National and county governments urged to invest in agriculture infrastructure in order to boost food security in Kenya

By Taigu Muchiri

The first Agripreneurs conference was held on June 27 and 28 with the theme ‘Catalyzing Social Investment for Youth-Centric Agribiz’. The focus on the youth responds to the growing need to find sustainable employment to young people who are not able to secure jobs in the formal sector. According to Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the 2017 World Food Prize Laureate, the “future of African youth lies in agriculture.” Yet this reality can only be achieved if there is intentional positioning of youth at the forefront of agribusiness opportunities and if strategic investments are directed to help youth modernize and grow the sector.

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Prof. Amb. Ruthie Rono addresses the gathering and mentioned that USIU-Africa is implementing several initiatives that will enhance employability skills of its students. So far, 26 students have benefited from the Narendra Raval (Guru) Entrepreneurship & Social Innovation Program which is an Outcome-Based Entrepreneurship
methodology which equip participants with the 21st century mindset, skills, frameworks, tools and process that help them transition from entrepreneurial intention to reality through a predictable Evidence-Based Innovation Process (EBIP). This immersive, masterful and transformative 6-month program is a product of a decade of rigorous research and experiences, designed to take nascent entrepreneurs through an iterative systematic process to create their own businesses. In addition, the government of Kenya in partnership with the World Bank has rolled out the Kenya Youth Employment Opportunities Project (KEYOP) program and the youth entrepreneurship program in Agribusiness that is targeting 1, 200 youths across Kenya. She urged the participants to find solutions to the existing challenges in agribusiness and explore new opportunities that will grow the sector and achieve food security.

The Deputy Governor of Nyandarua County, Cecilia Mbuthia acknowledged USIU-Africa and the role it plays in investing in the youth through various training programs. She mentioned that the Nyandarua County is glad to partner with USIU-Africa to develop training programs in monitoring and evaluation, needs-driven interventions, grants and proposal development that will improve the skills of the young people based in the county who can benefit immensely from training programs that will improve farm yields and link them to ready markets.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator Siddharth Chatterjee pointed out that Agribusiness in Africa will be worth $1 trillion by 2020 and this growth will be fueled by demand and supply. He added that Kenya's population will soar to 100 million by 2050 and the world's population will be at 50 billion. These increased numbers will rely on food security in order to avert and reduce malnutrition and global hunger.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. Goal two focuses on zero hunger and aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, making sure all people – especially children – have access to sufficient and nutritious food all year round. This involves promoting sustainable agricultural practices by supporting small scale farmers and allowing equal access to land, technology and markets.

The event was organized in partnership with the African Venture Philanthropy Alliance (AVPA) and the United Nations’ SDG Partnership Platform.

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences host visiting Faculty

USIU-Africa is privileged to host Dr. Mike McMullen as visiting lecturer of Social Sciences who is a professor of Sociology and Cross Cultural Studies at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in Houston, Texas. He will be attached to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, co-teaching Research Methods for the General Education program in the Summer 2019 semester. He will also assist the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice with its accreditation review. Along with his colleague Dr. Dawit Woldu from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, they will be working with administrators and faculty across USIU-Africa to set up ongoing faculty and student exchanges and research collaborations.

Dr. McMullen received his BSc in Sociology and Mathematics from the University of Kansas and holds a doctorate in Sociology from Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia). He is a practitioner and researcher in conflict resolution and mediation and has led workshops on conflict resolution for the national Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for Houston city government, and numerous corporations in the Houston area. He teaches several classes on social conflict and mediation, and is currently working on a book on the history of conflict resolution programs in the United States.

Dr. McMullen lived for a year in Cairo, Egypt as a Fulbright Scholar, teaching at American University in Cairo during the 2009-2010 academic year. He has conducted extensive research in the American Bahá’í community, and recently completed a book entitled The Bahá’í of America: The Growth and Change of a Religious Movement that was published by New York University Press. His first book The Bahá’í: The Religious Construction of a Global Identity was published by Rutgers University Press. His areas of interest include Bahá’í studies, the sociology of religion, the Middle East, organizational development and change, and conflict resolution and mediation, and he has won numerous teaching awards.

By SHSS

Photo: Courtesy
USIU-Africa Public Speaking club team emerges as Best Speakers in Strathmore’s Leg Three Mashujaa Debate

By Lucy Njeri Irungu

The USIU-Africa public speaking club once again emerged victorious in the recently concluded leg three of the Mashujaa debate held on June 21 and 22. The USIU-Africa team emerged as the best three speakers in the novice category with Chantalle Mukabi (Freshman, IBA) in first position, Eunice Njagi in second position and Kagia Samuel in third position. Chantalle Mukabi has maintained the best speaker position in this category in all the three tournaments. In addition, the team’s trainer, Grace Kinyua, was recognized as the fifth best adjudicator in the tournament. This was the third session of the Mashujaa debate which is an inter-varsity tournament hosted by Strathmore University and was preceded by two tournaments held in April and May.

