DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

AIR Academic Initiative for Renewables

# International Student Exchange 2016 – 2019

*Student Feedback Questionnaire*

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the lessons learned of the AIR international student exchange.

*By filling out this feedback report, you agree that your picture and experience will be published on the homepage of the AIR project.* http://www.air-project.org/

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|---|---|
| Name of student: | Charles Noel Malemia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Age: | 46 |
| Degree: | BEd. (Hons.) |
| Hosting university: | Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University |
| Sending university: | UNIMA |
| Period of exchange: | 13 Days |
| Field of study/major: | MPhil (RETs) |
| Field of interest during exchange: | Solar PV and Wind Energy |
| Further graduation plans (e.g. PhD program): | PhD (RETs) |

| **Please tick the appropriate box** | **I strongly agree** | **I agree** | **I neither agree nor disagree** | **I disagree** | **I strongly disagree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Program** | | | | | |
| I gained insights into the practical implementation of RE in the host country (sight visits etc.) | ✓ | | | | |
| I gained knowhow in field of my study | ✓ | | | | |
| The courses were helpful for my further research | | ✓ | | | |
| The agenda was well structured | ✓ | | | | |
| **Organization** | | | | | |
| The journey preparations were well organized | ✓ | | | | |
| The support during the exchange was good | ✓ | | | | |
| The post processing of the exchange was well organized | ✓ | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The reimbursement process was satisfactory | | | | | |
| The accommodation was pleasant | ✓ | | | | |
| Local transportation was well organized | ✓ | | | | |
| I socialized with local students | ✓ | | | | |
| I recommend the exchange | ✓ | | | | |
| Others: | What would you like to be changed/ be improved for the future? Student assessment style. Tests within the same 5 days of learning was really hectic. This left little room to adequately prepare for them. Giving a take home assignment for online submission after a week or two would be another option.<br><br>Did you experience any difficulties during your exchange?<br><br>Not at all. | | | | |

*Please write a report about your student exchange including organization, agenda, experience, lessons learned, suggestions for improvement, and tips for other students (max. 590 words, Arial 12)*

The whole program was superbly organized. From the time I was informed about the trip, there was always excellent communication on what I needed to do at every point of the program from organizers at UNIMA and NMMU. All transport arrangements from my home to Port Elizabeth and back were spot on. The accommodation was just excellent, no casting lots on that one. Spending my nights enjoying the evening breeze from the Indian Ocean which was just about 100 m away from the magnificent guest house where I was being accommodated, was not only refreshing but also memorable.

The learning experience was, to say the least, enlightening. It came at the right time when I was in the final stages of my MPhil. (Renewable Energy Technologies) studies. The Academic Initiative for Renewables (AIR) student exchange program has helped me to broaden my view on RETs particularly on Wind and Solar PVs, which were the courses I was privileged to attend in the 12 days I was at NMMU. Tapping knowledge from the facilitators who have vast hands on knowledge in these areas was one of the greatest learning experiences of my life. The learning process, though hectic, was well organized, with a very free atmosphere where contributions and discussions were greatly encouraged.

To ensure that the learning of the concepts was well understood and practical, visits to Laboratories and various renewable energy sites were organized. Watching the effect of shading some PV cells on the performance of the modules using their corresponding IV curves in one of the Laboratories really made me appreciate the behavior of modules when exposed to shades in reality. This brought a practical touch to the learning process, hence making it is easier to appreciate how the theories were being applied in practice.

The staff that we met at various places we visited were also a great source of information and inspiration. They were more than willing to show and explain to us how their systems operate in producing electricity. Watching and learning about the monitoring mechanisms that were put in place for their systems was really fascinating. Both at the Solar PV and Wind energy sites that we visited, the performance of each Solar PV module or Wind turbine was being monitored on a computer screen using SCADA system. With this system, the number of watts each Solar PV module or Wind turbine was producing was being shown. Watching the wind turbines pitching or grinding to a halt whenever wind speeds were very high will remain one of the unforgettable experiences on my visit to the Wind energy farm.

All in all, the courses were a huge success on my part. Not only have they opened my eyes but also completely changed my view of Wind and Solar PV systems from narrow to a much broader one. I can now confidently say that my dream to use these technologies to help set up irrigation systems for use by subsistence farmers has changed from merely dreaming in “black and white” to “dreaming in color” as our former head of state used to say. On top of that, I now look at the potential the above energy sources have in our country, Malawi, as a means of ending the electric energy shortages that the country is experiencing if they are promoted and utilized on a large scale.

To the students who have not yet attended these courses, I recommend them to come and do so. It will definitely broaden and add value to whatever knowledge they have on RETs in general and Solar PV and Wind energy in particular.

*Please add a picture of you during your stay at the partner university (you together with local partners at the university/excursion) (send it also as a separate file via email)*