

SPRING 2023

PRAYER ALERT

SMART CLASSROOMS

Empowering education in Egypt

A TIMELY INVESTMENT

Online education in the Philippines

WE LIVE BY SHARING

Networking in Rwanda

STORIES FROM THE DIGITAL DIVIDE





ONLINE COMES TO LIFE

Embracing new training opportunities

LOCAL LEADERS ANNUAL DINNERS 2023

Local Leaders International is delighted to welcome Dr Joanna Feliciano-Soberano as guest speaker for our 2023 Annual Dinner Series. Joanna serves as the Academic Dean at Asian Theological Seminary (ATS) in Manila. The college is one of the leading evangelical training institutions in the Philippines and a key partner for Local Leaders activities in Asia.

Simultaneously, Joanna works for Overseas Council USA as the Regional Director for Southeast Asia. In this role, she has partnered directly with us to oversee the rollout of 'Local Online: A Global Strategy' (LOGS) across Southeast Asia.

In this context, Joanna has witnessed the game changing benefits of digital connections. Increased student numbers, greater collaboration between faculties at different colleges, and the successful training of digital 'champions' (key people in a college who learn about online education methods and pass them on to members of their faculty), are just a few examples of the technological expansion that Joanna has spearheaded in Southeast Asia (read more in her article on pages 11 and 12).

An innovative leader, Joanna will inspire you with stories of how digital capacity-building is leading to tangible positive outcomes for Bible colleges in the Majority World. Online comes to life!

JOIN US FOR DINNER

CENTRAL COAST
TUESDAY 24TH OCTOBER

BRISBANE
WEDNESDAY 25TH OCTOBER

MELBOURNE
SATURDAY 28TH OCTOBER

PERTH
THURSDAY 2ND NOVEMBER

SYDNEY
SATURDAY 4TH NOVEMBER

See the enclosed invitation or our website for venue details, costs and how to register.

SCAN HERE TO BOOK YOUR SEAT.



“The LOGS strategy has proven to be a key partner in fulfilling the mission of equipping leaders for the Church during these challenging times.”

DR JOANNA FELICIANO-SOBERANO

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WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS & COMMENTS!

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COVER Students from South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, India.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The global pandemic lockdowns created all sorts of difficulties and inequities for many people. The negative implications will be felt for decades in the lives of individuals and communities who suffered because of them. Yet, there is also a good news story in the operations of our partner Bible colleges. To begin with, they had to go online. Now, most of them want to stay online (at least partially) and are working out how to do this well.

This edition of Prayer Alert gives an update on the progress of Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS), our program to assist over 125 Bible colleges to develop their online offering for training leaders.

It is a joy to report that after just two years of the strategy, we have assisted the **creation of over 8,500 new positions for students** to study God's word and train to be leaders for the church and society. That's like opening 50 new Bible colleges, without needing one brick!

As you read and pray through this edition, you'll see much **more than just the numbers**. The strategy is making a difference to the quality of training of students in many ways, including the 'retrofitting' of faculty members general teaching competence.

Increased numbers and higher quality teaching would be sufficient outcomes, but **there is even more** that you'll see in this edition. There have been new opportunities for colleges to cooperate with each other and for skills to be developed in systematic ways which we see are becoming more institutionalised.

We're grateful to the Lord for all that's been happening in the strategy, as it complements the many ongoing supports we provide to build up local leaders for Christian service throughout the Majority World.



Rev. Peterson from St Andrews Kabare in 2020. Local Leaders International funded the distribution of laptops to affiliate colleges of St Pauls University, Kenya.

MY TRAVELS – USA FOCUS

In the coming months I'll be spending more time in the USA than normal – in fact I'll take three trips this side of Christmas! I would normally go once every few years for a conference but this is part of a special effort that we're making in expanding the fundraising base for our newest strategy – Grassroots to Canopy.

I have coaches helping me to understand the scene and introduce me to two dozen potential donors. This work is on behalf of a new alliance that we're establishing with several key organisations that work in the theological space in the Majority World. It also includes representatives of over 1,000 evangelical Bible colleges in the wider network.

Please pray for this exciting opportunity and that the Lord will lead me to find people of significant means who will get the vision of raising up more leaders for the church in the Majority World.

Rev Dr Stuart Brooking
Executive Director



Stuart Brooking will be travelling to America to fundraise for our newest strategy – Grassroots to Canopy.

PLEASE PRAY

Lord of your church, you give ideas and you provide the funds they need. Help the leaders of the Grassroots to Canopy Alliance to discern your will. Provide as you choose. Raise up those who are inspired by you to give, or close it all down and give new, better ideas, we pray. Amen.

