

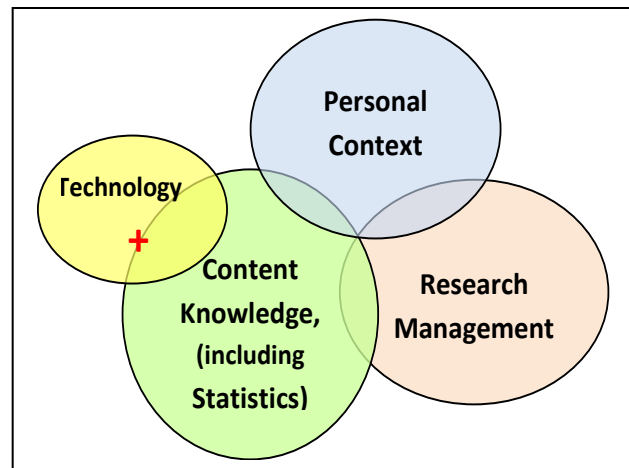


## The Person behind the Researcher

### Introduction

An important mandate of universities is to build capacity of graduate students to conduct ‘good’ research. It is necessary for students to develop skills in planning, managing and implementing research – but this requires not only content knowledge and a good grounding in statistical concepts, it is also as important, if not more important, to develop effective interpersonal and technology skills.

Research therefore requires a holistic approach which integrates knowledge with personal strength. The latter is best learnt through examples – listening to ‘stories’ told by experienced researchers: issues and challenges that all researchers face and how these can often be turned into opportunities; how to build on successes and learn from failures.



The main objective of this series of skill development seminars is to invite scientists and researchers who have travelled on this road and who can profitably share these experiences.

An additional objective of these meetings is to create opportunities for participants to meet and network with other researchers.

### Life Matters That Really Matter

The seminar series was kicked off by Dr. Ed Rege of Emerge–Africa and PICO–Eastern Africa. Dr Rege, who holds a PhD degree in Genetics, brings with him not only 26 years of experience working in academic and research environment, national and international, but has a passion for nurturing and building capacity among young researchers in Africa and helping to strengthen institutions which house them.



courtesy Ed Rege

Dr. Rege’s talk entitled “Focusing on life matters that really matter” concentrated on the person of the researcher - priorities, time management, communication and values; the need for the researcher to focus on what was important to him/her and work towards effectively realizing that goal. He explained how the skills of communication, time management, attitudes and maintaining balance all impact the process, the product and the person. His allegorical use of the compass and the clock to distinguish between the focus



	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	I • Crises • Pressing problems • Meeting deadlines	II • Prevention • Production capacity • Relationship building • Visioning • New opportunities • Planning • Recreation
NOT IMPORTANT	III • Interruptions • Some calls, some mail • Some reports • Proximate, pressing matters • Popular activities	IV • Trivia • Busy work • Some mail & calls • Time-wasters • Pleasant activities → ESCAPE ACTIVITIES

Courtesy Ed Rege

on vision and the management of activities was very well received while his urgent / important matrix really highlighted the need for a transformational rather than a transitional approach to life.

Dr Rege laid special emphasis on what he called the ‘Pillars of Happiness’ - PMSE model - which grounds the person in an environment where he/she can be most productive by investing equally on the physical, mental,

spiritual and emotional components of a person’s makeup.

According to Dr Rege, probably the most important skill an individual has to acquire is that of listening; as he put it “Good listening is great, *empathic listening* is the ultimate!”

The seminar was not to provide a cook book recipe on how to achieve these skills , but more about how one needs to search within oneself to focus on what is really important. As researchers who are involved in generating knowledge not only for the sake of knowledge but knowledge which can be meaningfully applied, this is an important lesson.



The seminar attracted almost 70 participants, both from within the university and outside, from many different disciplines. The university community was informed about the the seminar through university mail while special invitation was sent to postgraduate students of JKUAT currently registered for the Research Methodology program.

The participants were asked to evaluate different aspects of the presentation and opportunities for networking and discussions. The average rating on all aspects of the seminar ranged from good to very good: postgraduates were more satisfied with the opportunities for networking and discussion compared to faculty; they also rated the educational content of the seminar higher than the faculty. There was unanimous agreement that the choice of Dr Rege as the presenter was most appropriate, with many respondents commenting on how the presentation “changed and touched my life positively” , “have made me see life in a different way” “worth attending” inspirational” eye opener”

The participants were also asked to suggest topics for future seminars. Research related topics suggested included various aspects of implementing research , including sourcing funds , dissemination etc while on the personal level, topics included stress and time management, leadership skills, capacity building , networking and strengthening of interpersonal skills.



