

# **PUBLIC – PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN RESEARCH – KENYATTA UNIVERSITY LEADING THE WAY**

**Prof Waceke Wanjohi leads a Research Program funded by Osho Chemical Industries Limited**



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Kenya University is putting great emphasis on collaborations with local industries to ensure relevance of academic and research programs. One of the on - going flagship project which is funded by Osho Chemical Industries Limited (OCIL) is on ***“Bioprospecting for Potential Biocontrol Agents in Kenya and Capacity Building in Crop Protection”***. The project is training seven fully funded MSc students thereby supporting the development of highly skilled human resource to support sustainable agricultural production in Kenya. The students are conducting research to identify fungal and bacterial organisms and plant extracts that have high potential for use in biological control of the multiple diseases and pests on crops of major economic importance in Kenya. The potential impact of this project is significant, with a footprint across 13 of 47 counties in Kenya (27%) and targeting diverse crops and multiple pests. The students have made significant progress in identifying microbial agents and plant extracts with proven effect under laboratory conditions. The materials are being investigated under field conditions in preparation for large scale production and formulation for commercialization. After successful completion of their study the students will be awarded a Master of Crop Protection degree. The university is excited about this mutually beneficial collaborative project and has put in place the necessary mechanisms to strengthen and sustain such partnerships. The KU- OCIL project which started in 2016 is being implemented in the department of Agricultural Science and Technology in the School of Agriculture and Enterprise Development by Prof. Waceke Wanjohi as the Principal Investigator and a team comprising supervisors and a research Administrator.

## **Project objectives**

- Developing highly skilled human resource to support sustainable agricultural production in Kenya
- Bioprospects for fungal and bacterial biocontrol agents and botanicals in 13 counties in Kenya
- Commercialization of the highly efficacious biocontrol agents and botanicals

### **A word from the students:**



Aprodisia Kavutu: *“Through this project, I have attended a conference which benefited me in exchanging ideas, sharing of my expertise and socializing with international counterparts which is of great importance in my career. So far, I thank Kenyatta University and Osho chemical industries limited for their support.”*



Teresia Wanjiru: *“During my research funded by KU-OCIL collaboration, I have developed skills such as isolation and identification of microbes, presentation skills, networking skills among others. Frequent write-up on monthly progress report and follow-ups has made it possible to keep up with research timelines.” Thanks to the excellent leadership of the PI*



Anne Kariuki: *“Exposure to the industry through visits to the OSHO Chemicals Company and financial facilitation to attend conferences has been of paramount importance in building my skills and networking in the agriculture industry. Funding for my research means timely completion of my studies, acquiring high quality skills and quality products for the commercialization.” I appreciate the mentoring and coaching by my supervisors*



Steve Agong: *“I’ve had a perfect platform to learn much on the practical aspects of plant pathology and adequate time to practice and gather experiences on in vitro and in vivo evaluations. I’ve also had the opportunity to attend an International conference (RUFORUM) which was mind opening and I got the opportunity to interact with ‘big fish’ in various academic fields with various inspiring project, experiences and speeches working towards achieving a common goal. I’ve been able to learn much about teamwork working with and around fellow colleagues working on different research topics.”*



Arthur Wamani: *“I have visited and interacted with the OCIL’s staff where I gained firsthand experience on aspects of agrochemical commerce. This project has enabled me to approach my studies with an aim of having an insightful information and a tangible output that will be beneficial to the scholars and stakeholders in the industry respectively. I have also been accorded an opportunity to interact with lead researchers and students in agricultural disciplines from all over the continent through Ruforum biennial conference. This came with a lot of eye opener and appreciation on the importance of Public Private Partnerships cooperation in research for a better future.”*



Jane Musango: *“In this KU-OCIL project have been able to learn and apply various techniques especially in nematology and mycology. This has advanced my*

*knowledge in aspects learned during course work. I have realized that though research is rewarding, it is demanding and requires commitment. Have also managed to interact with researchers who have shared their vast experiences. I have noted that research is expensive thus need to financially support young researchers especially students.”*



*Barasa Wabukala: “Research through the KU-OCIL project has exposed me to very high professional standards in research in entomology discipline and my experience in this project has been great. I am grateful of various skills that I have been trained such as rearing of arthropod pests, isolation, identification and mass production of the microbial antagonists with regard to project’s key objective. As I progress with the research work which aims at isolation of the local entomopathogenic fungi effective in management of tomato pests, I have gained confidence to mentor B.Sc. students pursuing projects in Entomology particularly dealing with Bio-pesticides.”*