WE GIVE THANKS

“... Barnabas sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet. Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet.”

ACTS 4:37 – 5:2

The chapter break doesn’t do justice to the flow of the story. We have two very similar giving actions that illustrate completely different motivations. It wasn’t the portion that was the issue of difference, it was the purpose of the giving. Barnabas loved the community of God’s people. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the applause of God’s people. The Spirit of God would have none of it! They become exemplars of false faith and the judgement of God. Supporters and fundraisers alike do well to constantly search and refine our hearts so He finds Spirit-filled generosity.

CALENDAR YEAR 2023: FIRST HALF OVERALL FINANCES

We are rejoicing that at the six month mark our overall income matched budget at \$1.2 million. We are on track for our budgeted \$3.5 mil for the year. Our administrative expenses were lower than expected for a range of reasons.

We distributed to our partner colleges over \$1.4 mil in the period, happily drawing down on our allocated funds.

STUDENT SPONSORSHIPS

We are pleased to have the ongoing support for over 200 students. Our supporters gave over \$258,000 to student sponsorships. College principals often say how much they appreciate these funds, as they facilitate the operational costs of the college. This is because student fees are covered by these donations.



Students at Carlile College, Kenya.

PLEASE PRAY

All seeing Lord, create in us clean hearts by your Holy Spirit. Purify our motivations so our actions flow from a heart dedicated to you, your people and your world. We give you thanks for what we have and that we can partner with you in bringing Christ to the world. Amen.

FACULTY STUDY GRANTS

We received \$168,000 in the period to help over 40 faculty members get the higher degrees they need to teach in their colleges.

LOCAL ONLINE: A GLOBAL STRATEGY

Donors contributed over \$70,000 towards the many projects within our LOGS strategy. These funds are used in conjunction with the main funds we get each year to supply IT equipment for colleges, training for faculty members and resources to help the online projects.

PROJECTS

We received \$646,000 towards the many projects we support including buildings and other infrastructure. These funds also go towards different programs run by our college partners. For example, the Pasifika Strategy expansion, as it reaches out to ten small Bible schools in Papua New Guinea and a few extra in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

We are grateful for all our supporters who make this ministry possible. We give thanks to God for your generosity and your hearts.

THE IMPACT OF A BEQUEST

We are grateful that late last year we received funds from a bequest totalling \$591,385. This contribution has been split to support multiple Student Sponsorships (\$300,000) and Faculty Study Grants (\$291,385) over the next three years. Bequests such as these have a lasting impact for the church in the Majority World. One well trained leader ministering in their context can impact hundreds, if not thousands of people with the gospel message in their lifetime. How much more so when numerous leaders are trained and equipped? Hundreds of thousands of lives can be transformed!

Over the years, we have had numerous people include Local Leaders in their will and the board invites you to join in this program. It is as simple as adding a phrase in your will, or as a codicil to your existing will. It helps to have a lawyer involved and to explain your intentions to your family.

If you’re interested, please see the bequest page of our website: <https://localleaders.org.au/get-involved/bequest> for more information, or contact us at office@localleaders.org.au

ONLINE EDUCATION – PURISTS OR PRAGMATISTS?

By Rev Dr Stuart Brooking, Local Leaders International

Four years ago it was all different. Just a few of our partner colleges contemplated online education and even fewer chose to implement it. There were many ‘purists’ who knew that something would be lost without the high value contact of student with teacher, of student with student, and student with library. The pragmatists who spoke about what was possible online, the need for more training, and the coming tech revolution, only occasionally won the arguments. Probably 10% of our partner colleges had classes online.

Then came the lockdowns.

It’s a different question when the options shift – **go online or close down!** Pragmatism looks different – somehow essential and necessary. Though, to be true to the narrative, most colleges expected to ‘go back to normal’, even though the language of ‘new normal’ was frequently used.

The really interesting question in my mind is, how do you get what on-campus generally does easily (formation of students as disciples, training and testing of ministry skills, and guidance to become leaders) when you go online?

In this edition of Prayer Alert, as we report and celebrate the work of Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS), you may be wondering about the very issue of what is lost. It’s clear that **there are many good things** with online education, particularly in terms of the higher number of people who can access training. But what about the quality?

What is interesting to notice is that in **most of our partner colleges they have not opted for just online delivery.**

Most have implemented one of the many hybrid modes. They have answered the question

about formation of disciples and training for ministry by doing both things. Programs usually include some attendance at the college in a week or month at a time. In some instances, the students gather in small clusters with a tutor who guides them in prayer, support and learning. In other cases, the faculty members travel to the students. Interestingly too, some on-campus students are also given extra material online to help enhance their studies.

