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# CAMPUS THIS WEEK

February 24 - March 1, 2024

## How one Mastercard Foundation Scholar is transforming lives and creating sustainable development through a dairy goat project

By Brenda Odhiambo



*Esther Mukabyiringiro (center) with the project beneficiaries and trainers on the first day of training. Photo: Esther Mukabyiringiro.*

In Rwanda's Nyamasheke District, located in Bushekeri Sector, a project led by Esther Mukabyiringiro, a Mastercard Foundation Scholar in her second year in the Bachelor of Pharmacy program at USIU-Africa, has made a significant impact empowering 20 economically disadvantaged single mothers with HIV/AIDS. The project, which ran from December 19, 2023 to January 3, 2024 was designed to address nutritional challenges and limited crop yield faced by these single mothers through the provision of 10 dairy goats to provide a sustainable source of essential nutrients.

This was complemented by comprehensive agricultural training to combat crop yield issues by providing knowledge on enhanced farming practices, contributing to food security and economic stability. Beyond its immediate benefits, the project also aimed to empower these mothers with the skills and resources necessary for their long-term economic independence, aligned with key Sustainable Development Goals, namely No Poverty (Goal 1), Zero Hunger (Goal 2), and Good Health and Well-being (Goal 3).

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## Lights, Camera, Odanga: Unraveling the quirky charm of Kenya's film legend

By Lauryn Gitau



*Film Production and Directing students take a photo outside the Startimes studio with Prof. Sheila Mulinya and Film Producer and TV Director, Reuben Odanga. Photo: Sheila Mulinya and Multan Crew.*

As the sun begins its ascent over the sprawling USIU-Africa campus, my heart races with excitement, my anticipation bubbles like a simmering cauldron. I clutch tightly to my notebook as I board the university bus, our gateway to the pulsating heart of the Kenyan film industry. Today marks yet another special journey, not just of physical distance, but of aspirations and dreams converging. Bound for the set of the renowned “Pink Ladies” show on Startimes, under the guidance of Prof. Sheila Mulinya onto the mentorship of esteemed local Film and TV Director and Producer Reuben Odanga. My senses tingle with the promise of creativity and opportunity. The bus glides past the university gate traversing us to the cinematic odyssey, a chapter awaits to be written in the annals of our burgeoning film careers.

Maneuvering through the early Nairobi traffic, we arrive on the filming set and are welcomed by Reuben’s infectious laughter and penchant for adventure, he’s the kind of Director who’s just as likely to crack a joke as he is to yell “action!” From his humble beginnings in the bustling streets of Nairobi to his rise to fame on the international stage, Reuben Odanga’s journey is as colorful and captivating as the films and TV series that he creates. Starting the day on the set of Pink Ladies, a production shot by Reuben’s Multan Production in Karen, Nairobi, we are immediately thrown into our element.

A chance of a lifetime to learn the techniques that the talented crew use to create some of the biggest shows in Kenya.

Immediately Wanjera, the Assistant Director, yells ‘silence on set’, the chattering dies down and everyone is focused on their roles. She commands the set with vigor and they repeat the scenes until she is satisfied. The only time we get a chance to speak with her is during the short breaks as the lighting and cinematography crew set up for the upcoming scenes. I steal some seconds in between these breaks to engage Wanjera in an attempt to quell my curiosity to unpack the man and the craft and he effortlessly responds to my questions.

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*Mr. Eannes Ongus, Director of Advancement & Partnerships at USIU-Africa, shared the university's ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive campus environment at a plenary session during the Conference. Photo: Courtesy.*

Last week, USIU-Africa was represented at the Zero Project Conference (ZeroCon24), which took place at the UN Offices in Vienna, Austria. The conference is a unique global meeting place to innovate for disability inclusion. This year's topics were Inclusive Education, and ICT, with sessions revolving around the 77 Zero Project Awardees' innovative solutions, complemented by contributions from Inclusive Education and ICT Experts, and representatives of the global Disability Inclusion Community.

Mr. Eannes Ongus, Director of Advancement & Partnerships at USIU-Africa, shared the university's ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive campus environment. Emphasizing the high priority placed on accessibility and support for students with disabilities, Mr. Ongus highlighted some of the university's key successes in this area, including: the establishment of a Disability Inclusion Resource Centre filled with assistive technology and staffed with sign language interpreters, disability experts and other support staff, mainstreaming of a Disability and Inclusion Policy, which has transformed the university into a truly inclusive institution, the recruitment of students with disabilities, with 72 students with disabilities currently enrolled at the university, which has been achieved through the support of key partner institutions, including the Mastercard Foundation and Light for the World and the establishment of a Sign Language Club, which has membership from across the campus community.

