

AFRICAN WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

A Centre of Excellence in Research,
Scholarship and Policy Advocacy

THE BEGINNINGS
2010- 2012

Compiled by
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Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira

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Scholarship and Policy Advocacy



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AACGS	Australia-Africa Community Grants Scheme
AAHEP	Africa America Higher Education Partnerships
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APSEA	Association of Professional Societies in Kenya
ARSAS	Africa Regional Small Activities Scheme
ASCU	Agricultural Sector Coordinating Unit
AU	African Union
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWSC	African Women's Studies Centre
CHSS	College of Humanities & Social Sciences
CPST	College of Parliamentary Studies
CSDDES	Centre for Sustainable Drylands Ecosystems & Societies
DVC AA	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs
DVC A& F	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Administration & Finance
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
IDIS	Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
KAVI	Kenya Aids Vaccine Initiative
MTP	Medium Term Plan

RAP	Regional Action Plan
SUNY	State University of New York
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UoN	University of Nairobi

Statement from the Vice-Chancellor Prof George A. O. Magoha



Academics in this country, and indeed in Africa, need to create woman centered knowledge in all areas in order to strengthen and validate their knowledge and experiences. It is not enough just to have a higher number of women in all spheres of scholarship, we need to challenge the theoretical frameworks as well as the

methodological and analytical tools used and target women as constructors of knowledge and innovation. We have to transform our University to ensure women's knowledge in all disciplines is promoted and that their experiences, vision and philosophy of life will generate scientific knowledge that will be translated into policy and practice.

If we are to realise our vision of being a world class university, leading in human resource development in Africa, then it is of utmost importance that African women's knowledge and experiences are part of mainstream knowledge development in all areas of scholarship. We at the University of Nairobi are leaders in many fields and we will lead in this area as well.

We need to take positive measures to increase the proportion of women at the highest levels of academic institutions and ensure that research by African scholars on African women knowledge and experience continue to grow and influence the direction of development in Kenya so as to safeguard the realisation of Vision 2030 and accelerate the development of our sub-region, the Africa region and globally.

Foreword

The African Women Studies Centre recognises that the experiences of African women have not been part of mainstream knowledge development and have often not been a source of public and “legitimate knowledge” that guides development on our continent. These experiences and knowledge have not been utilized to shape, order and name our world.



*Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira,
Ag. Director, African Women Studies
Centre*

Our focus is, therefore, to bring the African women's knowledge to visibility, through academic and policy debates in our academic institutions and other fora at the national and regional levels. In addition, we take cognisance of the important linkage between women of Africa and those of African descent but living in other parts of the world.

The Centre also recognises that, in our region, we continue to refer to and use theories and frameworks whose basic assumptions do not include African women's worldview. Theories of power, political and other, need to be interrogated from the African women's experiences point-of-view. Looking at such novels as Margaret Ogola's *The River and The Source* (Kenya), Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* (Senegal) and Lena Elieshi's *“Parched Earth”* (Tanzania), among other books, will help us understand what this means.

Despite the remarkable growth of Gender and Women's studies in Africa over the last 3 decades, and the intellectual importance of this work, it is still difficult to find works on African women in libraries and resource rooms. This situation makes it difficult to develop a sense of the historical, intellectual and creative ingenuity of the African woman's ideas and analyses, the development of theories, and the manner in which they can influence our thinking. The African Women's Studies Centre seeks to bring to the fore the views and perspectives of this category.

The establishment of the African Women's Studies Centre (AWSC) has been a journey, a journey that is worthwhile. The Centre addresses the need to have special focus on African women and women of African descent in order to bring their views and perspective into mainstream academic and policy dialogue. The process towards the establishment of the Centre received the full backing of the women and men at the University. With the great support of the current Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) Prof Isaac Mbeche (then Principal, College of Humanities & Social Sciences) and the current Principal of the CHSS, Prof Enos Njeru, (then Dean, Faculty of Arts) the journey towards the birth of AWSC was well on course.

Our appreciation goes to the Vice Chancellor, Prof George A. O. Magoha for his tremendous support from right from the beginning.

We at the AWSC thank all those who have made the great idea of bringing the African Women's experiences and knowledge to the centre of academic discourse and policy dialogue to become a reality.

Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira
Ag. Director,
African Women Studies Centre

PART 1

1.1 Origin

Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira was acutely aware that the experiences of African women in almost all spheres of life were invisible, did not form apart of mainstream knowledge development and often they were not used as a source of public and legitimate knowledge. And she had a dream, a dream that one day African women will have the opportunity to speak for themselves, their experiences will be utilized to shape, order and name the world in which they live. That dream became a concept paper which she wrote in order to persuade the leadership and the community of the University of Nairobi that this University should lead the way in establishing a Centre that will promote the experiences and wisdom of the African woman. The African Women Studies Centre originated from there.

1.2 Founding Coordinators

Following her presentation of the concept, Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira then approached Prof Milcah Amolo Achola and Prof. Ciarunji Chesaina and asked them to join forces and work together to come up with various initiatives that would facilitate the establishment of the Centre.



*Prof Ciarunji Chesaina, Secretary
African Women Studies Centre*



*Prof Milcah Amolo Achola, AWSC,
Coordinator Research & Academic Division*

With financial support from the Ford Foundation, the concept was further developed and started on its journey through the relevant university processes. The then Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Prof Enos Njeru, chaired the College of Humanities and Social Sciences inter-faculty deliberations on the concept. These deliberations greatly enhanced the shape and dimensions the envisaged Centre should take and emphasized the need for a multi-disciplinary nature.

The next level was for the concept to gain the approval of the Academic Board of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS). The then Principal of the CHSS, Prof Isaac Mbeche, gave his full support right up to the highest level, that is, the University Council.

Meanwhile, a core group from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences organized a Consultative Meeting for the Proposed African Women Studies Centre, held at the University of Nairobi from 27th to 28th September, 2009. At that meeting academicians from all Colleges of the University of Nairobi met with practitioners and women leaders at all levels from all Provinces of the country to cross-pollinate ideas on the need to establish a Centre for Women Studies and the shape it should take.

Closing Speech by Prof Isaac Mbeche, then Principal of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Consultative Meeting, 29.09.2009



Prof Isaac Mbeche, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Student's Affairs

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is not only the largest in the University of Nairobi; it also has the greatest variety of academic programmes. As its Principal, I am proud of this. Not only does the African Women Studies Centre add to the variety of disciplines the College offers, but it also makes the College more attractive as a centre of learning. The College is, therefore, more than happy to provide the home for the African Women Studies Centre.

I know that the curriculum of the Proposed Centre goes beyond the College. Indeed, it

is apparent that if we consider how women relate to issues of health, the environment, agriculture, education, science and technology, we are talking about an entity that will encompass the entire University of Nairobi. In this regard, the college will work with the Office of the Vice Chancellor to ensure the success of the proposed programmes.

1.3 Building Consensus on Women Issues: Interdisciplinary Approach

The AWSC recognizes that African women's perspectives and experiences cut across all academic disciplines. In this spirit, the Centre has been working with scholars from all Colleges of the University in order to promote an interdisciplinary approach.

