



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**AFRICAN WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2011-2012**

**Contact information:**

**African Women's Studies Centre**  
**University of Nairobi**  
**P.O Box 30197- 00100**  
**Tel: +254 20 318262/28075; 725 740 025**  
**Email: [awsckeny@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:awsckeny@uonbi.ac.ke)**  
**Website: <http://awsc.uonbi.ac.ke>**  
**Nairobi, Kenya**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>OUR VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE: 2011-2012.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.0 ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION DIVISION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Postgraduate Studies .....	2
1.2 Short Courses, Training and Public Fora.....	2
1.3 Publications .....	5
1.4 Dialogue with Academics .....	5
1.4.1 Conference on Pathways to Feminism and Development in Africa.....	5
1.4.2 Speaking from the Heart of my Mind: The Story of our Journey – Prof. Micere Mugo’s Book launch.....	7
1.4.3 Colloquium and Public Lecture.....	7
<b>2.0 POLICY ADVOCACY DIVISION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Focus on Implementation of Article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya .....	9
2.1.1 Promoting and Advocating for the Implementation of Article 43 (1 )(c) of the Kenyan Constitution (2010) on Food Security.....	10
2.1.2 Focus on the Implementation of Article 43 (1) of the Constitution .....	13
2.1.3 Influencing Policies & Programmes in Vision 2030 and Documenting Women’s Experiences .....	14
2.2 Lobbying and advocating with policy makers .....	15
2.2.1 Lobbying with Parliamentary Oversight Committees and the Parliamentary Research Department .....	15
2.2.2 Lobbying with Relevant Government Ministries .....	15
2.2.3 Training in Policy and Advocacy .....	16
<b>3.0 OUTREACH, LINKAGES AND MENTORING DIVISION.....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Involvement in Climate Change Initiatives.....	17

3.2 Africa America Higher Education Partnership (AAHEP) Programme ..... 17

3.3 Abo Akademi University Exchange Programme (Finland)..... 17

3.4 Institute for International Trade, University of Adelaide Association ..... 19

3.5 IGAD Women and Peace Conference ..... 19

3.6 Involvement in Arid and Semi-Arid Programmes..... 21

3.7 African Women’s Studies Centre-Heinrich Böll Stiftung Gender Forum & Open Day21

## FOREWORD



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

The African Women's Studies Centre recognizes 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.

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's Studies Centre**

## **OUR VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES**

### **Vision**

A centre of excellence committed to incorporating African women's experiences and worldviews in scholarship, policy, institutional and community development.

### **Mission**

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

### **Core Values**

- Academic excellence;
- Freedom of thought and expression;
- Creativity and innovativeness;
- Quality customer service;
- Teamwork and equity;
- Respect for and conservation of the environment;
- Good corporate governance;
- Corporate citizenship and social responsibility;
- Professionalism in all actions and interactions;
- Commitment to African women's perspectives and knowledge;
- Respect for Human Rights;
- Sensitivity to gender and diversity.

## **PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE: 2011-2012**

### **1.0 ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION DIVISION**

#### **1.1 Postgraduate Studies**

The African Women's Studies Centre offers eligible applicants a course leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in African Women's Studies. The programme enables doctoral students to contribute to knowledge to the area of African Women's 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's 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 various disciplines. The AWSC has attracted a number of PhD candidates who are currently carrying out their research.

During the year 2011-2012, the following 3 PhD candidates presented their project proposals to the Centre;

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
<b>1.</b>	Sabiri Caroline	The Impact of Policy on Women's Status- A case Study of the Kenyan and Lesotho Socio-Economic Policies
<b>2.</b>	Barbara Agonga	A Study of the Determinants of Peri-Natal Mortality in Kisumu District Kenya
<b>3.</b>	Paschalia Kavuli Mbutu	Factors Influencing Women in Accessing Credit Finance: A Case Study of Kitui Town

#### **1.2 Short Courses, Training and Public Fora**

The Centre offers Short Courses and Training that focuses 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.

In 2011 the Centre offered the following Short Courses;

	TITLE	DATES	No. of Participants
1.	Women, Power & Decision-Making	February:27 <sup>th</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> March	9
2.	Writing Stories Based on Personal Life Experiences	March: 19 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup>	30
3.	African Women, Economic Policies and Gender-Aware Budgeting	March: 19 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup>	6

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



*Group photo of the facilitators & participants at the training*

The second Short Course was on, ***African Women, Economic Policies and Gender-Aware Budgeting***. The course took place from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2012 and was facilitated by Mr. Francis Kimani and Dr. Margaret Kirimi.

The third short course that was offered was on; ***Writing Stories Based on Personal Life Experiences***. The objectives of the course were 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 were to be edited and published. The course was held from 19th to 23rd March 2012, in collaboration with the Department of Literature. 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. Don DeLillo (American novelist born in New York in 1926) noted 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 course 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, acquire a personal style and mechanics of writing which are very essential elements in writing. They also repeatedly emphasized that personal stories were not for settling scores with those close to people, but rather the stories aid in letting go of that which holds someone 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 of the short stories is underway.



