

Interview with nutritionist Jeff Wamiti

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Jeff Wamiti (left) together with Stephen Mureithi (right) who was the one introducing Drylands Transforma to Jeff. Photo: Jeff Wamiti

There are now several Postdocs and PhD students affiliated to the Drylands Transform project. Jeff Wamiti is one of the postdoctoral researchers and his focus is on the most vulnerable group of people in the drylands – children and pregnant women. Here is a short interview with Jeff about his work in the project.

How did you come to know about the project?

I was introduced to the Drylands Transform Project by the Country Coordinator in Kenya. He is my mentor and a colleague at the University of Nairobi, Faculty of Agriculture. I learnt more about the project from the website and was pleased to see that one study objective met my research and academic background. I immediately expressed interest in the project and requested to be involved as I felt I could contribute to the attainment of the objective and I would also learn a lot.

What is your academic background?

I am a certified nutritionist and dietician with my highest degree being a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Applied Human Nutrition (2019) from the University of Nairobi, Kenya. Previously, I also attained my Master of Science Degree in Human Nutrition (2015). I have participated in a summer school at the International Livestock and Research Institute where I was trained on techniques of data collection (both quantitative and qualitative), geospatial analysis and mathematical modelling.

What is your role within the project?

In the Drylands Project I am a Postdoctoral Researcher working on to describe the impact of climate variability on livelihood strategies and resilience. I am currently working on a scoping review on climate/livelihood/health/nutrition. Next, I will engage in a quantitative and qualitative survey within the study sites.



Jeff Wamiti in front of the "hay barn" in one project site in Chepareria, Kenya. Photo: Jeff Wamiti

What do you think about the project sites?

I am fortunate to have visited the four project sites in Kenya and Uganda. This dryland region is exposing the communities residing there to recurrent water scarcity and instability in food production. This impacts livelihood strategies and exposes the populations to malnutrition especially among the most vulnerable groups including children and women who are pregnant and lactating. While visiting, we shared a lot of educative experiences with the locals, the community leaders and administrative heads. Being a nutritionist I believe this presents a challenge to me to study the changes in livelihood strategies including food consumption and contribute to the development of interventions that can alleviate the situation. That is why the project sites are ideal for this kind of research.

What is the next step?

I look forward to take part in the survey and the following data analysis, which is an aspect of the project I enjoy the most. In addition, I look forward to learn from the other researchers in the project who are from diverse fields of study and to co-author research articles with the rest of the team.

[More information about the work with nutrition and health aspects within Drylands Transform can be found here.](#)

Facts:



Drylands Transform

Drylands Transform is a 4-year research project funded by Formas that started up during the Covid-19 pandemic in October 2020. It includes an interdisciplinary research team representing SLU and seven other universities and international organisations from Sweden, Kenya and Uganda.

[Visit the website for Drylands Transform.](#)

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