Research reveals challenges with public participation at the county level

By Taigu Muchiri

Dr. Dorothy Njoroge, an Assistant Professor of Corporate and Development Communication in the School of Communication, Cinematics and Creative Arts, presented her findings on mapping the citizen engagement strategies of county governments in Kenya on Thursday, March 4.

Having received an internal grant of KES 500,000 to conduct the research in 14 counties between April and August 2018, Dr. Njoroge sought to find out how county governments are conducting the public participation process, the challenges experienced and recommendations on how to improve the process.

According to her findings attendance to public forums organized by the governments continues to be low indicating such mass communication methods are not utilized optimally or do not reach the intended audiences.

These findings were corroborated by county officials who bemoaned the low attendance.

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Research reveals challenges with public participation at the county level

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attendance at these meetings, and how thence they are unable to conduct their business unless they attain quorum.

The constituents also indicated that poor infrastructure contributed to the low turnout. For example, weather roads limit them from moving from their homes to the county office to attend meetings during the rainy season. To counter this, county officials mentioned that they hold the meetings in convenient areas such as bus terminus or the market. This has shown to have great success because residents are not disrupted from their normal schedules.

The residents mentioned that there exists communication barriers in that the language used to communicate because only a handful of residents speak and read English at the county level. Most times, the process has to be conducted in Kiswahili or a local dialect. Other reasons presented by the residents for not participating in the process include lack of awareness of how the process works and the information on pending forums is sent late or it is not received at all. Many residents say that the process is political and that it doesn’t address their needs and some say that the county targets specific people to send messages to attend the meetings.

The residents strongly expressed dissatisfaction in the deliberations during the exercise itself because it is largely controlled by leaders and they play a passive role. This has led to anger and disenchantment among the public while the Members of County Assembly (MCAs) blame lack of sufficient funds as the major constraint to effective public participation.

The residents expressed willingness to attend the meetings if they were more structured and included all members of the society especially the disabled. They urged the county government to conduct civic education on the process to attract more participation and encouraged an egalitarian relationship between the residents and the county leaders.

The 2010 constitution stipulates public participation in the law making process at the county level and all bills that are passed and implemented must be subjected to a public participation process to ensure inclusivity and ensure that the bill addresses the challenges of the constituents. However, this process has been a slow and lengthy presenting a challenge in its implementation. Both the constituents and the leaders put blame on the process and says that it is hindering development projects at the county level.

Annual cultural fete finally here

By Dan Muchai

Culture Week 2019 will begin this Tuesday, March 5 and climax with the Culture Concert on the night of March 7. An exhibition of food, dance and artifacts from 20 cultural communities represented at USIU-Africa will be held behind the cafeteria on Tuesday, March 5 and Wednesday, March 6, while the Culture Concert will feature this communities presenting their dance routines on stage from 7pm on Thursday, March 7.

The Culture Week 2019 Committee invites you to be part of this celebration of cultural diversity of cultural diversity by purchasing regular tickets at KES 450, or VIP tickets for KES 2,500 online on ticketsasa.com
Dr. Achoki appointed ERC Commissioner

By Dan Muchai

Dr. George Achoki has been appointed as a Commissioner at Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) by the Hon. Charles Keter Cabinet Secretary for Energy, for a period of 3 years with effect from Friday, February 8, 2019.

Dr. Achoki is an Associate Professor of Accounting and Finance in the Chandaria School of Business, with experience in management, academia and board directorship spanning over 20 years.

He began his teaching career as a Senior Lecturer in Kenyatta University, before joining the faculty of the Africa campus of United States International University in September 1997.

He was the coordinator of the Global Executive MBA program for seven years where he spearheaded partnerships with 4 international universities, and chaired the committee that rolled out the first doctoral program at USIU-Africa. He rose to head the Chandaria School of Business as Dean between 2013 and 2017.

He has published in the International Journal of Economics and Finance, the American Journal of Finance, and the Journal of Business and Management among others. He has authored 2 book manuals, and over 15 publications and conference presentations, and facilitated over 100 training sessions for corporate, public and not for profit executives.

Dr. Achoki holds a Bachelor’s degree in Commerce, a Master of Commerce in Accounting and Statistics and a Doctor of Philosophy in Human Resource Accounting, all from Sukhadi University, India.