As in the West, many of our partner Bible colleges now use what we generically refer to as **‘digitally-enhanced learning’**. It’s too much to suggest that the purists and pragmatists all agree. There are, of course, many issues to keep working out in each setting. However, by largely avoiding the either/or way of operating, our partners are finding ways to train many more people in ways that are suitable for the context.

PLEASE PRAY

Our Father, we give thanks that amid the disruption of COVID-19 your Word continued to go forth and train Majority World students through online learning. We pray for fruit among the many hybrid modes of learning which our partner colleges have adopted. We praise you for the acceptance of online learning and pray the truth of the gospel will reach even more students. Amen.



LOGS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN TWO YEARS

Dr David Turnbull, Program Director for Local Online: A Global Strategy, Local Leaders International, Australia

It's been two years since the commencement of Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS), the largest project ever for Local Leaders International.

We praise God because so much has happened in digital theological education, including new academic programs and increased student numbers.

Here is a snapshot of what LOGS has achieved:

CAPACITY

For 96 colleges and campuses in more than 30 countries, technological capacity has been built by providing servers, along with equipment for smart classrooms and recording studios. This amounts to 18 more partners than expected at this point.

COMPETENCE

This has been enhanced for faculty in partner colleges to deliver quality digitally enhanced theological education and training programs.

More than 700 faculty and staff from 148 institutions in over 45 countries have received this training! The training was offered in 96 face-to-face workshops or online webinars. This is 36 more than expected at this point in time.

Several key course-writing initiatives produced material for ICETE Academy (formally linked to the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education), including:

- Eight 4-hour courses for the Academy's Distance/Online Theological Education Competence Framework Foundation program, and
- A unit entitled 'Distance and Online Learning for Higher Theological Education' in the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Theological Education.

CONTENT

This has been produced with a resource bank of visual, text and audio material for ICETE Online. A website is almost complete which enables faculty to access resources from the Majority World for use in their online courses.

At this stage, 5 of the 33 colleges required have committed to the process of producing about 150 resources (well short of the 800 expected). Plans exist to increase this production and the number of colleges involved.

These first two years of the project have been a transformative experience for the team, witnessing the expanse and diversity in the Kingdom of God across the globe.

The team has taken the time to understand at a deeper level the unique needs of online theological education within Majority World institutions. Through collaboration and deep engagement with faculty and leaders, they have been able to build capacity, enhance competence, and produce valuable content.

The LOGS team greatly appreciates the generosity and prayers of our supporters during the first two years. The highlights are numerous.

First is the positive team effort within Local Leaders International, and outside it, with Education Consultants (formerly Regional Directors) from Overseas Council USA, ICETE leadership and Dr Diane Hockridge. We are thankful for the relationships which have formed.

Second is the identification of Champions for online education in institutions in the Majority World, and the leadership they have taken in regional training events.

Third is the intergenerational relationships developed as younger members support older members of faculty.

And finally, fourth is the encouraging response from colleges to continue with hybrid versions of online education post-COVID, rather than just return to the traditional options associated with a physical campus.

PLEASE PRAY

Our Father, we praise you for the LOGS management team, Dr David Turnbull and Elise Heerde. We particularly give thanks for all the progress made. Thanks for the collaboration between Local Leaders and Majority World partners and the ensuing relationships. Please pray for a heightened response to the ICETE Online content resource production, and for ongoing progress in the final year of LOGS. Amen.



Dr David Turnbull leading one of his sessions at the ICETE conference in Turkey, November 2022.

A TIMELY INVESTMENT AND LONG-TERM BENEFIT

Dr Joanna Feliciano-Soberano, Regional director for Southeast Asia, Overseas Council USA and Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Asian Theological Seminary in Manila, Philippines

“ **Local Leaders International’s LOGS project was a timely gift and a needed boost for theological education, formal and non-formal, as schools had to adapt to innovative ways of teaching** ”

– DR JOANNA FELICIANO-SOBERANO.

What are the disruptive challenges in theological education today that require adaptation, innovation and a new way of engaging students?

This is the question that seminaries in the Majority World had to grapple with post-Covid. Seminaries in the Philippines faced the challenges of low-enrollments, financial sustainability, more part-time and working students, and students who could not be present on campus for various reasons.

And so the offer of the Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS) project from Local Leaders International was a timely gift and a needed boost for theological education, formal and non-formal, as schools had to adapt to innovative ways of teaching.

