

## Mastercard Foundation and USIU-Africa partner to expand access to higher education in Africa

By Taigu Muchiri, Brenda Odhiambo and Laurie Armstrong



File photo

*The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program will enable 1,000 high-performing students facing financial, gender, displacement, or disability constraints to receive quality education and leadership development over the next 10 years*

On Tuesday, July 14, 2020, USIU-Africa and the Mastercard Foundation announced a partnership that will enable 1,000 high-performing students to receive quality education and leadership development over the next 10 years under the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program. The partnership provides scholarships for high potential students facing financial, gender, displacement, or disability constraints. At least 70 percent of the young people who benefit from the partnership will be young women, while 25 percent will be displaced or refugee youth, and at least 10 percent will be young people living with disabilities. With this USD 63.2 million partnership,

USIU-Africa joins the Foundation's expanding global network of partners committed to developing a generation of African leaders who will use their knowledge and skills to lead change in their communities, and contribute to meaningful transformation across the continent.

Speaking after the signing of the partnership, USIU-Africa's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Zeleza noted that the partnership was a milestone in the University's history.

“With the support of the Mastercard Foundation, we look forward to significantly expanding the impact and reach that USIU-Africa has had all across the world, by moulding students who will catalyze Africa’s continued advancement into a better, brighter future. By embracing the Scholars Program, we will increase the international student population from 15 percent to 20 percent which is in line with the university’s strategy of internationalization. Also, the Scholars Program will enhance socio-economic diversity of the student population as it will increase the number of students with disability, refugees, young women and displaced youth to address barriers to higher education for these marginalized populations,” he said.

Mastercard Foundation’s Chief Program Officer, Peter Materu, is excited to on-board USIU-Africa as a partner in the Scholars Program, noting the university’s excellent academic standing and demonstrated commitment to equity and inclusion.

“For close to a decade, the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program has worked in Africa, through initiatives like Wings to Fly and direct partnerships

with educational organizations at the secondary and tertiary levels, to enable young people from disadvantaged communities to access quality learning and develop their leadership potential. Our partnership with USIU-Africa builds on this historic work, which is already serving thousands of young leaders on the continent. Fundamentally, it is about expanding opportunity to all young people, irrespective of their socio-economic background,” he said.

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program is an initiative to develop Africa’s next generation of leaders by giving students, whose talent and promise exceed their financial resources, an opportunity to complete their education. Through the Program, Scholars receive holistic student support, including comprehensive scholarships, leadership development, and access to internships and industry-driven career services. The Scholars Program is a growing commitment and to date, the Program has committed over USD 1 billion to supporting the education and leadership development of more than 37,000 young people

# The School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension hosts colloquium on the impact of remote schooling on parents with students enrolled in private secondary schools

By Brenda Odhiambo

On Thursday, July 9, the School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension hosted a colloquium on the impact of remote schooling on parents whose children were enrolled in private secondary schools in Nairobi County. The study sought to explore the impact that synchronous and asynchronous remote schooling had had on the parents of primary and secondary school students, who had to suddenly adjust to this mode of learning.

The paper, which was the first of its kind to explore the impact of remote schooling on the parents of remotely schooled students in Kenya, was focused on determining whether there were better ways that parents could adjust to both working from home and homeschooling their children, in addition to exploring whether home schooling affected parents’ productivity in their work.

Dr. Emmanuel Adejoke, the lead author of the paper, noted that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic had led to a sudden shift in lifestyle for both parents and students, which created several challenges for parents, who now had to homeschool their children through remote learning, and to students, who had to adjust to learning away from the classrooms.

“Due to the pandemic, the continuity of education was at stake, as there was no way to determine the exact time at which the pandemic would be over, so that schools would resume, which meant that there would be a loss of things that were learnt in the past, which was an issue of concern among parents and students,” she said.

“Parents also had the additional challenge of trying to meet basic needs due to the loss of income and jobs as a result of the pandemic, in addition to trying to meet the costs of the adoption of the technology required for the adoption of remote learning,” she added.

According to the study, among those who had remote learning programs for



their children, it was determined that parental assistance with technology for remote learning was a major challenge, with a 55.5% response rate, while 51.8% of the study's respondents noted that they faced financial challenges of catering for the technology tools. Respondents also reported facing challenges in terms of unavailability of technology and extra costs of feeding the students at home at 37.3% and 26.4%, respectively.

