Student classes respond generously to famine donation appeal

By Eannes Ongus and Dan Muchai

In response to the Kenyan government’s declaration of the ongoing drought as a national disaster, USIU-Africa launched the #IamCompassionate campaign to raise support for 2.7 million Kenyans facing starvation. Several classes have since then responded by collecting cash, which will then be used to purchase dry foods. On Thursday, March 23, two of those classes invited the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza to personally receive their donations during their class sessions. Assistant Professor of Business Administration and Management Dr. Michael Kirubi’s Business Values & Ethics (BUS4070) class’ and Assistant Professor of Economics Dr. Timothy Okech’s International Economics and Trade (IBA 4020) class’ donations of KES 8400 and KES 14950 were handed over to the VC during the brief ceremony.

Speaking during the handover, Prof. Zeleza pointed out that the students’ and their lecturer’s remarkable generosity will be a beacon and a challenge to the entire university community to follow. Mr. James Ogolla (Director of Advancement) urged the students not to sit back, but to continue as ambassadors to other students, and to their own families on the dire situation afflicting millions around them.

Other classes has raised cash donations include the Dr. M. Ogola’s Business Communication (BUS2020) which raised KES 6160 and Dr. Kennedy Awuor’s Probability and Statistics (MTH 2010) which raised KES 5,750.

So far, the campaign which is scheduled to end on Saturday, April 8 has received a total of KES 144,750. The next event on the campaign is the Solidarity Run scheduled for Saturday, April 1, in which Professor of Management Prof. Peter Lewa will contribute KES1000 for every member of his Strategic Management Class (BUS6150A) class who beats him to the finish line of a 10 metre dash.

Other contributions are still welcome through the MPESA mobile money platform (Paybill No: 516900; Account name: #RunToSaveALife) or through a cash deposit at the Finance Office.
On Saturday, March 18, Mr. Stephen Mokaya (HR Business Partner, Marketing, Sales & Regional Recruitment Manager - Nestlé East Africa), was invited to speak to the Senior Experience (SENEX 4800) Class at the Chandaria School of Business Lecture Theater II. Mr. Mokaya - an alumnus (EMOD Class of 2011) - began his discussion by sharing his views on the class topic: millennials (persons joining the workforce from 2009) and their workplace expectations. He described how the modern workplace differs from millennials’ expectations - many of whom were in his audience - and how they can successfully cope in their future work environment.

He also dealt with the impact of career and academic choices made while on campus, including how social media activities may affect future career prospects. Mr. Mokaya concluded his talk by taking his audience through the process of presenting oneself to a potential employer, including a brief discussion on aptitude and psychometric testing. He will be back on Saturday, March 25 for his third session this semester, to conduct mock interviews with the same class.

The Board of Trustees, which sits at the apex of USIU-Africa’s governance structure, is charged with among other functions, appointment of members of the University Council and the Chancellor. Additionally, the Board of Trustees raises funds on behalf of the University, approves investment of funds and receives audits of the university.

Other members of the Board are Mrs. Carol Wallace (Secretary), Dr. Kevit Desai (Treasurer) and Prof. Wayne Frederick. Following the resignation of Mr. Linus Gitahi from the Board on January 23, 2017, Mrs Wallace was elected as Interim Chair.

On February 23, 2017, the Board of Trustees appointed Prof. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran (pictured) as Trustee. The appointment is for a 3 year term with effect from March 1, 2017 and is renewable upon satisfactory performance.

Prof. Wilson-Oyelaran is President Emerita at Kalamazoo College - a small liberal arts college in Michigan (USA) she led for 11 years. During her tenure, she raised over $129 million to support scholarships, endowed professorships, and the creation of the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership. Prior to her stint at Kalamazoo College, Prof. Wilson-Oyelaran was Professor of Education, Vice President and Dean of the College at Salem College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

She currently serves on the Advisory Board of the National Museum of African Art, and as Trustee of Pomona College and the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. In addition to other senior positions she has held in her illustrious career, she has been honored for her leadership in higher education and her work on behalf of women and girls.

