

CAYS report of activities on Webinar series

In a bid to reach out to the national, continental and global scientific community, the Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists (CAYS), planned a series of Webinars on topical issues that cut across science and current challenges plaguing scientists and communities. This broad and interrelated thematic scopes were discussed by national and international speakers as follow:

1- “Visibility of a researcher, Science Writing and Publishing and Communicating research findings” on August 28th, 2020

The presentations and discussions centered on the need to target credible (possibly impact factor) journals, dealing with journal article rejection, and the steps to identify relevant journals for scientific articles. Regarding visibility, it was strongly recommended that scholars should enhance visibility by disseminating their findings to different networks, join different scientific platforms (e.g. Google scholar, Academia.edu, Researchgate) and groups (e.g. CAYS, GYA, AAS) to enhance their visibility, and that of their universities/institutes. In communicating research findings, it was noted, an effective two-way communication is required. This, it was noted, could only be achieved if the science communicator has a clear understanding of his/her audience, and embrace plain language during the communication process. To strike a balance between print journal and e-journals, participants suggested that CAYs should take this up and prepare a position statement/policy brief, to share with the authorities of higher education in Cameroon. This may give a new impetus to the higher education research strategy in the face of a growing competitive global scientific landscape.

CAMEROON ACADEMY OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS WEBINAR SERIES 12:1

ZOOM ID: 727 2404 6750
PASSCODE: 8VEOQB

**August 28th, 2020
12.00-13h45**

"Visibility of a researcher, Science Writing, Publishing and Communicating research findings"

Moderator
Dr. Jude Kimengsi
HTTC, University Bamenda

Panelists
Assoc. Prof. Tonjock Rosemary Kinge
University of Bamenda
Prof. Dr. Gertrud Buchenrieder
Universität der Bundeswehr
Dr. Paul Animbom Ngong
University of Bamenda

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2- “COVID-19 and other infectious diseases” on September 11th, 2020

This public health thematic is of high concern in our present time since the breakout of COVID-19 in December 2019. Co-morbidity COVID-19 and other infectious diseases (IDs), diagnosis and therapeutic management of COVID-19 infection in co-morbidity with other IDs in the African context, and impact of COVID-19 on infectious diseases control. Co-infection COVID-19 and other IDs such as HIV, Hepatitis (B, C), Malaria, Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, Aspergillosis,

Candidiasis, and neglected diseases co-weaken the immune system of patients. Management measures (face masks, hand washing, social distance, sensitization campaigns, etc.) so far used against Covid-19 infection have positively helped in the prevention or reduced the incidence of other IDs. However, excessive medical and financial attention/focus on COVID-19 has been detrimental to drug/ medical service delivery and immunization programs of other IDs. COVID-19 is like a new born 'infectious baby' that must be added to our IDs basket. Like in the case of our common cold/ catarrh, our best option in facing COVID-19 remains learning how to live with, with minimal morbidity impact on human health. This is even advocated by the WHO Director-General. Preventive measures of COVID-19 are worldwide homologated, but the therapeutic methods varied and remain to some extent controversial. The possible and positive contribution of our medicinal plants or their formulated products (claim by the populations and highly encouraged by government authorities) could play significant role in the prevention and/or treatment of COVID-19 infection, though more work is still to be carried in order to better define their action and comply with appropriate therapeutic protocols. On the research perspectives, more data on COVID-19 cases and therapies used in the presence or not of the other IDs would help having more conclusive information on the African context of the disease.

**CAMEROON ACADEMY OF
YOUNG SCIENTISTS**



**CAYS WEBINAR
SERIES 12.2**

Moderator



Assoc. Prof. Edouard A. NANTIA
University of Bamenda

Panelists



Dr. Hugues NANA DJEUNGA
Researcher CRFILMT



Dr. Cédric CHESNAIS
Researcher IRD



Dr. Gerald NGO TEKE
University of Bamenda

ZOOM ID:
919 6380 9931
Passcode: 87076706
September 11, 2020
12.00-13.30
West/Central Africa

**"COVID-19
AND OTHER
INFECTIOUS
DISEASES"**

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3- ‘The effect of COVID-19 on research output in Africa’ on September 26th, 2020.