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

### 1.3 Publications

The Centre plans to publish a 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.

### 1.4 Dialogue with Academics

#### 1.4.1 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 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 in time; when the African Women's 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 also 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's Studies Centre (AWSC) representatives drawn from 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 get heard. This has been because of culture that has portrayed women as inadequate beings, the existence of male brokers whom women have to negotiate with for power, illiteracy, diversity among women which has fractured the 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 were 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's movements should be strengthened despite the diversities of women and strong linkages should be built with the women at the grassroots level.

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 laws 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 Chief Editor of the African Women's Studies Centre Journal.

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

#### ***1.4.2 Speaking from the Heart of my Mind: The Story of our Journey – Prof. Micere Mugo's Book launch***

On April 17, 2012, Prof. Micere Githae Mugo launched her book *Speaking from the Heart of*



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

*My Mind* at the University of Nairobi. The event was jointly organized by the Department of Literature and the African Women's Studies Centre. It attracted a huge audience of students, lecturers, writers, civil society organizations' representatives, 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.

#### ***1.4.3 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, DVC RP&E*

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 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a University Professor at Columbia University*

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 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.

## **2.0 POLICY ADVOCACY DIVISION**

### **2.1 Focus on Implementation of Article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya**

The African Women’s 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 focused on Article 43 of the Constitution which pertains to Social Economic Rights. The AWSC recognizes 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 realization of Article 43 include: Land, Environment and Natural Resources as well as Gender and Social Development where welfare programmes fall under.

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

### ***2.1.1 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 Kenya 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's Studies Centre (AWSC) has therefore, chosen to focus on working with the Parliament.

The African Women's Studies Centre has focused on the food security agenda because of the realization 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 recognizes 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*

*Dr. Margaret Jesang Hutchinson* initially carried out a research on the agricultural sector. She found that only about two thirds of Kenya's 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 nutritionally adequate diets, limited resource allocation and low

capacity to support the implementation of comprehensive nutrition programmes.



*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* 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



*Dr Daniel Ichang'i*

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 Kiriti Ng'ang'a*

*Prof. Tabitha W. Kiriti – Ng'ang'a* carried out a study interrogating article 43 (1)(c) which states that every Kenyan has a right to be free from hunger and to have adequate food of acceptable quality. Prof. Kiriti Ng'ang'a was acting on the Centre's recognition that 48% of Kenyans live below the 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).

### ***2.1.2 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 organizations and groups as well as ordinary Kenyans as they presented their views to the Ghai Commission on Constitutional reforms. Their collective efforts 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.

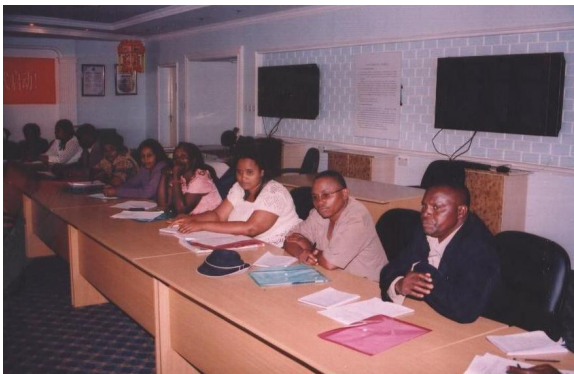
Based on the World Bank definition, the majority of Kenyans constitute men and women whose income levels cannot meet their basic needs. They lack social security, access to safe drinking water, adequate quality food, housing, quality health care and education.

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 (UNDP).

### ***2.1.3 Influencing Policies & Programmes in Vision 2030 and Documenting Women's Experiences***



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

This Project focuses on auditing identified flagship projects in the Vision 2030 and MTP 2008 – 2012 on how they are impacting the lives of Kenyan people, especially women, specifically on 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 analyzed policies in the agricultural sector and has come up with recommendations.

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.

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.

One of the major recommendations made by the farmers from Mwea was to review 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.

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

## **2.2 Lobbying and advocating with policy makers**

### ***2.2.1 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.

### ***2.2.2 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.

### ***2.2.3 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 organizations, government institutions etc. 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.

### **3.0 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.

#### **3.1 Involvement in Climate Change Initiatives**

The Centre has been involved in issues and debates on global climate change. In the 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.

#### **3.2 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.

#### **3.3 Abo Akademi University Exchange Programme (Finland)**

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*

*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 University, Ethiopia.

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 Nzioki* 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 for 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 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."*

**3.4 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.

**3.5 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.

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.



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

### **3.6 Involvement in Arid and Semi-Arid Programmes**

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

### **3.7 African Women's 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 Academic Affairs. The event was a reflection on 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!"  
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 Winner  
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