Gradually the nucleus of the three coordinators started growing and assuming a shape as scholars from a variety of disciplines started joining and offering their expertise. This sped up the process of the establishment of the Centre and also ensured its inter-disciplinary nature right from its initiation. These were, Dr Margaret Hutchinson from the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences; Dr Daniel Ichang'i and Prof Lydia Njenga both from the College of Physical and Biological Sciences; Prof Zipporah Ngumi and Dr Grace Omoni both from the College of Health Sciences; Mrs Anna Petkova-Mwangi, Dr Rayya Timmamy, Dr Helen Inyega and Mrs Julia Munialo from the College of Education and External Studies; Dr Eng. Mary Kimani and Dr. Siphila Mumenya, both from the College of Architecture and Engineering. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences, being the Host and the largest college of the University of Nairobi, produced a large number of supporters such as Prof Octavian Gakuru (Department of Sociology and Social Work), Prof Henry Indangasi and Dr Alina Rinkanya (Department of Literature), Prof Wanjohi Waruta and Prof Jack Odhiambo (Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies), Dr Jane Mariara (School of Economics), Dr Margaret Kirimi (Department of Geography), Prof Maria Nomo (Institute of Diplomacy & International Relations).

It should be noted that the above scholars are both male and female, which clearly indicates that the African Women Studies Centre not only caters for all disciplines, but it also recognizes the importance of men and women pulling together to make its programmes meaningful and viable.

It was indeed a momentous occasion when the African Women Studies Centre was approved by the University Council as an official entity in 2011 and Prof Wanjiku Kabira was appointed its first Director. The Council gave its approval in recognition of the importance of the African women's perspectives in all aspects of life. Hence the African Women Studies Centre was established as an academic, research and outreach centre linked to all the Colleges of the University of Nairobi. The African Women Studies Centre now stands as a multi-disciplinary Centre which serves all the six Colleges of the University of Nairobi, namely: College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Agriculture & Veterinary Sciences, College of Health Sciences, College of Biological and Physical Sciences, College of Architecture & Engineering and College of Education & External Studies.

1.4 Vision, Mission and Core Values of the Centre

Vision

A Centre of excellence committed to promoting African women's experiences and worldview in research, scholarship, policy and institutional development.

Mission

To promote intellectual inquiry by and on the experiences of women; through research, teaching, publication and dissemination and engage with policy makers, women's organizations and civil society organizations, in order to bring African women's perspectives into development and scholarship in Kenya, Africa and globally.

Core Values

The Centre subscribes to the University of Nairobi's core values which are: freedom of thought in academic enquiry; innovativeness; good corporate governance; team work; professionalism; responsible corporate citizenship and strong social responsibility; and respect for and conservation of the environment. As one of the important flagships of the University, the African Women Studies Centre strives to contribute significantly to the institution's endeavour to progress as a world-class university.

In addition, the Centre is committed to promoting:

- ❖ African women's perspectives and knowledge;
- ❖ Gender equity;
- ❖ Respect for human rights;
- ❖ Freedom of thought in academic enquiry;
- ❖ Innovativeness;
- ❖ Good corporate governance;
- ❖ Team work;
- ❖ Professionalism;
- ❖ Respect for and conservation of the environment; and
- ❖ Community service.

1.5 Programmes of the Centre

In order to capture all aspects of the African woman's needs and experiences in response to the multi-disciplinary nature of its studies, the Centre has broad areas of operation which appear as themes in its strategic plan. These are:

- i) Academic and Research Programmes Division
- ii) Policy advocacy Programmes Division
- iii) Outreach, Linkages and Mentoring Division.
- iv) Publication and Documentation Division

The Centre has put in place very clear objectives for each of the above themes. The objectives are aimed at promoting, in an inter-disciplinary manner, inquiry on African women on the African Continent, the Diaspora as well as at global level. Hence the objectives for each theme are as outlined below.

1.5.1 Academic Programmes and Research Division

The broad objective for this division is:

- ❖ To offer innovative quality academic Programmes at postgraduate levels.
- ❖ To create conducive environment for study and research on all significant issues affecting African women, taking their experiences

and world view into account.

- ❖ To generate knowledge and disseminate research findings on African women in Africa and the Diaspora.
- ❖ To be a resource for organisational and institutional for policy-makers in their development and formulation of policies affecting women.
- ❖ To bring African women's experiences and concerns into mainstream knowledge development.

1.5.2 Policy advocacy Division

The Centre works on advocacy for policy change. This is to ensure women's views and perspectives find their way into policy formulation and institutional development.

The broad objective for this division is:

- ❖ To conduct evidence based policy advocacy.
- ❖ To ensure African women's experiences and views influence national policy and programming.
- ❖ To conduct seminars, short-courses and workshops on specific issues affecting African women.
- ❖ To bring African women's experiences and concerns into mainstream institutional development.
- ❖ To create a forum where African women may come together to share their experiences, worldview, and ideas.
- ❖ To provide capacity-building opportunities for women leaders and organizations.

1.5.3 Outreach, Linkages and Mentoring Division

The main objective for the outreach division is to share research findings and to influence policy making and Programming in Africa in order to take into consideration the views and perspectives of African women on the same.

It is also aimed at facilitating interaction of University of Nairobi scholars with civil society organisations, women's organisations, private sector groups and

students, among others, so as not only to share knowledge but also, to learn from the larger community.

The specific objectives for this division are:

- ❖ To promote collaboration in areas of teaching, research and consultancy on Programmes targeting African women;
- ❖ To promote collaboration, links, and exchange Programmes with African scholars, organisations and institutions committed to the study and research on women's issues in the African Diaspora.;
- ❖ To collaborate and link up with global institutions and organisations involved in women's issues.
- ❖ To consult and engage governmental and non-governmental organisations in the formulation and development of Programmes and policies affecting African women.

1.5.4 Publication and Documentation Division

The main objective for the Publication and Documentation Division is to document the activities of the Centre, publish research findings and any relevant information, collect publications regarding women issues and serve as a source of information on data pertinent to the Centre and women issues in general.

1.6 Location and Management of AWSC

1.6.1 Location

The African Women Studies Centre is officially housed in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Although the day-to-day operations of AWSC are managed in the College premises, the programmes are run from the main office located at the Kenya Science Campus. The Principal of the CHSS, Prof Enos Njeru, was involved in the inception of the Centre when he was the then Dean of the Faculty of Arts and still continues to give his full support to the Centre.



*Prof Enos Njeru, Principal
College of Humanities & Social
Sciences*



*Prof Peter Mbithi
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Administration & Finance*

Prof. Meithei is the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Administration and Finance. The DVC accorded invaluable support to the infant African Women's Studies Centre, particularly in the area of financial administration. It was through his efforts that the University of Nairobi allocated AWSC premises at the Kenya Science Campus as the focal point for its operations.

1.6.2 Management of the Centre

The Centre is managed by various organs as follows.

Board of Management

The Board of Management is the policy decision-making organ of the Centre and the members serve for a term of three (3) years renewable once. The powers of the Board of the AWSC are stipulated in the University of Nairobi Statutes Number XVIII.

The Board consists of the following members: The Director, Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Technology; Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Development; a representative of an active development partner, three women scholars – one from the African Diaspora versed in the Centre's core business, one holding/has held an influential position in the public domain and one who has excelled in scholarship in the area of African Women Studies; a representative from the Academic Board of each College of the University of Nairobi; one academic member of staff of the Centre on an established position; Institute of Anthropology, Gender & African Studies; Population Studies and Research Institute; University Librarian; Faculty of Arts; School of Education; One Senate Representative; Department of Sociology & Social Work; Registrar Academic and the Centre's Administrator/Secretary as stipulated in the Statute.

