

Scientific Week 2015

PIASS annual scientific week successfully took place on 17 – 19 July 2015. It focused on the following topic: ***Conflict and violence management in families and communities: Factors contributing to failure or successes in Rwandan traditions and modern approaches.*** Six major papers were presented by academic staff and respective discussion papers for each were presented by external scholars.



A view of the plenary during the Scientific Week: students, academic staff and external scholars

- ***Effects of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide on Women: A Social Change in Gender Roles***

In this paper, Josephine Mukabera, a lecturer in the Faculty of Development Studies at PIASS and a PhD candidate in the National University, Seoul in Korea, discussed the effects of the 1994 Rwanda genocide on women with a focus on the change in gender roles. Traditionally, Rwandan women's role was limited to the domestic sphere. The 1994 Rwanda genocide forced women to go beyond their traditional

domestic roles, embracing the roles previously allocated to men. The crisis of genocide forced women to think about themselves differently, and the role played by counselling interventions in empowering them were explored. Fundamentally, trauma healing provided to women heads of families, helped them to gain power and claim for their rights, to initiate income generating activities, and to engage in the community leadership and development. In essence, economic development and political support have been fundamental in promoting women's empowerment. Rwanda women's contribution to their family and community rehabilitation convinced Rwanda leaders that increased participation of women in politics is necessary for improved social, economic and political conditions. For Mukabera, both males and females are able to contribute fruitfully to their societies if they are given opportunities and means. *This paper was discussed by Rev Dr Appoline Kabera.*



Mrs Josephine Mukabera presenting her paper in the plenary

- ***Prevention of Domestic violence case of Isange One stop centers of the National Police of Rwanda*** by Solange Tuyisenga.

A graduate of St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya and independent researcher with NGOs on Domestic and sexual violence, Tuyisenga looked at how Isange One Stop Centers provides holistic and multidisciplinary approaches to victims of GBV by healing, care and legal assistance

from one center. From one center in Kigali, the Rwanda National Police developed the initiative and in cooperation with other public and private actors expanded the initiative countrywide attending up to 24 centers by June 2015. The IOSC address the needs of children who have experienced violence with significant support. The IOSC medical-legal forensic capacity far exceeds anything else available in the country. By the end of 2015 it will be further enhanced with a forensic laboratory that has the capacity to test DNA. Judicial support has been awarded at national and internal Level. *The discussion paper to this presentation was done by Rev Dr Appoline Kabera.*



During the Scientific Week, academic staff, students and conference speakers mix in group discussions to pursue and deepen interactions on the topic and subtopics presented in the plenaries.

- **Psycho-social Analysis of Intimate Partners' Sexual Violence on Rwandan Families: a Case Study of Ngoma Sector by *Dative Nakabonye and Penine Uwimbabazi***

Culturally sexual matters are a taboo subject in Rwanda and probably in other many countries, yet they are a great source of conflict within families. The study explored and highlighted different types and causes of intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV) in Rwandan families, and showed its impact on individual, families and community. Furthermore, the researchers explored approaches that would help to prevent the IPSV. Using a sample of 96 couples in Ngoma Sector, Huye District, purposively selected from the population of 2185 couples, structured interview and focus group discussion selected using snow bowling technique helped to identify families that are known to be in conflict. The researchers came to the conclusion that the existence of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence in Rwandan families is a factor of psychosocial dysfunction of the family. Respondents displayed depression, shame, low self-esteem for the victim (mainly woman), etc. They also noticed a clash of tradition beliefs and modern beliefs on how to approach partners' sexual violence. Nakabonye, a final year student in the faculty of Developments studies who conducted this well acclaimed research under the supervision of Dr Uwimbabazi, lecturer in PIASS suggested a couple of therapy to accompany victims in the process of recovery. The discussant of this paper was Dr Ignatiana Mukarusanga, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Rwanda, Department of Clinical Psychology.