This debate, unlike the other two previous tournaments, had regional participants from Uganda and Tanzania. The club intends to host an inter-varsity tournament at USIU-Africa in July in order to provide its members with a more competitive platform to learn and improve on their debating and public speaking skills.

The debaters hold weekly training sessions as they prepare to defend their positions in the upcoming Scholars Festival debate in July organized by the Kenya National Debate Council (KNDC). They are also preparing to participate in the East African University Debate Championship (EAUDC) that will be held in August.

VCT and reproductive health week tackles toxic male masculinity and Gender Based Violence

By Taigu Muchiri

The counselling center held the Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) and reproductive week from June 24-28 in partnership with Africa Cancer Foundation and AHF Kenya. This is a bi-annual activity that is organized in response to the National requirements for HIV and AIDS.

The main objective of this campus-wide initiative was to encouraging members of the USIU-Africa community to know their HIV status as well as that of their partners, allow for screening of reproductive health-related cancers such as breast and cervical cancer and STIs, and disseminate information about HIV and AIDS.

The week-long event organized a discussion on toxic male masculinity and GBV and the effects they have on society. It is a response to the rising need to address issues related to the male gender who are struggling with identity issues. The panelist made up of professionals such as lawyers, counselling psychologists, gynecologists discussed various aspects that
are contributing to increased cases of domestic violence. Statistics indicate that 90 percent of men are involved in violence against women and this large number can be attributed to attitudes, norms and roles that have been perceived to be in the domain of men such as being the sole bread winner. This has severely affected relationships as gender roles have increasingly changed over time. On the contrary, only 40 percent of men are documented as victims of domestic violence. This glaring difference has been brought about because not all domestic violence incidents against men are documented. In addition, only 20 percent of male victims reported sexual violence before the age of 18. These statistics fuel the current ongoing debate about lowering the age of sexual consent.

The discussion also tackled the rape culture and discussed solutions that can be used in order to end stigmatization towards the vice. According to the World Bank, one in every four girls are raped during their time in campus while one out of 16 men experience domestic abuse related incidents while in campus. 50 percent of girls are likely report these incidents but only 1 percent of men will report incidents of rape. Further studies show that 50 percent of Homosexuals are at risk of being raped or sodomized. A majority of female students in campus never report rape cases because it is categorized as acquaintance rape and in most instances the perpetrator is known to the victim. There is stigmatization that is related to rape because most women fear that people will judge them and they feel that they deserve to be raped.

The situation is worse for men because they are not cultured to report such cases and this has contributed to the increased cases of rape among men. Men who go through rape are likely to be violent to their partner as a result of the stigma they experienced. In order for both men and women to effectively report on GBV, measures and systems have to put in place that will create safe spaces for them to report on rape incidents. A rape survivor, World Bank officer specializing in GBV and a student at USIU-Africa Ms. Janes Amondi mentioned that this would significantly reduce the stigmatization and encourage men and women to openly talk about rape. She is currently working on establishing an incident center in partnership with the World Bank, Amnesty international, UN Women and the police that will document rape incidents.

One of the guest speakers, Ernest Wamboye mentioned that we can all learn from positive male masculinity and relationships that do not get media attention. He mentioned that the negative stories receive a lot of attention and this slowly erodes our values to think that this is acceptable. He added that men form their perceptions on society, life and family from fellow men and if men do not mentor the young generation, this situation will only deteriorate. He further added that there exists vices that have been normalized in our society such as violence against women that are difficult to change. He urged fellow men to take up the role of mentoring to ensure that we are building safe spaces for the women and girls in our society.
USIU-Africa hosts members of the disciplined forces for Library orientation

By Ernest Mwanzi

On Wednesday, June 26 the Library and Information Center had the privilege of hosting members of the disciplined forces drawn from the National Defence College (NDC), Kenya Police and civil servants for an orientation of the Library.

The Library has been offering inter-library loan services to the NDC since the late nineties. Every year, NDC sends senior military officers from the rank of Colonel, senior officers from other disciplined forces and the civil service being trained for higher responsibilities in management of National defence, security and policy formulation, to USIU-Africa for an orientation session.

This annual orientation is designed to enable participants know the resources available to them as part of their management training. USIU-Africa Library and Information Center in return has been a beneficiary of NDC publications and newsletters.

This year saw senior military officers from Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Botswana, Zambia and India also joining their Kenyan counterparts for the orientation.