Aside from Nestlé, the Office of Placement and Career Services has developed other mentorship programs with BAT Kenya, VIVO Kenya and Standard Chartered Bank - Kenya.
David Ayora elected to head Staff Council

By Diana Meso

David Ayora (Chief Manager - Security) is the new chair of the Staff Council following the first meeting of the Council's newly-elected representatives on Friday, March 17.

Mr. Ayora teams up with the Vice Chair, Mr. Julius Ndambuki (Accountant), Secretary Ms. Beatrice Owino (ICT Assistant I), Treasurer Mr. Chrisantus Odongo (ICT Assistant I), Member-at-Large Mr. Reuben Manyogi (Office Attendant I) and Parliamentarian Mr. Francis Omondi (Cafeteria) to lead the Council.

The Staff Council is the official representative of university staff within the university governance system. Members are elected for a one-year term during which they contribute to matters concerned with the work, benefits and environment of the staff population. They also work jointly with the university management and governance units to ensure successful growth of the university, while maintaining its commitment to its mission statement.

Student software developer group hosts code lab

By Dan Muchai

The Google Developer Group of USIU-Africa organized an Android Developer Code Lab led by one of Nairobi's leading developers Mr. Frank Tamre at the Innovation and Incubation Center. Mr. Tamre, a founder of 818 Interactive - a leading mobile applications developer focused on telling Africa's story - and Moringa School (coding school based in Nairobi), facilitated the day-long course, which introduced participants to development principles and tools applied in the world's leading mobile operating system - Android.

The hands-on instruction course involved using Google developer content, to train participants on the fundamental approaches to good material design.

Before the course ended, participants were offered the opportunity to share their experiences developing applications for their clients, and have a brief look at the Google home device; a voice activated personal assistant device that is part of Google's ecosystem of intelligent applications that use smart home automation technology.

Metro Cleaners complete entrepreneurship training course

By Dan Muchai

As part of NEVA’s Community Outreach program, 45 out of 60 participants completed the Business Model Generation training course, which was designed to provide the Metro Cleaners employees with the tools to successfully launch micro and small medium enterprises.

NEVA’s Community Outreach program was launched in 2016 as a means to reach informal groups in need of entrepreneurial training. This was the second such training following a similarly successful project at PAWA 254 - a art collective based in Nairobi, with a stated aim of “housing, fostering, and catalyzing creative and community-driven projects for social change across Kenya.”

In a couple of months, NEVA expects to launch a similar exercise at iHub - a seven-year old landmark innovation hub and technology space for the hacker community in Nairobi.

Photo Credit: Dan Muchai
Scott Bellows (Assistant Professor of Management and Director, New Economy Venture Accelerator) takes a group of students through aspects of divergent thinking, identifying and prioritizing social problems as well as dealing with customer pain points, during the first session of a five-week entrepreneurship training program on Tuesday, March 7 in the Innovation and Incubation Center. The NEVA training program endeavors to guide students in finally launching enterprises or creating innovations that change society. Their sessions are held twice a week on Tuesday (12.30pm) and Thursday (4.00pm).

Joy Karinge (IR Junior) Secretary of the HeforShe Club explains the objectives of her club to a group of interested students during a recruitment drive held between March 21-23 on campus. HeforShe club was formed on August 4, 2016, as part of a global movement championed by the United Nations Women (UN Women) agency, promote gender equality and empower women among UN member countries. At USIU-Africa, the club’s stated aim is to engage both men and women in removing the social and cultural barriers that prevent women and girls from achieving their potential.
Al-Shabaab: Should the Somali president open talks with the terror group?

By Dr. Fatma Ali

A political settlement between the Federal Government of Somalia and terror group Al-Shabaab has eluded both parties for years. Now newly elected Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo has indicated that he would be open to talks with the militants. But he also made it clear that if Al-Shabaab refused to engage he would take the war to their doorstep.

Although Al-Shabaab has lost control of most towns and cities, it still dominates in many rural areas including locales in Juba, Bay, Shabelle and Bakol. It's also reported that Al-Shabaab has become increasingly present in Somalia's northern regions, especially along the Golis mountains and in the urban areas of Puntland.

