

# Curriculum Vitae

**Dr. Virginia Gathoni Gichuru Ph.D.**

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## EDUCATION

**PhD(Plant Pathology) 2004-2008**

Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

**Thesis title:** ‘Influence of farming systems and crop host varieties on *Pythium* root rot epidemics in a highland agroecology of southwestern Uganda.

**MSc (Molecular Biology) 2002-2004**

Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

**Thesis title:** ‘Analysis of diversity among East African sweet potato cultivars (*Ipomoea batatas*) using morphological and simple sequence repeats (SSR) DNA markers’.

**BSc (Biochemistry & Botany) 1996-2000**

University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya

Grade attained: Upper Second Class Honours

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## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

*Lecturer, Pwani University* **2018 to present**

- Lecturing undergraduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences for the following units: Plant pathology, Microbial Ecology, Plant Ecology, Plant morphology and Anatomy.
- Lecturing Masters students in the Department of Biological Sciences in the following units: Environmental Microbiology and Advanced Bacteriology
- Supervising 1 Masters and 1 PhD student
- Supervising ten (10) undergraduate 4<sup>th</sup> year research projects

*Lecturer, Strathmore University* **2011 -2018**

- Lecturing undergraduates in Ethics, Bioethics and Philosophy
- Supervised 1 Masters student

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## **ADMINISTRATION EXPERIENCE**

### ***Pwani University, Kilifi***

- i) Chair of the Department Biological Services, Curriculum Committee- 2019 to date
- ii) Head of Mentoring, Department of Biological Services- 2019 to date
- iii) Member of the Library Advisory Committee- 2018 to date

### ***Strathmore University, Nairobi***

- i) Secretary, Ethics Review Committee-2019 to date
- ii) Dean, School of Hospitality and Tourism- 2016 to 2018
- iii) Dean of Research- 2013 to 2016
- iv) Member of the Academic Council- 2013 to 2018
- v) Member Academic Administration & Enhancement Committee-2013 to 2016
- vi) Member of the University Research Committee- 2013 to 2018
- vii) Head of Research Committee  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS)-2011 to 2013
- viii) Member of School of Graduate Research Committee-2011 to 2014

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## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

### ***Pwani University***

**Supervisor of Undergraduate research projects** 2019 to date

Some of these projects are:

- Muleli, Annet Mashayo. Isolation and Identification of bacteria from food vendors at Kibaoni market, Kilifi
- Omolo, Elly Brian. Isolation and identification of microorganisms associated with spoilage of tomatoes at Kibaoni market, Kilifi
- Kilonzo, Muimi, John. Determining if *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Propionibacterium acne* can be isolated from used makeup brushes
- Neema, Kassim Nderi. Antimicrobial activity of microbes isolated from soil mixed with human saliva against pathogenic microorganisms causing dermatological diseases.
- Mwabonje, Lorna. Isolation and identification of pathogenic bacteria on mobile phones in lab setting in RVIL

## **Supervisor of Graduate research projects**

2019 to date

### ***Masters research***

- Dogo, Masha. Salt tolerance induction by bacterial endophytes from *Solanum spp.*

### ***Strathmore University***

#### **Supervisor of Graduate Research project**

- Indira Othieno Ogonjo. The principal's role in influencing student performance in Mathematics: A study of Usigu Division Secondary Schools

#### **Conference Organiser**

- Organised the Research Week at Strathmore University from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015 whose theme was : 'Innovation for Sustainable Development'

#### **Conference Organiser**

- Organised the Kenya Association of Private Universities (KAPU) Research Conference held on 21<sup>st</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 whose theme was: 'Re-aligning Academia, Government and Industry (AGI): Roadmap for the attainment of Vision 2030.

#### **Project Manager (2013-2014)**

- This was a partnership between the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland (Austria) and Strathmore University. The partnership was designed to achieve educational, research and development goals involving faculty and students at both institutions. The collaboration set up a trans-disciplinary project that brought together students from different disciplines from both institutions to address a complex challenge together. They made use of the Biomimicry process to co-design potential solutions for a sustainability-related problem.

