

Interview Catherine Mbagaya and Beatrice Matafwali

Can you give a brief description of your research subject?

Catherine:

I am investigating the relationship between child maltreatment and personality maladjustment. The study involves samples drawn from different cultural backgrounds. These are university students drawn from Leiden, Zambia and Kenya. Besides drawing independent relationships between the variables under study for each country, this study has a comparative component for the three samples. We are also testing the role of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the development of personality disorders.

Beatrice:

The central focus of my study is "The Relationship between oral Language and Early Literacy in a Zambian Language and English". This was a longitudinal study which followed a cohort of children at the end of their first grade of schooling and second grade respectively.

What can you tell about the possibilities or impossibilities for people in Kenya and Zambia who wish to seek a degree? Can you describe the circumstances?

Catherine:

It is possible to pursue degrees in Kenya. Because of limited chances at the universities, the government gives loans to those who score an average of a B+ in their final high school exams to enable them to pursue their Bachelor Degree. However, those who score above C+ are considered eligible but they do not get government loans. They are free to pay for their university education in the public and private universities if their parents can afford it. Many do not get this chance given our GDP. For one to pursue a Masters Degree and PhD, he or she has to pay for it by him- or herself. If one is lucky, one can get a scholarship from the limited funding agencies.

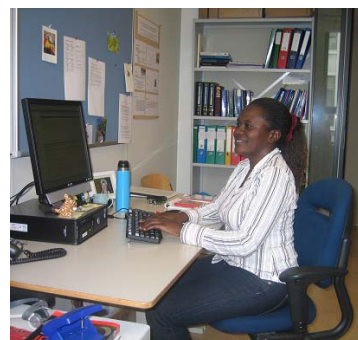
Beatrice:

The demand for University Education, particularly at post graduate level, is ever increasing. However, opportunities for research grants are limited, making it impossible for a majority of prospective students to advance their studies.

How have the grant from the Lolle Nauta Foundation and the supervision from Professor Van IJzendoorn and Professor Bus helped you in your PhD study, if at all?

Catherine:

The grant from Lolle Nauta Foundation could not have come at a better time. I am now able to access literature on Leiden University's library through internet. In addition, I am focused on reading and writing and not on issues of survival since the



Catherine Mbagaya

foundation has also taken care of that. Secondly, the supervision I have from Prof. Van IJzendoorn is awesome. Really, it is nothing like I had ever experienced before. Working with him has given me new horizons, new possibilities and of course new knowledge. To say the least, I am different. I am not the same person who came to Leiden in February. I learnt to believe in myself and what I can achieve!!

Beatrice:

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lolle Nauta Foundation for the grant, and particularly Prof. Adriana Bus for her mentorship throughout my PhD study. This has been a great opportunity for my professional development. Under the supervision of Prof. Bus, my understanding of research has been broadened.

Has your visit to the Department of Education and Child Studies of Leiden University had an added value to your research?

Catherine:

Of course! The Leiden visit sharpened the focus of my research. Before I came to Leiden, this was hazy. I have also learnt how to deal with data and choose appropriate statistical tools for my research. This knowledge is invaluable, especially so, for a budding researcher like me.

Beatrice:

Of course, the visit to Leiden has had a great impact on my research. In this vein, I would like to extend my gratitude to my great statistics teachers Verna van der Kooy and Suzanne Mol for being patient in ensuring that I grasped the basic principles of statistics during the short course. Generally, my visit to Leiden has helped me to understand and appreciate my research even more.

How do see your future after obtaining your PhD?

Catherine:

Where do I see myself after earning my PhD? I see myself in research and in research and in research. I see myself providing the African perspective to Child Studies and Developmental Psychopathology. There is a big void in this area in the continent. I hope to be counted among those who will fill this void.



Beatrice:

After earning my PhD, I would like to focus on research which will result in publication as this will greatly help me in my professional advancement. It is therefore my wish that the professional support from Prof. Bus will be sustained even after earning my PhD. Given an opportunity, I would like to advance towards post doctoral studies.

Beatrice Matafwali