He has also been a resource person for Commission for University Education (CUE) formerly Commission for Higher Education (CHE) for over 10 years, and Inter University Council for Higher Education (IUEA).

Between 2016 and 2018, he served as a Council Member at the Export Promotion Council where he chaired the Strategy, Product Development and Promotion and the Finance and Resource Mobilization Committees.

As a Commissioner, Dr. Achoki will provide oversight to the Commission’s management whose mandate is licensing and regulation, enforcement and compliance, and dispute resolution in the energy sector in Kenya.

Congratulations Dr. Achoki.

Lecturer pitches writing benefits to high school students

By Dan Muchai

Ms. Sarah Ambiyo, a Lecturer of English in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, was invited by the English Department to speak to pupils of the Aga Khan High School on “How writing benefits an individual” during their Annual Book Week.

The event which is held every second week of February is organized to aid in inculcating reading habits among the students. Typically, various speakers from publishers to writers and photographers are invited to interact with students,

On the final day, Friday, students from other local schools, are also invited to meet authors and publishers of various books in East and Central Africa, who then have an opportunity to sell their books.

This year, the event coincided with the release of Premier Golden Tips English, a book which Ms. Ambiyo co-authored and which has been published by Moran East African Publishers. Her prolific penmanship, has included titles ranging from English revision books for high school, to class readers for primary schools and Bible stories for children.

“Students should take up writing so as to record their fancy and for posterity. There is no better way to document life than in the stories of today,” she said.

According to her, writing is rewarding in many ways; aside from book sales, one gains an opportunity to participate in learning – a contribution she considers very satisfying.

Right: Ms. Sarah Ambiyo, Lecturer of English at Aga Khan High School’s Annual Book Week.

PHOTO: COURTESY
Junior students in the Bachelor of Pharmacy program were recently taken through an orientation session on hospital Ward rotation, held at the new Skills Lab in the Science Center from Thursday, February 14. The goal of the orientation session was to brief the students on the relevance, professional disciplines, expected outcomes, “dos” and “donts” and on being USIU-Africa ambassadors during their rotation experience.

During the session, Dr. Amsalu Defersha and Dr. Jonathan Mwangi briefed the students on the activities they are expected to perform during their attachment and on the dos and don’ts in a clinical practice setting. Dr. Defersha described the reviewing of the hospital clinical pharmacy services, patient case review, prescription processing, and dispensing of medications, emphasizing that students are expected to document their observation, drug related therapy problems and pharmaceutical care plans in their log books and prepare a seminar in the school.

Dr. Ermias Terefe also highlighted on the need of collaboration with the multidisciplinary team in health institutions to ensure patients get the standard pharmaceutical care, and to learn as much as they can from them.

On his part Dr. Mwangi stressed on the need of discipline, adequate reading and preparation for successful completion and attainment of learning outcomes from the clinical ward rotations.

Dr. Yasodha Janapati led the session “Practice on confession of the Oath of Pharmacist” where students professed the Oath of Pharmacist with all their faculty and the session was filled with many motivations and positive energies.

Finally, Dean of the School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Prof. Njeri Wamae, spoke to the students on the attributes that will make students ambassadors of the university in hospital, community, industry, and research centers.
New electoral commissioners to supervise student elections

By Ernest A. Mwanzi and Dan Muchai

On Wednesday, February 6, 2019 three new student commissioners were sworn in to be part of the Electoral Commission to manage the forthcoming series of student elections.

In a short ceremony presided over by the Dean of students Mr. Robert Onsarigo, International Relations Sophomore Ms. Vivian Lispa, Psychology Junior Mr. Samuel Mainar and International Relations Junior Ms. Hannah Wasidiwa, pledged to serve students faithfully and diligently.

The Commission’s mandate includes conduct and supervision of the election of members of the Electoral College and Student Council, in accordance with the Student Association Constitution.

By law, the Commission is chaired by the current Faculty Council Chair, Dr. Naomi Nyarigoti, while the Staff Council Secretary Ms. Faith Mugambi is the Commission’s Secretary.

The Commission, which already conducted elections for student organizations from Tuesday, February 25 to Wednesday, February 26, also announced the end of the campaign period for candidates for the remaining elections for members of the Electoral College and Student Council to be Sunday March 4.