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## **WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS ATTENDED**

- Training course on Plant Health organized by the John Innes Centre, UK and Pwani University, held in Pwani University, Kilifi on 3<sup>rd</sup> April to 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019.
- Training course on Phage Biology organised by Phages for Global health held in Pwani University, Kilifi on 24<sup>th</sup> June to 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018.
- Training course on Plant Metabolism for Improved Nutrition and Health Course organised by the John Innes Centre (UK) and BECA-ILRI, held in Arusha Tanzania on 20<sup>th</sup> February to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- Workshop to develop a training module for University leadership held at Commission for University Education (CUE) headquarters on 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

- Attended the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) held in Manchester from July 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> 2016. Funded by Robert Stifung Organisation
  - Attended a confocal microscopy workshop held at the Donald Danforth Plant Centre, St. Louis Missouri on 27<sup>th</sup> June to July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016.
  - Participated in the International Deans Course part III held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016.
  - Participated in the International Deans Course part II held in Accra Ghana on 1<sup>st</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.
  - Participated in the International Deans Course part I held in Osnabruck and Berlin, Germany on 20<sup>th</sup> June - 4<sup>th</sup> July 2015.
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## AWARDS RECEIVED

- Visiting Scholar at the Campus Biomedico, Italy 2020. (postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic outbreak).
  - Award for the Best Presenter at a Symposium held for the 13<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the International Society of Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC) in Arusha, Tanzania, 10<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> Nov 2003.
  - Gender and Diversity-Rockefeller Fellowships for enhancing the careers of East African women scientists. I was one of the eleven fellows selected out of a pool of 104 applications from the region. ([www.genderdiversity.cigar.org](http://www.genderdiversity.cigar.org)), 2005-2007.
  - Visiting Scholar position at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) in South Africa from July to August 2018.
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## PUBLICATIONS

**Google Scholar Link:** <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=GmyTP-YAAAAJ&hl=en&authuser=3>

- Gichuru, V., Rubaihayo, P.R, Lubega, G.W., Aritua, V., Mukasa, S., Edema, R., Wasike, S. and Adipala, E. 2003. A preliminary analysis of diversity among East African sweet potato cultivars using morphological and Simple Sequence Repeats (SSR) Markers. ActaHort. (ISHS) 703:159-164. <http://www.actahort.org/books>
- Gichuru, Virginia.2014. “What should we consume: An Examination into the Ethical Acceptability of Genetically Modified Foods in Kenya Principled on Aristotelian Ethics In: The Bounds of Responsibility Ed. Tadeusz Lewandowski and Elisabeta Gabriela Illie

- Gichuru,V,Buruchara,R and Okori,P. 2016 Pathogenic and molecular characterisation of *Pythium spp.* inducing root rot symptoms in other crops intercropped with beans in Southwestern Uganda.Journal of Applied Biosciences 104:9955 – 9964.

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## CONFERENCE PAPER PRESENTATIONS

