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**The University of Kabianga newsletter: Quarterly
publication from the office of the Vice-Chancellor**

University of Kabianga

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The University of Kabianga Newsletter

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University of Kabianga holds its first Virtual Graduation Ceremony.

Graduation Ceremony Pictorial, 24th March, 2021



Procession Ceremony led by student leaders headed to graduation square/ **Photo Emmanuel Rotich**



From left Amb. Simon Nabukwesi PS University Education, Center Mr. Mayaka Member of Council and to the right Prof Wilson Kipngeno UoK VC, -During UoK 8th Graduation Ceremony. / **Photo Emmanuel Rotich**



Some of the UoK Council Members during the 8th Graduation Ceremony / **Photo Emmanuel Rotich**



Amb. Simon Nabukwesi PS University Education, during his address at UoK 8th Graduation Ceremony / **Photo Emmanuel Rotich**



Prof. Wilson Kipngeno-VC, introduces members of staff to PS. Amb. Simon Nabukwesi/ **Photo Emmanuel Rotich**



University Education PS. Amb. Simon Nabukwesi, plants a tree during UoK 8th Graduation ceremony. **Photo Emmanuel Rotich**

Highlights

Joining University
during the Pandemic

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Season with
reasons

Kugeuza dira ya
toponimi ya Swahili

Editorial desk

The Editorial Board of the University of Kabianga Newsletter gladly welcomes you all to our first publication in 2021. We hope that the stories herein will enrich your experience of the university as a member of this community. The times have been hard, but as a whole, we have risen to the challenge and seen not just darkness, but light as well. This ideal will be exemplified in the letter and spirit of the articles in this edition.

At the inception of the new Editorial Board towards the end of the year, we made a pledge to publish quarterly. Unfortunately, owing to the Covid-19 disruptions that have now become the norm, and the subsequent cessation of studies in education institutions, we are about a month late. This has been occasioned by the reality that we were not able to gather enough stories and items by end of March, 2021.

This issue contains, among other stories, the University's successfully held virtual graduation which happened and adhered to stringent Covid-19 containment measures, stories on how students and staff converted the Covid-19 challenges into opportunities and other key events in the university in the recent days. As in the previous issue, we continue to act in the spirit of linguistic diversity by affording our newsletter a multilingual character. As such, we have an article in Kiswahili, and soon, will begin to have items written in other languages spoken and taught in the University.

The newsletter continues to offer space for new in sports and other co-curricular activities, and creative corner where students and members of staff can

submit their short pieces of art and talent. Besides, major events in the university shall be covered in the publications as and when they happen.

It is in light of the above that the Board invites monthly submissions of opinion articles, commentaries, news articles, events updates and short works of artist. The editorial board pledges to be hands-on not only ensuring that our voices are heard, but that they are heard in a manner that proves quality. Submissions from members of staff and students can be submitted to our new email uoknewsletter@kabianga.ac.ke. Thank you and good reading



Dr. Wesonga Robert
Editor-in-Chief/Chair Editorial Board

Joining University during the Pandemic

Once upon a time, in the year 1918 to be exact, there was a pandemic: The Spanish Flu, caused by the H1N1 Influenza Virus. It is also known as 1918 Influenza Pandemic. It was as deadly as any other pandemic in human history. At that time, some said that the gods were annoyed with humankind. The pandemic lasted from February 1918 to April 1920 in four successive waves that infected over 500 million people, which was approximated to be a third of the world's population at that time. One hundred years later, another deadly pandemic (COVID-19) has pushed mankind between the rock and a hard place. As of February 2021, more than 113 million positive cases worldwide were recorded and over 2.5 million deaths registered.

In my lovely country, the news of the arrival of the pandemic in February 2020 was scary. There was panic even in my village - the panic was beyond measure. Quickly the Ministry of Health had to put in place the protocols to be adhered to during pandemic: hand washing, sanitizing, wearing face masks and keeping social distance formed an important part of the new norm. The common rule was 'If you treat this pandemic normally, it will treat you abnormally' as the Minister of Health, Mutahi Kagwe, would severally intone. Schools were closed, churches were no longer a place to go and worship, walking on the deserted streets was frightening and the curfew was a first reality since I was born.

