

# Nyambura Mpesha

## Curriculum Vitae

### Education

Bachelor of Arts Degree in English, University of Nairobi, Kenya, 1973.

Master of Arts Degree in English Literature, Dar es Salaam University, Tanzania. 1979.

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in English Literature, specializing in Children's Literature, Kenyatta University, Kenya, 1996.

Course in Copy Editing, East African Literature Bureau, Nairobi, 1976.

Certificate in Copy Editing, British Council, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1998.

Certificate in Filmmaking, Compass Arts Academy, Grand Rapids, 2004.

NARLC Summer Institute on the Teaching of African Languages, 2004.

NARLC Summer Institute: Technology Workshop Languages, 2010.

### Technical Skills

#### *Research & Teaching*

Research and teaching for more than 25 years in various fields including, language, literature, creative writing and cultural studies. Supervising individual and groups of students doing Oral Literature and Children's Literature and African Literature. Extensive research in Folklore and Children's literature.

#### *Writing*

I write literary works in English (over 20) and Kiswahili (11 children's books and 4 radio narratives) and have published works include plays stories, poetry and papers.

#### *Editing*

Editing magazines; Academic and research journals; manuscripts for publishing houses; books for budding authors and my own works.

#### *Scriptwriting.*

I have written scripts for radio and TV drama. In 2004, I took a course in Film to enhance this skill and have completed two film scripts.

#### *Storytelling*

I enjoy telling stories to children in English and in Kiswahili. Audiences have varied from families to 200 children. Most of the storytelling events have been in schools.

#### *Organizing Conferences and Writers' Workshops*

I have organized many conferences and workshops such as the children's talent development skills workshops supported by the British Council and also the challenging but successful 2000 International Congress for International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR).

#### *Directing*

Directed Sean O'Casey's **Juno and the Paycock** (High school students in 1973); Wrote and directed a Kiswahili play, **Kapotei na Lulu** (Riara Primary School); and also wrote and directed musical play, **Peace Harvest**, with Suzanne Gachukia (Riara Primary School). I have the capacity to direct performances for stage, radio and television.

#### **Membership and Affiliations to Professional Bodies**

Member of the Writers Association of Kenya.

Member of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR).

Member of Kenya Oral Literature Association.

Member of African Language Teachers Association (ALTA).

Member of National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLTCTL)

Member of The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY)

#### **Professional Experience**

##### *Current Engagement September 2009 to Present*

Lecturer III in CAAS, teaching Swahili and Coordinating African languages. Courses include: Elementary; Intermediate and Advanced levels.

*Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Adjunct Professor of Swahili, 2005 – August 2009.*  
Developed and taught courses in Elementary and Intermediate levels.

*Grand Rapids Community College: Adjunct Professor of English September 2006-August 2009.*

Teaching English 101 and English 102.

*Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Professor of English, 2001 – August 2004.*  
*Kenyatta University, Kenya: Senior Lecturer of English, June 1984 – June 2001*

Teaching and supervising *undergraduate and graduate* students in various fields of literature especially Children's and Adolescent Literature, Creative Writing and Oral Literature. Launched undergraduate and post graduate courses in the field of Children's Literature in 1986 and 1987 respectively; supervised 5 MA and 2 PhD students. Taught the following courses between 1984 and 2001: African Literature, Oral Literature, East African Literature, Theory of Children's Literature, Children's Literature in Africa, Expatriate Literature on Africa, African Short Stories, Epic, Swahili Literature.

*Kenyatta University, Kenya: Chair, Literature Dept. Nov 1986– Dec. 1998*

As Chair of Department (November 1996 to November 1998, a two-year term), successfully managed 1000 students, 27 faculty and 5 staff members. Relinquished this position to chair the organizing committee of the International Society of Folk Narrative Research.

*Kenyatta University, Kenya: Chair, Organizing Committee ISFNR Conference January 1999- June 2001*

Responsible for the pre-conference seminars, conference preparations, day to day running of the July 2000 ISFNR International Conference, post conference follow-up and editing of the proceedings.

*University of Dar es Salaam, Lecturer of Literature 1980 - May 1984.*

Teaching African Literature, Oral Literature and Drama.

*University of Dar es Salaam: Senior Administrative Officer & Editor September 1975 to 1979.*

Coordinated Higher Degree matters, research activities of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and edited *UTAFITI*, the quarterly Research Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Social sciences from its inception and launching of the first issue.

*Kahuhia Girls' High School, Kenya; Teacher: 1973 to August 1975*

Taught English and Literature. Was promoted Deputy Principal in the second year of service. Directed a major play, Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* in 1974.

### **External Examiner**

1999 University of Dar es Salaam, Literature Department.

2000 University of Dar es Salaam, Literature Department.

2000 University of Dar es Salaam, Theatre Arts Department.

2000 Catholic University (Nairobi), Literature Department.

2001 Catholic University (Nairobi), Literature Department.

### **Recognition & Awards**

- 2007 Nominated for the NSK Prize for Children's Literature for the books: **Junior Pilot** and **Kuku na Mwewe**. <http://www.ou.edu/worldlit/NSK-candidates-juries.html>
- 2007 Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature (Category: Children's Literature, English): **Far Far Away**.
- 2007 Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature (Category: Children's Literature, Swahili): **Hanna Na Wanyama**.
- 2009 Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature (Category: Children's Literature, English): **A Mule Called Christmas**.

### **Languages**

- English:** *Writing:* Excellent. *Speaking:* Fluent
- Kiswahili:** *Writing:* Excellent. *Speaking:* Fluent
- Kikuyu:** *Writing:* Excellent. *Speaking:* Fluent
- Kihaya:** *Writing:* Good. *Speaking:* Very Good.

Nyambura Mpesha, PhD

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