INVESTING IN DRYLANDS

Empowering Pastoralists Through Education

Students Extol Internship Program

Knowledge Exchange Seminars Initiated at UoN
Our Vision:
Excellence in the management of dryland ecosystems and Societies.

Our Mission:
To contribute to sustainable dryland ecosystems and improved livelihoods through innovative trans-disciplinary education, research, partnerships, policy dialogue and community outreach initiatives.

Core values
1. Collaborations and partnerships
2. Equity and inclusiveness
3. Professionalism and integrity
4. Commitment to community service
5. Innovativeness
6. Environmental integrity
7. Respect for cultural diversity
8. Good governance
9. Affirmative action

Our Key objectives
1. Improved coordination of interdisciplinary Higher Education, research and outreach for drylands in Kenya.
2. Greater capacity of students and faculty to address the problems of dryland ecosystems and societies.
3. More informed policies, more efficient use of resources, and more appropriate innovations for drylands of Kenya.
4. Greater participation in higher education by pastoralists/dryland communities, especially women, resulting in the development of more appropriate innovations for dryland systems.
5. Increased impact of higher education, research and outreach on the sustainability of Kenyan drylands.
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Stakeholders Voices

Isaac Thendiu, Program Officer, USAID, Kenya

“This is one of the important projects that we support and are looking at it to generate a lot of solutions to the horn of Africa because universities have the knowledge and ability.”

Stacy Lynn, Project Manager, Colorado State University.

“We have partnered with University of Nairobi to build the Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies to bring in voices, needs and dreams of the communities to be better served and build their capacity.”

Prof. Agnes Mwang’ombe, Principal, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, UoN

“I am glad to note that the efforts to build sustainable dryland ecosystems and societies is in line with the Kenya Vision 2030 that recognizes the need to provide socio-economic inputs and protect environment to achieve economic growth by investing on community actions.”

Dr. Tully Cornick, Executive Director, Higher Education for Development.

“We celebrate the partnership for demonstrating quality in both design and execution. The partnership has a role to play in addressing food security problems in Arid and Semi-Arid lands of Africa. The expectations are high that by the end of the program, the partnership will enable Kenya take control of their own progress and economic well-being, contribute to Kenya’s National Development Agenda and form educated and empowered citizens.”

Prof. W. Wanjala Dean School of Education, UoN

“CSDES will fully utilize UoN assets including the College of Education Centres spread in various parts of the country and human skills available in different UoN departments. For curriculum development, the Centre will engage stakeholders at all levels.”
Access to higher education for pastoral communities has remained a big challenge in Kenya and many other African countries. It has become increasingly clear that pastoral communities have been severely disadvantaged in accessing higher education opportunities due to high poverty levels and marginalization. The high cost of higher education and the high entry points to the universities have posed a great impediment to empowering the pastoralists communities through education. However, the story is taking a different turn for six pastoral students courtesy of the Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES).

CSDES which is a partnership between the University of Nairobi (UON) and Colorado State University (CSU) was established one year ago with the mission to contribute to sustainable dryland ecosystems and improved livelihoods through innovative trans-disciplinary education, research, partnerships, policy dialogue and community outreach initiatives. In a bid to accomplish this mission, the Centre in partnership with the Meeker Family Fund competitively awarded six needy students from the pastoral communities with higher education scholarships to enable them pursue undergraduate and masters degrees in various disciplines.

The scholarships catered for all their fees and upkeep at the University of Nairobi.

“I am now certain of attaining my dream career as an Environmental Scientist.” quipped Lalampaa Pricillah, one of the beneficiaries.

“Being a girl from Samburu County, I have no support from relatives since they would rather have me married than get education. My parents are also unable to support me due to the high levels of poverty. This is a God given opportunity that I will use to succeed in life and empower my community.” She concludes. Like the other five students who benefitted from the scholarship, Lalampaa is excited that her future looks bright.

CSDES is one of the 11 partnerships between Africa and U.S institutions of higher education that received a two year funding through a competitive grant process by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through Higher Education for Development (HED).

“This is a God given opportunity that I will use to succeed in life and empower my community.” Lalampaa Pricillah.
Ten students successfully completed their three months internship program at various organizations where the Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES) posted them. During an internship evaluation seminar held at CSDES offices, speaker after speaker praised the program noting that it had significantly made a difference in their academic lives and in understanding dryland management issues. “I have gained experience in the understanding and management of outreach for dryland ecosystems,” said Mosiany Peter an intern attached at Dupoto e Maa.

