

**IN COLLABORATION WITH RWANDA EDUCATION BOARD, THE
PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES – FACULTY
OF EDUCATION HOSTED PUBLIC LECTURE ON COMPETENCE BASED
CURRICULUM**

On Sunday, April 24th 2016, the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences – Faculty of Education organized a public lecture on Competence Based Curriculum which was recently launched by the Rwanda Education Board (REB). The guest speaker was Dr. Joyce Musabe, the Head of the Curriculum and Pedagogical Materials Department of REB. The purpose of the public lecture was to challenge and explain to teacher candidates in the Faculty of Education the role of the teacher in making the classroom environment responsive to the new curriculum.

In her presentation, Dr. Joyce Musabe asserted that knowledge based teaching is not appropriate for Rwanda's schools today. For her, the teacher should not be considered as the center of the knowledge, but rather the facilitator of the learning process. She demonstrated the extent to which the teacher centered method has blinded schools from exploiting and nurturing the capacities and competences hidden in learners. Criticisms of theory based teaching include (i) classroom teaching methods not properly preparing young people for labor market demands (ii) focusing too much on facts and information with insufficient attention given to skills and competencies (iii) learning and teaching are too teacher centered with teaching heavily reliant on students copying notes from the teacher/blackboard (iv) little time for problem solving and written exercises, and an absence of practical activity, even in the sciences ...

According to Dr. Joyce Musabe, the new curriculum seeks to give learners the space to show and demonstrate their capacity at the fullest, while the teacher stands as the facilitator. It is expected that at the end of each year and/or level of schooling,

the learners are able to demonstrate clear and specific competence. For instance, through play based learning, foundations of literacy, numeracy and social skills are expected to be developed. The introduction of vocational subjects such as farming and animal husbandry, creative arts and home economics in addition to entrepreneurship and IT are expected to provide vocational skills to learners. Contrary to the former curriculum, each subject syllabus shows the broad subject competencies to be demonstrated at the end of the cycle, key competencies to be demonstrated on a year by year basis and unit/topic competencies during the learning. Each syllabus shows that learning is achieved by doing and activities are performed by learners either individually or in groups.

During the discussions, students and lecturers appreciated the new curriculum and the quest to switch from, “*What do you know?*” to, “*What are you able to do?*” But, they questioned the capacity of the country to finance the implementation of such an important programme. In addition, the following concerns were raised: (i) teachers may not easily adapt to new competence based pedagogical approach and will tend teach others how they have been taught (ii) the teacher-pupil ratio especially in primary schools is still high, making it difficult for teachers to pay attention to individual learner’s needs (iii) the English language proficiency of teachers is still low. Much effort and commitment is need for the development of generic competences (iv) the double shift system does not provide enough time allocation for proper syllabus coverage in most subjects and (v) not all schools have science and computer laboratories or internet access, so competences related to science and technology may not easily be developed in schools with such shortages.

After looking back to the extent community grown solutions made the implementation of nine and twelve year basic education a reality by contributing more than USD 49million, the participants were then convinced that the successful implementation of competence based curriculum will be with community commitment supplemented by the government. What matters is the change of mindset for all actors and stakeholders of education. It was therefore recommended

to students and lecturers to conduct research on the teachers and community's attitude towards competence based curriculum implementation as well as its financial implications.

The Department of Curriculum and Pedagogical Materials of REB has committed to collaborate closely with the Faculty of Education of PIASS in preparing and empowering teachers in implementing the new curriculum.