Candidates will have a chance to present their manifestos to the student body on Monday, March 4 from 10am to 12.30pm in the auditorium, with elections for those who will represent each School to be held from Tuesday, March 5 to Wednesday, March 6 in the Cafeteria.

The first duty of the newly-elected members of the Electoral College is to elect by a simple majority the members of the USIU-Africa student government - the Student Council.

FAQ: All you need to know about the new online Room and Resource Booking

By Charles Muthee

What is Libcal?

USIU-Africa has long relied on the manual and tedious way of making bookings that involved back and forth phone calls, emails and the good old diary.

In its strategic endeavor to automate business processes in USIU-Africa, the ICT Division embarked on creation of a solution for the community’s room, resource and service booking needs. Libcal is an easy to use web platform designed to handle USIU-Africa’s community’s booking needs of such nature.

How does it work?

With Libcal, one can create a booking in the span of a few clicks.

All one has to do is access the portal (click on the Quick Links at the footer of the USIU-Africa website and click on Room and Resource Booking), select your intended room, resource or service, the date and time onde desires, provide the user’s USIU-Africa credentials, and finally submission of booking. One can also access Libcal directly via: https://usiu-ke.libcal.com/

The booking will then be approved by the respective moderators (Administrators) of these resources. The resource will then appear as booked on the portal and will be reserved.

Who can make a booking on Libcal?

Booking on this portal is reserved for all USIU-Africa employees and students (through their respective club patrons).

What is currently available for booking on Libcal?

One can book the following resources and services on the Libcal portal:

- Meeting Rooms: Boardrooms and Training rooms
- Auditorium
- Multimedia: PA system, projectors, laptop
- Catering Services
- Marketing Services: branding, photography, banners

Where can I get help?

Any questions regarding the booking system can be directed to the IT team on Extension 121 or +254 730 116 121.
Association for the Study of African and American Life and History (ASALH)’s 2019 theme Black Migrations is meant to emphasize the movement of people of African descent to new destinations and subsequently to new social realities. This theme focuses especially on the twentieth century through today.

We know that before the twentieth century, black migration especially the movement of Africans out of motherland was characterized by slave trade and slavery. Today’s migration out of Africa is in most cases voluntary dotted by notable cases of trafficking in human beings.

The theme ‘Black Migrations’ lends itself to the movement of Africans across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean. Yomi Kazeem from Lagos refers to this crossing as illegal and recounts that nearly every part of it is filled with peril. Through a vast illegal network, desperate migrants are smuggled across borders, a journey that involves payments to agents who in turn pay smugglers but not always in full. Kazeem tells of how events turn ugly when smugglers discover duped migrants. Cases of flogging, detention and payment of exorbitant ransoms are reported. Where ransoms cannot be raised by relatives the only option is to sell off the migrants in ‘Libya’s infamous slave markets’.

According to a news report by Agence France-Presse (AFP) in September 18, 2018, more than 36,000 migrants entered Spain in 2018, making Spain the main entry point for migrants arriving in Europe that year after Italy and Greece.

Majority pay for a spot on an inflatable dinghy or to take part in a mass run on the heavily fortified border fences that surround the Spanish enclaves - Ceuta and Melilla. News of deaths while “A hundred dead after two migrant boats sank off Libya this month: MSF” (AFP, September 11, 2018).

Scaling barbed wire-topped fences and crossing the sea in inflatable boats and jet skis, 90 percent of the illegal migrants entering Europe are helped by human traffickers. Aljazeera reports that Syrians and Eritreans are amongst the top nationalities represented in the rat race to Europe. Others are from Gambia, Nigeria, D.R. Congo and the Congo. Jose Nieto Barroso of the national police’s human smuggling unit UCRIF told AFP that

“the journey can last one year, two years, depending on the ring and the funds you have, because the trafficking networks will take you as far as you can pay”
In recent decades the international community has focused its attention on trafficking in persons, which is surely one of the most worrying phenomena of the 21st century. In Part I, this book examines trafficking in persons in the light of the recent definition of the phenomenon given by the UN Trafficking Protocol, and various other international legal instruments including treaties and ‘soft law’. It analyses trafficking causes and consequences, and the most common forms of exploitation related to it.