In her presentation, Dr. Adejoke highlighted the fact that with remote learning, it was not possible to appropriately determine and control the optimal levels of parental involvement in students' learning, noting that there was no existing standard that controlled what is imparted to guardians about their duties or how that data is conveyed.

"Some online schools expect guardians to watch a video that clarifies their job as a supervisor, or mentor, however, doesn't consolidate an ensuing check for comprehension or perception to ensure that guardians are sticking to the prerequisites. Moreover, guardians don't have the preparation to give similar assistance needed to encourage their child's participation in online schooling," she said.

In his comments, Dr. Collins Oduor, the paper's co-author noted that parental involvement was critical in the student success, noting that it was important for schools to have different levels at which parents would be involved in their children's schooling.

"For parental inclusion to happen and be viable, schools must furnish guardians with different chances to have their influence in their children's

training. Teachers must also ensure that the structure is adhered to by having continued correspondence with families," he said.

He also pointed out the importance of parental reinforcement in the success of their children's virtual learning, noting that it entailed supporting parental behaviors that contributed to the development and strengthening of a child's positive attitude towards learning, as well as a parent's positive attitude such as self-confidence which impacts on the child and encourages better attitude towards virtual learning.

Dr. Oduor highlighted some of the positive aspects of remote learning, which included: reduced schooling costs due to a lack of commuting to and from school, ability to monitor the quality of education offered, ability to monitor the children's character and attitude to education, better support for children with disability, among others.

The study concluded that remote learning could be easily accepted by many Kenyan parents, with 39.8% of the respondents noting that they would recommend the implementation of remote schooling, having experienced some benefits from it, with 24.8% indicating that they would not recommend its implementation. In their recommendation, Dr. Adejoke and Dr. Oduor noted that it would be critical for the government to address the factors that may hinder effective remote learning, thus encouraging parental involvement and support. They also recommended that the government and education practitioners should officially develop and implement standards and curriculum for the implementation of remote learning in Kenya in preparation for future pandemics.

## Admissions Office hosts virtual open day for Nova Pioneer students

By Linet Aguko

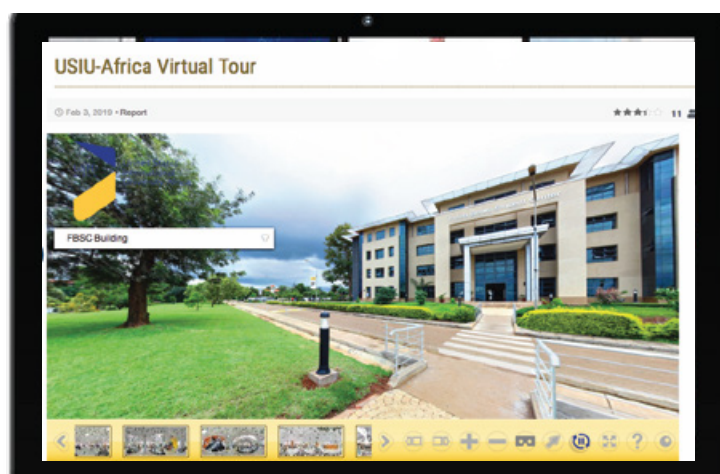
Last week, the Admissions Office held a virtual Open Day for the Form Four Class at Nova Pioneer School, alongside their Careers teacher. The session was conducted as part of the department's efforts to market the University to students in their last year of high school, including providing career advice to attendees, clarifying queries about the university and its processes and strengthening existing relationships with high schools.

The Admissions team took the opportunity to illustrate the learning opportunities that were available at USIU-Africa, including the online learning platforms that the University had deployed during the lockdown as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The team also took the students through the end to end process of getting into USIU-Africa, from the admissions process, right through to the registration for classes. These sessions were conducted by Admissions staff alongside selected faculty members, who were at hand to provide detailed information and guidance to the students regarding various programs

Dr. George Lumbasi, the Chief Admissions Manager begun the session by giving a brief background of USIU-Africa and gave an in-depth explanation as to why the University's programs were some of the most sought-after in the country and in the region.

"Joining USIU-Africa means having the opportunity to experience a holistic education, focused on both academic and personal growth, in areas of student life such as club activities, community service and sports. We also ensure that each of our students is given a fighting chance to complete their education by putting in place comprehensive financial aid programs that assist our financially needy students to complete their studies," he said.