Four AGST Philippines schools (Asia Graduate School of Theology – a consortium of graduate seminaries) have benefited from the generous LOGS project since 2022. One of these is Manila’s Asian Theological Seminary (ATS).

Aside from receiving a generous capacity provision for a hybrid classroom and a recording studio, seven young faculty

members also signed-up as faculty “Champions”.

Champions are key people in a college who take up the learning and pass it on to members of their faculty or to those in other colleges.

Champions are committed to develop their competencies in online and hybrid learning, with a view to designing online/hybrid courses and become instructional leaders.

Instructional leaders for quality online learning are essential guides for successful curriculum design and delivery. Their level of commitment has been so encouraging that ATS is now using these instructional leaders to conduct faculty development workshops every semester.

Moreover, for the forthcoming academic year 2023-24, these champions will be offering workshops for other seminaries.

Part of the LOGS training is the required engagement with ICETE Academy (IA) courses.

One seminary even decided to have all its faculty members register for IA courses for continuing professional development.

I see the LOGS strategy not only providing the gift of capacity and training for competency development, but that faculty members can be connected to other sources of growth in educational proficiency.

Because of the benefits received from the LOGS project, ATS Manila is now constructing a second hybrid classroom so that more courses can be offered and more students can be accommodated.

What’s more, ATS has increased enrollment in non-formal programs, encouraged

international and local students to remain in their preferred online learning modality, and has trained more faculty in developing competencies for online and hybrid teaching.

I believe that, for seminaries committed to pursuing excellence in online theological education, the LOGS strategy has proven to be a key partner in fulfilling the mission of equipping leaders for the Church during these challenging times.

Joanna will be our international guest speaker for the Annual Dinner Series in October and November.

To book your place, head to localleaders.org.au/get-involved/annualdinners



The hybrid classroom at ATS. Faculty members on site and online are receiving training from a faculty champion.

PLEASE PRAY

Our Lord, we pray for the continued roll-out of the LOGS strategy in southeast Asia. We give thanks that theological schools here are adapting to innovative ways of teaching with seven faculty members taking positions as Champions, committed to developing their online and hybrid-learning capabilities. Thank you Lord that the LOGS strategy has enabled faculty members to expand their professional development. Amen.

THE SMART CLASSROOM: EMPOWERING EDUCATION

Rev Mark Senada, Professor at Alexandria School of Theology, Egypt

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, Alexandria School of Theology (AST) has embraced the transformative power of smart classrooms.

Smart classrooms have produced remarkable benefits to our institution, including enhanced student engagement, improved accessibility, extended reach and cost-effective solutions. We are grateful to Local Leaders International for its invaluable support.

ENHANCED STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The smart classroom has revolutionised student engagement and interaction. Integration of advanced technologies creates an interactive learning environment where students actively participate, collaborate, and utilise multimedia resources.

In the classroom, both in-person and online students can have clear audio and video communication, fostering engagement and creating a comfortable learning experience.

EXPANDED REACH

Our institution has successfully extended its reach to students across various campuses, including St Cyprian Seminary in Tunis and our satellite study centre in Menya, Upper Egypt.

Geographical barriers are bridged through real-time video conferencing and online collaboration tools, allowing us to offer high-quality education to a broader student base. This increases accessibility, inclusivity, and saves valuable time and resources that would have been spent on travel.

Students in remote locations can now benefit from the same educational opportunities as our main campus, thus expanding our ministry through online education.

Additionally, the smart classroom serves as a valuable resource for live-streaming seminars and recording high-quality videos and interviews, benefiting a wider audience.

COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

The smart classroom not only expands our reach to multiple locations but also provides cost-effective solutions. It eliminates the need for travel expenses for classes in Tunis and Upper Egypt, particularly when inviting visiting professors to Cairo.

By utilising smart classrooms, we can connect our Alexandria, Menya, and Tunis campuses and reach students outside the country or in distant cities from Cairo. For instance, our upcoming class on the Song of Songs taught by a visiting professor in August will benefit all our campuses due to this facility.

We express our gratitude for the partnership with Local Leaders International and praise the Lord for the opportunities to effectively teach the Word of God, reaching more students and contributing to the growth of His kingdom.



Rev Mark Senada and Archbishop Samy Shehata during the inaugural event in the smart classroom at Alexandria School of Theology, Cairo campus, Egypt.

