

ANNUAL REPORT

AFRICA REGIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The FIG ARN focusses on networking and capacity building for the African region. In the last year it has not been possible to meet in person but the distributed leadership on the continent did meet virtually. ARN workshops were planned for Nigeria in July 2020 and Uganda in 2021. The Mauritian Surveyors' Council was also looking at hosting a workshop in 2023. All of these face-to-face gatherings have been put on hold.

In the last year, the Facebook platform **@FIGARN** has been the primary method of communication. Online resources, especially MOOCs and training sessions were routinely shared, especially those hosted by organisations with relationships with FIG such as FIG Corporate members and FIG partners. These offerings facilitated practitioners to us periods of hard lockdown to upskill in latest technology and methods. However, lockdown has had a negative effect on companies and individuals as African economies continue to suffer tremendously under COVID-19 with little or no social security net. Voluntary associations, including member associations of FIG, are faced with the challenge of increased resignations driven by individual and company budgetary constraints.

A key role of the FIG ARN during this last year was to provide support to lecturers in surveying on the continent. African students face challenges that demand a different response to course delivery compared to the solutions appropriate for the developed world. The challenges of remote learning for the African student include lack of hardware (including lack of access to a smart mobile phone for connectivity), lack of internet connection combined with the inability to purchase data for essential connectivity, poor working environments (such as overcrowding, noise, lack of basic resources such as electricity and water, threats to physical safety). Lecturers in Africa needed to respond by delivering non-synchronous content with very low data requirements while being extremely flexible and accommodating of student hardships. Videoed lectures and synchronous online tutorials were reduced to a minimum or avoided altogether. Students often have no access to resources used routinely in more affluent settings such as Youtube videos and existing online tutorials commonly available on the sites of software and instrument suppliers. The ARN response was to establish a set of themed Facebook Groups to facilitate sharing of resources for remote tertiary education in Africa (e.g. groups on teaching land law, GIS, plane surveying, GNSS). The Facebook **@FIGARN** Group platform is not a repository for teaching materials – it is intended that these are shared directly between lecturers. Lecturers indicate resources that they have developed and can share and also where there exist good, free, flexible (low and high bandwidth resources) resources on the internet. An example are the materials on the responsible governance of tenure by the FAO. Although set up for African educators, these themed Facebook Groups are open to all. If you who would like to contribute to this community then first **LIKE** the Facebook page **@FIGARN** and request to join the appropriate Group. The challenge of educating surveyors in Africa is ongoing – many students are still accessing classes from home under adverse conditions – this is likely to continue long after students in the developed world are allowed to return to campus-based learning environments.

At the FIG 2021 Working Week, the ARN will be focussing attention on the CORS networks in Africa through relevant sessions. This is a key focus identified as regionally imperative for building capacity in Africa.

