

Professional development workshops and training for counselors, teachers and administrators in five regions of Togo

No one can deny the importance of education in people's lives and in the development of a country. To be educated is good but to get an education of quality is the best. Many students in our country Togo are seeking for better universities where they can get good education and where they can choose a major of their dream. In fact, lots of students seek universities outside their country because of the lack of available resources on campuses in their home country, lack of training for lecturers, the non-existent majors of their dream. They also want to get a unique experience of studying outside their country in universities where they will bring their experience and also learn from others. In their quest to better places where they could further their studies, students in Togo are usually facing the problem of guidance, financial means to afford university cost (tuition, accommodation, etc.). More than eighty percent of students applying to universities outside Togo are looking for scholarships. In this process, it is vital to have someone to guide them. Most of their failures in the application are due to the fact that there is no one as a counselor to guide them and bring them the right information about opportunities available, the application process and other inherent resources. The word counselor is quite inexistent in Togolese schools. It is in that perspective of assisting students for effective applications and guidance, and supporting those who work with students that we decided to organize professional development workshops and training for counselors, teachers and administrators in five regions of Togo. The workshops and training in the five regions of Togo started on November 8, 2019 with the opening of the new academic year and ended on February 26, 2020. The program reached seven hundred and fifty counselors, teachers and administrators. Through these workshops and training, participants learned about the university application process, how to write letters of recommendations, the role of technology in university application, writing school profiles and how to guide students applying to study internationally. This has been an innovative training which has started yielding fruits. Augustin, one of the teachers who attended the first training reached out to me later stating this "People say information is power and it is true. I would like to thank you and thank the International ACAC Opportunity Grant team for making the training we had possible. Thanks to the information you provided us, I have been able to guide a student who has been selected to study in the United World College in Tanzania. I am really grateful to you". The feedback of participants about the training shows how impactful these workshops had been. Let's note that some school administrators following the training also invited me to talk to their students about opportunities available to them. We are confident the impact of this training will be noticed in the coming years since participants have started working with their students preparing them for future applications.

The training and workshops were successful thanks to the involvement of EducationUSA Advisor, some local counselors, Peace Corps Volunteers in the educational field, English language inspectors, the English Language Fellows on duty in our country. The activities have been rich with the contributions of all these people.

All the activities, the transportation of participants, accommodation, training resources have been possible thanks to the generous International ACAC Opportunity Funds Grant. We wouldn't have been able to organize these workshops without this great support. Our gratitude goes to the International ACAC team especially to the IACAC Opportunity Grant team.

A follow up session will be done around September/October 2020 to support teachers, counselors and administrators who attended the training and workshops as they will be assisting students in their different university applications.



