“ We express our gratitude for the partnership with Local Leaders International and praise the Lord for the opportunities to effectively teach the Word of God... ”

PLEASE PRAY

Our God, we give thanks for the enormous reach LOGS has permitted for learning online through AST. We are grateful for the crossing of what were geographical barriers, and for the cost cutting advantages which have ensued. Ultimately, we pray for the growth of your Kingdom thanks to this technology and its provision. Amen.

THE FRUIT OF COLLABORATION

Dr Diane Hockridge, LOGS Educational Consultant,
Local Leaders International, Australia

“ We’re encouraged to reach our students online and to teach them in a more effective way. ”

– REV PAUL MARTIN, BOMBAY BIBLE SCHOOL

When the Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS) project began two years ago, we were all emerging from the somewhat chaotic educational space of the early years of the Covid pandemic.

This fundamentally shifted educational practices. We knew there was a need for developing faculty competency in online teaching, but our challenge was where to start on this enormous task.

The LOGS team chose to start by consulting widely with global theological educators to identify key competency areas needed for faculty teaching in distance and online modes.

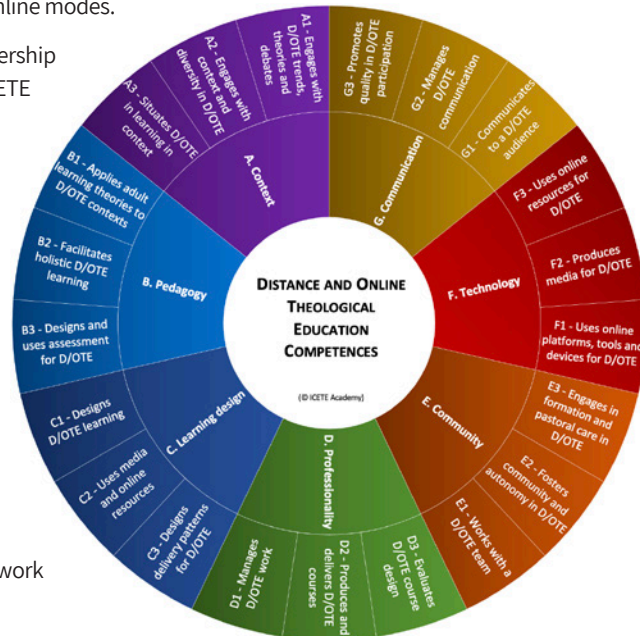
These consultations were in partnership with Dr Marvin Oxenham of the ICETE Academy and resulted in a new competency framework for online theological education.

The Distance and Online Theological Education Competency Framework (D/OTEC) consists of seven key competency areas for distance and online teaching (context, pedagogy, learning design, professionalism, community, technology and communication – see diagram). As far as we know, this is the only competency framework

specifically designed for the online theological education context.

Next, again with the assistance of Dr Oxenham, we pulled together global teams of experienced practitioners in online theological education to develop a set of online courses based on the D/OTEC framework.

Our aim was to use the expertise and voices of Majority World theological educators to develop training courses contextualised to their needs. This collaborative process was a new experience for many and has borne much fruit.



Diane presenting at the ICETE Conference in 2022.

Not only do we have the set of online courses available on the ICETE Academy learning site, we also expanded the skill-sets of all those involved and forged fruitful new connections with Majority World institutions and educators.

Since then, we’ve been using this first set of D/OTEC courses to train groups of theological educators in many places. The LOGS teaching team, which includes Dr David Turnbull, Dr Pauline Golder, Dr Nancy Njagi and myself, has run more than 100 workshops.

“ I am so glad to express my gratitude to you concerning the online workshop. Indeed it is a great privilege for me to join together and learn through these classes. They are effective, meaningful and helpful for me to teach in seminary. Thank you ”

– HENRY D DAVEED, ECI THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PLEASE PRAY

Dear Heavenly Father, we give thanks that LOGS courses have been shaped by Majority World practitioners, and deal with the real-world challenges in presenting quality and sustainable online education. We pray for the development of the second round of advanced distance theological education courses presently underway. Amen.

Most of these have been conducted via Zoom, as a series of webinars over several months or intensively over a few days. A few have been held in person. We’ve found Zoom training is not only cost-effective but works well to equip people for online learning since they directly experience the pros and cons of live online connection.

In the past 14 months, I have led 25 Zoom workshops for colleges in India, Mongolia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Papua New Guinea, and Malaysia, often having the privilege of partnering with Majority World specialists in doing so.

We’re currently working on developing a second round of ‘advanced’ D/OTEC courses which will be available on the ICETE Academy site.

These courses are also shaped by Majority World practitioners and deal with the real-world challenges of establishing quality and sustainable online theological education.