The three month internship program aims at transforming higher education in the Drylands of Kenya. Young graduates are sent as far as Loita, Garissa, Mbeere, Laikipia, Kajiado/Kitengela, Turkana, Taita-Taveta, Tana-River/ Isiolo, Kiboko, and Mara.

Based at the department of Land Resources Management and Agricultural Technology (LARMAT), CSDES aims to enhance the capacity of the University of Nairobi (UoN) to produce high-performing graduates to engage in demand-driven research that contributes to sustainable and productive dryland ecosystems and societies, and to build the higher education capacities of dryland communities in Kenya. Interns present at the seminar were Siyat Onle, Rebecca Katitia, Peter Mosiany, Sylvester Mashati, Agnes Keshine, Priscillah Lalampaa, Frankline Otieno, Irene Nalain, Ali Abdi, Peter Kaimi, Joe Lepatei and Adan Mohammed.

In his remarks, CSDES Director Prof. Jesse Njoka said one of the objectives of the Centre is education and capacity building in dryland societies. “As CSDES, we will develop an education curriculum that will promote the culture of investing in drylands,” he said. Prof. Njoka acknowledged that drylands have a lot of potential that needs to be explored. The Director explained that as a Center there is need to engage in local issues affecting drylands.

While addressing the interns, Dr. Onyango, Management Committee member in charge of mentorship advised them that education is vital for the drylands and ought to be adopted. She told the students that good mentorship is vital in life. “In life one must always have a mentor and as students, you should strive to identify a mentor from the Centre to walk you through,” she said.

Dr. Nkedianye, the Deputy Director in charge of Community outreach enlightened the students that a time has come for them to grow. “The ladder of success is never crowded at the top but it is not easy to reach the top,” he said. He reminded students the internship program is part of the learning process.

“I am now able to; use the Global Positioning System (GPS), conduct group discussions and do research.”

Irene Kasaine from Kajiado County (attached to Mary Morara, a Dryland Resource Management PhD student doing her research in Kitengela).

“I assisted in data collection, I was able to; understand different ways of conducting research and make respondents provide reliable data. I learnt how to best plan while considering budget expectations and report writing which is critical in any research or field visit.”

Sylvester Mashati. A community member from Narok County (Attached to PhD research scientist Peris Kariuki).
Peter Kaimi from Taita Taveta County (attached to PhD candidate and research scientist Judith Mbau).

“I now have first hand experience in collecting and analyzing data. I know what community development and management entails. I have consequently developed interest in drylands and would wish to pursue a degree in drylands management.”

Priscillah Lalampaa from Samburu County. (Attached to Mainyoito Pastoralists Integrated Development Organization)

“I attended several trainings and created awareness on climate change and environment issues. I published several reports, wrote articles on climate change, understood the dangers of charcoal burning and human-wildlife conflict.”

Rebecca Katitia from Kajiado County. (Attached to Dupoto e Maa organization)

“I was dealing with a community in the dryland whose major problem was high rates of school drop outs. The girl child I discovered in the community is less privileged, does not attain basic school education and is often married off at a tender age. I explained to pupils the need to focus on formal education if meaningful change is to be achieved amongst them.”

Irene Nailan from Kajiado County. (Attached to Maa AIDS Awareness Program MAAP)

“I participated in data collection for the orphaned and vulnerable children. I recruited orphans who were awarded sponsorships to further their education. I participated in medical camps, assisted the finance assistant with budgeting and procurement. I wrote reports for the organization and applied for grants.”

Joe Lepatei from Kajiado County- (Attached to CSDES Office)

“I actively participated in communication activities at CSDES. I have been able to perfect my skills in; writing and editing, videography, photography, website and social media management and sound recording.”

Frankline Otiende from Kisumu County (Attached to CSDES office)

“I provided technical knowledge on dryland issues; I also enjoyed writing and editing at the Centre. My soft skills in minute taking and writing and coordination have greatly improved. The Centre through the Research for Development awards also sponsored part of my research for my Master’s degree program.”
For a long time, there has been a great desire to initiate a learning platform for knowledge exchange in the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS) at the University of Nairobi (UoN). This dream, though elusive, has now become a reality courtesy of the Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES). CSDES is a partnership between UoN and Colorado States University (CSU). The partnership initiated a series of monthly seminars at the CAVS with an aim of bringing together experts and practitioners from various fields, faculty members, students and other diverse institutions to discuss current issues affecting the communities and identify practical solutions for the issues.