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## Strengthening community ties: The Kasarani neighborhood stakeholders engagement assembly on security

By Christine Kamala





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*The Kasarani neighborhood stakeholders engagement assembly on security at the School Humanities and Social Sciences on February 22. Photo: Erick Macharia.*

In a bid to foster community safety and enhance collaboration, a pivotal security engagement meeting took place on Thursday, February 22. The event, which was organized by a dedicated team of stakeholders, saw a significant turnout of participants from the vibrant Kasarani neighborhood including shopping malls, schools, universities, hostels, hotels, transport, religious institutions, private security firms, community leaders and law enforcement.

The gathering, the first in the year 2024 quarter, provided a platform for a comprehensive update on prevailing security challenges within the Kasarani area. Through Mr. James Lelesara, the Security Manager from ICIPE, attendees were briefed on ongoing and potential threats, reinforcing the need for a united front against crime. Initiatives such as neighborhood watch programs, community patrols, and enhanced communication networks were applauded as successful ongoing steps towards bolstering security.

Mr. James Nzomo, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Unit Commander, Kasarani Sub County emphasized the importance of community involvement and shared responsibility. He acknowledged the strength of community unity and the commitment of Kasarani stakeholders to actively contribute to the well-being of their neighborhood. By working hand-in-hand with local authorities, community leaders, and law enforcement, the event demonstrated the power of collaboration in creating a safer living environment for all.

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## **USIU-Africa hosts the Commission for University Education (CUE) for verification of academic resources for proposed online programs**

*By Brenda Odhiambo*



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*The Interim Vice Chancellor, Dr. Lola Odubekun receives the site visit report from the Panel Chair, Dr. Dorcas Omukhulu. Photo: Kairo Ngamau.*

Last week, USIU-Africa hosted a three-day site inspection visit by the Commission for University Education (CUE). The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the university's readiness to launch six new online programs and three blended Programs across undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The CUE team, led by panel chairs, Dr. Dorcas Omukhulu and Prof. Marcela Mwaka, reviewed the program proposals for the new programs, which included:

- School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences: Master of Science in Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Master of Science in Clinical Pharmacognosy and Complimentary Medicine, Bachelor of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing.
- School of Science and Technology: Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Analytics.
- School of Humanities and Social Sciences: Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology and the Master of Arts in International Relations.
- School of Communication, Cinematics and Creative Arts: Master of Arts in Media and Communication Studies.

The site inspection involved a deep dive into the facilities and equipment to support the programs, faculty quality, technological infrastructure, and systems established to enable the university to offer quality online learning in each of the programs. The inspection ensures that the new programs uphold USIU-Africa's rigorous academic standards and deliver an exceptional learning experience to learners across the globe.

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## NIERA's Amplifying Her Voice: Breaking Gender Barriers in the Creative Industry

By Laura Were

### AMPLIFYING HER VOICE: BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY WEBINAR



**Jennifer Nyakinya**  
Program Manager  
NIERA



**Melissa Kiplagat**  
International Actress



**Valentine Zikki**  
Musician & Voice  
over artist



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**Rachel Mwara**  
Creative Entrepreneur



**Pauline Wambui**  
MD and Legal Advisor at Zebra  
Productions Limited



*The panelists who tackled various issues from Gender Based Violence to compensation of female creatives.*

The Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa (NIERA) hosted a webinar on February 8 titled: "Amplifying Her Voice: Breaking Gender Barriers in the Creative Industry." The webinar brought together 87 attendees from across Kenya including Country Creative Arts, Residence & Empowerment (CO-CARE) program beneficiaries, creatives, researchers, and industry professionals. CO-CARE's research and learning agenda is being supported by NIERA's Demand Driven Research Initiative (DDRI) and is evaluating the effectiveness of training and mentorship interventions in creating decent jobs and sustainable incomes among youth in the creative industry.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Jennifer Nyakinya, Program Manager at NIERA, highlighted the four strategic areas of inquiry: Gender mainstreaming, Systemic barriers, Job decency, and Technological advancements in Artificial Intelligence that guide the network's research intervention that is generating insights and filling knowledge gaps on youth employment in the creative industry.

