



2014 BHEARD Scholar
Lessah Mandoloma

Profile

Country of Study:	Kenya
University:	Egerton University
Department:	Natural Resources
Student Position:	Graduate Research Assistant — MSc
Home Country:	Malawi
Home Institution:	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)
Home Position:	Associate Lecturer: Natural Resources Mgmt.
Mentored By:	MALAWI: Tasokwa V.M. Kakota, PhD Head of Basic Sciences Department LUANAR

Research Area: *Natural Resources Management, Ecotourism and Climate Change*

BHEARD PROGRAM START DATE: August 2014

HOMETOWN: Lilongwe, Malawi

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: Natural Resources Management, University of Malawi, MALAWI

RESEARCH INTERESTS: Sustainable Ecotourism Management

“Eco-tourism is increasing in importance as more developing countries look towards this industry as an alternative to achieve sustainable economic growth,” says Lessah. “In Malawi, the tourism sector is one of the key areas in the Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) that the government is implementing in order to turn around the country’s economy. In fact, Ecotourism answers to the pillars of Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, MGDS II and the Millennium Development Goals.”

Lessah says her aim is to develop a socio-economic model that will address issues of climate change vulnerability among communities participating in ecotourism. “This will entail assessing how biodiversity — specifically wildlife — are affected by weather variability and their impact on ecotourism.” She plans to develop models that capture marketing, ecotourism promotion and social issues to enhance rural development.

She is interested in this research particularly because many governments in the developing world promote their own production based food security while neglecting off farm food security

entitlements. “These market based food entitlements are threatened by climate change and weather variability as is agriculture. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a model that will promote sustainable management of the ecotourism sector.”

PERSONAL STATEMENT:

Lessah says her experience working as a research assistant and later as a staff associate at LUANAR gave her a deeper understanding of the dynamic field Natural Resources Management. “I am certain my current MSc program will broaden my knowledge and understanding of my field to effectively apply and teach relevant courses as well as conduct relevant research in the field of natural resources.”

Following her MSc program, Lessah plans to pursue her PhD in natural resources and development. Lessah describes herself as hardworking, reliable, friendly and supportive. “I am very passionate about learning, I am easy going and I love meeting new people. Oh I love to smile a lot! My career goal is to become a well-known researcher in my field of Natural resources, ecotourism, and climate change.”

Lessah believes that she is standing today on the shoulders of very supportive people and therefore feels a reciprocal responsibility to be supportive of others. “My thoughts about this life: every person you meet has a story and you become part of it by the kind-print you leave in their lives. Make it worthwhile.” In her spare time, Lessah loves reading magazines and novels, watching movies, singing, and travelling.