We look forward to many more opportunities to support global theological educators as they transition to new ways of teaching in changing educational contexts.

EMPOWERING FACULTY OVER A CUP OF COFFEE

Magdi S Gendi, Regional Director for Middle East and North Africa, Overseas Council USA

In 2021, I attended the Overseas Council Institute of Excellence in Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The topic was ‘Instruction Design for Online Education’ and it was eye opening!

It became clear that not all the faculty members were at the same level when it came to teaching online.

Some of them have a long history of embracing technology, others do not.

Since Covid in 2020, all the Bible schools switched to online education delivery methods. At that time, I thought about those who haven’t had a good experience with online education.

I decided to offer the opportunity to change the experience for faculty in different disciplines. **Local Leaders’ Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS) became the saving initiative to fulfil my desire to empower faculty competence in online education.**

My colleague Paul Clark and I decided to offer an opportunity every month for the faculty members of specific disciplines to share their online teaching experiences in an informal setting – sitting around a cup of coffee.

We purposefully asked the participants from different schools, as well as the facilitator, to bring their cup of coffee to the presentation to make the session very friendly.

The facilitator presents his/her experiences,

challenges and opportunities in thirty minutes, then we spend an hour discussing the challenges and opportunities for different contexts.

We started with teachers of biblical languages. We asked the schools to bring the faculty members of Hebrew and Greek to gather around a cup of coffee virtually. One of the more experienced faculty members would then facilitate the session.

We continued for four to five months with other disciplines like spiritual formation, pastoral and family counselling, evangelism, mission, and church planting.

In the second year, we went to a deeper level: instead of exchanging experiences in different disciplines, we decided to offer learning opportunities.



Magdi Gendi



For example, we held a session on using smart classrooms. After that session, one of the participants admitted that their smart classroom was like a museum exhibit – it was shown to visitors as a feature, but was barely used. Now, they are using it effectively!

We also offered sessions on subjects such as flipped classrooms and mobile learning.

Different schools have participated in this initiative including Zarephath Bible Seminary (Pakistan), Pars Theological Centre (Persian world), the Program for Theological Education by Extension (Jordan and Egypt), Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (Jordan), Bethlehem Bible College (Palestine), Nazareth Evangelical

College (Israel), the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo (Egypt), Faith Bible College (Egypt), Middle East Baptist Seminary (Egypt) and Nile Theological College (Sudan).

We think that creating a friendly virtual setting is a great opportunity for teaching different faculty members in different schools. Another positive result from the Learning Cafes is that faculty have networked of their own accord.

Faculty of specific disciplines are now connecting with other faculty in other schools to help each other and to exchange experiences. We hope that this initiative will empower and enrich online theological education throughout the MENA region.

PLEASE PRAY

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the initiative of the Learning Cafes. We pray for your blessing as faculty from a variety of schools come together and meet in this way. We ask for strengthened bonds between individuals and a proliferation of ideas and methodologies around online learning. Amen.

WE LIVE BY SHARING

Rev Prof Diphus Chemorion, Vice Chancellor,
East African Christian College, Rwanda

This year's annual theme for East African Christian College (EACC) is "Be the Salt of the Earth and the Light of the World" (Matt. 5:13-14).

This theme came in handy during the Africa Mile Deep Strategy (AMDS) conference in Uganda, in February, when EACC was officially declared the 7th hub university working in partnership with Local Leaders International.

The elevation to the hub status was a call to EACC to demonstrate how to be the salt and the light in the arena of pastoral training. Ever since the Uganda conference, our Theology faculty has been busy laying strategies for a vibrant Network of Diocesan Bible Schools (NDBS) affiliated to EACC.

This is a timely endeavour because the population of educated people is growing day-by-day, but the number of pastors with quality training is still very low.

EACC will celebrate its 3rd anniversary on December 20. The college is still in its nascent phase. The question is, where shall this infant institution get the resources to foster sister institutions? When asked this question, there is a common answer among student pastors and teachers in the Faculty of Theology: "We live by sharing."

The secret for African survival lies in the philosophy of communality that is best expressed in a saying: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am".

Over the past two years, Local Leaders International has supported EACC in raising funds for student scholarships, as well as for staff support and development.

Through the Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS) program connected to the AMDS, our college has set up a video conferencing room which it shares with six Bible schools in the NDBS.

The network aims at growing the capacity of pastors, evangelists, local church leaders and lay leaders, by **equipping them with competencies enabling them to deal with the spiritual and physical needs of God's people**. Along with the global challenges Rwandan people encounter each day.