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## The Counselling Centre holds Open Week

*By Counseling Department*



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curative psychological services to the university community with a variety of personal, academic, social, and emotional concerns that could affect their ability to function at their optimum. The Department collaborated with the Counseling Center's Open Week committee and the Peer Educators and Counselors Club (PECC) in organizing a two-day event on February 13 & 14 to create awareness to the community about the services it offers. The main objective of the event was to demystify stigma surrounding mental health in order to increase the number of people seeking counseling services to mitigate, manage and restore individual's mental well-being.

This event attracted more than 300 people who came to engage in the activities that were being offered such as numerous personality and self-awareness tests, love languages tests for both singles and couples, temperament tests, attachment styles, time management test etc. The event organized de-stress fun games such as what do you meme, connect, scrabble, chess & checkers and art therapy. This two-day event was successful since the community gave positive feedback of how thrilled they were to have participated in the different assessments and de-stress activities available at the tents. During the event, besides encouraging partners to shower their partners with love, there was a lot of emphasis on self-love and self-care among singles and even those in relationships.

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## AfricaHACKON in partnership with the School of Science and Technology bring together industry experts for the first edition of the 2024 Masterclass

By Tapiwanashe Mlambo & Tabitha Musya



*Participants take a group photo after the Masterclass sessions. Photo: Victor Aine.*

On Saturday, February 25, all roads led to USIU-Africa for the Q1 AfricaHACKON Masterclass. A collaborative effort between USIU-Africa's School of Science and Technology, AfricaHACKON, 369Global, CyberGuard Africa, and Startinev brought forth a laudable Cybersecurity Masterclass that gathered industry experts, learners and cybersecurity enthusiasts alike. For over 10 years, AfricaHACKON, a cybersecurity collective has been actively fostering research, capacity building, towards mentoring and building a strong community of cybersecurity experts to bridge the ever-yawning skills gap in an aggressively dynamic cyber threat landscape, locally and globally. Notably led by Dr. Bright Gameli, CEO of CyberGuard Africa, the Masterclass aims to foster and nurture cybersecurity and propel cybersecurity excellence across the African



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need for cross-sector collaboration in navigating the intricate landscape of cybersecurity threats – a fundamental pillar of any robust organizational security strategy.

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## Criminal Justice System Week seeks to empower future justice leaders

By Mercy Tania



*Hon. Justice William Ouko, Supreme Court Judge, Prof. Amos Njuguna, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics: Transformative Teaching, Learning and Research and Dr. Omolola Omole E. Odubekun, Interim Vice Chancellor in the Vice Chancellor's boardroom share a hearty laugh as they discuss matters criminal Justice at the start of Criminal Justice Week. Photo: Kahiro Ngamau.*

Criminal Justice System Week proved to be an enlightening journey into the complexities of legal practice, reforms, and professional growth. The event commenced with a thought-provoking keynote speech by the Honorable Justice William Ouko. Justice Ouko's discourse centered on the pressing need for criminal justice reforms and advancements in litigation methodologies.

His insightful address laid the foundation for a detailed exploration during the subsequent panel discussion. Distinguished legal minds engaged in a robust dialogue, delving into the nuances of proposed reforms and their potential impact on the justice system. Attendees gained a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in reshaping the legal landscape.

The second day brought forth Ms. Yinka Kolade, Managing Partner of Penbroke Chambers, to share her expertise on peace, conflict, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Ms. Kolade's keynote speech illuminated key aspects of fostering harmony and the strategic role ADR plays in mitigating legal conflicts. Her insights resonated with the audience, emphasizing the significance of proactive resolution mechanisms in the contemporary legal milieu.



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## USIU-Africa in pictures

By CTW Team



Dean, School of Science and Technology, Prof. Audrey Mbogho (left), Interim Vice Chancellor, Lola Omole-Odubekun, Ph.D., Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Kevit Desai and Chair, Department of Computing and Informatics, Dr. Leah Mutanu Mwaura (right) pose for a photo moment at the Vice Chancellor's Office after discussions on possible new courses on Artificial Intelligence.

This is after the recent visitation by the Kenyan accrediting body, the Commission for University Education (CUE), and the AMLD Africa Conference dedicated to the latest advancements in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Photo: Kairo Ngamau.