The aim was to assess research output in Africa before and during the COVID-19 era. In addition, the meeting contributed to provide a way forward to scientific productivity amidst the COVID-19 pandemic so that researchers are not redundant. The theme of the day was addressed by national and international speakers under the following sub-themes: Research and research output in Africa (pre COVID-19). The impact of COVID-19 on research output: Possible solutions to be able to continue with research and Post COVID-19 and research in Africa. During the talks, the African continent was situated in the world with respect to disease burden, population, and research visibility through publications. The trend in research output over the years and the pattern of scientific collaboration was unraveled. The benefit of African-led capacity building was highlighted with the goal of encouraging more efficiency in research that can be commensurate to the African population. Continuing research during this period was emphasized with various adaptations proposed. Some highlighted strategies were to collaborate more and build stronger teams. The audience were encouraged to join associations and conferences online. The importance of joining research networking platforms such as ResearchGate.net and the need to add COVID-19 to individual research work was underscored. On the post COVID-19 perspective, a paradigm shift in research because of the pandemic has been observed and researchers must embrace this. To this regard, researchers must develop a sense of readiness for change through autonomous and intrinsic motivation as well as self-regulated learning and research skills. It is obvious that after this unprecedented era, in addition to the traditional research method, e-learning/digital learning and remote research will continue, thus a redesigning of research methodologies.



CAYS WEBINAR SERIES 12:3
CAMEROON ACADEMY OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS

SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 | 12.00 PM-1.00 PM
WEST/CENTRAL AFRICA

THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON RESEARCH OUTPUT IN AFRICA

MODERATOR



DR SAMJE MOSES
RESEARCHER/LECTURER
UNIVERSITY OF BAMENDA,
CAMEROON

PANELISTS



DR GODSWILL NTSOMBOH
RESEARCHER/LECTURER
UNIVERSITY OF
YAOUNDE I, CAMEROON



DR LYNN COCKBURN
RESEARCHER/COORDINATOR
PARTNERSHIPS FOR
INCLUSIVE RESEARCH
AND LEARNING,
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO,
CANADA



MR ETIENNE NGEH
RESEARCHER/FOUNDER
RESEARCH ORGANIZATION
FOR HEALTH EDUCATION
AND REHABILITATION,
CAMEROON

zoom ID: 957 4729 5849
Passcode: 15341482

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4. “Tips on winning scholarships, fellowships, research, and travel grants”

The fourth Webinar in the CAYS Series was held on October 9th 2020 under the theme “Tips on winning scholarships, fellowships, research, and travel grants”. Various tips to successfully compete for these four closely related award types were presented by both national and international speakers. The first speaker focused on “scholarships and travel grants”, the second on “fellowships” and the third on “research grants”.

Some of the key issues highlighted by the speakers were as follows. First, there is need to be informed, i.e., to access information on available opportunities which happens to be widely available on the internet. Once they decide to apply for a specific opportunity, an applicant needs to prepare sufficiently. They need to understand the funders requirements and to assemble all what is needed. Some applications require a lot of time and the potential applicant should take that into account. Participants were encouraged to be persistent and not give up even when their applications are not successful since there are usually several applicants and many good applications may be turned down. The need to create connections and to collaborate with established researchers both at the national and international level was emphasized and participants were encouraged to publish in edge-cutting journals which will raise their profiles and eventually strengthen their applications.

Participants expressed a worry about the issue of plagiarism of research proposals and were advised to share their proposals only with trusted individuals and close collaborators.

Presenters shared several links to websites with participants and encouraged them to explore and, possibly, apply. With the enthusiasm manifested by the participants it is possible that many of them will apply for various opportunities after this Webinar, and it is the hope of CAYS that many of the applications will be successful.

CAYS WEBINAR SERIES 12:4



CAMEROON ACADEMY OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS (CAYS)

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Moderator



Tips on winning scholarships, fellowships, research and travel grants

ZOOM ID:
993 3347 2805
Passcode:
99549074
October 9, 2020
12.00-13.30
West/Central Africa

Prof. Pius W. AKUMBU
Linguist, Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Panelists





Prof. Irmeli MUSTALAHTI
Natural Resource Governance, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Prof. Jude KIMENGI
Resource and Environmental Geography, University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Prof. Dr. Tobias HALLER
Social Anthropologist, Institute of Social Anthropology, the University of Bern, Switzerland

5. The role of the Young Academies in the development of Africa”

The Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists (CAYS) in collaboration with the GYA organised as part of their outreach programme the fifth in a series of CAYS webinars, entitled “The role of the Young Academies in the development of Africa”. This important thematic scope was discussed by panelists, composed of members of National Young Academies from Northern, Western, Southern, Eastern and Central Africa on these sub-themes:

Young academy: leadership, career development – GYA member Roula Inglesi-Lotz, (Co-Chair, South African Young Academy of Science)

Young Academy and policy making – GYA member Victorien Tamègnon Dougnon (President, Academy of Young Scientists of Benin)

Young academy and partnerships with regional and international organizations (UN, UA etc.) – GYA member Binyam Sisay Mendisu (Secretary, Ethiopian Young Academy of Sciences)

Young Academy: Building a sustainable research systems – GYA member Lahcen El Youssefi (GYA Executive Committee member)

Young Academy: Research Ethics – Godswill Ntsomboh Ntsefong (Fellow, Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists)

The webinar saw participation from almost 80 participants, and was moderated by CAYS President and GYA member Justine Germa Nzweundji. Discussions highlighted the role, importance, and impact that young academies can have in helping Africa take another step forward. The quality of the career, which can have an impact through the leadership we provide and the work that follows. The place of the members of the young academies and their impact will depend on their total commitment and the seriousness of their work. It should be noted that collegiality or learning to work together in teams is an asset that will go a long way to overcoming barriers. Membership in scholarly societies such as the national young academies of sciences is an asset for individual

development and creates friendship and impact that goes beyond science. In addition, it was noted that Science is a tool for information and development, young academics are scientific expertise to the society, translating scientific data to the decision making at the local, national, regional and global levels, while holistically implementing the SDGs of the UN. Thus, it critically important to work together to share knowledge, mentor the next generation of science leaders who will inspire future generations with the potential to make a difference. The webinar therefore was an opportunity for the different national young academies to come together and discuss issues and ideas that would enhance their being involved in the conceptualization and development of national strategic plans. Knowing also that ethics matters centrally in the research framework of all nations, thus transparency, honesty, accountability and the institutionalization of a policy of ethics is a prerequisite for success.

CAMEROON ACADEMY OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS

CAYS WEBINAR SERIES 12:5

GLOBAL YOUNG ACADEMY

The role of young academies in the development of Africa

October 23, 2020/ 12:30 PM-2:00 PM West/Central Africa

Zoom ID: 947 3742 7028
Passcode: 58330200

Prof. Roula INGLES-LOTZ
Economist, University of Pretoria
South Africa

Prof. Lahcen ELYOUSSFI
Agri-environmentalist,
Sultan Moulay Slimane University
Morocco

Dr. Victorien Tamegnon DOUGNON
Microbiologist/Senior Lecturer,
University of Abomey-Calavi
Benin

Dr. Justine Germe NZWEUNDI
Plant Biotechnologist/
Researcher, IMPM
Cameroon

Dr. Godswill NTSOMBOH
Researcher/Lecturer,
University of Yaounde I
Cameroon

Dr. Binyam Sisay MENDISU
Linguist/ Policy and
Science policy specialist, UNESCO-IICBA
Ethiopia

6. Mental Health in Cameroon: A cause for concern?

The Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists (CAYS) held the 6th edition of their 12-planned webinar series on the 6th of November, 2020. The theme of this 6th webinar series was: Mental health in Cameroon: a cause for concern? This topic was chosen in relation to CAYS's interest in being part of current debates on issues plaguing the Cameroonian society.

Four speakers were invited to present in this webinar. Their presentations covered the breadth of mental health and were spiced with clear and relatable examples. The first speaker- an expert in mental health (a clinical psychologist) - explained what mental health is, how it manifests, the different types, how early to suspect mental health and clinical responses to mental health. This speaker made it clear that some actions or behavioural tendencies in excess (such as eating too much or sleeping too much) could be a sign of mental health issues. This paved the way for the next speaker who spoke on mental health in the COVID-19 era, showing the Cameroons evolving

response (from alarm to exhaustion) to different mental health demands imposed on the nation by COVID-19. He highlighted COVID-19 spectrum of fear in Cameroon, Cameroons COVID-19 stressors, laying emphasis on Cameroons unique cultural circumstances and the need to move from the individual level to population level in response strategies. The third speaker then continued in this line with other examples of diseases with mental health implications, the cases in point being neglected tropical diseases like elephantiasis and buruli ulcers. He showed how the clinical signs of these diseases could lead to stigma, discrimination, exclusion of patients from fully participating in society and linked how this can lead to mental health issues. The final speaker presented novel options or alternative treatments for mental health issues. In contrast with the first speakers' clinical approach, the final speaker instead elaborated on the role of theatre, music and other relaxation techniques in addressing mental health issues. He showed how mainstream methods have not curbed mental health issues and thus the need for alternative therapies geared towards increasing wellbeing.