Those who had financial means did their shopping in large quantities until the shelves in the supermarkets were empty. On the contrary, those who were faced by the challenge of economic meltdown hoped for the best. Least valuable commodities attained anomalous demand in the shops. Hospitals were no longer full and matatu passenger capacity reduced by half. At that moment, everybody would have accepted to go to heaven alive but nobody was willing to imagine and accept death as a path to heaven.

All this was one big worry for me as a girl child who had just finished my KCSE exams and longing to pursue my Bachelor's Degree in Education Science at the University of Kabianga. The journey towards admission date was the longest ever. The sun rose slowly and its legs never shone like a diamond for it was aware that the planet earth was ailing. Sunset was expected without excitement, for the nights were longest. Despite all this, my prayer was to receive my admission

letter and this happened.

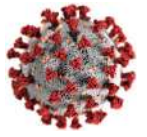
My admission and orientation was online and never had I thought that at one time in life I would have to be part and parcel of online activities as a first year student. The world became a small village due to online activities. The University of Kabianga made all efforts to create student portals and provided necessary training that made e-learning a reality. There was double confusion: confusion for being a first year and confusion due to the new normal but the university managed to freeze all this and restored confidence in us. The learning experience was serious growth not just to me and my fellow fresher's, but even to the continuing students and lecturers at University of Kabianga. When time for phased reopening was announced, I was happy since the moment to meet my classmates and lecturers was no longer a mirage. We finally reported to our University of Kabianga, whereupon the reception was excellent and every effort was made to ensure we adhere to the COVID -19 protocols. Teaching and learning was blended, that is; face to face learning in small groups and online sessions. Meeting our lecturers who were determined to disseminate knowledge was the best experience. The pandemic did not inhibit us from doing our assignments, continuous assessment tests and exams. My parting shot is that: we shall overcome all the impeding factors to our dreams by continuously making right the decisions.



Cynthia Cheres Cherotich
First Year B.Ed (Arts), Physics/Chemistry



University of Kabianga Cares



PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY FROM **CORONAVIRUS**



Dont shake hands



Avoid close contact with anyone



Cover your mouth and **nose** with tissue or cough and sneeze into your flexed elbow



Stay Home and **avoid unnecessary travels**



Wash your hands frequently with soap and running water

FOR MORE INFORMATION FOLLOW MINISTRY OF HEALTH GUIDELINES

UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA | INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

Women and Girls in Science

Director of Gender and Development

The vision of the Directorate of Gender and Development is to enable University of Kabianga become a gender balanced community with equal opportunity to all based on ability and merit. In an effort to create awareness, the directorate organised a workshop to celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. The theme of the celebration was “Equality in Science for Society: the Value of Social Cultural Dimension in Science, Technology and Innovation to enhance Sustainable Development Programme



Led by Director, Gender and Dr. Leticia Ochola, Head of Biological Sciences Department, one of the Guest Speakers speaking on her career path, During the Workshop/Photo Courtesy

As part of the day's celebration, the DVC (A&SA) emphasised the importance of Science and gender equality in the achievement of both the internationally agreed development goals, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He reiterated the need to harness science's full potential, by empowering all members of the society to identify problems and create innovative solutions.

In order to achieve full and equal access to and participation in science

by women and girls, and consequently achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, various speakers stressed the need for awareness creation, celebrating women's excellence in science, and reminding the community that science and gender equality have to advance hand-in-hand to address major global challenges and achieve all the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

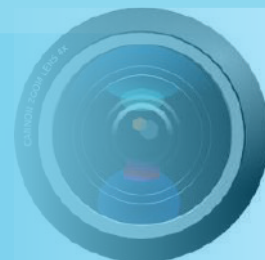
Women scientists from various schools embraced this clarion call with a special focus on career paths in Science. There were testimonies from Female Scientists – both teaching and non-teaching staff, in which they related their journeys as scientists. It was observed that the under-representation of women in STEM translates to the loss of a critical mass of talent, thoughts and ideas, which hinders countries from reaching their maximum development potential.

