



Remarkable Firsts

Using Education, Donations, and Hope to Help Kenyans Back Home Student Establishes First Humanitarian Fund



Gathua (L) and a colleague help advance education for Kenyan girls.

Over winter break, Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral student **Wangui Gathua** traveled to her native Kenya only to find herself caught up in the violent aftermath of the disputed reelection of President Mwai Kibaki that claimed 1,000 lives

and forced 400,000 Kenyans to flee their homes. What Gathua saw both shocked her and spurred her to action.

Gathua found that young girls whose families could no longer pay for schooling had become particularly vulnerable in this turbulent environment. Polygamy, pregnancy, AIDS, and sexual exploitation further marginalized them. So when Gathua returned to Iowa City she formed the Kenyan Humanitarian Fund, a branch of the School Outreach Community Based Organization (SOCOBO) Iowa founded in 2002.

SOCOBO, which Gathua helped found in Kenya in 2000, was created to raise awareness about the plight of young Kenyan girls and help advance their education. Through the SOCOBO Iowa Kenya Humanitarian Fund, Gathua plans to send donations of canned and dry foods, clothing, books, and other supplies to people back in Kenya, particularly young girls, who are in need.

Today, SOCOBO boasts 35 teachers from seven regions in Kenya and offers paralegal training for members, raises funds for communities, and creates scholarships for girls in need. "By providing both the means and opportunity for getting an education," Gathua said, "the group empowers women and helps them become self-sufficient with the goal of leveling the balance of socioeconomic power among Kenyan men and women."

As for her own career, Gathua hopes to use her degree as a powerful tool for fighting injustice in Kenya. She came to Iowa with the hope that, by further educating herself, she could learn how to educate and counsel others.

"I'm not able to give them back their lives," she said. "I don't have the power to fix it. But there is hope."

Assistant Professor **David Duys** said Gathua is fully integrating her interest in counseling, healthcare, and empowerment with her academic program.

"She is already planning to use her education to help Kenyans by researching effective interventions for children and adolescents affected by AIDS/HIV," Duys said.

SOCOBO Iowa welcomes donations of money, supplies, and food. Checks should be made out to School Outreach Community Based Organization-Kenyan Humanitarian Fund. The drop-off locations are at 537 Terrace Rd., Iowa City, or N 153B in the Lindquist Center on the UI campus. All donations will be shipped to Kenya from these points. For more information or to learn how else to help, contact Gathua at wangui-gathua@uiowa.edu or at 319-930-1883.

Awards and Recognition Faculty, Students Make National Mark

Doctoral candidate **Tracey Magda** and Assist. Prof. **Liz Hollingworth** played a major role in this year's National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) conference.



Doctoral candidate Tracey Magda and Prof. Liz Hollingworth (R)

Magda, chair of the NCME Graduate Student Issues Committee, is the UI's only student representative. Hollingworth is one of the faculty advisors and symposium mediators.

Hollingworth said she's proud of Magda's efforts as the graduate student committee chair. "She has represented our university well," she said.



Prof. Michael Kolen

The National Council on Measurement in Education honored Educational Measurement and Statistics Professor **Michael Kolen** with their prestigious Award for Career Contributions to Educational Measurement.

Curriculum and Supervision Assistant Professor **Christy Moroye** received the American Educational Research Association's Division B (Curriculum Studies) Outstanding Dissertation Award for her research, "Greening Our Future: The Practices of Ecologically Minded Teachers."

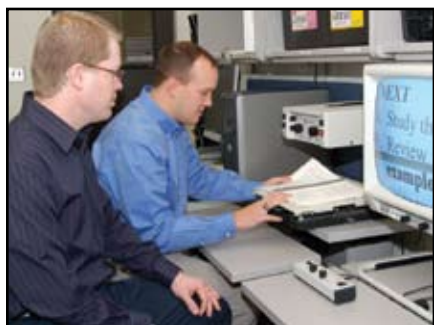


Prof. Christy Moroye



Prof. Chris Ogren

The American Educational Research Association's Division F (History and Historiography) elected Social Foundations Associate Professor **Chris Ogren** to a two-year term as secretary.



Estrada-Hernández (L) and Stachowiak assess Iowa's assistive technology needs.

The UI Office of the Vice President for Research awarded over \$30,000 to Rehabilitation Counseling Assistant Professor **Noel Estrada-Hernández** and **Jim Stachowiak**, coordinator of the College's new Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research (ICATER), to conduct a statewide assistive technology needs assessment.

Measuring the Assistive Technology Needs of Iowans with Disabilities

Special education services provided to Iowan's with disabilities guarantee an active participation in public education, the same as their peers without disabilities. Services such as assistive technology are provided to help with this goal. Assistive Technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, or product system that increases, maintains, or improves the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Current research documents assistive technology's role in facilitating education, employment, and independent living outcomes for adults with disabilities. However, little attention has been paid to the identification of AT needs in the school systems. This study will determine how well Iowa's schools are utilizing AT by

measuring the state's AT needs as perceived by students with disabilities, their parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, and AT service providers.

"Ultimately, we hope to develop an understanding of the current status of assistive technology service provision, knowledge and experience, available resources, and factors affecting the delivery of effective assistive technology services in Iowa schools," said Estrada-Hernández.

This research marks only the beginning for the important work ICATER plans to do.

"With the results from this study, we will then be able to address other contemporary issues regarding AT in education such as its use as an accommodation on standardized testing," said Stachowiak.

Remarkable Research

Community Educator Scholarships Help Diversify Iowa's Work Force

Heather Webster (MA '06) couldn't have completed her Developmental Reading master's degree without assistance from a scholarship program she calls a "blessing."

Webster was among the first to receive the Community Educator Scholarship, an award funded by the Graduate College that provides tuition support for underrepresented students pursuing their master's degree in the College of Education. Recipients must also be active teachers or educators.

The award benefited its first students in spring 2004 and funds four students at a time for between 9 and 18 credit hours per fiscal year for up to three years.

Webster, who is now a Reading Recovery and Title I teacher in Little Rock, said the Community Educator Scholarship made pursuing her degree financially possible and cemented her decision to attend The University of Iowa. "This scholarship provides worthy and willing educators with the tools to enhance and define their pedagogical practices in the classroom," she said.

Rachel Collins (BA '00/MA '07) earned her degree in School Counseling while working full time. The Community Educator

Scholarship allowed her to take fewer classes than required to qualify for traditional financial aid and student loans.

Today she is a school counselor at Kennedy High School in Cedar Rapids and said she appreciates the opportunities the scholarship opened up to her.

"This important scholarship shows that The University of Iowa is committed to helping the state of Iowa diversify its highly qualified work force," she said.

Sam Black, who will graduate this spring, is one of the newest Community Educator Scholarship beneficiaries. He started his master's degree in Social Foundations after learning about the award. Black was previously a probation officer who made frequent visits to local schools.

"I'm not an educator in the traditional sense," he said. "By the same token, demand for my services in schools far exceeded my availability. The Community Educator Scholarship provided me the tools to fill the niche I've found in education more effectively."



Collins provides advice and counsel to Kennedy HS student Anthony Cooper.

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