The webinar ended with a question and answer session which offered an opportunity for participants to receive clarifications on issues related to mental health.

The poster is for a webinar titled "Mental health in Cameroon: A cause for concern?". It is part of the "Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists (CAYS) webinar series 12:6". The event is scheduled for November 6, 2020, at 12:30-2 PM West/Central African Time. The Zoom ID is 928 33859150 and the Passcode is 25758321. The poster lists five participants: a Moderator, Dr. Mireille NDJE NDJE (Senior Lecturer, Clinical Psychologist, University of Yaounde I), Dr. Valerie MAKOGE FORBIN (Senior Research Officer, Salutogenic Parasitologist, Promotion specialist/IMPM), Prof. Wilfred MBACHAM (Titular Prof of Public Health, Biotechnology, University of Yaounde I), Dr. Paul ANIMBOM NGONG (Senior Lecturer, Information and Communication Science, Specialist/ University of Bamenda), and Dr. Hugues NANA DJEUNGA (Researcher, Molecular Parasitologist, CRFILMT).

7. 'COVID-19 AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES'

The Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists (CAYS) webinar series 12:7 was held on the 12th of December 2020. The theme of the webinar was, 'Covid-19 and Environmental Issues'; there were five (5) speakers (one (1) moderator and four (4) panellists of various research fields (consulting physician / medical advisor, geographer, a sociologist and biochemists).

The major objectives of the presentation were to apprehend the actual impact of Covid-19 on our environment (from eco-toxicological, Sanitation and socio-anthropological angles); create awareness in the global community to urgently address global environmental threats arising from the Covid-19 pandemic on humanity and the planet; establish research priorities to address critical

gaps caused by Covid-19 in the global environment; and generate way forwards to different stakeholders for adjusting the negative impacts of Covid-19 on the global environment.

It was exposed from the socio-anthropological angle that covid-19 is imposing new ways of production, distribution and consumption which results to deviance, dysfunction and disruption of social orders within institutions. This has equally reshaped the routine related to family ecology (disputes, stress agony, violence, divorce, gender inequalities, matrimonial instability ...). Many people have lost their lives because of this pandemic. It has caused suspicion and distrust among governments, disrupted the global supply chain and weakened human solidarity.

As regard medical care and patient environment, it was elucidated that covid-19 has led to the mental and physical exhaustion of healthcare workforce. The pandemic, having weakened the healthcare sector, there has been a rise in auto-medication that has caused more harm to patients and persons just taking medications as preventive. It was highlighted that covid-19 has increased biomedical and municipal waste (plastic gloves, masks ...) due to a reduction in the recycling of waste. Destruction of biodiversity for the production of hygiene and sanitary products for protection against the covid-19 pandemic; closure of industries and institutions; increased water and soil pollution (leads to food insecurity).

However, looking at covid-19 from the positive perspective on the environment, it was proclaimed that the pandemic has led to an improvement in air quality and reduction of Green House Gases; reduction in water pollution by industrial wastes; reduction in noise pollution and ecological restoration.

It was concluded that covid-19 has caused a lot of harm to the human and physical environment where millions of people have lost their lives. As such, it was recommended that actors of environmental protection should work towards a dedicated approach so as to address the health and wellbeing of all, and the physical environment; attention should be given to threats on the environment and natural resources; Nations should commit to green covid-19 economic rescue plans; and create opportunities to enhance the capability of people to improve health while addressing the commercial determinants of health.

At the end of the presentations a participant asked, what is the way forward in the African society given that covid-19 is contributing to create social distancing in the context where social relationship is being altered?



Moderator



Dr. NSAHLAI Loveline Kongla
Researcher/Lecturer,
The University of
Ngaoundere-HTTC, Bertoua

Panelists



Prof. NANTIA A. Edouard
University of Bamenda



Dr. TSAMO NDOMO Vigny
Medical Doctor, General
Practitioner, Nkong-Ni
Subdivisional Medical Center



Dr. MANFO TSAGUE F. Pascal
Lecturer, University of Buea



Dr. NANTCHOUANG DJIBIE
Dany Forming
Lecturer, University of
Bamenda

**CAMEROON ACADEMY OF YOUNG
SCIENTISTS WEBINAR
SERIES 12.7**

ZOOM ID:
827 6750 0284
Passcode: 348079
December 12, 2020
12.00-13.30
West/Central Africa

**"COVID-19
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
ISSUES"**

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