Technical Committee

The Technical Committee is made up of 2 coordinators from each of the Colleges of the University. Their role is guiding the implementation of the

Centre's programmes and providing technical assistance particularly relevant to the areas of interest of the respective coordinators' Colleges and also helping the Centre to identify expertise needed for the implementation of its programmes. It is also the responsibility of the Technical Committee to work closely with the Centre to identify critical aspects of the Colleges that would need attention in terms of the mission of the Centre. The Technical Committee members (College Coordinators) are appointees of the Principals of their respective Colleges.

Management Committee

The Management Committee consists of nine members including the heads of the divisions/departments of the Centre as shown in the organogram on page 9. Their role involves working with the Secretariat in ensuring the implementation of the programmes. The management committee is appointed in consultation with the technical committee.

Director

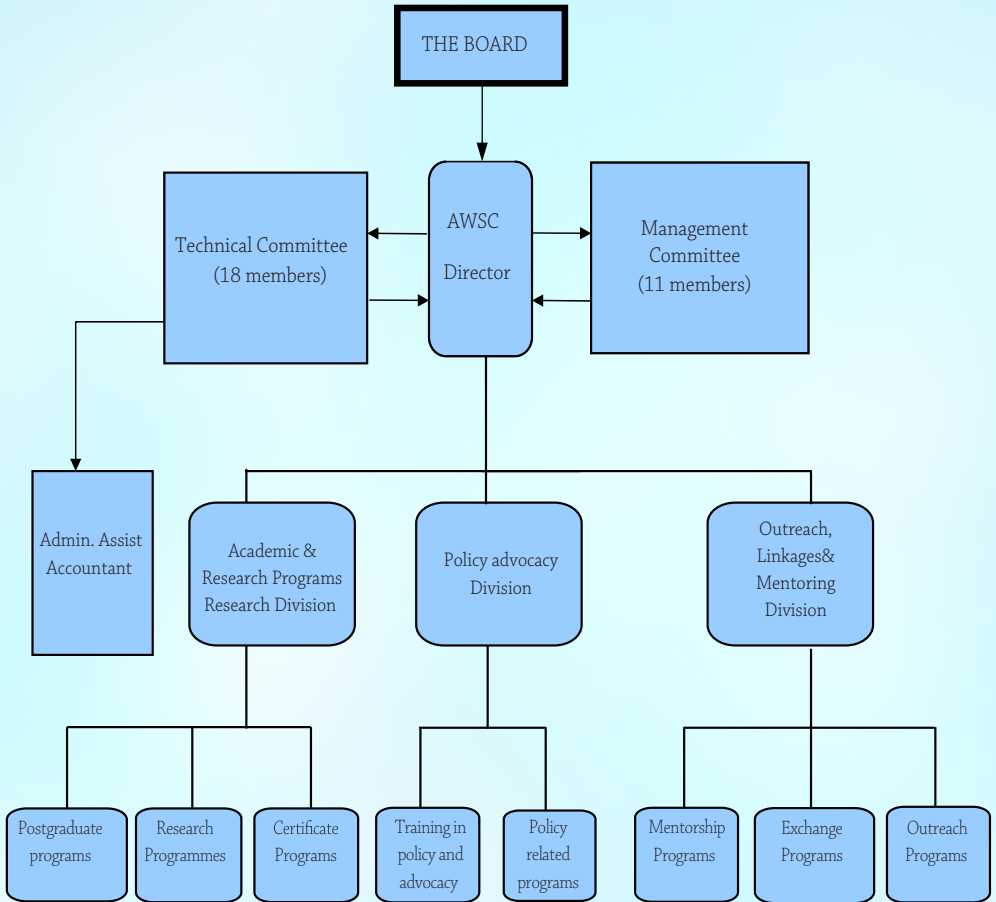
The Director is appointed by the Vice Chancellor and is responsible for all the operation of the Centre. The Director is assisted by the coordinators and the Secretariat.

Secretariat

At present the Secretariat consists of the following people:

- ❖ Wanjiku Gathoni Gacheche, Programme Assistant, Policy advocacy division
- ❖ Gideon Ruto, Research Assistant
- ❖ Sylvia Obulinji, Senior Administrative Assistant, Outreach, Linkages and Mentoring Division
- ❖ Veronica Waeni Nzioki, Administrative Assistant, Academic & Research Division
- ❖ Minneh Nyambura Wanjiku, Administrative Assistant, Policy Advocacy Division

The Structure of the Centre



PART 2

PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE: 2010-2012

Part 2 focuses on the programmes and activities of the Centre that were undertaken during the period 2010-2012.

2.1 Academic, Research and Publication Division

The African Women Studies Centre offers eligible applicants a course leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in African Women Studies. The Programme enables doctoral students to contribute to knowledge in the area of African Women Studies. As they make these contributions, students are expected to see their research in relation to the big picture of Women Studies in the world. The African Women Studies Centre provides the PhD students with rigorous grounding on the theory and methodology that interrogates the current and traditional theoretical concepts and methodologies in all fields of the humanities and social sciences. Because of its interdisciplinary nature, the AWSC accommodates the plurality of theories and methodologies from its various disciplines.

2.1.1 Short courses, Training and Public Fora

The Centre offers Short Courses and Training that focus on areas such as Gender and Development; Gender Analysis, Feminism and Feminist Theories; Gender and Human Rights; Gender Perspectives in Policy Formulation and other relevant areas. The Centre targets practitioners in the non-governmental sector, women leaders, government officials and people who may want to improve their knowledge in their areas of choice.

Since 2010 to date, the following activities have been implemented in the academic, research and publication division:

i. Postgraduate Studies

The AWSC has attracted a number of PhD candidates who are currently carrying out their research.

ii. Short courses

The first short course, *Women, Power and Decision Making*, took place from 27th February to 2nd March 2012 and was facilitated by a powerful team consisting of Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, Dr Peninah Ogada, Wanjiku Mbugua and Ms Mabel Isolio from the Institute of Anthropology and Gender Studies.

Another short course was on *African Women Economic Policies and Gender-aware Budgeting*. It took place from 23rd to 27th April, 2012 and was facilitated by Mr Francis Kimani and Dr Margaret Kirimi. These two courses will be discussed in more detail in Part 3 of this booklet.

The third short course that was carried out was on writing short stories about personal life experiences. The objectives of the course are to create an environment where both men and women can overcome their inhibitions related to their ability to write creatively and develop skills that will enable them to write their own stories, express their emotions and attract the interest of the reader. These stories are then edited and published. From 19th to 23rd of March 2012, in collaboration with the Department of Literature, the AWSC held a one week workshop on writing short stories based on personal life experiences. As the photograph below illustrates, many of the participants in this course were men since the Centre recognizes the need for men to write personal stories, especially those about women.



Participants & facilitators of the workshop on writing about personal life experiences!

Don DeLillo (American novelist born in New York in 1926) said that *“writing is a form of personal freedom. It frees us from the mass identity we see in the making all around us. In the end, writers write not to be outlaw heroes of some under culture but mainly to save themselves, to survive as individuals.”* Indeed the participants got an opportunity to free themselves through writing. The workshop was facilitated by Prof Henry Indangasi (Literature Professor, UON) and Mrs Anna Petkova Mwangi (Lecturer at the School of Education, Kikuyu Campus). Under their guidance and deliberative sessions, participants were given intensive knowledge and skills ranging from the importance of personal writing which is mainly to deal with personal conflict and finding a forgiving heart, to how one is to organize the story, perfect sentence skills and acquire a personal style, and mechanics of writing which are very essential elements in writing. They also repeatedly emphasized that personal stories are not for settling scores with those close to you, but to let go that which holds you back, which is best explained in ink. They added that a good personal story is the one that demonstrates a conflict and how the writer either tried or struggled to overcome it, at the same time evoking emotions from the reader because, as Robert Frost once said, “No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader.” The course was very successful and a publication is underway.

