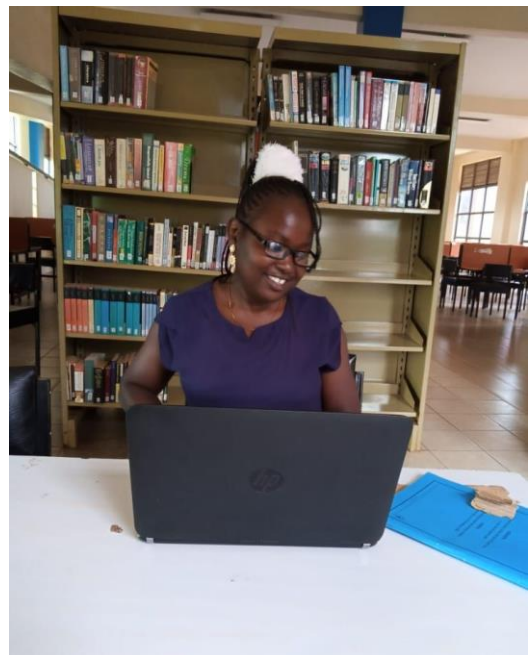


INTERIM REPORT ON SCHOLARSHIP PROGRESS

I am Carolyne Wanjuki Ileri undertaking Master's degree in Biology of Conservation at University of Embu, Kenya.

As the saying goes, a long journey starts with a single step. I thought my dreams would never come true after the barbaric attack by the al-Shabaab militia to innocent students at Garissa University. But I thank God by the fact that the DAAD came through during the difficult times of my life and helped me to find my way back to normal with their education support programs, which really helped me complete my first academic degree with a DAAD scholarship. This opportunity really pushed me to put more efforts in my studies regardless of the flashbacks of trauma incidences.

After my Bachelor's degree program, I never thought I could pursue a Master's degree, which would bring me closer towards fulfilling my dream of attaining a PhD. This was made possible by the DAAD-Stiftung, which created a new transition to my future goals, which I never imagined would come true, by awarding me with the Garissa Master Scholarship Kenya. I managed to be among the few selected scholarship holders, and it was an honor for me to be awarded with the scholarship. This golden opportunity allowed me to continue with my studies and lay the foundation for a successful start into my professional life. I take this opportunity to really thank you for giving me such a golden opportunity that I never imagined could have happened to me and I really appreciate your trust and confidence in me. I am delighted to be part of the DAAD-Stiftung's family, and I promise to work extremely smart so as not to waste resources which you entrusted on me until I reach my goals. Apart from studies, I love traveling to explore about nature, playing volleyball and watching movies.



During my studies in the first academic year, I have interacted with scholars from different fields, such as in statistics and agriculture, and this has provided me with an opportunity to exchange knowledge and ideas. I have also made a couple of new friends in the past academic year.

Various interactive sessions within the institution of my field and general workshops held have really challenged me not to only limit myself up to MSc level, but to also look forward to PhD level. For sure education is a continuous process which impacts one with new knowledge and skills creating an opportunity to challenge oneself more. So far, I have gained skills (investigative skills on how to identify a problem, research, observation skills, etc.) through my course work which I will implement through my project work to solve any emerging problems that arise and also to help in improving the livelihoods of individuals. My lecturers have been the best teachers I could ever ask for, very interactive, high mastery level and always ready to help. My supervisors, Dr. Justine Nyaga and Dr. Hannah Karuri have played a key role through my Master's journey. They are very supportive, always lending an ear to listen and guiding me accordingly.

Moreover, they are really committed to ensuring they walk with me throughout my Master's

journey encouraging me whenever I feel low.



Currently, I am in the process of drafting my proposal for guidance during data collection, analysis and in building my thesis writing, following direct guidelines from my supervisors. I intend to look into the contribution of small mammals (Kenyan African mole rat, naked mole rat, white-tailed mongoose, bush baby, monkeys, baboons, honey badger, etc.) to human wildlife conflict around three forest patches in Embu, Kenya. This is because small scale farmers who reside near forest edges have consistently suffered threats, losses and damage from small mammals with minimal intervention from the

government, for instance crop raiding, livestock predation, etc. and their consequences on disease transmission to both livestock and humans.

After proposal writing I will be defending my work at departmental level. The proposal will then be taken through several processes within the university to ensure that the proposed research work is of good quality. The process of data collection will follow after the proposal approval; thereafter, progress reports shall be presented after three months. It will be a pleasure if a member of the DAAD family either DAAD e.V. or DAAD-Stiftung be present in either of the presentations which are mostly done online due to the Covid pandemic.