The first such seminar was held on 13th July 2012. The theme: “Is REDD+ a good policy option for Kenya?” attracted more than 40 participants from various institutions including professors and postgraduate students from the University of Nairobi (UoN), Kenyatta University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. The presenters at the Seminar were Dr. Sophie Chapman from the University of Cambridge and Dr. Rowena Maguire from Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.

The second seminar which brought together more than 30 participants including two high school students aspiring to be scientists was held on 17th August 2012. The theme was “soil organic matter, microbial community dynamics and the economies of diversified dryland winter wheat and irrigated sugar beet cropping systems in Wyoming, USA.” The presenter was Dr. Eusebius Mukhwana, Director of SACRED and Soil Scientist from the University of Wyoming.

The third seminar was held on 11th October, 2012. The title of this seminar will be announced soon.
the seminar was; “Indigenous knowledge: does it have a place in development?” Giving his presentation, Mr. Patrick Maundu from the Kenya National Museums discounted the notion that indigenous Knowledge is old-fashioned, with little place in the realm of modern science and development. The seminar attracted 38 participants from diverse faculties.

“These seminars are very important in creating a vibrant think tank at the University of Nairobi,” Prof. Njoka, CSDES director said. He was speaking during the closure of the 3rd seminar. The Director acknowledged all the participants and urged them to participate and be more active in the subsequent seminars.

Mr. Patrick Maundu from Kenya National Museums giving a Lecture at the University of Nairobi (UoN), College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS). The title of the seminar was, “Indigenous knowledge: does it have a place in development.”
Participants of a workshop on Q fever pose for a photo at the end of the workshop at the University of Nairobi.

Prof. J.T Njoka CSDES CO PI, engages CSU and CSDES management committee in a discussion at UON Kibwezi Sub Station.

University of Nairobi and Michigan University students pose for a photo at Mpala Research Centre during a field trip.

Students from University of Nairobi, Isiolo Sub-Centre, CSU staff and CSDES staff pose for a group photo.

CSDES and CSU staff in a group photo with Kibwezi Centre station staff.

Prof. Woodmansee from CSU chats with pupils from Utafiti primary school in Kibwezi.
Participants of the internship evaluation seminar pose for a group photo after the seminar.

Rebecca Lolosoli (Right) Chairperson Umoja Women group and Prof. G. Wanjala the Dean of Education, UoN during a stakeholder engagement seminar in Samburu.

Prof. Agnes Mwang’ombe Principal, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences UoN (2nd right), Stacy Lynn (right), David Swift (3rd from right), Bob Woodmansee (Centre), Ms. Ngunga college registrar, Prof Jesse Njoka and Peter Kamande pose for a picture upon paying a courtesy call to the principal.

Umoja Women group members in a photo with CSU and CSDES team.

CSDES PI Prof. J.T. Njoka engages women from the pastoral community in Laikipia.

Kalama conservancy staff, CSDES and CSU team pose for a group photo.
Pulsating tenor voices reverberate in our ears. The intonation of women voices cannot be ignored as they walk into the village. They clap in sync with the music. Though they are singing in their local Samburu dialect one cannot fail to notice how sweet the music is to the ears. To a lay man, one might imagine the women might have attended a music training school considering their mastery. This is Umoja women group deep in the heart of Samburu County. From the horizon, the sun’s rays strike the Manyatta of this active village. It is 8.00 am but the temperatures are way above 35 degrees. This is despite the sight of the waters of River Ewaso Nyiro flowing nearby to the Lorian Swamp.

Our guide Akin, a community member quickly introduces us to Rebecca Lolosoli, a Samburu lady who is the head of the women group. After a brief chat we are quickly ushered into one of the Manyattas to have a feel of the real Samburu habitation. “This is interesting,” quips Dr. David Swift from Colorado State University (CSU).

Rebecca says the life of a Samburu woman entails taking care of the home. “As men go out to look after the cows, women have to remain taking care of their homesteads,” she says. Rebecca adds; “Contrary to how it is in most societies where the man builds the home, in our culture it is the woman who ensures that the house is constructed and children fed.” She says that as pastoralists, they are nomadic moving from place to place in search of pastures and water. This affects their quest for formal education, especially for the boys. The harsh environmental conditions with frequent droughts and sometimes floods mean that even human food is in short supply. “The harsh weather conditions have
become part and parcel of our lifestyle," she says with a tinge of a smile in her face.