This workshop called on everyone to spearhead growth of women and girls in Science and embrace gender equality in Science for society.



Dr. Wangila Phanice
Gender Director

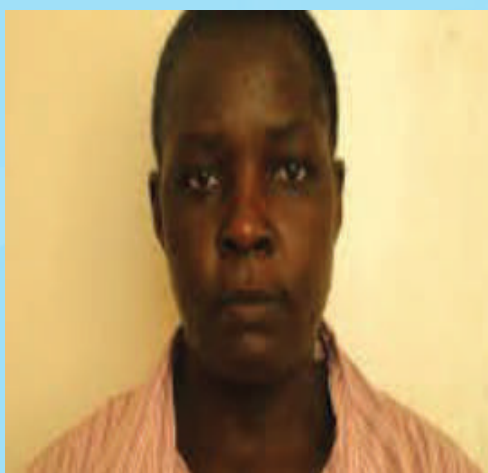
Editorial board Pictorial



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Tindibale Edward
School of Science and Technology

Season with Reasons: a Don's Recollection

The season was here with a reason and nobody once ever knew that the new normal due to the pandemic (COVID-19)

could mature to

adulthood. As a university don, this was not just any season but an eye opener on my instructional approach. For a long time, the song was teaching by lecture method, using whiteboards, projectors and giving assignments. A time came when it was imperative to roll up my sleeves and subscribe to online instruction through such internet-based tools such as Zoom, Google Classroom, and Google Meet.

The office in charge of academics together with other stakeholders worked hard to make ends meet in the tough season. The season was not the end of the road instead it was the commencement of tapping into our hidden potential with a reason. Just before the pandemic, dons and all students gathered at University of Kabianga for academic reasons. There was laughter, hugs and a wonderful learning experience. But no sooner had the ministry of health made its first announcement regarding the status of the pandemic than the tone and tune of everything in the university changed. Panic was all over, fear was written on everyone's face and wallowing in the mayhem of confusion was a school of thought nobody wanted to subscribe to. Little did I know that it was the end of the normal season and the start of the new normal.

For the longest time, I viewed online learning and teaching as limiting my quality of

classroom instruction. But I had a choice to make, a choice that could stand the test of time no matter how turbulent the times were. I had to embrace my potential and leveraged my creativity to create promising outcomes that made e-learning a reality at University of Kabianga. The new season had its own setbacks with respect to online classes. For example, there was low attendance by students due to network related matters, acquisition of internet bundles challenge – especially for students, power challenges. Besides, some did not even have smart phones to enable them access online activities. However, our students never gave up, they worked as a team through social media groups and were able to share the e-content and respond to assignments.

The ICT department made each effort to ensure dons and students had their portals functioning. The e-content reviewers worked day and night, they crossed every 't' and dotted every 'i' in the e-content during the review process and standard content was uploaded for instruction. When time for gradual re-opening was at hand, the students were happy to be back to campus. The COVID-19 protocols were the order of the day in every instruction given. Blended learning and teaching was practiced and as a family of University of Kabianga, we managed to adhere to the basic regulations. As an institution, the best was done within our means irrespective of the teething issues that were encountered, with the realization that addressing them is a continuous process. Nobody knew of this season and therefore, we have enough reasons to appreciate ourselves for the effort we have made to be where we are today.

By Tindibale Edward

Kugeuza djira ya toponimi ya 'Swahili'

Kati ya sahil (ya Ki-Arabu), swahili (ya KiSwahili Sanifu), suaheli (Krapf, 1840), sawahili (Khalid, 1977; Hijazy & Mzenga, 1977), siwahili (Attas, 2018), na ziwahili (ufafanuzi wa mitaani Mambasa) tushike ipi nriyo toponimi (majina ya mahali kionomastiki) ya mwafaka kuhusu mahali wathu wanaoishi katika upwa wa Mashariki ya Afrika kutoka Somalia hadi Msumbiji? Makala haya mafupi yatajaribu kugeuza djira ya maelezo kuhusu nyusuli za toponimi ya 'swahili' kutoka kulekezwa baharini hadi kulekezwa barani nrani.