## Acknowledgement

Our sincere thanks to

- The **Principal, CAVS, Prof Agnes W. Mwang'ombe**, for her encouragement and support and for providing tea and snacks for the meeting.
- The **Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Prof John W. Kimenju**, for not only facilitating the organization of room, projector and mineral water for the participants but also for welcoming the invited speaker and participating in the seminar
- **Dr. Ed Rege** for taking time off from his busy schedule to spend the afternoon with us
- **Dr Ochieng Adimo** for organizing transport and bringing the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology Research Methodology students to participate in the seminar
- Senior **Faculty** members who set a good example by attending and participating in the seminar and providing opportunity to the students to interact with them.
- The strong , dependable support team, led by **Biometry Unit Senior Technician, Mr Douglas Douglas W. Khamila** , **Principal's Secretary, Ms Irene Githongo** , and all the **other staff** who helped to make this seminar a success.
- Special thanks to **Ms Jaameeta N. Kurji** for preparing and analyzing the evaluation forms and all the assistance before and during the seminar.





## Appendix 1: Presentation

Focusing on life matters that really matter

Ed Rege  
**Founder and CEO**  
Emerge-Africa  
&  
PICO-Eastern Africa

Presented to Graduate Students of JKUAT and Faculty and Students of CA/VS  
Kakela Campus of the University of Nairobi  
January 26, 2015

The coverage

- A. How you make your priorities?
- B. How you invest your time?
- C. How you communicate with others?
- D. The values you uphold?

What defines success for YOU?

And what are you doing about it?

A. How you make your priorities

What is important to YOU in life?

- We often talk about our priorities in life
- But how many of us have ever stopped to really think about which things are **most important** to us, let alone how much?
- Overarching priority setting is really about what matters to YOU in life
- Everything else follows from that!
- Think ... what if you have got it all wrong so far!
  
- *Back to this later...*

A focus on direction first!



### A focus on direction first ...

- **The compass** represents our vision, values, principals, mission, conscious, direction — what is important to us and how we lead our lives



#### Your direction, your choice:

- If you do not know where you are going you will still get somewhere!
- If you know where you are going you will get there

### A focus on actions next ...

- **The clock** represents our commitments, appointments, schedules, activities — i.e. what we do with, and how we manage our time



## B. How you invest your time?

Do you focus on the urgent?  
Do you focus on the important?

## The Time Management Matrix

as

*A tool for Personal Development*

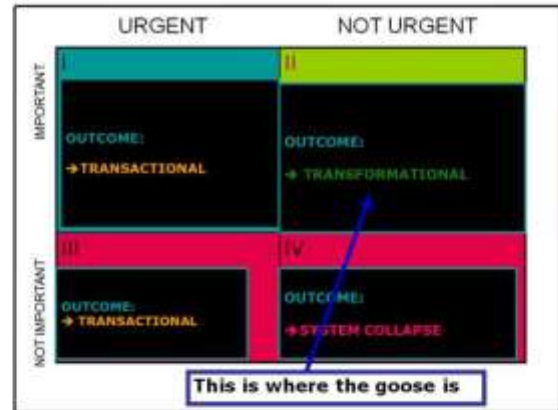
### Improving quality of your life by getting time management right

Do you appreciate, admire, or even envy, deep, purposeful, thoughtful, calm, present, effective, people?

Do you feel good about yourself when anticipated action you take saves you from stress?

How do you think this happens?

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p><b>I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crises</li> <li>• Pressing problems</li> <li>• Meeting deadlines</li> </ul>	<p><b>II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Production capacity</li> <li>• Relationship building</li> <li>• Visioning</li> <li>• New opportunities</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Recreation</li> </ul>
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- The urgent:**
- Need **attention now**
  - Act on us** – we react to them! e.g. a ringing phone vs a waiting client
  - Are **visible**
  - Are usually **popular**
  - Because of c) and d) **'politicians' (practising and aspiring)** love them
  - But they **starve the goose!**

- Transformational People**
- Not problem-minded, but **opportunity-minded**
  - **Feed opportunities**, starve problems
  - **Proactive**, not reactive
  - Focus on **important**, not urgent
  - Think **preventively** – hence *reduce 'urgent' clutter from their desks/lives*
- **Focus on high-leverage, 'capacity'-enhancing activities of quadrant II**

C. How you communicate with others

**A focus on listening**

Communication experts estimate:

- ❖ 10% of our communication is represented by the words we say
- ❖ 30% by the sound
- ❖ 60% by *body language*

*Implication: Do not assume you understand based on just words or sound!*



### Empathic listening

Good listening is great, *empathic listening* is the ultimate!