Dr. Stacy Lynne from CSU quickly asks her (Rebecca) of what value does she think the drylands are. “These large tracts of lands are of no value to us except for wildlife conservation and our livestock which are our main sources of income,” She remarks. “We use these vast drylands for grazing purposes,” Rebecca answers in confidence. As she responds her fellow Samburu women nod their heads in affirmation seemingly concurring with what their chairperson had just told us. However, in their faces, one could quickly read that in their minds they were wondering what could be interesting Colorado State University (CSU) and the Center for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES) in the drylands.

Prof. Jesse Njoka, the Coordinator for CSDES poses a question to the women inquiring if they would wish to be trained on how to make the drylands more useful to their community than it is at the time. “Yes,” was the chorus answer that rang out of their voices. Simaloei, a 19 year old mother of two, is particularly interested to know what these courses could be. At this point Prof. Njoka takes the opportunity to introduce the Centre while highlighting the reason of our tour. The Centre, he shares with the eager throng, in collaboration with CSU is in the process of identifying courses that would be suited for the sustainable management of the drylands. He further discloses that the team would wish them to suggest those areas in which they would need training. The Centre is eager to see more pastoral students get higher education than is at the current time.

Speaking on behalf of the community women, Rebecca indicates to the CSU and CSDES teams that the community would appreciate short courses in grazing management in drylands, management of human-wildlife conflicts, forest management, and soil conservation among others. She adds that as a community they would also wish to be educated on dryland water use efficiency and land reclamation.

Prof. Bob Woodmansse assures the community that CSU together with CSDES will create short courses appropriate for the sustainable use of drylands. “Our aim is to create demand driven courses to be delivered through Open and Distance Learning (ODL)” the retired don adds. Through ODL, pastoralists as mobile as they are will be able to access formal education without being confined at a place (school) as is with the conventional formal education systems.

Pastoralists depend on camels as means of transport, source of food and wealth.
In a bid to fulfill its objective on community outreach and engagement, the Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies’ (CSDES) Coordinator led by Prof. J.T Njoka together with his communication team embarked on a community outreach program in Loita Division, Narok County where CSDES and Loita Cultural and Resource Centre agreed to work together to develop management approaches for dryland systems. Present at the meeting held on 3rd July 2012, were Mr. Josiah Odongo, Loita Division Officer, Mr. Charles Ole Saitabau, Chairman of Loita Cultural and Resource Centre, Dr. Cecila Onyango, CSDES Management Committee member, CSDES Communication team and Loita Community members.

Addressing the participants, Mr. Charles Ole Saitabau, welcomed the partnership and cited that the move was a great step in helping the Community overcome the ever-increasing challenges affecting their ecosystems and human livelihoods. He called on CSDES to support more students from the community to pursue higher education and also build the capacity of the community to conserve the environment.

In his remarks, Prof. Njoka, acknowledged the importance of the partnership between the two Centers. He emphasized on the significance of higher education for dryland communities as a lasting solution to the myriad of dryland challenges. The Coordinator pledged more educational support and urged the leaders to send more students to pursue higher education at the university.

Those in attendance appreciated that the two Centers are endowed with a lot of resources which if utilized can be beneficial to both CSDES and the Community. The Loita Cultural and Resource Centre possess a lot of indigenous and cultural knowledge while CSDES, through the University of Nairobi has a lot of scientific knowledge. These two spheres of knowledge are vital in the management of natural resources.
According to the 2009 population census by the Kenya government, Kibwezi district population stands at 248,704 with the number of females being 125,635 and male 123,069. The size of the district is 3,985 KM². Being a dryland poverty levels are very high. It can be attributed to unreliable, inadequate and erratic rainfall; lack of clean drinking water leading to increased cases of water-borne diseases (typhoid and amoebic dysentery); reduced economic productivity and high rates of unemployment; increased cost of medication; sparse location of health facilities and poor road network (GOK, 2002).

In Kibwezi, the University of Nairobi runs Kibwezi field station. But years of neglect has seen the once vibrant field station go close to its knees. Hostels, science laboratories that were once used by students have turned into a pale shadow of themselves.

Being a dryland region the Centre for Sustainable Dryland and Ecosystem Society CSDES) in its quest to create a dryland community outreach programs resulting to greater participation in higher education, especially by women, identified the field station as one of its outreach Centre’s. CSDES restored the field station centre to its glory. The center renovated the Kibwezi station in readiness to disseminate dryland short course for the locals. While accompanied by officials from Colorado State University (CSU), the two teams sought to know which dryland courses would assist Kibwezi locals better appreciate their environment and manage their dryland resources.

