Mini symposium title: Tackling today’s Science, Research and Leadership for the Ocean Decade in the Western Indian Ocean

Conveners:
Nelly I. Kadagi, Ph.D - Director, Education for Nature and Conservation Leadership, WWF USA
Sarah Ater - Ph.D researcher, University of Nairobi, Kenya
Riaan Cedras, Ph.D - Lecturer, University of Western Cape, South Africa
Sammy Wambua, Ph.D - Lecturer, Pwani University Kenya
Damaris Kinyua - Ph.D researcher, Pwani University Kenya
Sarah Glaser, Ph.D - Senior Director, Oceans Futures WWF, USA
Nina Wambiji, Ph.D - Senior Scientist, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute
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Background, Rationale and Novelty
How adequately has capacity development and sharing equipped current and future scientists, researchers, and leaders to address the complexities of the UN Decade of Ocean Science in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO)? The UN Decade of Ocean Science recognizes that populations and habitats are connected. It also recognizes that investments in enhancing capacities forms the nexus for sustained data collection, evidence-based science, sustainable development, leadership, and conservation that addresses complexities in the interconnectivity between people and nature. Countries in the WIO region are embracing actions to develop and increase access to knowledge, skills, and expertise for the Ocean Decade. Diverse efforts have been made in-country and regionally to streamline capacities (skills, knowledge, strategies, learning and resources) to maintain and advance effective capacity sharing and building. However, the ability of WIO countries to sustain the capacity for the Ocean Decade remains challenged by various factors not limited to inadequate human resource development, systemic issues, intergenerational gaps, low visibility, and awareness of current and emerging ocean leadership as well as the lack of long-term resource mobilization.

The mini symposium seeks to catalyze the urgency and stimulate reflection and practical actions from a diverse audience to seize the substantial opportunity presented by the Ocean Decade and aspirations of the Blue Economy to strengthen science, research, and leadership. We uniquely convene a platform to share experiences and lessons, facilitate discussions and work plans for practical solutions, and challenge diverse audiences to consider collective efforts in advancing capacity development and sharing in the WIO.
Objectives and Expected Outputs

The objectives of the proposed mini-symposium are four-fold: (1) to bring together a diverse audience to share success, lessons and examples of effective science, research and leadership for the Ocean Decade (2) to share and operationalize work plans for increasing visibility, awareness and communication of current and emerging ocean research and leadership (3) to collectively enhance sustainable resource mobilization and (4) to diversify and increase the support network for sustaining the pipeline for science, research and ocean leadership.

To build a common understanding, the symposium will co-produce a short brief featuring context and case specific recommendations, frameworks, and action items for enhancing science, research, and ocean leadership in the WIO for the Ocean Decade. Recognizing that reaching capacity sharing and development goals requires active engagement of local and indigenous communities, the symposium will draw lessons from experiences and case-studies to leverage for diverse human capacity and technological advancement that strives to integrate local and indigenous expertise. We envisage that panel discussions will contribute towards strengthening implementation and operationalization of the Blue Economy in the WIO region, by taking stock of ongoing efforts and assessing gaps and opportunities.

Targeted Session Audience

The mini symposium aims to bring together government agencies, regional academic and research institutions, multi-sectors, intergovernmental organizations, scientists, students, journalists, communicators, and non-governmental organizations, and funding bodies.

Mini-symposium structure

speakers

The mini symposium will comprise several panel discussions featuring on four key areas including: Enhancing capacities, students and early career experiences and lessons, communicating science and research, and opportunities and recommendations. We will share profiles of speakers and their content to the audience prior to the session to provide context and ensure preparation.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Panelists</th>
<th>Thematic Area</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Welcoming Remarks and Housekeeping</td>
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<td>Success, lessons and examples of capacity sharing and development</td>
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Moderator: Sarah Ater
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>14:45-15:45</td>
<td>Dr. Jamal Hassan/Dr. Sarah Glaser, Sarah Ater, Dr. Sammy Wambua</td>
<td>Project Kaluun: Shining a light on the successes and lessons for Somalia and the WIO. A case study of the WIOMSA-funded BILLFISH-WIO project. A personal account of developing capacity in the conservation genomics in resource poor setting.</td>
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<td>Moderator: TBD</td>
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<td>16:00-16:30</td>
<td>Dr. Jacqueline Uku, Dr. Sarah Glaser, Susana Wachia, Dr. Nina Wambiji</td>
<td>Discussion on visibility, awareness, and communication</td>
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<td>16.45-17.30pm</td>
<td>Dr. Nina Wambiji</td>
<td>Q/A Roundtable Discussion and interventions Conclusion: Closing Remarks and Thanks</td>
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**Abstract that will be presented:**

2. Dr. Jacqueline Uku – “Integrating Art into Ocean Literacy for Policy and Practice in Kenya”
4. Dr. Nelly Kadagi “Leveraging funding support to enhance the capacity for ocean science, research, and leadership: The WWF-Education for Nature Approach”
5. Dr. Sammy Wambua – “Building Change, Leveraging Intentionality: A personal account of developing capacity in the conservation genomics in resource poor setting”
6. Abstract for Dr. Sarah Glaser –