Farmajo's election has been widely celebrated. For many his rise to the presidency signals the beginning of an era of unity in Somalia. He has a reputation for being an effective and no-nonsense administrator. This was particularly true during his term as Prime Minister of Somalia between 2010 and 2011. He has made it clear that he's committed to reforms, good governance and uniting the Somali community in the semi-autonomous regions of Somalia and the diaspora.

Can he bring peace?

But the credibility of his government will depend on its ability to deliver security. Proposing dialogue with Al-Shabaab could facilitate a political settlement, which will be crucial for the security, political and economic prosperity of Somalia during his term.

A host of commentators – including scholars, analysts, policy makers, journalists, politicians and ordinary citizens – agree that dialogue or talks could be a viable strategy to end the menace of Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The question is whether Al-Shabaab would be willing to enter into dialogue given that its modus operandi is to engage in guerrilla warfare. Previous attempts to engage it in talks have failed. The terror group is one of the biggest threats to security in Somalia because it attacks all sectors – from the military to the political class, the people and the economy. It also attacks neighboring countries that it considers enemies.

Negotiating with the enemy

The argument against negotiating with terror groups such as Al-Shabaab stems from the idea that negotiating with your enemy is a sign of weakness, rewards terrorist behaviour and can lead to the legitimization of terror groups.

In the case of Al-Shabaab, Farmajo would have to temper their hunger for power, which has given them the impetus to continually employ terrorist tactics to obtain their objective.

It wouldn't be the first time an attempt was made to use dialogue as an alternative to conflict. Different democratic governments around the world have gone down this road as well.

For example, the Colombian government led by President Juan Manuel Santos recently negotiated a peace process with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia People’s Army (FARC-EP). Those talks ended 52 years of war. Given successes such as these, there's a possibility that dialogue could work in Somalia.

Al-Shabaab and the Somali people share a general religious ideology, which is Islam. They also share nationality. So the problem with Al-Shabaab is less its belief system, and more the use of terror to achieve its goals.

In my opinion, Farmajo’s government would therefore need to explore new ways to compromise with the terror group by focusing on shared doctrines and beliefs. It would need to capitalize on the fact that Somalia's provisional constitution stipulates that Islam is the religion of the state, and use it as an ideological bridge to create common ground.

What the president has going for him

Farmajo is seen as a Somali nationalist. This might be appealing to nationalist elements in Al-Shabaab, who could be convinced that he would consent to one of their main demands, which is the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Somalia.

The withdrawal of foreign troops became a central demand after Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia in 2006. Another key demand is the installation of Sharia law.

In addition, the clan dynamics in Somali politics and clannist tendencies within Al-Shabaab, could result in the terror group viewing Farmajo (from the Marehan sub-clan), and his Prime Minister Hassan Ali (from the Murusade sub-clan), as kinsmen.

Many among the top leadership of the Al-Shabaab hail are Murusade, which is a sub-clan of the Hawiye.

Therefore, the terror group could easily reach out to the president and prime minister on the basis of clan loyalty.

Another factor that could contribute to successful dialogue is the fact that the African Union’s Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is facing difficulties.

The government could be left vulnerable if AMISOM troops are withdrawn due to disputes over payments for soldiers, the withdrawal of Ethiopian soldiers and the probability of a reduced presence in Somalia.

This would resonate with Al-Shabaab’s main demand – the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Somalia. An alternate strategy would be for the Somali authorities to draw into negotiations those who are in Al-Shabaab by ‘convenience’. Those members of Al-Shabaab who are not hardliners, and who subscribe to the government's agenda for peace, security and development.

Alternatively, Farmajo could attempt to negotiate with Al-Shabaab on humanitarian grounds given the severe drought ravaging the country. Al-Shabaab controls parts of the country that are being hit the hardest.

Obstacles to dialogue

However, there are many obstacles that could stand in the way of dialogue. The biggest is the possibility that Al-Shabaab will not recognize the legitimacy of the new government.

There might also be internal and external pressures on the government not to negotiate with terrorists. The internal pressure could come from within government, and the external pressure from neighboring countries that have troops inside Somalia, for example Kenya and Ethiopia.

If Al-Shabaab maintains its hard stance, dialogue will be impossible and the government and its allies will be forced to intensify the war on terror through other means. One thing that remains clear is Al-Shabaab’s ability to adapt, innovate, surprise and shock. This still poses a major challenge to peace and development in Somalia.