The students also had the opportunity to chat to current students enrolled in



a wide range of programs, representative of USIU-Africa's diversity in both its programs and its student body, which is drawn from several nationalities across the world. The students shared their journey to and at USIU-Africa, their reasons for enrolling at the University, tips for excelling at USIU-Africa, among others.

At the end of the session, the students were taken through a virtual campus tour, which allowed them to get a feel of the University's world class facilities, which many of them reported looking forward to experiencing in person once schools opened.

# Dealing with grief during the COVID-19 pandemic

By Lydia Winda



The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new normal that most people are struggling to adjust to; from lockdown to curfew, wearing masks, sanitizing or washing hands, no shaking hands or hugging to social distancing among others. People were caught off guard and most, if not all, imagined that it was going to last a shorter period than it has. Unfortunately, that has not been the case since things are becoming worse by the day given that most countries including Kenya are having an increase in number of new cases which can be attributed to mass testing. This period has also instilled a lot of fear in people related to their work, health, uncertainty about tomorrow, parents, grandparents, our country, way of life and for some, their mortality.

The ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has affected everyone in one way or another. One of its major effects is loss, which could be the loss of a job, loss of a loved one, or even the anticipatory loss of someone close to you who may have contracted the virus, loss of business, normalcy, social interactions, freedom, and predictable future among other issues.

Grief takes five stages, according to the Kubler-Ross model. These stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. It is important to acknowledge that the stages are not fixed, they may or may not occur following the order above, some people may not experience all the stages while others experience all, some experience specific stages multiple times while others only once or never.

## Denial

One can live in denial of emotional and even physical pain and this delays the opportunity for early intervention and the fight to survive hence preserving life.

Denial may look like:

- The Government and people are blowing this COVID-19 issue out of proportion.
- It is like the normal flu.
- I'm not old, my immune system is strong.
- I don't have a pre-existing health issue that would predispose me to contracting COVID-19.
- COVID-19 does not exist.

## Anger

Anger is a common feeling when people are undergoing any form of loss or grief. This is the time one asks themselves the question "why me", or they go through the feeling of life being unfair. Instead of dealing with the issue at hand, sometimes people put blame on others, they may become hostile, could refuse to obey rules, externalize the problem and sometimes it could go as far as experiencing power plays.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, anger looks like:

- This is China's fault, they should have contained the virus to prevent it from

spreading to other parts of the world.

- Why am I the one who lost my job and yet others are still working?
- The hospital did not take good care of my patient that's why he/she succumbed, why are other people getting cured of COVID-19?

## Bargaining

This occurs once one has processed denial and is in the process of accepting the reality as it is and is able to do away with the belief that they have control. Essentially in this stage, one tries to compromise to find an easier and less painful way.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, bargaining looks like:

- All these will end soon before December and we shall go back to living our normal lives.
- I can tell if someone is sick from seeing how they look. I will be fine so long as I stay around people who look healthy.
- I hardly visit crowded places, so I'm safe from it.
- It is OK to spend time with others so long as they wash their hands, wear masks and you observe social distance.

## Despair and Depression

Despair and depression creeps in when the truth eventually sinks in and there is no more room for denial. At this point one feels hopeless, powerless, inability to control what is going on around them. Some people withdraw from life, feel numb and not want to come out of bed. Some may have suicidal ideations.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, despair sounds like:

- I don't feel like leaving my bed.
- My life will never go back to normal.
- I will never recover from the losses I have incurred due to COVID-19.
- I'm not able to pay school fees for this semester, I will never finish campus, I feel helpless.
- There is nothing worth living for anymore, I just want to sleep and never wake up again.

## Acceptance

This is the point where you make peace with the fact that you cannot change whatever is happening around you. Accept the new normal and live with it. Accept that there will be good and bad days.

Acceptance during COVID-19 pandemic sounds like:

- I cannot control COVID-19, but I can play my part by washing my hands, wearing a mask, observing social distance and being positive.
- I might not be in a position to meet my friends physically, but we communicate virtually. I can also work from home if I cannot go to work.
- Make peace with having online classes. I am lucky enough to be going on with classes albeit online. My academic life is not at a standstill.

## How to cope with loss and grief during the pandemic

### Acknowledge and accept all your feelings.

Acknowledge the pain and the loss then allow yourself to go through the pain and give yourself time to recover. Do not rush, recover at your own speed. Denying the loss does not reduce the pain, but instead lengthens the suffering.