- ***The practice of church discipline in protestant churches: A source of koinonia or disruption?***

The research looked for the dynamics of Church Discipline and if the practices brings true fellowship or causes disruption in the church. The study investigates historical formation of the practices of church discipline from Biblical times, during Church fathers, western Christianity prior to reformation and reformers time, and find out that Church discipline was practiced differently. Earlier times, the practices were for people who recant their faith due to different reasons. Later, some more offenses were added like murder, adultery and apostasy. The main aim of church discipline in all these periods was to guide the spiritual and moral lives of the Christians. In Rwanda, missionaries added a long list of what they called offenses/sins some of which were simply not compatible with their culture. For example, drinking traditional alcohol which was used during celebration, reconciliation and in different activities which united the Banyarwanda was denied by them. A Christian to participate in such a drink was put under Church Discipline. When the church became autonomous, the practices of Church discipline was copied and pasted. The research was conducted within EPR Gitarama presbytery, EAR Muhanga and ADEPR in Ngoma, Huye District. All churches interviewed agreed that all sins should be forgiven... The research also, found that there is disruption with the practices of Church discipline; to date it is still practiced in a legalistic way. Some measures taken for

disciplining the offenders are inconsistent with the protestant doctrine of Law and Gospel which teaches that we are sinners not because of what we do but because of who we are. Hence, our true repentance should come from the innermost of us and God forgive us by grace through faith instead of following certain legalistic approaches done by our churches. *The discussant of this paper Rev Dr Jimi Zacka, is a theologian from Central Africa Republic, a professor of theology in universities in France and Morocco.*

- **Traditional approaches to conflict management and poverty reduction in modern Rwanda
Case studies of Ubudehe and Abunzi in Nyanza, Huye, and Gisagara districts**

By Gerard, Gloriose and Penine

In a modern developing world that focuses on industrialization and economic growth, traditional practices are generally regarded as backward. Traditionally, families and communities used to play a central role in social economic life of the Banyarwanda in early days. People had the culture of solidarity, unity and collaboration for solving community issues including conflicts resolving and poverty reduction. Looking at poverty and conflict as interlinked issues, the government of Rwanda uses a combination of tradition and modern approaches in dealing with the above mentioned issues. These include Ubudehe initiated by the Government since 2001 through its vision 2020 to empower poorest households by creating opportunities for the people to interact with one another, share views and create institutions of their own which assign duties, benefits, responsibility and authority. In mediation, Abunzi process existed prior to the colonial era as traditional methods of conflict resolution in communities like to moderate land disputes, cattle ownership, marriage, inheritance rights and petty theft... *Current Abunzi "community mediators" were rehabilitated as a permanent addition to the judicial system, to serve as ongoing forums for public, participatory, grassroots justice that increased efficiency through reducing the congestion of the formal courts systems and promoting reconciliation-focused justice. Mr Jean Baptiste Ndikubwimana, a lecturer in the University of Rwanda discussed this paper.*



During SW students from all levels mix with teaching staff for more insights: Here VC elect, Prof Elisee Musemakweli in group discussions

- ***Student care in Rwandan Secondary Schools: School practices and people's perceptions***

This study was conducted by the team of the faculty of Education to investigate the extent to which schools care about students with special needs in learning activities, paying school fees, having learning materials and discipline? How do learners and parents perceive student care practices and school punishments towards cases of indiscipline at schools?

The school is generally required to provide assistance, support and guidance that respond to students' needs, problems and demands so that new knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired. Secondary school students are people passing through a period of social, emotional and intellectual development with a high curiosity to learn, explore and try everything (transition from adolescent to adulthood). If education aims at helping them to go through these changes and at the same time fulfill their learning obligations, then there is a need for radical changes from current practices.

All tentative of helping students to learn effectively are done collectively in classroom. There is no mechanism to assist individual students to first know the reason behind his/her failure or behavior. Teachers on their own initiative may provide extra catching up session to students who have not understood well their subjects; but this is done to only final years students (3rd and 6th year) to better prepare national examinations. Lack of time due to the quest to finish the study program and a huge number of learners with difficulties do not allow them to give proper assistance to individual learners. But the study brought out a serious issue of how schools deal with students unable to pay school fees on time. Different strategies have been used including sending back home students to bring money, preventing them from attending classes or entering refectory, forcing parents to sign a payment agreement... In all the study suggested that all venues must be explored to avoid any measures that can have negative consequences on the learning process of the student.

Schools should set up guidance and counseling services in secondary schools and appoint well trained personnel to deal with problem behavior of students. *The discussion paper was presented by Dr Simon Sebatukura, senior Lecturer in the University of Rwanda.*