Chapter review — Madam President; The changing Gender Dynamics of African Politics

By Susan Muriuki

The book entitled Barrack Obama & African Diasporas Dialogues and Dissensions is a series of Pan-African essays written meticulously by distinguished Professor of History and African American studies Professor Paul T. Zeleza. This chapter review covers Madam President; The changing Gender Dynamics of African Politics. The author brings to light the challenges that continue to hinder women participation in politics especially in the 21st century. Cognizant of the fact that women inclusivity in decision making and political processes is vital to a democracy, many states including the so called fathers of democracy have low representation of women in positions of power.

According to a 2018 report on women participation in politics, only 23.8 percent of women around the world hold parliamentary positions. Moreover, from 1992-2011, women accounted for less than 9 percent of participants in peace negotiations. This demonstrates the laxity of countries and international organizations to embrace women as a vital part of decision making and politics at large. Prevailing social and cultural norms continue to hinder women from taking part in political processes. In addition, those women who fall in the category of the minority such as Muslim minorities, disabled, LGBTQIA+ suffer the greatest barrier due to their minority, indigenous or religious status in the society. Reading this chapter comes at a crucial time.
where #metoo #HeforShe movements are taking to the forefront to advocate for women rights. These groundbreaking moves are changing the prevailing women stereotypes, encouraging more women to demand for their rights and also participate in political processes. With the help of social media, these movements have served to bring forth a generation that is more aware of gender equality as a prerequisite to development especially in Africa. Indeed, a state can accrue great benefits when they create an enabling environment for women to participate in political processes. Studies have shown that increasing representation of women in positions of power will likely to bring faster economic growth compared to a state with a predominantly male leadership. Although the author portrays great optimism in the changing gender dynamics in African politics, the changes are occurring in a rather plodded rate due to barriers yet to be overcome. We however, continue to celebrate the trailblazers like former President of Liberia Ms. Ellen Jonson Sirleaf, Graça Machel, a politician and humanitarian and Ilhan Omar the Somali –American elected in U.S House of Representatives for the state of Minnesota among others. These women through their personal courage dared to chart the path for women to participate in politics and are changing the narrative.

USIU-Africa to establish a Confucius classroom

By Diana Meso and Wanjiku Mbugua

USIU-Africa is set to receive KES 3 million to establish a Confucius classroom that will improve the teaching and learning of Chinese language and culture. It is the first ever Confucius Institute to be established in a private university in Kenya.

This was sealed after the University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Confucius Institute at Kenyatta University on Tuesday, June 24.

The classroom will not only strengthen the role of Confucius Institutes globally, but also enhance the mutual friendship between Kenya and China. It will further provide a platform for conducting Chinese teaching programs, training local Chinese language instructors, organizing student and faculty exchange programs in China, conducting other activities related to Chinese Language and Culture and support the Chinese language class that is already offered in the University.

USIU-Africa will also be receiving an annual funding from the Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban) in China to promote running of the classroom and other related student activities. So far over 40 Confucius Institutes have been established across Africa.

Present at the MoU signing was the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza, Kenyatta University Confucius Institute Directors Prof. Li Jing and Dr. Kamau Wango, Amb. Prof. Ruthie Rono (ASA DVC), Mr. James Ogolla (Director, University Advancement), Dr. Paul Okanda (Director, ICT), Eng. Paul Warui (Acting Director, Administration), Prof. Wangari Mwai (Associate DVC, Student Affairs) Prof. Martin Njoroge (Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences), Dr. Michael Kihara (Associate Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences), Dr. Josephine Arasa (Associate Professor of Psychology) and Mrs. Wanjiku Mbugua (Lecturer, Chinese Language) who played a big role in the partnership and other representatives from Kenyatta University Confucius Institute.
Admissions office attends career day at Kenya High School — Pictorial

Students of Kenya High School talk to the admissions team from USIU-Africa

Students of Kenya High School talk to the admissions team from USIU-Africa

Sport Updates

By Ernest Mwanzi

TAE KWON DO
On Saturday, June 22, during the Nairobi TAE KWON DO Association games, the USIU-Africa ladies’ team (lower division) were second runners up. The games were hosted by USIU-Africa.

Media Mentions

Compiled by Diana Meso

June 24: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Business Daily in an article titled “Time to finance higher education through PPPs.”

June 22: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Dancing a few language steps with Ngugi and exciting young writers.”

June 21: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Warriors, Thunder seek wins in second leg openers.”

June 21: Citizen Digital mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Strathmore seeking revival against ANU in KBF.”

June 21: USIU-Africa was mentioned online in an article titled “Best universities in Kenya 2019.”