



Editor's Note

Welcome to this edition of the 2012 newsletter of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. It provides you with an opportunity to sample some of the department's activities in 2012. The mission of the department is to provide dynamic leadership in the teaching, research, consultancy and outreach services in geography and environmental studies for the benefit of humanity and sustainable development

Graduate Student Received Canadian Research Grant

Stephen Otieno, postgraduate student at the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies was among the recipients of the 2012 Africa Initiative Graduate Research Grant (AIGRG) offered by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), Canada. The grant supports Africa and Canada-based graduate students undertaking policy-related research on Africa. It builds capacity by providing grantees with an opportunity to conduct new and innovative research and publish work in their field of expertise, and in alignment with the Africa Initiative's critical issue areas.



Stephen Otieno with Prof. Bruce Frayne at the University of Waterloo, Canada

His research, being supervised by Prof. George Krhoda and Dr. Sam Owuor, examines water governance challenges in informal settlements, and is an outgrowth of his involvement with an IDRC/DFID-funded project on strengthening the role of civil society in water governance and climate change adaptation in African cities. Stephen was accepted as a visiting scholar at York University in Toronto for a period of 6 months. During his visit, he was able to interact with practitioners and other researchers in water governance from York University, University of Waterloo, University of Guelph, University of Toronto, Toronto Regional Conservation Authority and the Toronto City Council. He also participated in course tutorials, research projects, seminars and conferences as a member of York's Faculty of Environmental Studies.

2012 International Student Conference on Environment and Sustainability

Students from the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies participated in the 2012 International Student Conference on Environment and Sustainability held in Tongji University, Shanghai, from June 5-8, 2012. About 400 students from 42 countries gathered to discuss contemporary issues, innovative technologies and creative ideas on environment and sustainable development.



Admola Sime of the department (in white blouse) with other conference participants

The main topics that featured include: water and ecosystems; green economy and youth employment opportunities; green economy and design driven innovation; future green cities and multi-model mobility; and urban and rural integrated development. According to Admola Sime, “the subway and tunnel-channel transport system in China has made travelling hustle free and very cheap. This is indeed many countries’ dream come true”. The conference was also attended by the Vice-Chancellor (UoN) and Prof. Mungai of the Department.

2012 World Environment Day Celebrations

The University of Nairobi Geography Students Society (UNGSS) participated in the world environmental day, 2012 in Lafarge ecosystem, Bamburi, Mombasa, Kenya. Led by their chairman, Simon Andika, the students participated in several environmental activities, including lectures and clean-ups.

Exchange Programme to University of Jyvaskyla, Finland

In the first quarter of 2012, two postgraduate students from the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies (Manas Muhongo and Miriam Ogunyo) benefited from a one-semester exchange programme to the University of Jyvaskyla, Finland. The North-South-South exchange program is a beautiful experience for any student. The programme, initiated by Dr. Sam Owuor, also involves students from Jyvaskyla coming to UoN for one semester.



Manas Muhongo and Miriam Ogunyo (2nd & 3rd left) with other exchange students in Jyvaskyla

According to Manas and Miriam “the one semester away provided us with the rare opportunity to sample a different education system, a different culture and a different climate which allowed us to grow in many ways. The University of Jyvaskyla has a diverse population of international students not only from Europe but also from the rest of the world. The exchange program was an eye opening experience that would be beneficial to any student”.

New Appointments & Promotions

The following members of staff were promoted in 2012

1. Dr. Alice Odingo (Promoted to Senior Lecturer)
2. Dr. Stella Mukhovi (Promoted to Senior Lecturer)

Another Exchange Programme to University of Jyväskylä, Finland

In the last quarter of 2012, four undergraduate students from the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies (Simon Andika, Kellen Mwirigi, Irene Otieno and Philip Mwaura) benefited from a one-semester exchange programme to the University of Jyväskylä, Finland.