The author, Dr. Fatma Ali is the International Relations Programs Director and Associate Professor of International Relations in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.
SPORTS UPDATES

By Diana Meso

The men’s soccer team recorded mixed results during this past weekend after winning 2-1 against National Youth Service (NYS) and losing to Nairobi Institute of Business Studies (NIBS) Ruiri in the Universities and Colleges Federation league (UCFL) that took place in Kabete. Their female counterparts beat NYS 1-0 in the same league at the same venue.

Both the men’s and ladies hockey team beat Nakuru Hockey Club and Kenyatta University (KU) 2-1 and 2-0 respectively in the ongoing Kenya Hockey Union (KHU) league that took place this past weekend at City Park. The ladies team battle out Telcom orange at City Park on Sunday March 25.

On Saturday March 18, the rugby men’s team triumphed against Mombasa RFC 18-12 in the ongoing Kenya Rugby Union (KRU) league that happened in USIU-Africa rugby pitch. The team will travel to Eldoret on Saturday March 25 to play against University of Eldoret.

The men’s basketball team lost to Ulinzi 45-67 in the Kenya Basketball Federation (KBF) league that took place in Nyayo Gymnasium last weekend. This coming weekend the team will encounter Co-operative Bank at the same venue.

MBA student James Kwesinga (background) takes Mr. Julius Mbuvi (alumnus ’09) through the basics of racquet handling during an impromptu training session on the tennis court.

Photo credit: Dan Muchai

MARCH 25
Rugby: USIU-Africa (Men) vs University of Eldoret
@ University of Eldoret

Basketball: USIU-Africa (Men) vs Co-operative Bank
@ Nyayo Gymnasium

USIU-Africa (Men) vs Kenyatta University (City Campus) @ USIU-Africa
Hockey: USIU-Africa (Men) vs Kenyatta University (Ruim Campus) @ Kenyatta University

MARCH 26
Hockey: USIU-Africa (Ladies) vs Telkom Orange
@ City Park Stadium

March 27
Pre-Registration for Summer 2017 (Doctoral & Graduate)

March 27 - 30
Project Finje (Choma Fiesta Edition), 9am - 5pm
@ Behind Cafeteria

March 30
Guest Lecture: Angela Nyokabi (UNEP) and Patterson Siema (UN Women), 5-40pm @ Science Center Classroom ST9

Saturday, April 1
Solidarity Run, 8am - 5pm @ Soccer Pitch

Google Next 2017, 9am - 3pm @ Innovation and Incubation Center

MARCH 20
TV featured USIU-Africa in an article titled “Varsities launch initiative to promote library use.”
http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/740-k24-varsities-launch-initiative-to-promote-library-use

The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Moi backs USIU in disputed land compensation.”

USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Butali Sugar Warriors stock up for opponents.”
http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/738-daily-nation-butali-sugar-warriors-stock-up-for-opponents

The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “WOMAN OF PASSION: From money to dance.”

The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Police flatten varsity lads.”

The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Butali Sugar Warriors subdue Western Jaguars.”

The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Kiunjuri’s mastery of proverbs serves him well.”

The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “USIU stay Titans at City Park.”

March 20: K24 TV featured USIU-Africa in an article titled “Varsities launch initiative to promote library use.”
http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/740-k24-varsities-launch-initiative-to-promote-library-use

March 20: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Moi backs USIU in disputed land compensation.”

March 20: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Butali Sugar Warriors stock up for opponents.”
http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/738-daily-nation-butali-sugar-warriors-stock-up-for-opponents

March 19: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Butali Sugar Warriors subdue Western Jaguars.”

March 18: USIU-Africa was mentioned in an article titled “SHOWBUZZ: Huddah Monroe to extend cosmetic line to eye shadows.”

March 18: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “USIU stay Titans at City Park.”

March 17: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “2017 basketball league begins with 14 matches.”

March 17: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “WOMAN OF PASSION: From money to dance.”

March 17: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Police flatten varsity lads.”

March 11: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Kunjunji’s mastery of proverbs serves him well.”

MEDIA MENTIONS