### Talk about your loss.

This can help lower the burden of grief as a problem shared is half solved. You can reach out to family and friends through voice or video calls, chat, text and any other online platform.

### Take stock of what is going well.

Journal or write down about your strengths and good moments each day to Monitor your progress. Even as you do this, be cognizant of the fact healing occurs in difference phases as described above and you move into and out of different feelings. Be aware of your triggers even as you pen down your feelings and thoughts each day. Be aware of any form of relapse.



### Pay attention to the things you have control over.

Stay at home as much as you can, washing your hands or sanitizing as often as is necessary, keeping social distance, eating healthy foods, exercise and maintaining a daily schedule.

### Self-care.

Get plenty of rest, eat regular meals even if you don't feel like it, exercise regularly and allow yourself to be happy when you feel happy.

### Reach out to helpful resources available.

You can seek online counseling by sending an email to [counsel@usiu.ac.ke](mailto:counsel@usiu.ac.ke) to talk to a therapist, job advertisements online if job hunting, business ideas, spiritual support from your spiritual leaders, medical assistance in the event of health related challenges among other resources.

### When to seek help

Feelings of grief are natural reactions to significant losses. If these feelings persist, your mood does not improve or worsens, or you feel unable to function and perform basic daily activities, reach out for help.

### Adopted from Psychology Today

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/love-and-sex-in-the-digital-age/202003/covid-19-and-the-grief-process>

Reach out to the USIU-Africa counseling Center on [counsel@usiu.ac.ke](mailto:counsel@usiu.ac.ke) or call 0730116748 to talk to a therapist.

# Media Mentions

Compiled by Winnie Nyakio

**10 JULY 2020:** USIU-Africa was mentioned by Techweez in an article titled "Part 1: 61 Percent of Kenyan Men Are on Twitter Anonymously."

<https://techweez.com/2020/07/10/usiu-simelab-social-media-summary/>

**13 JULY 2020:** Citizen TV mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "Kiprono Kittony appointed as Chairperson of Nairobi Securities Exchange Board."

<https://citizentv.co.ke/business/kiprono-kittony-appointed-as-chairperson-of-nairobi-securities-exchange-board-338657/>

**13 JULY 2020:** The Star mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "NSE Board appoints Kiprono Kittony as its chairperson."

<https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2020-07-13-nse-board-appoints-kiprono-kittony-as-its-chairperson/>

**13 JULY 2020:** The Standard mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "Double standards in policy a blot on coronavirus fight."

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/commentary/article/2001378549/double-standards-in-policy-a-blot-on-coronavirus-fight>

**14 JULY 2020:** USIU-Africa was mentioned by Techweez in an article titled "Part 2: 83% of Kenyans Encountered and Shared Fake News With Friends."

<https://techweez.com/2020/07/14/fake-news-blogs-social-media-use/>

**14 JULY 2020:** USIU-Africa was mentioned by allAfrica in an article titled "Kenya: Kiprono Kittony Appointed NSE Chairperson."

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202007140246.html>



**14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020:** USIU-Africa was mentioned by Kenyans.co.ke in an article titled "Life of Media Boss Tasked With Running The Nairobi Securities Exchange."

<https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/55287-life-media-boss-tasked-running-kenyas-stock-exchange>

**14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020:** IT NEWS AFICA mentioned Usiu-Africa in an article titled "Mastercard Foundation Partners with USIU-Africa to Expand Higher Education Access in Africa."

<https://www.itnewsafica.com/2020/07/mastercard-foundation-partners-with-usiu-africa-to-expand-higher-education-access-in-africa/>

## Upcoming events

**Launch of Global Leadership and Governance program**  
23 July, 2020

**Leading in Uncertain Times: Governance, Legal and HR issues that organizations have to contend with**  
30 July, 2020

**Innovation and Incubation Centre Guest Speaker Series**  
Thursday, 23 July 2020, at 6:00pm:  
Stephanie Kirathi, CEO of Alero Group;  
Angelina Ndung'u, CEO of Intel Domain, Ltd.  
Topic: Women Technology Leaders and How to Manage Technology Startups.

Thursday, 30 July 2020, at 6:00pm  
Josiah Mugambi, Co-Founder & COO at Qhala  
Topic: Technology Startups for Non-Techies.