During the stakeholders meeting held in September 2012, residents requested to have a vibrant center that will emulate world class education Centre’s on dryland management issues. A center that will avail information and educational materials that will assist manage drylands for their benefits. Eunice Mbethi a local resident acknowledged that the adverse weather conditions are a hindrance to their economic development. She adds that with the weather conditions, locals require best practices that can enable them survive. She identified one of the key drivers as good education on how to realize the importance of the drylands.

“As locals we need short courses on fish farming, beekeeping, soil and water management for instance terracing, seed management and propagation,” she said.

Prof. Jesse T. Njoka CSDES CO PI informed residents of Kibwezi that the centre will provide Open Distance Learning (ODL) to the people of the dryland areas. “As a Center one of our roles is to uplift the standards of people of the drylands,” he said. “We want you the locals to learn how useful these areas can be,” the professor said. He highlighted the Center’s main purposes for the visit was to identify short course that can be offered to the locals.

Dr. Stacy Lynn CSU CO PI said CSDES in collaboration with CSU will adopt the ODL mode of teaching. She highlighted that ODL is cheaper and one does not have to take leave to study. “Our main role as CSU is to offer programs that are needs based since this will assist in mitigating against dryland problems,” she said.

Eunice adds that the locals also require a short course in water shed and water management. “This should include the management of surface and underground water sources to help improve water situation in drylands,” she said. Joshua Komu adds that short courses in management of tree seedlings, nurseries, and ecology of drylands and irrigation will serve to make a difference. “As community leaders if trained on dryland issues, we will further cascade such information and training for others to emulate,” he said.
Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) is a center for developing innovations and knowledge for improved livelihoods and commercialization of agriculture. Some of the services offered by KARI include soil manure and plant tissue analysis, livestock feed analysis, advisory services on feasibility, design, installation and management of irrigation and drainage systems, residues analysis in livestock products among others. The institution has several field stations one of them being Kiboko field station. At the station a pool of scientists burn the mid night oil to ensure the government parastatal accomplishes its mandate.

Among the staff needs, is the desire for higher education. In September 2012 CSDES management team and CSU team sought to get the views of Kiboko field station staff on accessing Master and PhD programs in Drylands management. During the stakeholders meeting staff expressed optimism.

Brian Ogillo said staffs in these remote areas are in dire need of courses in resource economics, orchard farming, entrepreneurship and instrumentation/practical work, particularly for technical staff. “We as staff in dryland areas will appreciate if such courses can be availed to us,” he said. Ogillo noted with the onset on Open Distance Learning (ODL) staff in these regions stand to gain and increase their technical knowledge. He said being in a research organization, such opportunities will assist institutions to further engage in research activities.

During the stakeholders meeting KARI staff also sought to understand how the Centre plans to conduct higher education training and conduct practicals on ODL/e-learning platforms. Prof. Jesse Njoka advised Kiboko staff that this would be addressed by use of videos and actual practicals at the university or ODL Centre’s. “It would involve the skills of practitioners and lecturers as shall be deemed appropriate,” Njoka said. He noted that the USAID NRM portal platform can deliver an exciting online academic program which can be closely compared with face to face classroom teaching/learning.
One of the major objectives of the Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Society (CSDES) is to build a hub of information on issues pertaining drylands.

The Centre strives to engage in partnerships with policy makers, government ministries, department or parastatals, education institutions, International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations that deal with dryland issues.

In the quest to enhance partnerships, the Centre has engaged in partnerships with organizations across the board on dryland issues. Just to mention a few, the Centre has initiated talks with; Practical Action, ministry of Agriculture, ministry of Livestock, Water and Irrigation ministry and the National Drought Management Authority. CSDES is also in talks with several USAID funded organizations. The Centre has engaged the Kenya Dryland Livestock Development Project, Cross-Project Dryland Consortium, Mpala Research Centre, Meeker Family Fund, Land and Mineral Resources in the EA Community, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), the Wangari Maathai Institute and Africa Conservation Centre among others.

The Centre has created a platform for dryland communities and organizations to voice challenges related to drylands sustainability and access to higher education for dryland communities. These partnerships have facilitated the Centre in setting its agenda, short and long term goals, and next steps for research and outreach according to the needs voiced by the dryland communities.

The Centre has also been able to discuss opportunities for collaboration and partnerships between different projects. CSDES leveraged US$100,000 funds from the Meeker Family Fund & Mpala Research Center to sponsor two graduate and four undergraduate students' education and research activities.