2.1.2 Publications

The Centre plans a refereed journal entitled *‘Pathways to Africa’s Development’* which will disseminate research findings and knowledge highlighting women’s perspectives, knowledge and experiences. All the materials submitted for publication will be subjected to a rigorous peer review mechanism to ensure that they meet high academic standards.

Apart from the publications that will be generated for scholars, the Centre is also producing publications targeting its various audiences including the general public.

2.1.3 Dialogue with Academics

a) The University of Nairobi Women Scientists Workshop

The Consultative Workshop of Women Scientists of the University of Nairobi was held on 14th July 2010 at the Council Chambers. The major objectives of the workshop were to share and articulate the issues related to Women,



Participants & facilitators of the workshop on writing about personal life experiences!

Science, Technology and Innovation in development and to share tools of gender analysis in the health and agricultural sector that AWSC had developed. In addition, the meeting was intended to provide an opportunity for capacity enhancement of the women scientists and exposure to issues related to Vision 2030.

The Vice Chancellor Prof George Magoha graced the occasion with his presence. The workshop was also attended by the DVC Academic Affairs Prof Jacob Kaimenyi, College of Humanities and Social Sciences Deputy Principal Prof Peter K'obonyo, Dean, Faculty of Arts Prof Enos Njeru among others. The women scientists were drawn from all the colleges of the University of Nairobi. In his address, the Vice Chancellor assured the women scientists that he committed to help the women at the University of Nairobi get to the highest levels of leadership in the institution and ensure that the Affirmative Action was implemented in the institution. The Vice-Chancellor offered a scholarship opportunity to one woman scientist and challenged the AWSC to select the most suitable candidate. The scholarship was awarded to a student in the College of Biological & Physical Sciences.

b) Conference On Pathways To Feminism And Development In Africa



Prof Octavian Gakuru chairing a session during the conference

Since its inception, feminism has achieved some societal changes through sharing experiences, developing theory and campaigning for rights such as, for example, phasing out discriminatory laws by seeking women's equality, reduced male dominance in the family institutions, increased participation of women in clergy, use of gender neutral language and increased participation of women in decision making organs.

The conference on Pathways to Feminism and Development in Africa took place at a momentous period of time, that was when The African Women Studies Centre had just been approved by the University of Nairobi Council, and more so, when the implementation of the new Constitution of Kenya giving women a fair share of representation in Parliament had just started, after a long struggle, and women were beginning to see the fruits of their struggle. That was a time when women at every level were getting sensitized to participate in all socio-political and economic activities for development, since they too, have the potential and the Constitution has provided the necessary conditions for their growth and development.

The Conference brought together scholars from different Kenyan Universities to share their views on feminism and development and was held on 30th June 2011 at the University of Nairobi, Main Campus, Council Chambers. The aim of the conference was to enable the scholars to come together and share various pathways to feminism and development in Africa. The key officials included Deputy Chief Justice, Lady Justice Nancy Barasa; Dr Risper Oduor who represented the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology; Professor Enos Njeru, Principal College of Humanities and Social Sciences representing the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, and Professor Odek, Dean Faculty of Law. The facilitators included the African Women Studies Centre (AWSC) representatives drawn from the various Colleges of the University of Nairobi linked to the Centre. Among those present was Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira who is the Director of the

Centre. The others included Dr Jesang' Hutchinson who is the coordinator in the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, Dr. Siphila Mumenya from the College of Architecture and Engineering, Professor Octavian Gakuru from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ms Mabel Isolio from the Institute of Anthropology and Gender Studies and Anna Petkova-Mwangi from the College of Education and External Studies.

The methodology employed involved presentation of papers on various thematic areas based on feminism and development. Each presentation was followed by a discussion by an assigned scholar highlighting key concerns in the presentation. After a couple of presentations, there were plenary discussions where the participants gave their views in light of the presentations. It was noted that the African woman has been gagged for a very long time and it was high time that she spoke out and was heard. This has been because of culture that has portrayed women as inadequate beings, the existence of male brokers whom women have to negotiate through for power, illiteracy, diversity which has fractured women's unity, a question of tactics and strategy and denial of identity.

It was also observed that overtime; women had been retrogressing, especially when they met with resistance. It was realized that investing in women is investing in the development of all spheres of a nation. When a woman is empowered the benefits trickle down to the family level. Thus women movements should be strengthened despite the diversities of women and strong linkages should be built with the women at the grassroots level.



*Prof Patricia Kameri Mbote,
Dean, School of Law and Chief Editor-
'Pathways to Africa's Development' Journal*

The dominant hindrances for the development of the African woman were noted to be lack of economic power and development, real or perceived traditional practices based on the patriarchal model, scarcity of resources and competition, the plural system of law which allows for the practice of religious, customary and state law that do not have the interests of the woman in mind, the role of theory in the portrayal of women and the women's voice which is not

affirming who the women are. To achieve development, feminism needs to be integrated in all socio-political and economic sectors of the state.

The papers discussed at the 'Pathways to Development' forum form the first issue of the Journal. Prof Patricia Kameri-Mbote is the editor of the African Women Studies Journal.

c) **Speaking from the Heart of my Mind: The Story of our Journey** **- Prof Micere Mugo's Book launch**



Prof Micere Githae Mugo & Prof Githu Muigai, the Attorney General during the book launch

On April 17, 2012, Prof Micere Githae Mugo launched her book *Speaking from the Heart of My Mind* at the University of Nairobi. The event was jointly organised by the Department of Literature and the African Women Studies Center. It attracted a huge audience of students, lecturers, writers, civil society organisations, women leaders and other visitors. The event was formally opened by the Deputy Vice Chancellor-Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi. Other dignitaries included the Hon Martha Karua and the Attorney General, Prof Githu Muigai.

Message from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Academic Affairs, Prof Jacob Kaimenyi



Prof Jacob Kaimenyi, Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs

One of the core values of the University of Nairobi is to promote and advocate for freedom of thought and expression. Indeed, this is in line with our new Constitution which is one of the best in the world. The African Women Studies Centre aims at promoting freedom of speech, particularly by African women who have hitherto been denied a voice. I see this as the context in which the Centre has hosted this inspiring lecture by Prof Micere Mugo, whose academic roots go down to the time she served as the first female Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Nairobi.



The audience during the book launch

Colloquium and Public Lecture

On 3rd – 4th September, 2011, jointly with the Department of Literature at the University of Nairobi, the Centre hosted the world renowned Prof Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak with a view to working out modalities of exchange programmes. The topic of the Colloquium was *Critical Theory and Nation State Formation*.

Opening Speech by Prof Lucy Irungu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Production & Extension, 03.09.2011



Prof Lucy Irungu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Production & Extension

It is important to highlight the fact that critical theory is an examination and critique of society and culture, drawing from knowledge which cuts across the social sciences and humanities. Critical theory involves the application of principles or values in order to make judgments for the purpose of bringing about positive change. This is for instance, rhetorical criticism which carefully examines and judges the quality of discourse.

It is worth to note that the University bears a moral responsibility in shaping a nation's agenda. First, it is important from a moral perspective since it

educates and trains our future community and business leaders, teachers and policy makers.

Second is that it pursues academic discourse from a practical point of view as it is exceptionally equipped to help solve the daily challenges of a nation through innovation in teaching and learning. It also extends to students and future leaders the intellectual tools for doing that. This means that universities influence the standards for political leadership throughout a nation and even shape the global nation formation.

