

Guests from Lubumbashi

The President of the University of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Prof. Dr. Gilbert Kishiba Fitula, visited the University of Würzburg for the first time, to strengthen the collaboration with the Congolese Excellence Scholarship Program BEBUC and with the partner university in Würzburg.

Prof. Fitula, who is a professor of law, has been the president of the University of Lubumbashi (UNILU) since the end of 2015. Even before that, he had been involved in BEBUC and had attended the scholarship ceremonies. Prof. César Nkuku Khonde and Prof. Paul Kyungu Shimbi travelled together with him. Prof. Nkuku is a professor of history and the cooperation advisor at UNILU. Since he always hosts the Examination Committee during the annual evaluations, he has known Gerhard Bringmann, holder of the Chair of Organic Chemistry I at the University of Würzburg and President of the Excellence Scholarship Program BEBUC for some years. Prof. Kyungu, a political scientist, coordinates a cooperation program with Belgian universities.



The Congolese delegation and the President of the BEBUC Evaluation Committee (from the left): Gerhard Bringmann, Gilbert Kishiba Fitula, Paul Kyungu Shimbi, and César Nkuku Khonde. (Photo: J. Habel)

The University of Lubumbashi

The University of Lubumbashi is one of the major universities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with 15 faculties and about 25,000 students. It is also one of the best universities of the country. Thus, as an example, the "University Web Ranking" of *4icu* classifies it as the second-best Congolese university, after the University of Kinshasa (which also

participates in the BEBUC scholarship program). UNILU was founded in 1955 by the Université Libre de Bruxelles, as the *Université Officielle du Congo et du Rwanda-Urundi* in Lubumbashi, the previous *Elisabethville*.



Visit of the Congolese delegation to the President of the University, Alfred Forchel (from the left): Paul Kyungu Shimbi, Gerhard Bringmann, Alfred Forchel, Gilbert Kishiba Fitula, and César Nkuku Khonde. (Photo: G. Bartsch)

Collaboration with the University of Lubumbashi

Since 2013, UNILU has been participating in the Excellence Scholarship Program BEBUC and has, from the same year on, also been associated to the University of Würzburg by a partnership contract. BEBUC has, ever since, been supporting outstanding bachelor students there, mainly students of medicine. Meanwhile, UNILU has become a strong partner for BEBUC. Apart from the university, also the Institut Tuendele, a renowned girls' high school, has been affiliated. Within BEBUC, Lubumbashi is a special place, also due to the fact that Prof. Karine Ndjoko Ioset, member of the BEBUC Panel and Program Manager of the scholarship program, holds a visiting professorship there. The BEBUC scholars in Lubumbashi profit from that because Prof. Ndjoko combines her teaching activity with an intense mentoring to the BEBUC scholars and also organizes special girls' seminars.



They took the opportunity for a stimulating exchange: The Congolese delegation and three BEBUC scholars who are presently doing their PhD studies in Würzburg in chemistry and pharmacy (from the left): César Nkuku Khonde, Blaise Kimbadi Lombe, Jean-Pierre Koy-Sita Mufusama, Gerhard Bringmann, Gilbert Kishiba Fitula, Dieudonné Tshitenge Tshitenge, and Paul Kyungu Shimbi. (Photo: private)

Future Planning

"From this specific girls' support, BEBUC expects an increased number of female scholars at the University of Lubumbashi for the coming years, and, ultimately of female professors", says Bringmann. In the future, the program shall be further extended by also including an excellent primary school from Lubumbashi in the project. Thus, the entire 'academic pipeline' in BEBUC would be represented in Lubumbashi – from primary school through high school to university. This will further strengthen the

BEBUC concept in Lubumbashi. The reinforcement of the scholarship program, but also further perspectives of the collaboration of the two universities of Würzburg and of Lubumbashi, were also part of the conversation with the President of the University of Würzburg, Prof. Alfred Forchel. They agreed to elaborate possibilities for young Congolese doctors to attend specialization courses in Würzburg. In the Congo, there is a lack of experts in the fields of neurosurgery, cardiology, pediatrics, and urology.

Scientific Books for Lubumbashi

On the occasion of the visit, possibilities were discussed to donate a considerable amount of books to the University of Lubumbashi, which have been collected by G. Bringmann, mainly from the Max-Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces in Potsdam. In this context, options for the transport from Germany to Lubumbashi were envisaged.

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On the Scholarship Program BEBUC and the NGO
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