

News from IQ-GEAR – 1st Newsletter October 2022



Recently, Ambo University, Addis Ababa University (College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine), Hawassa University, Jimma University and Ghent University have united forces into a University Network called IQ-GEAR (acronym for Interuniversity Collaboration for Quality Graduate Education and Research in Ethiopia). The vision of IQ-GEAR is to transform both postgraduate education and research quality, and to become a driver of equitable and sustainable development in Ethiopia. The main missions are **(i)** to deliver higher quality and inclusive postgraduate education, **(ii)** to improve research practices, and interuniversity/disciplinary research, **(iii)** to improve ICT and library services that enhance (i) and (ii), and to **(iv)** improve engagement of stakeholders that enhance (i) - (iii).

A word from the coordinators

Dear IQ-GEAR members, colleagues and friends,

It is our honor to share with you the first newsletter of the IQ-GEAR project. Indeed, this new Ethiopian year has already been very productive. We distributed a unique network-wide questionnaire to gain insights into the obstacles of a PhD trajectory in Ethiopia, we developed an amazing website, and we had our kick-off workshop at Bishoftu, Ethiopia. Yet, more is to come. In November, Impetus Academy will join the team in Addis Ababa for the second session of agile leadership training and a co-creation workshop on how to adapt this training to an Ethiopian setting. Moreover, we hope to open the call for four new PhD scholarships, mainly considering female candidates only, soon. Needless, to say that we are both very proud. Great teamwork!

Stay safe, Kora and Bruno

Identification of obstacles of a PhD trajectory

Under the leadership of Teklu Gemechu (Jimma University) and Fiona Van de Velde (Ghent University), with support of Jolien Tegenbos (Ghent University), Zeleke Mekonnen (Jimma University), the Post-Graduate Program Coordinators of Ambo University (Tibebu Alemu), Addis Ababa / College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture (Bersissa Kumsa), Hawassa University (Hanna Getachew)), two questionnaire were developed and sent out to **1,464 PhD students** and **772 PhD supervisors** across the four Ethiopian partner universities of the network. Through these questionnaires we want to gain insights into the obstacles of a PhD trajectory in Ethiopia. For this, a conceptual framework was developed (**Figure 1**).

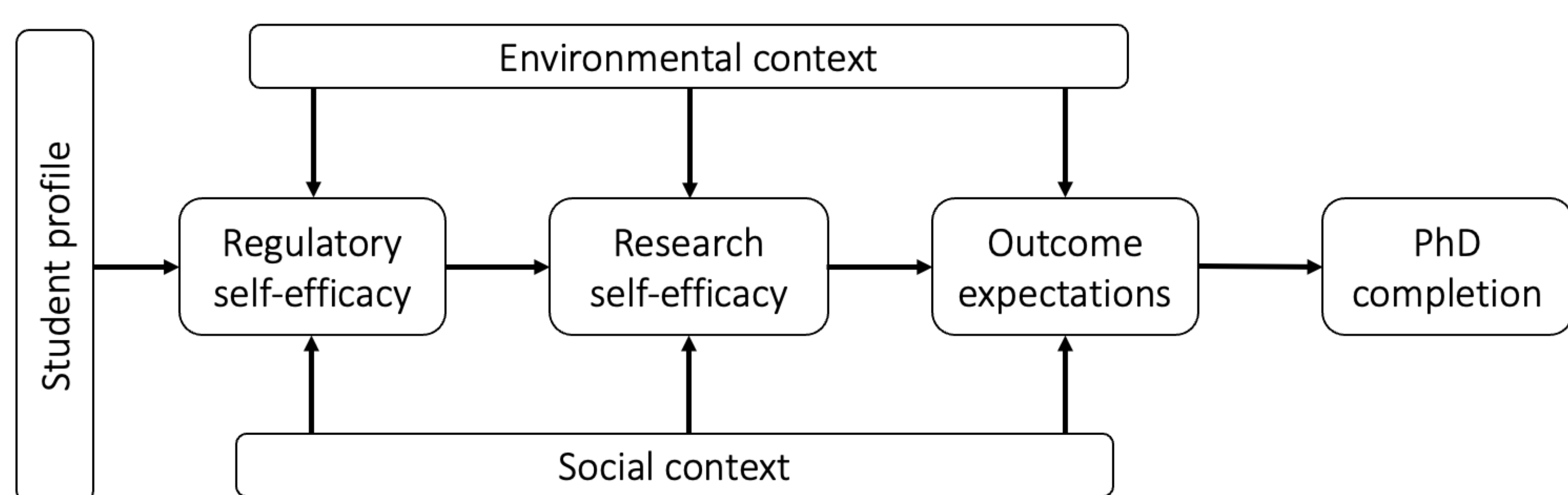


Figure 1. The conceptual framework applied to gain insights into the obstacles of a PhD trajectory

We believe that the insights obtained through these questionnaires will form an important basis not only to prioritize investments within Network but will also to improve both institutional and national policies on post-graduate programs. So far, **463 (32%)** PhD students and **105 (14%)** PhD supervisors completed the questionnaire. As an incentive to participate, we will provide access to a slide design course (Ghent University), online course material (Udemy) or the Agile Leadership course (Impetus Academy) to 50 and 25 randomly selected PhD students and PhD supervisors, respectively.

IQ-GEAR website

During a 5-day hands-on training on Content Management Systems organized by Yonas Teshome (Ambo University) and Rudy Geveart (Ghent University), different website designs were explored by the different trainees (**Figure 2**).



Figure 2. Participants of the 5-day training on Content Management Systems

Following this training, a core team of trainees (Mandefro Legesse, Ambo University; Betsegaw Lukas, Hawassa University; Seid Mohammed, Abdurhman Abrar and Tigist Wondiye, Jimma University) continued applying the new skills learned resulting in the official IQ-GEAR website. You can now follow our progress on iq-gear.org!

Kick-off Workshop

On October 17, we proudly presented IQ-GEAR in presence of representatives of the Ministry of Education (Dr. Eba Mijena), Ministry of Agriculture (dr. Yohannes Girma), Belgian Embassy (Marie Huberlant), the presidents and the vice-presidents of the different Ethiopian universities (Dr. Bayisa Leta, Ambo University; Dr. Tadesse Habtamu, Jimma University; Dr. Tafesse Matewos, Hawassa University). Given the national 12th grade exam at all public universities in Ethiopia, the presence of each of these higher officials only emphasizes and demonstrates the importance of the IQ-GEAR Network.



Figure 3. Group picture of the participants of the IQ-GEAR Kick-off Workshop

More info required / suggestions?

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