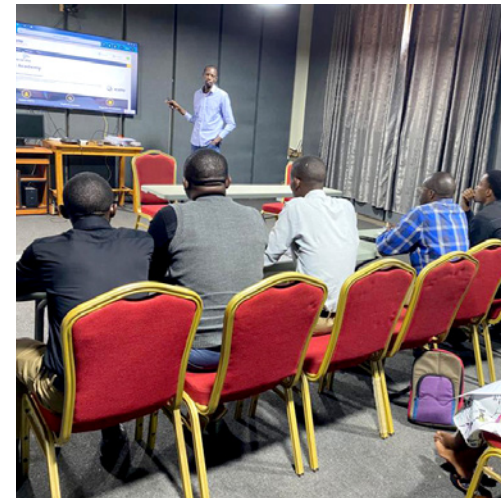
Through the LOGS program, trainees in the NDBS can access the EACC learner management system for easy communication and data processing, without having to travel hundreds of miles to reach EACC offices.

While teachers at the Bible Teaching Centres can engage learners in person, lecturers from EACC can instruct the learners through the virtual platform.

For effective practical training, students are attached to Communities of Practice (COPs) where pastors from different areas converge for one to three days to share their experiences and learn through guided peer review mechanisms.



Above and below: Students at EACC are introduced to virtual classes.



PLEASE PRAY

We give thanks dear God for the collaboration between EACC and six Diocesan Bible Schools (Byumba, Cyangugu, Kigeme, Shyira, Shyogwe and Gahini). We pray for needy students at EACC to be provided with support and we ask you to bless the college with funds to pay for content creation equipment and materials. Father, we pray that a spirit of generosity will replace the devouring prosperity doctrine, which is impairing people in Rwanda. Amen.

ENCOUNTERING GOD IN VIRTUAL PLACES

Manal Mekhael, ICETE Academy Coordinator, Egypt



Manal Mekhael

In my third year of the Master of Arts in Theology program at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo (ETSC), the Spiritual Formation professor asked us to reflect on God's request from Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac.

The question aimed to assess our understanding of the working faith of Christ's sacrificial offering. As I pondered the question, my heart was deeply touched and my answer was full of emotion.

As soon as I submitted my paper, I began to cry, which made my colleagues and the professor turn around to me. I shared my story with them, which in some parts is similar to the struggles of Abraham in his faith journey. They opened my eyes to how

my struggles affirm that I am attached to God and growing in my relationship with Him. They prayed for me and encouraged me to continue the spiritual formation journey. **An authentic assessment question turned the classroom into a divine operating room for inner healing and community support.**

I'm excited about sharing this and other stories in the Authentic Assessment course, one of 3 advanced D/OTEC writing workshops I am facilitating for the Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS) project – pedagogy, technology, and media competencies.

I am enthusiastic about my engagement in these workshops as they develop my skills side-to-side with the growing network of talented theological educators in the Majority World.

These workshops provide holistic digital teaching and a learning medium inspired by the Holy Spirit. This penetrates not only the classroom (as in my story) but also work offices, bedrooms, subways, cafes, fields, and any virtual place where students locate.

Although our relationship with the Holy Spirit seems "virtual," He brings learners face-to-face with God. So, the 'virtual' classroom becomes for God the 'Holy of Holies'. He can encounter learners anywhere!

As a new ICETE Academy (IA) community member, I coordinate the development of LOGS courses on the IA platform.

I am grateful for the persistence of both entity's leadership teams to include us as Middle Eastern women, to unleash our voices, and to bring our vivid experiences into a healthy, diverse community of Christ.

LOGS and IA leaders trust and motivate us to bring examples from our local environment to shake off the idea of "selective borrowed education", strongly believed to be in the Arab education systems and policies.

Our genuine teaching/learning approach springs from God's genuine approach to each of us regardless of race, gender, colour, beliefs, region, dreams, place and time.



Manal with her students in the Scriptwriting Course at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt.

PLEASE PRAY

Dear God, we thank you for the workshops Manal is facilitating as part of the LOGS project. Thank you that they are holistic and provide learning that is inspired by your Spirit. Praise be to you that this teaching is not only impacting the classroom but is allowing students to encounter you, even in the virtual space. Let your Word settle in the minds and hearts of those who hear it, guiding their steps. Amen.

UNIFYING COLLEGES WITH ONLINE TRAINING

Dr George Mombi, Dean of Post Graduate Studies at Christian Leaders Training College, Papua New Guinea and Director of the Pasifika Strategy, Local Leaders International

Covid-19 caused great concern, harm and loss to almost everyone around the world. Governments and private institutions were faced with an unprecedented challenge.