The multidisciplinary approach has become an important approach in modern discourse as it involves many related disciplines and creates teams of scholars that enrich the overall scholarly experience. It involves drawing appropriately from multiple disciplines to redefine problems outside the normal boundaries and reach solutions based on a new understanding of complex situations. Even though it faces challenges by the long established tradition of highly focused professional practitioners that has cultivated a protective boundary around their area of expertise, I urge the scholars to break away from this practice and engage in multi-disciplinary studies as these are geared towards holistic development of scholarship and enrichment of professional bodies.

While on this path of nation formation, we realize that this sector is multidisciplinary, bringing together scholars from different disciplines like Law, Political Science, Literature, and Sociology, among others.

As scholars, the importance of research in academics cannot be gainsaid. It leads to applications that directly benefit the people of a state and beyond. Without research, we would not be able to transform an unstable nation into a stable nation, shortage into plenty, still into movable. To a large extent, it enables scholars to actively transform our nation and our natural, social, and individual worlds for the better.



Prof. Spivak is an Indian literary, philosopher and University Professor at Columbia University, where she is a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. She is best known for the essay “Can

Prof Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a University Professor at Columbia University

the Subaltern Speak?” considered a founding text of post colonialism; and for her translation of, and introduction to Jacques Derrida’s De la Grammatology. In 2012 she was awarded the Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy for being “a critical theorist and educator speaking for the humanities against intellectual colonialism in relation to the globalized world”.

Prof Spivak is best known for her contemporary cultural and critical theories to challenge the “legacy of colonialism” and the way readers engage with literature and culture. She often focuses on the cultural texts of those who are marginalized by dominant western culture: the new immigrant; the working class; women; and other positions of the subaltern.

2.2 Policy Advocacy Division

2.2.1 Focus on Implementation of Article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya

The African Women Studies Centre recognizes that all policies have to be anchored in the principles and spirit of the Constitution. Policy may be defined as a set of decisions oriented towards a long-term purpose or a particular problem. Such decisions by the government are embodied in legislation and usually apply to a country as a whole rather than to one part of it. This recognition has led the AWSC to initiate a Project with a specific focus on policy advocacy for the implementation of the Constitution. Initially this Project focuses on Article 43 of the Constitution which pertains to Social Economic Rights. The AWSC recognises the basic rights of each Kenyan to water, health, education, food and social security. These are areas that directly involve African women and therefore, their experiences and knowledge in this respect, can greatly contribute both to the formulation and the implementation of Article 43.

The AWSC Project targets influencing policy makers in various ministries whose portfolio falls within social and economic rights namely: the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Education, Housing, Water and Internal Security. Other ministries relevant to the realisation of Article 43 include: Land, Environment and Natural Resources as well as Gender and Social Development where welfare programmes are located.

The Project targets the poor in the country as the final beneficiaries who, according to the World Bank definition, constitute men and women whose income levels cannot meet their basic needs. They include those who do not have social security, access to safe drinking water, adequate quality food, housing or quality health care and education, together with other vulnerable groups such as orphaned children, people living with disabilities as well as people living with HIV/AIDS.

According to the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, which Kenya is a signatory to; all human beings are entitled to Economic and Social rights. The Chapter of the Bill of Rights in the Kenyan Constitution, 2010 provides for enjoyment of Economic and Social rights under Article 43 (1)(a-f) on five sectors which include health, adequate food and of acceptable quality, housing, clean and safe water and social security. In this respect, the AWSC has concentrated on:

- ❖ The implementation of Article 43 (1) (c) of the Kenyan Constitution (2010) on Food Security
- ❖ The implementation of Article 43 (1)(a, b, d, e & f) of the Kenyan Constitution (2010).

(a) Promoting and Advocating for the Implementation of Article 43 (1)(c) of the Kenyan Constitution (2010) on Food Security



The purpose of the Project on Article 43 (1) (c) of the Kenyan Constitution (2010) is to promote and advocate for the implementation of the right to freedom from hunger and access to adequate food of acceptable quality for all Kenyans which is the spirit of Article 43 (1) (c) of the Kenyan Constitution. Parliament as an institution is critical in ensuring the formulation and implementation of policies and

programmes as well as raising issues of concern to the people. In addition, the Parliament has a major role in the allocation of the national revenue and in exercising oversight over the same. The African Women Studies Centre (AWSC) has therefore, chosen to focus on working with the Parliament in

order to ensure the implementation of Article 43 (1)(c). We have focused on this agenda because we are aware that 48% of Kenyans live below the poverty line (*Food Security and Nutrition Strategy of Kenya, 2008*). According to the literature available, food security is said to occur when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (*FAO World Food Summit, 1996*). Worldwide, 854 million people are food insecure and 2 billion are seasonally insecure (*FAO, 2010*).

This Project therefore, focuses on looking for ways of working closely with Members of Parliament with particular emphasis on Oversight Committees in order to ensure that food security concerns are mainstreamed in all policies and programmes. The project appreciates the multi-dimensional nature of addressing food security related issues and therefore, calls for data that will ensure that the Members of Parliament focus on the journey towards the implementation of article 43 (1)(c). In addition, the Project recognises the importance of capacity enhancement for the Oversight Committee members as well as the Parliamentary Research Department to address this issue.

The Project was approved on 1st September 2011 and has been implemented at the national level. It involves working with scholars/researchers as well as interacting with the relevant Parliamentary Committees and civil society organizations.

The committee members who are spearheading the implementation of this Project are:

- ❖ Dr Margaret Jesang Hutchinson
- ❖ Dr Daniel Ichang'i
- ❖ Prof. Tabitha Kiriti Ng'ang'a
- ❖ Dr Mary Lucia Mbithi
- ❖ Mr Gerrishon Ikiara
- ❖ Dr Wanjiru Gichuhi



Dr. Margaret Jesang Hutchinson

nutritionally adequate diets, limited resource allocation and low capacity to support the implementation of comprehensive nutrition programmes.

Dr. Margaret Jesang Hutchinson initially carried out a research on the agricultural sector. She found that only about two thirds of the Kenya population can be said to be food secure with 33% of the population being undernourished. Nationally 1.8 million (30%) children are classified as chronically undernourished. The major constraints in attaining good nutritional status include inadequate awareness and knowledge on



Dr Mary Lucia Mbithi

Dr Mary Mbithi carried out a research on food security in which she compared Kenya's situation with that of three countries which had programmes in place to alleviate hunger. She discussed Brazil's Zero Hunger Programme, India's National Employment Scheme and Malawi's Fertilizer subsidy programme. Dr. Mbithi posed the challenge that Kenya, being a developing country, was expected to counter hunger in a similar manner, during the stage of her implementation of social welfare and social security in the Constitution.



Mr Gerrishon Ikiara

Mr Gerrishon K. Ikiara is based at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies at the University of Nairobi. He served for five years as Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Transport and Communication. Hence Mr Ikiara has been invaluable to the Centre in the area of policy and Vision 2030.



Dr Daniel Ichang'i

Dr. Daniel Ichang'i represents the College of Physical and Biological Sciences at AWSC. He has been instrumental in interrogating the Constitution and strongly believes that such interrogation can act as a basis for AWSC to carry out its mandate in many areas. It was in this light that the Centre interrogated relevant articles of the constitution. As Chairman of the Association of Professional Societies in

Kenya (APSEA), Dr. Ichang'i has followed the issue of the Constitution for a long time. At APSEA, Dr. Ichang'i and his colleagues are engaged in the implementation of the Constitution at various levels. As a scholar, he believes that AWSC provides an outstanding opportunity to ensure best practices by highlighting women's perspectives which must influence policy.