Franklin Otiende a graduate student says he has benefited from the partnership between Mpala Research Station and CSDES. “While at Mpala I gained a lot of experience in natural resource management, got a chance to interact with many scientist from abroad and taught me new data collection methods for instance the camera trapping technique,” a jubilant Otiende, acknowledged.

“While at Mpala I gained a lot of experience in natural resource management, got a chance to interact with many scientist from abroad and taught me new data collection methods for instance the camera trapping technique,”

From left: P.Kamande, CSDES Project Manager, Dr. S. Lynn (CSU), Prof. C. Mulei, Dean, Veterinary Sciences, Prof. J T. Njoka, Coordinator CSDES, Ms. Victoria Gammino, Director, Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and Daniel Macharia from CDC pose for a photo after a partnership meeting at the University of Nairobi.
In an effort to establish more collaborations and partnerships with institutions engaged in education, research and action supporting dryland communities, the Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES) has initiated talks with Practical Action.

Speaking in a meeting held on 10th August 2012 at the CSDES’ office, Grace Mukasa, Practical Action Regional Director, who was accompanied by Mr. Willy Tuimising, team leader on food and agriculture, said that Practical Action is looking forward to a strategic partnership with CSDES. The aim of the partnership is to come up with practical solutions for problems facing communities today. Some of the areas she identified for possible partnerships included: joint research and documentation of best practices; engagement of policy makers; joint fundraising; curriculum development and sharing of contacts.

On his part, Prof. J.T Njoka, CSDES Coordinator welcomed the discussions on the partnership. He acknowledged the role played by Practical Action in seeking solutions that are defined and owned by the community. The Coordinator said that the Centre is very keen to collaborate with institutions that will bring positive impacts on dryland communities.
Kalama conservancy rangers interested in basic education

With basic or no education, and a wild life conservancy to manage, Samburu worriers want basic education to manage it. During a stakeholders meeting held at the conservancy offices between CSDES management committee and CSU staff, they explained their management of the conservancy is faced by several challenges.

Some of the challenges they identified include little knowledge or education in the management of drylands, human wildlife conflict, best farming methods in drylands, taking care of wildlife and managing of the conservancy among others.

The former worriers now turned park rangers also expressed the need to be educated on land use planning and watershed management, forest products, forestry business management, accounts, tree/crop improvement among others. The stakeholder meeting was attended Prof. Bob Woodmanse, Dr. Stacy Lynn, Dr. David Swift, Sarah Woodmanse, Prof. Jesse Njoka, and Prof. Genevieve Wanjala among others.

Samburu National Reserve rangers optimistic

The Samburu National Reserve is located on the banks of the EwasoNg’iro river in Kenya. It is 165 km² in size and 350 kilometers from Nairobi and ranges in altitude from 800 to 1230m above sea level. In the middle of the reserve, the EwasoNg’iro flows through palm groves and thick riverine forests that provide water without which the game in the reserve could not survive in the arid country. Here, the big five roam freely. On the banks of the river are tourists’ hotels doing booming business. The park is managed by the county council and does not depend on the central government.

During a visit to the reserve by CSDES and CSU, the team was told that education on management of park and drylands management are some of the biggest challenges facing the community leaving inside the park. It was revealed because of interaction between wild life and domestic animals there are situations whereby diseases spread.

The rangersalso highlighted that coping up with the drylands weather conditions is also a hindrance to their development. Other courses rangers sought to be educated on include livestock production, human wildlife interaction, and range management among others.

CSDES holds a successful two day GIS training workshop

The Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES) held a successful two day Geo-Information Systems (GIS) training workshop at the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS), Department of Land Resource Management & Agricultural Technology (LARMAT) from 19th to 20th June 2012.

The objectives of the course were: to create understanding of GIS data structures; introduce the students to the ArcGIS environment; to train the students on how to display, query and edit GIS data. The students were also trained on how to explore geospatial relationships and on how to produce maps. The training which benefitted a total of twelve PhD students was conducted by Dr. Laban MacOpiyo and FikirAlemayehu.

The GIS lab was established by CSDES in early June at the UoN, CAVS in line with the Centre’s second objective that seeks to develop a dryland leadership learning program at the UoN resulting in greater capacity of students and faculty to address the problems of dryland ecosystems and Societies in Kenya.

Dr. Laban MacOpiyo conducts the GIS training at the University of Nairobi, CAVS.
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