(Foreground L-R): Simon, Irene, Philip & Kellen in a winter mood

According to the students “this opportunity has been a major success towards our studies and experiences. It will indeed shape our future thinking and career. We enjoyed the forests and lakes, natural beauty and landscape, best education system in the world, sauna, many friends from other parts of the globe, Finnish culture, riding bicycles, environmental consciousness and of course the winter. What a great and worthwhile experience and Kiitos!”

Memorandum of Understanding

The department initiated the following MoUs in 2012:

- MoU between Shah Ranmal Raja Charitable Trust, Kenya and the University of Nairobi for twelve (12) annual scholarships to needy and bright students in geography and environmental studies
- MoU between Mitsubishi Corporation, Japan and the University of Nairobi for nine (9) annual scholarships to needy and bright students in geography and environmental studies

2012 Graduated Postgraduate Students

NAME	DEGREE AWARDED	THESIS/PROJECT TOPIC
1. Onga'nyi Paul Obino	PhD Population Geography	Spatio-temporal variations in orphanhood: Analysis of the effects of AIDS and traditional versus modern institutional coping mechanism in Kisumu District, Kenya
2. Chepkania Levi Situma	MA Geomorphology	Assessment of soil erosion factors in parts of Bungoma and Mt. Elgon Districts drained by River Kibisi in Kenya
3. Uduogu Austin Okenzie	MA Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management	Impact of crop irrigation on rangeland soil biodiversity and insect pollinators at Isinya, Kenya
4. Ayuyo Isaac Ongonga	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Geospatial analysis of land cover and land use change in the Mau forest complex of Kenya
5. Igunza Alex Adagala	MA Environmental Planning and Management	The impact of green buildings in climate change mitigation: An investigative study on selected office buildings in Westlands, Nairobi County
6. Kamochu Winifred Wanjiku	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Integrating community participation in natural resource management: A case study of Ndigia self-help group
7. Kaa Caxton Gitonga	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Socio-economic factors affecting agro-forestry adoption in Ndabibi location, Naivasha, Kenya
8. Muchiri Nancy W.	MA Environmental Planning and Management	The impact of human activities on wetlands: A case study of Ondiri Wetland in Kiambu County, Kenya
9. Mugo Beatrice Jepkorir	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Factors affecting adoption of conservation agriculture among smallholder farmers in Ngata Division, Nakuru County
10. Muthui Thomas Wambugu	MA Environmental Planning and Management	An assessment of the level of awareness/knowledge and practice of environmental management in schools in Kenya: A case study of public secondary schools in Nairobi County
11. Mutune Terry Ndinda	MA Environmental Planning and Management	The effect of water interventions on the urban poor: An analysis of the Wandiege Community Water Supply Project in Kisumu
12. Mwangi Paul Kiiru	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Environmental impacts of government land settlement schemes in dry lands: The case of Lake Kenyatta Settlement Scheme, Lamu County, Kenya
13. Mwaniki Dennis	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Mapping pollution in the Mathare River: An analysis of waste disposal patterns and river pollution in an informal settlement
14. Ndungu Mary W.	MA Environmental Planning and Management	An evaluation of Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP): A case study of Mavoko Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme in Machakos County, Kenya
15. Nzomo Mulatya	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Factors influencing household use of improved sources of drinking water in Kenya
16. Ongoro Elizabeth	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Solid waste management challenges in developing countries: A case study of Nairobi city, Kenya, Eastern Africa
17. Sangori Robert Ogara	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Adoption of Hydraform Interlocking Stabilized Soil Blocks (ISSBs) building technology and its impacts on environment in Nakuru County
18. Theodore E.A. Oben	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Greening construction of mega sports venues and facilities: The case of the London 2012 Olympic games
19. Tirop Stephen Kipchirchir	MA Environmental Planning and Management	Evaluation of the suitability of soils for irrigation in lower Kuja, Nyatike District, Kenya