Prof Tabitha W. Kiriti – Ng'ang'a carried out a study interrogating article



Prof Tabitha W. Kiriti – Ng'ang'a

43 (1)(c) which states that every Kenyan has a right to be free from hunger and to have adequate food of acceptable quality. Dr. Kiriti Ng'ang'a was acting on the Centre's recognition that 48% of Kenyans live below poverty line and this figure includes those who live in marginalized areas where production is low. The scholar's research on food security indicated that there were economic and cultural factors which accounted for women and children being the majority of those affected by food insecurity.

The project was funded by the State University of New York (SUNY-Kenya).

b) Focus on the Implementation of Article 43 (1) of the Constitution

The AWSC notes that one of the rationales underlying a country's realization of the basic rights is to address existing inequalities in distribution of wealth and resources. The people of Kenya negotiated for their basic needs to be entrenched in the Constitution. This was a battle led by civil society organisations and groups as well as ordinary Kenyans as they presented their views to the Ghai Commission on Constitution reforms. Their collective effort

gave birth to Article 43 of the Bill of Rights incorporated in the Constitution of Kenya. The policies that guide the implementation of this Article need to be reinforced by learning from the experiences of countries that succeeded in the realization of these basic rights. The Project, therefore, targeted policy makers in various ministries whose portfolio falls within social and economic rights namely: Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Education, Housing, Water and Gender, Children & Social Development.

Based on the World Bank definition, the majority of Kenyans constitute men and women whose income levels cannot meet their basic needs. They lack social security, access to safe drinking water, adequate quality food, housing, quality health care and education.

The team members who are spearheading the implementation of this Project are:

- ❖ Dr Wanjiru Gichuhi
- ❖ Dr Grace Omoni
- ❖ Dr Margaret Kirimi
- ❖ Dr Joy Kiiru
- ❖ Prof Elishiba Kimani

The project was funded by Amkeni Wakenya.



Dr. Grace Omoni



Dr. Wanjiru Gichuhi



Prof. Elishiba Kimani



Dr. Margearet Karimi

(c) Influencing Policies & Programmes in Vision 2030 and Documenting Women Experiences

This Project focuses on auditing identified flagship projects in the Vision 2030 and MTP 2008 – 2012 on how they are impacting on the lives of Kenyan people, especially the women, including their empowerment, economic status, status in society, improving the livelihoods of households and communities and the link between culture and development, among others. In addition, the Project has analysed policies in the agricultural sector and made recommendations to the relevant ministries.

A series of consultation workshops and peer review meetings, presentations, seminars, sharing with policy makers, among other activities aimed at the development of Gender and Policy Analysis Tools were held on several dates between March 2010 and March 2011. The objectives of this project were achieved through research, paper presentations, consultations, peer review meetings as well as sharing of the tools with policy makers.



Workshop participants of the Mwea Irrigation Scheme and Health Workers from KAVI

The Project has consulted men and women at the grassroots level from the Mwea Irrigation Scheme in order to document women's experiences as per the vision and mission of AWSC. These experiences are used to influence policy within the relevant ministries.

The AWSC held a two day workshop on 17th and 18th September 2010. There were both male and female participants from the Mwea Irrigation Scheme and the KAVI. The key presenters in this meeting were Dr. Margaret Jesang Hutchinson who was the lead researcher in the agricultural sector and Dr Grace Omoni, the lead researcher in the health sector.

One of the major recommendations made by the farmers from Mwea was to review of laws governing irrigation schemes which are outdated, including CAP 347 and other by-laws. The women farmers also raised the issue of affirmative action for women's representation in the Irrigation Board. Currently women comprise less than 1% of the management.

The major concern raised in the health sector was that the normal approach to health care systems is management oriented with focus on infrastructure, technology, logistics and financing. This way of doing things fails to capture the human face as the recipient of services rendered. Major recommendations appear in part 2 of this document.

Dr Grace Omoni expressed her views on Health policies to representatives of the Ministry of Health. Following her research she concluded that there is dire need to demystify the role of doctors and ensure that nurses have an input in decisions that pertain to their work in order to facilitate healthy teamwork between doctors and nurses. She also emphasized that one of the key core values of AWSC was that Kenyan women's knowledge and experiences need to be harnessed in order to improve on health programmes.



The women above from Mwea Irrigation Scheme share their views.



A male participant from Mwea Irrigation Scheme shares his experiences with other participants from the scheme.

The partner of AWSC in this Project was the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

2.2.2 Lobbying and advocating with policy makers

a) Lobbying with Parliamentary Oversight Committees and the Parliamentary Research Department

The AWSC has established linkages with the Kenyan Parliament where we are working together with Parliamentary Oversight Committees and the Parliamentary Research Department. Proposals for collaboration are underway.



Hon. Elius Mbau, Chair, Parliamentary Budget Committee



Hon. John Mututho, Chair, Departmental Committee on Agriculture, Livestock & Cooperatives

b) Lobbying with Relevant Government Ministries

The Centre has also established linkages with other government ministries in the country including the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Higher Education, Science & Technology, Gender, Children & Social Development and non-governmental organizations.

c) Training in Policy and Advocacy

The Centre organizes short courses that address some of the concerns that African women, their leaders and other development workers have been struggling with for decades. The short courses mainly target practitioners in the civil society, women leaders, and civil servants interested in enhancing their understanding of issues from African women's perspectives. The short courses are aimed at strengthening the participants' capacity to influence

policy, design and implement programmes/projects from the African women's perspectives. The courses may also target greater capacity building for civil society organisations, government institutions. Needs assessment will be carried out to identify the courses, some of these courses are reflected in the main document.

The short courses are tailor-made to address the needs of various categories of target groups. Intense courses for senior government officials will be planned for about three days. Certificate Courses will be held for one to two weeks. Most of these short courses will be self-sponsored. However, the Centre will mobilize resources to facilitate the participation of women in short courses. These will be courses that will aim at enhancing the capacity of women to engage effectively in policy and decision making processes. This will be a way of enhancing the affirmative action. The Centre also holds Seminars, Public Lectures and Conferences. In addition, the Centre has a Mentoring Programme.

The short courses offered by the Centre include:

- i. Women, Power and Decision Making
- ii. Writing Stories Based on Personal Life Experiences

i. Women, Power and Decision Making Short Course



Group photo of the facilitators & participants at the training

The Centre held a short course on Women, Power and Decision Making from 27th February to 2nd March 2012.

The objectives of the course were to educate participants on the different types of power, constraints to power for women and to overcome them, comprehend various mechanisms for accessing power and to analyse electoral systems, political parties and

other organizations on their appropriateness for women participation in the political processes, and finally ways of influencing change in institutions for

greater participation of women in decision making.

The course was facilitated by Dr. Ogada, Mabel Isolio, Wanjiku Mbugua and Prof. Kabira. There were interactive discussions between the facilitators, the participants and amongst participants as well. All the participants agreed that they had learnt something new and they were more competent in areas of women, power and decision making. Certificates were awarded to the participants at the end of the course.