Mengi ya yanayoelezwa kuhusu usuli wa WaSwahili, miji na lugha yao, ni kwamba wametokana na kwingiliyana kwao na Waarabu bali kuna wanaosema hii lugha ni utanzu mmoja wa lugha ya Ki-Arabu. Kazi nyingi za kiantropolojiya kuhusu WaSwahili zawaonesha kuwa wathu wanaojishughulisha zaidi na bahari ya Hindi, kwa uvuvi au biyashara (kwa mfano, Middleton (1992)). Hoja hii nriyo inayosababisha wataalamu wengi au pengine wote kusema kuwa 'swahili' ni neno la Ki-Arabu lenye maana ya 'pwaa ya bahari' na piya laweza kumaanisha wathu wanaoishi katika ufuwo huu wa Afrika Mashariki (Chiraghdin na Mnyampala, 1977).

Maoni ya Pawlowicz (2012) kwamba thwangelaye nrani ya Afrika badala ya kulekeya baharini kuwanasibisha WaSwahili yanatokana na utafiti wake Mikindani, Kusini mwa Tanzania ambao unashahadiya kuwa thimbo nyingi za huko zaonesha ni mji uliyotangamana

zaidi na bara kuliko pwani. Maoni haya yanatiliya nguvu kazi ya Nurse na Spear (1985) inayoshadhiya kuwa ushahidi wa vifaa na magaye yaliyotafitiwa katika miji ya pwani ya Afrika yakilinganishwa na data ya kilugha yanaonesha kuwa WaSwahili asili zao ni wathu wa Afrika nrani waliyohama hadi kufikiya mwambao wa pwani ya Afrika Mashariki.

Kulingana na kazi za Nurse na Spear (khj.) na Mapisi ya WaSwahili ya Marehemu Ahmad Nabhany (2011) zinaonesha kuwa WaSwahili ni wathu wanaozungumza Ki-Bantu wanaotokea katika kunri kubwa la wasemaji wajulikanao Niger-Congo ambalo asili yake ni Afrika Magharibi. Wazo hili la Niger-Congo na lile la Pawlowicz (khj.) la kwangelaye usuli wa WaSwahili nrani bara linatufanya tuchukwe msimamo mpya kuhusu toponimi ya 'swahili' kwamba inatokana na bara kuliko inavoaminika hivi sasa katika mawanda ya mapisi na anthropolojiya ya WaSwahili.

Mosi, katika makala ya Suleiman (2017) kwenye jirida la *The Conversation* anaeleza kwamba 'sahel' (piya hutamkwa 'sahil') ni eneo liko kusini mwa Jangwa la Sahara linalojumuisha nchi kwanziya Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, mpaka Eritrea. Anaongeza kuwa eneo hili la 'sahel' kiotamaduni na kihistoriya ni mwambao baina ya Mashariki ya Kati na nchi za kusini mwa Sahara. Pili, Jacques (1837), akinukuliwa katika wikipedia, anasema kuwa 'sahil' kwa maana ya 'ufuwo' ni kiotamathali wa lugha na katika Kamusi ya Al Mawrid (1995) kwa Ki-Arabu cha Kikale ina maana ya 'ardhi tambarare'

maelezo yanayoafiki ufafanuzi wa Schoff (1912) akinukuliwa na Hinnebusch (1996:92) kwamba hii miji ya Uswahilini ni 'nyangwa k'havu za pwani kusini mwa Mtikati'. Tutāona kuwa neno 'jangwa' haliyepukiki katika ufafanuzi wa neno 'swahili'. Haṭa 'nyangwa' kwa Ki-Swahili ina maana ya 'ardhi ṭambarare ilopakana na bahari'. Kwa hivo, kauli za Nurse na Spear na Nabhany kuhusu Niger-Congo ni sahihi kuwa WaBantu asili yao ni Afrika Magharibi na neno walilotumiya kujitambulisha nako ni 'swahili'.

