in touch with the other Global centres and it was a pleasure to interact with their centre IT Managers.

As we learned during the Moodle course, DIGI-FACE can be either regarded as a platform with several features, or as a portal to several platforms. I personally like the idea that it is a virtual portal to an international network of scientific cooperation. As centre IT Manager of AFAS, I am fascinated by the possibilities this portal

offers to our team, our students and our future collaboration with the other Global centres. To highlight two of them, the shareable features for publications and the project management tool have the potential to make individual project outcomes visible for future collaboration.

It is exciting that members of our centre – both staff and our students – can get in touch with the African centres of Excellence via DIGI-FACE. Now that the onboarding process is complete, we look forward to being part of this promising portal and will encourage our centre members to actively take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

DIGI-FACE Launching Activities

Aristide Fongang

Ten centres, namely **CCAM, CEGLA NIGER & CESAG, CEMEREM, CERM-ESA MOI & UMI, GGCDs, NGCL, Pro-RUWA, and TRANSCRIM** (see our 'centres' section at digiface.org to find out the full names of the centres) participated in the third round of 'Launching Activities'. The activities implemented were multidimensional and included, among others, the creation of **new courses**, the development of a **business model** to generate revenues, the **promotion** of DIGI-FACE to attract more participants, and the training of lecturers about Moodle and the LMS.

Staff members worked as a team in their respective centres to fulfil the expectations of the call for proposals. For instance, some

modules that were developed were part of centres' curriculum and they will be taught directly from DIGI-FACE in the upcoming semester. The designed cost calculation kit, as well as marketing strategy, can be referenced by other centres planning to produce and offer courses for fees on the platform. Feedback from the main users was critical to improving both their learning experience and the modules. Evaluations by the participants showed the added value that such processes can bring to the centres of African Excellence, and that they are willing to use their achievements as a springboard to create more digital content on the platform. It will contribute to the growth of their centres in the sector of online education. The DIGI-FACE team will continue to monitor their work.

Roles & Rights on the DIGI-FACE Platform

Elisa Adams

The DIGI-FACE project provides the centres with an IT infrastructure and, to use this infrastructure to its fullest potential, we grant certain people administrators rights on our platform. These rights are tied to specific roles, and these roles are only granted to a limited set of people, usually individuals nominated by the centre.

Role 1: centre Administrator

The *centre Administrator* can

- Edit the centre information page on digiface.org and grant others editing rights
- Approve new users affiliated with the centre
- Approve new publications affiliated with the centre
- Create blog posts for the centre

Role 2: centre IT Manager (Moodle)

The centre IT Manager manages the centre's section on our Learning Management System, Moodle, which we call 'Learn'. This entails:

- Managing participants for online courses by enrolling them to courses and creating cohorts of participants
- Creating new empty course shells or course copies
- Making use of DIGI-FACE's Generic Modules for the centre

The requirement of these roles is the successful completion of the Module 'Managing your DIGI-FACE Moodle site'. If you want to nominate someone who has not yet completed this module, please reach out to us.

Farewells

Dr Dorothee Weyler

Dr Dorothee Weyler, Programme manager and Head of Section of the African Excellence programme of DAAD is moving on to new horizons. After almost 15 years developing the centres of African Excellence programmes Dr Weyler will take over as an intermediate position the management of the scholarship section for Africa, before she moves in the latter half of 2023 to manage the DAAD office in Nairobi, Kenya.

She says: 'Those who know me might know how difficult this decision was for me! Although I am very much looking forward to my new duties in Kenya as the director of our DAAD office in Nairobi I will miss the tasks and opportunities of the day-to-day work with the centres of Excellence, I will miss the freedom to make my/our own decisions and especially the enrichment of working together with all of you. During the last 15 years there was not one day, where I didn't go to work with passion. I always loved to collaborate with you in order to reach our common goals! I really enjoyed working together as a team (or better, as a family) and learn from each other - on our common way to establish the "centre of African Excellence" - as a new brand for high quality standards in Higher Education in Sub Saharan Africa!

It is a kind of consolation, that I will continue to work with the region of my heart and hopefully will keep in contact with most of you in the future. And my successor, Isabell Mering, is already very much looking forward to taking over the tasks of the centre of African Excellence program!'



Dr Dorothee Weyler



Eva Rothenpieler

Eva Rothenpieler

Eva Rothenpieler is leaving her position as programme manager for the DIGI-FACE project. She said: 'It was definitely a tough decision, but I must admit that I am happy for the opportunity to pursue new challenges of my interest. I will shift to section ST32 - Scholarship Programmes Africa, where I will be responsible for DAAD-GIZ cooperation on Strengthening Advisory Capacities for Land Governance in Africa.

While I'm excited about the new job, there's also a big part of me that's sad to be saying goodbye. After working with the centres of African Excellence for almost 5 years, I want you to know how much I've enjoyed working with you and getting to know you. And most important, how much I've learned from you – thank you!'

Pilot Project on a Decentralised Payment Approach

centres need to develop alternative sources of revenue beyond DAAD funding and need to be sustainable. One way available is by offering courses for a fee. CERM-ESA in Kenya and the NGCL in Namibia have been selected for a pilot project in which they are not only responsible for the development of quality courses on DIGI-FACE, but they also define and manage their own payment system.