**Push and pull factors**

“We all travel to get to plant a new life. We Africans we believe that if you go to Europe your life is good.” Patrick Jabbi, 27, a Congolese migrant. (Aljazeera, 2016)

The factors pushing people to leave Africa – and the paths they take to arrive at their destinations – vary from country to country and individual to individual. In the case of Europe, the population of sub-Saharan migrants has been boosted by the influx of nearly 1 million asylum applicants (970,000) between 2010 and 2017, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of data from Eurostat.

Political instability, poverty and the ever rising unemployment rate are amongst the most common factors prompting migration (Pew Global, 2018). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of sub-Saharan displaced within their own country nearly doubled to 9 million between 2010 and 2016.

Also, the total number of refugees from sub-Saharan countries living in other sub-Saharan countries grew about 2.3 million in the same period. At the same time, reports indicate that anywhere between 400,000 and a million sub-Saharan Africans are in Libya; some of them have been sold as slaves or are being held in jail-like facilities.

Pew Global postulates that pressures related to economic well-being and insecurity may help to explain why, beyond a general willingness to migrate, substantial shares of sub-Saharan Africans say they actually plan to move to another country in the next five years.

Among the six countries polled, the share with plans to migrate ranges from roughly four-in-ten or more in Senegal (44%), Ghana (42%) and Nigeria (38%) to fewer than one-in-ten in Tanzania (8%). Political instability in the countries cited above cannot be ignored, as this leaves many widows and orphans craving for peace and better life that is advertised abroad.

Many struggling Africans see Libya, Morocco and the Mediterranean, as hopes and dreams of a future of dignity and work, of money to send back home to families.

The tortuous journey across the Mediterranean, however, does remind one of the nasty days and experience of the transatlantic slave trade. The haggling off of African slaves to the highest bidder in the 16th century is no different from what Africans face in European detention camps upon arrival. There is an obvious violation of rights and freedoms along the way and in the detention camps. This is indeed an ugly situation, a repeat of history that we as Africans need to rethink. In an ideal case, in the overall interest, if migration is properly managed, all parties could gain.
SPORT UPDATES

By Diana Meso

KUSA Nairobi Universities League

The men’s and ladies’ basketball teams continued with their winning streak in the ongoing Kenya University Sports Association (KUSA)-Nairobi Universities League matches played on Saturday, February 23 and Sunday, February 24. The men’s team hammered Pan Africa Christian University 46- 22 and Mt. Kenya University 47-38, as their female counterparts beat Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (JKUAT) 29- 21 and Kenyatta University 32-25.

The ladies’ hockey team won 2-0 against JKUAT, while the men’s team beat JKUAT by an identical score, but lost to Daystar University 0-1 on Saturday, February 23 at Kenyatta University.

Maseno University Tournament

However, the weekend also featured mixed blessings for the men’s soccer team in the Maseno University Tournament on Saturday, February 23.

The team narrowly defeated Maseno University (Biomedical Campus) 3-1 and JKUAT 1-0, but drew with Maseno University (Main Campus), then lost to Maseno University’s Siriba Campus 0-1. Meanwhile, the ladies’ hockey team lost to both St. Claires Girls School and Friends College.

Over at the handball games, the men’s team were awarded a walkover score (10-0) against Maseno University Alumni and JKUAT who failed to show up for their games. They however lost twice to Maseno University (Main Campus) at the same tournament.

The men’s volleyball team did not fare much better when they lost to Western and Kondele 2-3 and 0-3 respectively.

Kickboxing

Meanwhile the kickboxing team emerged third overall with 2 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze medals in the Kickboxing Championship hosted by the Kenya Kickboxing Federation on Saturday, February 24 in the Ruai suburb.

Cricket

The cricket team was victorious in their two matches against JKUAT and Multimedia University in the Cricket University League played at Jamuhuri High School on Saturday, February 23.

Rugby

The rugby men’s team’s tough luck continued when they lost to Western Bulls 6-13 in the Kenya Rugby Union Championship League, last weekend.

Upcoming events

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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student Elections Debates</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>10am-12.30pm</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unveiling of new website</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>12.30pm</td>
<td>Training Kitchen and Restaurant, 3rd Floor, Freida Brown Student Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture Week 2019 Exhibition</td>
<td>March 5 - 6</td>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>Behind Cafeteria</td>
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<td>Culture Night Concert</td>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>7pm</td>
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