- Seeing the world from the depth of the other person's frame of reference
- Getting to the feelings and the meanings
- Understanding beyond the words used
- Focuses on 'seeking first to understand, then to be understood.'

Empathy is neither sympathy nor is it agreement.  
[Sympathy is a form of agreement and requires some judgement]

### Listening as basis for problem solving

- When it is his/her turn are you **listening** or simply **waiting to talk**?
- Learning to **separate the person** from the issue
- Listening with an ear for **solutions**, not problems
- Distilling for **win-win outcomes**

### Questioning as a listening tool

- How about ...?
- What if ...?
- How so?
- Tell me more ...?
- And then what?
- Have you thought of ...? other ways?

### When people leave after an engagement with you:

Do they feel:

- **Introspecting** or **wondering**?
- **Heard** or **lectured**?
- **Validated** or **shattered**?
- **Empowered** or **disempowered**?
- **Encouraged** or **discouraged**?

The choice is yours!

### What is important to ME in life?

It is:

**1) Making significant contribution to building leadership capacity of those who work to deliver social outcomes in Africa**

**2) To be happy without negatively interfering with happiness of others**

Consequently, my aspiration everyday of my life in respect of the compass, clock and how I communicate is absolutely about this!

Your HAPPINESS is about preserving and enhancing your greatest asset – YOU!





### What is important to YOU?

Is any of these, even close?

- To be the "go-to" consultant in my country on matters to do with a particular area e.g. Research Methods?
- To build excellence in your area (e.g. Research Methods) in my team, institution, country, Africa?
- To create a network of practitioners (e.g. in Research Methods) across my country, continent?

OR IS IT:

- To make as much money as you can???

### Whatever it is:

- Make deliberate choice on direction of your life
- Use your time wisely – bias towards the important
- Communication is critical – listening is the core of communication
- Develop core values that define you
- Invest in your PMSE health

Remember: Education opens your mind to think: what you do (and how) after that is wide open!!

Thank YOU and GOD Bless  
YOU!



**Appendix 2: ANALYSIS OF THE SEMINAR EVALUATION**

ITEM	Faculty	Postgraduate	Average*
<b>Content</b> (58 responses)	64% good; 36% very good	38% good; 62% very good	4.6 (V.Good)
<b>Duration</b> (58 responses)	25% fair 50% good; 25% very good	9% fair 39% good; 52% very good	4.3 (Good)
<b>Delivery</b> (58 responses)	38% good; 54% very good	20% good; 78% very good	4.7 (V.Good)
<b>Ratio of lecture to discussion</b> (45 responses)	50% fair 25% good; 25% very good	16% fair 41% good; 41% very good	4.1 (Good)
<b>Networking opportunities</b> (46 responses)	50% fair 25% good; 25% very good	16% fair 41% good; 41% very good	3.9 (Good)
<b>Education focus</b> (47 responses)	50% fair 40% good; 10% very good	11% fair 62% good; 27% very good	4.3 (Good)

\* Rating: 1- V Poor, 2 – Poor, 3 – Fair, 4 – Good , 5 – Very good

\* 67 participants filled Evaluation Forms (17 Faculty/ staff ; 47 PG, 5 UG & Missing information)



**Appendix 3: PICTORIAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE SEMINAR**

**Preparation For The Seminar**



*Setting up the seminar room*



*Testing out the equipment*



*Welcome desk and attendance / registration*



*Evaluation form distribution*



Appendix 2: PICTORIAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE SEMINAR (cont.)

The Talk



Introducing the seminar speaker



Welcoming the speaker to CAVS



Audience held captivated by the speaker



The popular matrix for prioritization & time management





**Appendix 2: PICTORIAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE SEMINAR (cont.)**

**The Discussions**



*Discussion facilitation*



*Audience reflections and comments*



*Audience reflections and comments*



*Audience reflections and comments*



*Audience reflections and comments*



### The Discussions continue with refreshments



Photo credits: Ms J. N Kurji