Christian Leaders Training College (CLTC) in Papua New Guinea was no exception to the effects of the Covid pandemic. The impact of Covid-19 made the college leadership think strategically about how to continue with its training programs.

CLTC was already faced with a deep financial crisis. The leadership had to decide on a strategy that would reduce costs, yet still enable the training goals to be achieved.

Restructuring of the whole institution was considered the best approach to minimise expenditure. And this allowed CLTC to keep

its main priority – the successful delivery of our academic program.

The two campuses, in Lae and Port Moresby, were restructured. They have become open campuses with only one faculty member managing them.

The rest of the faculty members from these campuses were recalled to the main campus in Banz, where most of the teaching occurs.

The plan was to teach online via Zoom from the Banz campus, connecting with Lae and Port Moresby, but the two city campuses had no online classrooms.

Banz campus did have an online classroom, but it was not technologically well furnished.

Due to the restructuring, the support offered to CLTC through Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS) was timely to make teaching across the three campuses successful.

Firstly, with LOGS support, a faculty competency training workshop was presented to equip the faculty with knowledge and skills in online theological education.

Secondly, online classrooms were set up at the three campuses. The faculty from Banz was able to teach classes in Lae and Port Moresby. While Internet connectivity remains an issue still to be fully addressed, LOGS' support in setting-up the smart classrooms on the three campuses has unified the training programs.

This is also opening up the opportunity for CLTC to expand its training to other centres throughout the country, as well as assisting the Associate Bible Colleges in Melanesia and South Pacific.

There is a growing demand from the middle class and professionals to study God's word. CLTC, with its digital technology, can reach this group of people who are also leaders in their denominations. LOGS support to CLTC is enabling the growth and expansion of theological education in PNG and the South Pacific.



Dr George Mombi.

PLEASE PRAY

Heavenly Father, we give you praise that three campuses in PNG are successfully teaching online thanks to LOGS' support. We give thanks there is unification in the training programs across these campuses. Moreover, we pray there will be opportunities for expansion across the country and throughout the South Pacific region. Amen.

“ Due to the restructuring, the support offered to CLTC through Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS) was timely to make teaching across the three campuses successful. ”



The smart classroom at CLTC Banz campus, Papua New Guinea.

A MESSAGE FROM THE STUDENT PASTORS AT EAST AFRICA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, RWANDA

We are writing to you to express our excitement about the scholarships given to cover our studies at East Africa Christian College (EACC).

Local Leaders International came to our rescue when we were truly struggling to find the tuition to continue our university studies. You have made it possible for us to pursue our dreams.

Without your support, we would not be what we are today. Especially considering the socio-economic challenges that make life difficult in the countryside of Rwanda, where we are from.

Your contribution to our education will allow us to fulfil our calling to be pastors.

The congregations we serve are already very excited and happy because now we're able to minister with a lot of confidence.

Some of us will graduate next year... After graduation we shall serve as pastors in various parishes and congregations.

We wish you blessings from Almighty God as you continue doing the great work of bringing smiles to our faces and sponsoring other students in different parts of the world. We can't say thank you enough, but we pray that our heavenly father God will bless you abundantly. Your contribution is not in vain.

From the bottom of our hearts please accept our deepest thanks for your support.



Some of the students at EACC sponsored by supporters of Local Leaders International.

TESTIMONY FROM BENJAMIN AT EAST AFRICA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

I was saved in 1994 following the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. After seeing that many people were being killed, I took a decision to receive Jesus Christ as King and Saviour of my life.

Now I am a catechist. At college I have learned how to be the light and salt of the world, and I have been putting this knowledge to work by sharing the word of God.

This semester I have been studying pastoral care and counselling, systematic theology and effective evangelism and discipleship. Because of these courses my thinking has been expanded and my knowledge has increased.

Now I know the history of the Church, that Christians went out all over the world to make people disciples of Jesus Christ, as per the Great Commission. Furthermore, I appreciate how the Church cares for people who are facing problems.

I would like to thank my sponsor for this kind opportunity. God bless you.



You can support students like Benjamin and his colleagues at EACC through our Student Sponsorship Program. \$2,200 per year helps students with tuition fees, accommodation and necessities.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT STUDENT SPONSORSHIP

Contact our Sponsorship Program Manager, Kathy Mildenhall
kmildenhall@localleaders.org.au

PLEASE PRAY

Dear Lord our God, thank you for the progress EACC students have made in their studies and please help them see their courses through to completion. We pray for leaders and staff at the college. Please draw them closer to you as they study your word and minister in their communities. Amen.



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