



Danny De Looze, Dr
Expert Testimonial
Gent, Belgium

Since 2011, I have been participating as lecturer/expert at the yearly OMGE course in Rabat, Morocco. From the first time onwards I was impressed by the professional framework that is set up to teach gastroentero-hepatology to young African gastroenterologists. First of all the theoretical courses by experts from especially Western countries are outstanding: high level, up-to-date, scientific and very practical. Every year again I am surprised by the knowledge the students have. I always give talks in an interactive way with lots of questions for the audience and every year I am surprised by the answers I get from them. They are very well prepared and exhibit a high level of theoretical background. I have to admit that asking the same questions for a western audience never results in the same correct answering and discussions that I experience in Rabat. Furthermore, the African students are eager to get practical information; not only during the lectures but also during the breaks they come to the experts with lots of questions for their daily practice. Formation in abdominal ultrasound in digestive endoscopy is also offered the way it should, students start on dummies during the first days and further on they progress to doing endoscopy on pig stomachs and pig colons. At least 2 hours per day are committed to these hands-on sessions under the supervision of the experts. We teach them how to apply the most commonly used endoscopic techniques (endoscopic hemostasis, extraction foreign bodies, colonic polypectomy, etc.).

This WGO center plays a crucial role in the formation and ongoing education of African gastroenterologists. In a 2-week course they receive an update of the complete gastroenterological pathology, from top to bottom. The program of the course is well balanced and comprises every organ and pathology. But every year the program changes in order to cover the full spectrum over several years, and in order to adapt to new developments in our specialty, e.g. therapeutic advances in hepatology (very important in Africa!), oncological therapies, impact of the gut microbiome, etc. More African gastroenterologists should be able to participate to this course which is practical, complete, up-to-date and – very important in this part of the world! - less expensive for the Africans to attend. After all, the majority amongst them do not have the resources to attend scientific meetings in Europe or the States.

Last but not least, there is the human and social aspect. In 2011 I arrived in Rabat as a stranger – for years now I am travelling to Rabat as a friend of the WGO center, and especially as a friend of the wonderful team around Prof. Naïma Amrani. The warm welcome and convivial atmosphere makes me look forward every year to attending and collaborating at the WGO course. The organizing team not only puts on a great

scientific program, they also create a pleasant and grateful ambiance towards the lecturers. As a Western expert, you experience the Moroccan and African hospitality all day long.