Conclusion

The high level people in administration who have graced some of the consultations included: the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi (UoN), Prof George Magoha, the Deputy Vice-chancellors, the Principals of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Architecture and Engineering, the Dean of the Faculty of Law (School of Law), Dean, Faculty of Medicine, College of Health Science and the Dean, Faculty of Arts, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Director of the Centre for Dry Lands, many heads of Departments and Directors of Schools, the coordinators of various Colleges, Mr Gerrishon Ikiara the former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Transport and currently a lecturer at the University of Nairobi, Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS), AWSC Committee members, women scientists of the University of Nairobi. Outside the University of Nairobi, those who have participated in this process and shared their views include: Hon Dr Sally Kosgei, (then) Minister for Higher Education, Science & Technology, the (then) Deputy Chief Justice, Lady Justice Nancy Barasa; Dr Risper Oduor, Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology, Prof Micere Githae Mugo, Dr. Gituro Wainaina, Director of Vision 2030 –Social and Economic Pillars, the Deputy Coordinator Policy and Planning of the Agricultural Sector Coordinating Unit (ASCU), the Hon Martha Karua, the Attorney General Ptof Githu Muigai, Mr Stephen M. Laititi and Deputy Coordinator of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Mrs Anne Chele, as well as the coordinator of Mwea Irrigation Scheme, Mr. Hosea Wendot, Prof Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a renowned scholar and a University Professor at Columbia University, among others.

PART 3

3.1 Outreach, Linkages and Mentoring Division

The Centre has, through the University of Nairobi, entered into agreement with various institutions and entities. The major aim of the linkages and exchange programmes is to collaborate on research, enhance capacity building and promote scholarship, especially with regard to the perspectives and experiences of the African woman.

a) National Women's Consultative Workshop

The National Women's Consultative Workshop had the major objective of consulting with various stakeholders, particularly women leaders and women's organisations and share the vision and mission of the Centre for input by the women. The then Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dr Sally Kosgey, performed the opening ceremony. Other participating organisations included Civil Society organisations, County women's organisations and the University of Nairobi community.

Specifically, the workshop was intended to generate ideas that would help to set up a Centre of excellence committed to promoting African women's experiences and world view in scholarship, policy and national development. This would, in turn, influence the formulation of policies and strategies to empower women to develop to their full potential and contribute to national development and the wellbeing of the individual, the family and the nation.

The meeting was an excellent forum where women scholars and women leaders from all counties met and freely shared their experiences and opinions. All participants were unanimous in their support of the idea to set up an African Women's Studies Centre. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology strongly supported the establishment of the Centre.

Opening Speech by the Minister for Higher Education, Science & Technology, 28.08.2009



Hon Dr Sally Kosgei, Minister for Higher Education, Science & Technology

This initiative is indeed long overdue and most worthwhile. It is gratifying to note that the proposed Centre with its emphasis on African women will be among the first of its kind, not only in Africa but world over. I note that the vision of the proposed Centre is to be a Centre of excellence, committed to promoting the experiences and worldview of African women in scholarship, policy and institutional development. As the Minister of Higher Education, I sincerely hope

that the initiative will strive towards influencing educational policy because this would naturally impact on every other area in the society of Kenya. One such impact may be, hopefully, to influence policy with regard to my Ministry's efforts to improve and highlight women's contribution in positions of decision making. The establishment of the Centre may also have far-reaching implications beyond our borders. Hopefully, the initiative will impact significantly on women in the African continent and in the Diaspora.

b) Involvement in Climate Change Initiatives

The Centre has been involved in issues and debates on global climate change. In 2010/2011 academic year, the Centre hosted Dr Pius Kamau, President of the Africa America Higher Education Partnerships (AAHEP), Denver, USA and Prof Gillian Bowser of Colorado University. Climate change was one of the focal issues underlined for future collaboration.

c) Africa America Higher Education Partnership (AAHEP) Programme



Florence Muindi Mbithi, AAHEP's programme first beneficiary

The Centre has already established a linkage programme with (AAHEP). The programme helps promote scholarship of Women Scientists from Africa or of African descent with the aim of bringing women's perspectives and experiences into global and regional policy formulation and influence. The programme is a partnership with other higher education institutions in the sub-Saharan Africa with AWSC being the coordination point. The programme has seen Florence Muindi Mbithi, a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Nairobi, receive a scholarship at the University of Denver in Colorado for the Fall Quarter 2011 for her MSc. in Mechatronics Systems Engineering degree program. After acquiring the MSc. degree in Mechatronics Systems Engineering, she plans to start working on a PhD degree soon afterwards and later work in academia, in the public or private sectors and as a consultant in policy making specializing in technology development and economic decision analysis.

d) Abo Akademi University Exchange Programme



Albina Wambui

The Centre also received sponsorship for an exchange programme student for one of its pioneer PhD students at the Abo Akademi University in Finland in 2010/2011. While there, the student pursued coursework on methodological issues of her PhD thesis on peace studies and conflict resolution

Albina Wambui got an opportunity for a three month exchange programme in Finland at Åbo Akademi University. After her exchange programme and in collaboration with Dr. Emezat Mengesa of Addis Ababa University and with

Jane Wambui, a colleague, she got an opportunity to teach a course during the September 2012 semester at Åbo Akademi on gender and conflict. Later in the month of October 2012, she also got an opportunity to teach the same intensive course at Addis Ababa.

Albina has so far succeeded in getting registered as a PhD student at Åbo Akademi. The exposure has so far brought about discourses that will enrich her research.



Veronica Waeni Nzioki

Veronica Waeni from the AWSC Secretariat went to Åbo Akademi University for the autumn 2012 North-South-South exchange programme at the Department of Social Sciences, Women Studies, during the last quarter of 2012. During her time at the Women Studies, she took up courses on: Nordic Perspectives on Gender, Equality and Welfare; Conflict and Gender; Contemporary Perspectives on Gender and Sexualities in South African Contexts; Finnish as a Foreign Language Level 1; and Thesis

Seminars. The programme was funded by the Finnish Centre of International Mobility (CIMO).

This gave her an understanding of the welfare state as well as Nordic feminism, specifically key features of the Nordic welfare state and its historical, political, and ideological foundations in relation to gender; work, health, political power, etc; skills in the analysis of the interconnections between gender, conflict and peace building in contemporary interstate conflicts; basic knowledge of the Finnish language which was helpful to her everyday social life within Finland.



Wanjiku Gathoni Gacheche

Wanjiku Gacheche attended an intensive course in Addis Ababa University coordinated by the North-South-South Programme. The courses which ran from 29th October to 7th November 2012 were in Gender, Nationalism and the Body. The courses saw the convergence of very eager to learn Gender studies students from the University of

Nairobi, Makerere University, the University of Western Cape and the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, Abo Akademi University and the University of Lapland, both from Finland and the hosts - Addis Ababa University.

Wanjiku Gacheche reports:

'Among the topics covered were: Memory work which has been developed by feminist researchers in order to try to overcome the distance between the researcher (subject) and the researched (object); Constructionist approaches to Gender and Sexuality; Nationalism, gender and embodiment; Policy, agency and resistance. To cover these topics we had to read journals, articles and sections of books from renowned feminist authors, such as Childhood in the second sex by Simone Beauvoir, Feminism and the subversion of identity by Judith Butler, European Journal of Women's Studies by Yuval Davis, Under Western eyes, feminist Review by Mohanty and many other eye opening articles.