Both centres have elaborated on the concept by taking account of their local contexts and their past experiences. Follow-up meetings are regularly organised to discuss a fair course fee, marketing strategies, legal aspects, and administrative and financial management. Nelson Mandela University has also been involved in the project; they assist with all the technical components such as the display and the distinction between paid and free courses on DIGI-FACE, and the enrolment process that will be the most suitable.

Throughout this pilot project, both centres will be supported in the process of generating revenues from their paid courses available on DIGI-FACE. Afterwards, best practice examples and lessons learned will be shared and disseminated to other centres.

In the same line, a mini-module on the sustainability of centres is under development. It will be released on DIGI-FACE and will provide leaders and staff members with key steps to follow to successfully contribute to the financial stability and the long-term prospect of their centers and academic institutions.

Aristide Fongang

Multipliers on the DIGI-FACE Network

Since 2020, DIGI-FACE has offered a variety of generic modules to the African Centres of Excellence. Some of the earlier modules, like *Academic Written and Graphic Presentation*, have been offered to as many as ten cohorts in English and five cohorts in French. This level of demand has made it clear that DIGI-FACE cannot meet the growing need for course offerings without official multipliers. As a result, the project has used 'multiplier training' sessions with the most successful graduates on our Generic Modules who wish to qualify as official facilitators and enable DIGI-FACE to attain a desired level of scalability and sustainability.

Multiplier training has been conducted for three modules that have been in high demand, namely *Academic Written*

and *Graphic Presentation, Exploring the Online Learning Environment and Strengthening Post-Graduate Supervision*. Our multipliers are featured in our facilitator database hosted on digiface.org at digiface.org/facilitators. While most of the facilitators currently facilitate modules for their own centres it is possible for other centres to invite them to facilitate generic modules for them. In this way collaboration between centres is strengthened and, should financial agreements be reached, make a contribution towards the offering centre's sustainability.

If you have any questions regarding the facilitator database or multiplier training, kindly reach out to Sonja for more information.

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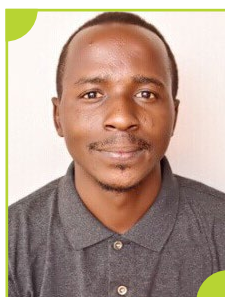
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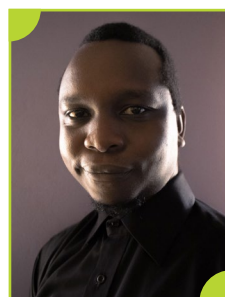
Noel Japheth



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Raymond Sawe





DIGI-FACE Supports DAAD Southern African In-Country/ In-Region Scholarship Holders Conference

Elmien Waring

Members of our South African DIGI-FACE team were privileged to attend the DAAD In-Country/In-Region Scholarship Holders Conference from 15-18 September 2022. The conference, held in Port Elizabeth/Gqeberha, South Africa, was a great opportunity for Master's and PhD students who are currently funded under the [DAAD In-Country/In-Region Programme](#) studying at Universities in South Africa, Namibia and Malawi. The theme for this year was 'Digitalisation: support or restriction?'. Various interactive workshops, presentations, and discussions were hosted and networking opportunities offered for the young academics and various partners in Academia and Industry.

Karlien Potgieter and Elmien Waring attended the opening event of the conference where they experienced an overall feeling of optimism as our future African decision-makers networked

and enjoyed conversation with each other and guests. Elmien offered a workshop as an interactive space aimed at enlightening participants about the DIGI-FACE project and highlighting the resources and support available to them as DAAD scholarship holders. The different functions of the platform were explored revealing opportunities for networking and being able to engage in the DIGI-FACE modules that have been developed. The workshop also offered a quick look into a practical aspect of the courses by assisting researchers in strategies on presenting research findings as infographics.

By all indications the participants responses appeared to be overwhelmingly positive. They all indicated an interest in being part of the DIGI-FACE project and the fact that most stayed well past the time allocated to discuss the project further speaks volumes.

Francophone Centres and Digitalisation

Michael Kongo

Francophone centres received several training sessions and assistance from the DIGI-FACE coordination team. Among them were the *centre Congolais Allemand de Microfinance (CCAM)*, *CEGLA* and *PRO-RUWA*. These three centres comprise six Francophone countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.

A course on academic writing was held in Congo and Mali. During eight training sessions, the participants engaged with the intricacies of how to produce a scientific document (dissertations or articles). A formation of trainers was also organized in Bamako and Kinshasa. This training brought together centre IT Managers (computer specialists, technical and educational managers) and lecturers to enable them to be autonomous in producing online modules and to be able to help other academics. On five days spread over two months, participants at the PRO-RUWA centre pledged to put educational materials online and learned to explore the Moodle platform.

Our visit to Kehl in September 2022 strengthened the unity between the French-speaking and English-speaking centres. We found that many issues unite us and that we can learn from each other's experiences to promote online teaching. Digitalisation has become part of the daily vocabulary of our centres, thanks to the DAAD.



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