### *Oral presentations*

- Virginia Gichuru.Pathogenicity of *Pythium ultimum* on other crops intercropped with beans. A paper presented at the 2016 Plant Cell Dynamics Conference, Washington University, St. Louis Missouri, 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> June 2016.
- Virginia Gichuru.'An examination into the ethical acceptability of genetically modified foods in Kenya principled on Aristotelian Ethics'. A paper presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Responsible Living: reflecting on the ethical issues of everyday life, held in Lisbon, Portugal, 6<sup>th</sup> May to 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2014.
- Virginia Gichuru.The moral acceptability of genetically modified foods. A paper presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Ethics Conference, Strathmore University, 25<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> October 2012.
- Virginia Gathoni Gichuru. Influence of farming systems and crop varieties on *Pythium* root rot epidemics in Southwestern Uganda. A paper presented at the Campus de Excelencia in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, 22<sup>nd</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> June 2008.
- Gichuru, V., Rubaihayo, P.R., Lubega, G.W., Mukasa, S., Edema, R., Aritua, V., Wasike, S. and Adipala, E. 2003. Assessing the genetic relatedness of sweet potato cultivars (*Ipomoea batatas*) from selected areas of East Africa using simple sequence repeats (SSR). A paper presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> African Crop Science Society Conference, 12-17<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2003, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Gichuru, V., Rubaihayo, P.R., Lubega, G.W., Aritua, V., Mukasa, S., Edema, R., Wasike, S. and Adipala, E. 2003. A preliminary analysis of diversity among East African sweetpotato (*Ipomoea batatas*) cultivars using morphological and Simple Sequence Repeats (SSR) Markers. A paper presented at 9<sup>th</sup> Triennial Symposium of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops-Africa Branch, 31<sup>st</sup>Oct –5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2004, Mombasa Kenya. Funded by CIP (The International Potato Centre).
- Gichuru, V., Rubaihayo, P.R., Lubega, G.W., Aritua, V., Mukasa, S., Edema, R., Wasike, S. and Adipala, E. 2003. Preliminary analysis of diversity among East African sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) cultivars using morphological and Simple Sequence Repeats (SSR) Markers.A paper presented at the 13<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the International Society of Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC) in Arusha, Tanzania, 10<sup>th</sup> –14<sup>th</sup> Nov 2003.

- Gichuru, V., Rubaihayo, P.R., Lubega, G.W., Aritua, V., Mukasa, S., Edema, R., Wasike, S. and Adipala, E. 2003. A preliminary analysis of diversity among East African sweet potato cultivars using morphological and Simple Sequence Repeats (SSR) Markers. A paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Symposium on Sweet potato and Cassava 14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> June 2005 in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. Published in the conference proceedings. Funded by CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation).
- Gichuru, V., Buruchara, R., Okori, P., Opio, F and Ugen, Identification and characterisation of *Pythium spp.* of major crops in southwestern Uganda. A paper presented at the American Phythopathological Joint Meeting held in Quebec City, Canada in July 29<sup>th</sup> –August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006.
- Gichuru, V., Buruchara, R., Okori, P., Opio, F and Ugen, M. Pathogenicity of bean pathogenic *Pythium spp* on major crops in a bean-based cropping system. A paper presented at the American Phythopathological Joint Meeting held in Quebec City, Canada July 29<sup>th</sup> –August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006.

#### **Poster**

- Gichuru, V., Rubaihayo, P.R., Lubega, G.W., Aritua, V., Mukasa, S., Edema, R., Wasike, S. and Adipala, E. 2003. Assessment of diversity among East African sweet potato cultivars using morphological markers. A paper presented at 6<sup>th</sup> African Crop Science Society Conference, 12-17<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2003, Nairobi, Kenya .

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### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- American Society of Microbiology (AMS)-Member Number: 56128820
- American Phytopathological Society (APS)-Member Number: 192718
- Member of the African Network of Internationalization of Education (ANIE)
- Member of Strathmore University Ethics Review Board(SU-ERB)
- Speaking Woman Toastmasters Club

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### **COMUNITY SERVICE**

#### *Strathmore University*

- Active mentor to students at Strathmore University. Received recognition as one of the most active mentors (2017)
- Participated in various community and social projects in Kibera, Southlands slums, Nyahururu, Ugunja, Kitui and Eldoret while based at Strathmore University.
- Organised professional and cultural activities for Strathmore University students together with Keri Study Centre

*Pwani University*

- Social projects in Kilifi Hospital with Pwani University students
- Professional talks to Pwani University students in collaboration with Tewa Training Centre
- Professional talks and social projects with Technical University of Mombasa students

**REFEREES**

Professor Ismail Ateya,  
Lecturer & Acting Dean, Research  
Strathmore University,  
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City Square Nairobi Kenya  
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International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT-Nairobi)  
c/o International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) Duduville Campus Off  
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