Apart from the rigorous study sessions, I was able to get time to visit the beautiful city of Addis with the guidance of the pleasant local students and I got the opportunity to go to the museum in Entotto, a historical town in Ethiopia, the famous Piassa town that is the hub of all things silver and gold and the highlight of it all was the 'last supper' as a team in Yod Abyssinia which is a traditional Ethiopian restaurant that has received great International recognition."

e) Fulbright Scholar from the University of Virginia Women's Center

The AWSC hosted a Fulbright scholar, Prof Sharon Lynn Davie in August 2010, courtesy of the U.S Embassy. During her visit, the Centre held seminars on 10th, 12th and 18th of the same month at the University of Nairobi. The major objective of the seminar was to share and articulate issues related to development of a curriculum for the proposed PhD Studies Programme. The main facilitator was the Fulbright visiting scholar with the purpose of producing a curriculum for three taught courses to be undertaken by all PhD candidates after registration before going out for field work which is:

- ❖ Review of historical development of women and gender studies;
- ❖ Feminism and feminist theories;

- ❖ Theoretical and methodological issues guiding feminist research.

f) Institute for International Trade, University of Adelaide Association

The Centre has established collaboration with the Institute for International Trade, University of Adelaide on trade and gender training programmes. The AWSC will be working on the design, organisation and implementation of trade and gender aware training perspectives in trade, policies and programmes.

g) IGAD Women and Peace Conference

IGAD supported an AWSC representative to the Women and Peace Conference held in Addis Ababa. The draft IGAD Regional Action Plan (RAP) to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 1325(2000) and 1820(2008) between 2011 and 2015 was one of the core outcomes of the IGAD Women and Peace Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between 26 and 29 April 2011. The membership of the Conference was drawn from among women parliamentarians from the member states, representatives of women/gender ministries, civil society organizations, the academia, and representatives from partnering Regional Economic Communities and international organizations, including the African Union [AU], United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], United Nations Development Program [UNDP] and UN Women.



Far right: Eng. Dr Siphila W. Mumenya (AWSC) at the IGAD conference in April 2011

The main objectives of the conference were to assess the achievements and challenges in peace building and security initiatives; review the status of ratification and domestication of relevant regional and international instruments by IGAD Member States; articulate regional approach; implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 and draw action plans for 2011 to 2015; popularize objectives of the Africa UNiTE Campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls as well as the African Women's Decade and launch for implementation by member states; and create an IGAD Women and Peace Forum to coordinate activities. The other outcomes of this Conference were the launch of the Africa UNiTE Campaign on Violence against Women, launch of the African Women's Decade, and the launch of UNWomen. The IGAD RAP is intended, when fully endorsed through the appropriate IGAD structures, to be a tool for member states to benchmark their own responses and National Action Plans [NAPs] to the core issues on which 1325 and 1820 are founded. This is with respect to the important issue of women's participation and inclusion in decision-making processes as regards conflict prevention, resolution, and management, as well as the prevention of sexual violence against women and girls during situations of armed conflict.

h) Involvement in Arid and Semi-Arid Programmes

Plans are underway to work out the modalities of collaboration between the African Women Studies Centre and the Centre for Sustainable Drylands Ecosystems & Societies (CSDDES) at the University of Nairobi Kabete Campus. The AWSC has since nominated Prof Octavian Gakuru as a representative to the CSDDES Management Committee.

i) African Women Studies Centre - Heinrich Böll Stiftung Gender Forum and Open Day

The AWSC, in partnership with the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, held a gender forum and open day in October 2011 which was officially opened by Prof Jacob Kaimenyi, DVC AA. The event was a reflection of the 10 year gains and interventions that have been made in the struggle for gender equality which further highlighted the need for interventions to be driven by research to allow informed planning as well as to provide contextual and feasible solutions. The main theme of the event was *Celebrating a Decade's Achievements towards Gender Equality: Reflecting on Strategies to Maximise Gains*.

The organizers of the event dedicated the auspicious occasion to a friend and a comrade, the late Nobel Laureate Prof Wangari Maathai whose vision and legacy for equality, democracy and sustainability resound in our hearts and minds. Her work was later exhibited at the open day.

The Open Day aimed at cultivating productive relationships between academia and interveners in the gender sector. For this particular event, a colleague from the Department of Literature composed the poem *The Mugumo Tree*.

THE MUGUMO TREE

(By Kimingichi Wabende)

In future, when our children awake,
Step out in a bright morning,
Smell the freshness of nature's fragrance,
See the blooming and the blossoming flowers,
Touch the dew droplets on green leaves,
Feel the sensation of young sunrays,
They will see the good in God's creations
And in fullness of their voices proclaim
"Today is a Wangari morning!"



The late Prof. Wangari Maathai

For such is the freshness, you bequeath the world
Wangari, You of the leopard,
As a leopard,
You didn't need to proclaim your leopardness,
All those who saw you noticed your gracefulness,
Those who tried to soil you could not rub off your spots

The world noticed you were noble
It was your country you wanted to enable
So they decorated you, the first African woman peace Nobel
As a leopard is to nobility, so is Wangari to Nobel
You the Mugumo, the community trunk,
From you a tribe will spring, whose identity is the colour green,
Rivulets will flow like springs into a mighty stream
You sparked it all with a female scream
Marking the beginning of our dream
And so trees will be planted in your name
Watering them will be the name of the game
Your name will be written in halls of fame
For the monument that you built
Will be protected by the green commandos
And all your followers will come before it
The Wangari shrine, the Mugumo tree

Acknowledging our partners

The African Women's Studies Centre is most grateful to various donor organizations which have generously supported its programmes.

The **Ford Foundation** was instrumental in availing seed money to kick start the process. The then Director, Dr Willy Mutunga (currently, Kenya's Chief Justice) gave tremendous support and encouragement, leading to the conceptualization of the initial image of the Centre.

The Centre is grateful to the **Australian High Commission** in Nairobi for supporting programmes on health and agriculture. As will be seen later, the funding enabled the Centre to support the efforts of grassroots women, thus enhancing linkage with the community.

Appreciation goes to **Amkeni Wakenya** and **SUNY–Kenya** for supporting

programmes geared towards interrogating the Kenya Constitution in relation to how it can benefit women and communities. Worthy of note was the programme on food security which the two organizations supported.

We are happy to receive an allocation of Kshs 81 million by **Parliament in the 2012/13 national budget** to complement and support the implementation of the **National Food Security & Nutrition Policy** developed by the Ministry of Agriculture. This support will be instrumental in the implementation of Article 43 (1)(c) in ensuring food security to all Kenyans by addressing gender perspectives in food security, programme implementation and documenting women's experiences; promoting people's participation on food security issues; monitoring & reviewing of institutional mechanisms at the county level; monitoring the implementation of schedule 4 of the Constitution; lobbying with parliamentarians for resource allocation to ensure zero tolerance to hunger.

The AWSC is grateful to the University of Nairobi for supporting and co-sponsoring its programmes.

The following scholars are acknowledged for being at the centre of activities, donating their time, energy and ideas so that the African Women Studies Centre can find its feet and start its journey. We are a people who have short memories and we do not want to forget their efforts and devotion:

1. Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira
2. Prof Enos Njeru
3. Prof Milcah Amolo Achola
4. Prof Ciarunji Chesaina
5. Prof Octavian Gakuru
6. Mrs Anna Petkova Mwangi
7. Dr Alina Rinkanya
8. Prof Henry Indangasi
9. Dr Margaret Jesang Hutchinson
10. Prof Peter K'obonyo
11. Prof Lucy Mwang'ombe
12. Prof Edward Mburugu
13. Dr Grace Omoni
14. Mr Gerrishon Ikiara
15. Prof Lydia Njenga
16. Dr Rayya Timmamy
17. Dr Siphila Mumanya
18. Dr Daniel Ichang'i
19. Dr Mary Kimani
20. Dr Jane Mariara
21. Dr Peninah Ogada
22. Dr Margaret Kirimi
23. Prof Eunice Mutitu
24. Prof Winnie Mitullah
25. Prof Judith Bahemuka
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