Pengine mṭafiti aweza kuuliza neno lililosemwa ni 'sahel/sahil' na wala si 'swahili'. Haya yanapatikana katika lugha ya Ki-Swahili kwa kudonrosha au kwengeza sauti katika maneno, kwa mfano, katika neno hili pameengezwa /w/. Katika lahaja za Ki-Swahili /s/ na /sw/ huweza kupatikana katika neno na isibadilishe maana ya neno hilo. Kwa mfano, maneno /swi/ Ki-Vanga hutamkwa /isi/ katika lahaja za Kaskazini – Mambasa mpaka Kiunga – kwa maana ya 'samaki'. Piya wako Wamviṭa wanaosema /swiswi/ kurejeleya /sisi/ (us, Kiingereza) katika KiSwahili Sanifu. Haṭa maṭamshi ya sāhil ['sa:ḥil] 'ufuwo wa bahari' na sahl 'ardhi ṭambarare' inaṭafautiṭiyana; ya pili yafanana zaidi na 'swahili' ya KiSwahili Sanifu. Hivo basi, kwa kuita miji yao 'swahili' (au, kisisi, 'sahili') ni kushahadiṭya kwamba waṭoka bara katika nchi k'havu za jangwani.

Kwa ufupi, makala yetu yameonesha maṭamko ṭafautiṭi ya neno 'swahili' kurejeleya miji iliyopakana na upwa wa Afrika Mashariki. Tumerejeleya mawazo ya

waṭaalamu wa Anthropolojiya na Chimbo kuhusu unasibishaji wao wa neno hili na uṭamaduni wa WaSwahili kulekeya baharini, haswa ya Hindi. Walakini, kuṭokana na ushahidi wa Kimachimbo na magaye ya miji ya WaSwahili na ushahidi wa lugha ya Ki-Swahili na Ki-Bantu, kwa upana, tumeṭowa wazo jipya kuhusu neno hilo 'swahili'. Usuli wa toponimi yake yaonesha neno hilo lafaa liyelekezwe Afrika barani kuliko kulekezwa baharini kwa sababu usuli wa neno hilo ni 'sahili' inayomaanisha ardhi k'havu kusini mwa Sahara. Thwaamini kwa kutumiya ṭaaluma hii ya toponimi kwangaziya nyusuli za majina ya miji iliyomo katika eneo hili thwaweza kupata ushahidi zaidi kuhusu geuko la dṭira yetu kuṭoka baharini hadi barani.

Dkt. Mohamed Karama,
**Idara ya Isimu Lugha na
Mawasiliyano**



No Body; No Burial
A thought for the Covid-19 Victims

His two daughters wailed in the dark

Because that burial happened, but it did not
It didn't because there was no body
Here, bodies come in coffins
What we had was parcel -
A parcel wrapped in white canvas

It was not a burial
Here, burials happen in the day.
That happened in the dead of night
A night lit not by a star or the moon,
Nor the solar powered lamps of a night's vigil
Nor the trembling flames of amakenga fire,
It was lit by the tremulous light from mobile phones,
And the dim parking lights of the ambulance...

His two daughters wailed in the dark
As white figures did it all in the dark
The white figures moved about in the hazy images
They were hooded and goggled and gloved
- to shut away the virus.

His two daughters still wailed in the dark
As the hooded and goggled and gloved figures -
The white figures in the clothes of machine -
Dragged and yanked the heavy parcel
The parcel was wrapped in white canvas
The parcel folded and landed in the shallow pit - heavily
The parcel was supposed be their father;
And the shallow pit, his grave.

The two daughters still wailed, uncontrollably
As the nightly ambulance revved ominously
And picked up speed, then left the compound.

The hooded and goggled and gloved figures -
They sat in the cabin of the ambulance – they had no faces
If they had faces, they were covered by the Hazmat suits
And these Hazmat suits, they had faces of machine.

Dr. Wesonga Robert

EDITORIAL BOARD

Dr. Robert Wesonga(**Editor-in-Chief**), Ms. Anne Tenya(**Editor**), Ms. Jacqueline Kandagor (**Content Editor**), Mr. Nicholas Langat(**Secretary/Editor**) and Mr. Eliud Lilan(**Design & Layout**)

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The Editorial Board Welcomes brief comments, articles or news on topical issues.

send to uoknewsletter@kabianga.ac.ke