

WANGARI MAATHAI INSTITUTE PhD students Present their Proposals to the Faculty.

On 1st July 2013, the following three PhD students at Wangari Maathai Institute presented their PhD proposal.

Claude Benard Muthee Kamau

Legal Pluralism in the Management of Forests in Kenya – Opportunities and Challenges for Inclusive Governance: Case Study of Eastern Mau Forest Complex

In Kenya forest management is centred on the Forest Act 2005 (FA 2005) which is the principal legal instrument governing forest management. This forest management system, however, occurs in a setting of a multiplicity of legal frameworks that related to natural resource management. There is a lack of harmonization of these various legal frameworks and this plurality of legislations has created several centres of power, such as between CFAs and Water Resource Users Associations (WRUAs) and also as between Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). This plurality also gives rise to problems with the management of forest ecosystems and with the implementation of the FA 2005 amongst the various stakeholders and consequently deprives this country off a sustainable forest governance approach. This study shall make an analytical journey into these multiple legal frameworks and provide an analysis of the legal pluralism existent within the governance regime of forestry management in Kenya and expose the gaps and overlaps existent therein. It will then proceed to highlight opportunities and challenges for sustainable forest management and in the legislative framework of forestry management and more specifically, within the eastern Mau forest complex.

Raphael Mulaha Kweyu

Analysis of conflicts in utilization of forest resources in a multi-ethnic setting in Eastern Mau, Kenya.

Conflicts over natural resources are increasing in number and severity. This problem has been compounded with the increasing population and scarcities of natural resources in developing countries. Forest resource conflicts are disagreements and disputes over access to, control over and use of forest resources. These conflicts if not addressed effectively can undermine trust among the citizens and increase insecurity as well as forest degradation. The study aims at unmasking the sources of forest related conflicts with a view of contributing to their management thereby realizing peace and stability within Eastern Mau and beyond

Jane Mutune

Decentralized Forest Management Impacts on Livelihoods in Kenya: A Case Study on Eastern Mau Forest.

To enhance livelihoods and forest conservation, more than 30 African countries have adopted decentralized forest management. The Forest Act 2005, ratified by Government of Kenya, advocates for participatory forest management (PFM), a form of decentralization, thus a significant departure from command and control forest governance regime that alienated other stakeholders. There is an expectation that PFM can bring substantial benefits in terms of livelihood security and poverty reduction possibly by increasing producers' bargaining power and prices. However empirical information, particularly in Kenya, is lacking to support the livelihood outcomes of PFM. Rigorous impact evaluation methods such as propensity score matching will be used to associate livelihood outcomes to the policy intervention. The study is expected to make policy recommendations besides writing a thesis and at least three academic papers.

Jane, Bernard, Raphael are registered for Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Governance and Management at Wangari Maathai Institute. The three students competitively won study scholarship from the STAKE project. The STAKE project is an exciting new partnership between the Wangari Maathai Institute, the Green Belt Movement (GBM), Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI) and the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. It is expected to contribute to stability in Kenya by understanding and targeting the underlying factors that lead to conflicts over forest related resources. This 3-year project funded by the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA) will also contribute to Kenya's long-term development by mentoring and training the next generation of talented, young academics through provision of scholarships for Masters and PhD training.

The program will also provide research funds to 15 Masters Students. It is coordinated by Dr Thenya Thuita assisted by Prof Wahome on behalf of WMI and Prof. Vibeke Vindelov on behalf of University of Copenhagen. It will run for four (4) years.