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*USIU-Africa students enjoy a culinary adventure featuring a journey through the soulful essence of Somalia. Photo: Erick Macharia.*



*Eswatini students spice up the cooking competition with a flavorful feast such as 'Sishwala' or 'Emasi etinkhobe', 'Dombolo' or dumplings, corn bread, chicken, greens, pap, pork, chakalaka, as the main dishes. Photo: Erick Macharia.*





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*The Club for Hotel and Tourism Students (CHATS) members attend a seminar at the Boma International Hospitality College in Nairobi. The theme of the seminar was 'Transforming and Greening Hospitality Training Institutions in Kenya' and focused on topics such as sustainability in hospitality education, curriculum development, industry collaboration, student involvement, and policy advocacy. The objective of the seminar was to address the imperative need for transformation and greening within hospitality training institutions across Kenya and brought together representatives from various universities to discuss strategies for enhancing sustainability practices and curriculum development in hospitality education. Photo: Courtesy.*



*USIU-Africa community at the Freida Brown Students Centre enjoying Ugandan dishes during the Uganda Cooking Competition on Wednesday, February 28. Photo: Erick Macharia.*



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*USIU-Africa students enjoying Kenyan dishes accompanied by music performances by fellow students during the Kenya cooking competition held at the Freida Brown Students Centre on Thursday, February 29. Photo: Erick Macharia.*



*By Lynn Mwangi*

## **Masibo tournament and premier league awards**



*The ladies' hockey team celebrate after winning the tournament held in Kitale over the weekend. Photo: Courtesy.*

Over the weekend, the ladies' hockey team embarked on a journey to Kitale for the Masibo Tournament. The competition unfolded with games starting on Saturday and concluding on Sunday. The team fielded two teams, but one unfortunately was disqualified before the semifinals. However, the other team persevered, securing a spot in the finals and ultimately emerging victorious.

Notably, Natasha Wambui from the team earned the Most Valuable Player (MVP) title, while Jasmine Muthaka stood out as the top scorer. The team proudly brought home the winners' trophy, and each player received individual trophies in recognition of their outstanding performance.

In addition to the Kitale tournament, team's achievements extended to the Premier League awards. The Spartans secured the 3rd position in Kenya, earning the 2nd runners-up trophy. Each player was honored with well-deserved medals for their contributions throughout the season. This weekend showcased the team's resilience and skill, bringing home not only trophies but also a sense of pride and accomplishment.



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*The men's hockey take a photo at St. Anthony Boy's High School in Kitale. Photo: Courtesy.*

The USIU-Africa hockey teams, team A and B, participated in the recent tournament held at St. Anthony Boy's High School in Kitale. Both teams showcased remarkable performance throughout the tournament, displaying exceptional skills and teamwork. In the group stages, team A competed in Pool B, securing victories against formidable opponents. They defeated Kitale Day with a score of 2-1, triumphed over Blue Pirate with a narrow 1-0 win, and emerged victorious against Eldoret Polytechnic with a score of 2-1. Similarly, team B, competing in Pool A, demonstrated dominance by defeating Nandi Hawks 5-1, securing a resounding 7-0 win against St. Anthony, and clinching a 5-0 victory against Moi University.

In the quarter-finals, team A faced off against Bungoma Masters, resulting in a 1-1 draw in regular time. However, team A emerged triumphant with a 2-0 win in the shootouts. Meanwhile, team B delivered a dominant performance against Vandals, securing a convincing 4-0 win to progress to the next stage.

The semi-finals witnessed an intense clash between the two teams, with team B ultimately prevailing with a 2-0 victory over team A, showcasing their strength and determination. Team B continued their stellar performance in the finals, facing off against Eldoret Polytechnic. Team B emerged victorious with a 2-0 win, clinching the championship title. Danstone Wabwire was crowned Most Valuable Player, Judethedius Ongondo won Best Goalkeeper and the Top Scorer was Jamleck Macharia.

We appreciate the information you provide for publishing. Should you have any news or features you wish considered for publication in the next edition, please send them to [pr@usiu.ac.ke](mailto:pr@usiu.ac.ke) on or before Monday, March 4, 2024. Material received thereafter shall be considered for the subsequent edition.

For comments, submissions and queries, please contact the Marketing and Communications Department on [pr@usiu.ac.ke](mailto:pr@usiu.ac.ke) or on 0730 116 237 / 307 / 420 / 585 / 562.



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