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**University of Nairobi**

**Research Week 2020: 2nd Annual International Conference on Project  
Planning and Management**

**Theme: Recasting Project Management to Address Sustainable Development  
Goals (SDGs)**

**Topic: Cross Cutting: Converting Challenges into Educational Opportunities**

**Presenter: Jenifer Wambugu**

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020**



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# Introduction: Jenifer Case Study

- ▶ Born in Ihuririo village, Othaya Constituency - Nyeri County.
- ▶ School:
  - Ihuririo Primary
  - Naromoru Girls
- ▶ College:
  - Kenya Medical Training College - Diploma in Kenya Registered Community Health Nursing.
- ▶ University:
  - Kenya Methodist University - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (2014)
  - University of Nairobi - Master's degree (2016)
  - University of Nairobi - PhD candidate, Project Planning and Management
- ▶ Publications:
  - 4 adolescents' story books
  - 6 journal articles
  - Presented over 15 abstracts in national and international conferences



# Introduction CNTD

## ▶ Professional work

- FHI360/Kenya's USAID Afya Uzazi Nakuru/Baringo program - Associate Program Officer in charge of Program Coordination
- Jhpiego/Kenya - County Integration Coordinator for Kirinyaga and Kitui counties
- Ministry of Health Kenya - Provincial PMTCT Coordinator, Central Province

## ▶ Professional achievements

- Registered with the Nursing Council of Kenya.
- Awarded with the 2008 Regional (Central Province) Nurse of the year 4<sup>th</sup>, runners up in the Nation,
- Won several awards for exemplary job.

## ▶ Other achievements

- Ordained Pastor
- A breast cancer survivor and ambassador.



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Pastor  
Mother,  
Cancer Survivor,  
Health worker,  
Author



Jennifer Wambugu ·



# Overview: Jenifer Case Study

- ▶ **Reproductive health cancers** are the most stigmatized cancers.
- ▶ Breast cancer changes one's life forever and equal to the physical health is the emotional devastation that leaves one wounded in both body and spirit (Hamen, 2014)
- ▶ Diagnosis of breast cancer is one of the most frightening experiences a woman can have (Ramadam, 2017) .



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# Diagnosis

- ▶ **I felt a lump on the left breast, which was unusually larger than the right one. Two rural hospital visits and palpation revealed a hard, immobile lump**
- ▶ **I was referred to a bigger hospital for further diagnosis.**
- ▶ **I was only 32 years old. The one week of waiting for results gave me nightmares, hallucinations. I thought I was going to die even before I got the results.**





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# Diagnosis CTD

- ▶ When I finally got the results, I knew my life had ended. A **mammogram confirmed first stage breast cancer.**
- ▶ Being a nurse, I knew too well the course of treatment. Worries engulfed me, as I wondered who would take care of my child. All I saw was death.





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# Management

- ▶ A major concern, progressed to **real psychological devastation**
- ▶ **I could not use a mirror.** Many times, I drove to work and passed my office.
- ▶ As a hardworking nurse, I had won a few awards.
- ▶ **My work performance** went down
- ▶ **Financial crisis** followed
- ▶ Workplace became the biggest source of stress and I nearly lost my job. I was no longer myself.
- ▶ I attempted to commit suicide twice.
- ▶ The treatment process did not worry me much compared to **the mental anguish**, which drained me.
- ▶ I feared to share the diagnosis with people around me





# Management and Outcome:



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- ▶ I sought treatment during all this stress.
- ▶ My doctor advised me on a breast-conserving surgery (Lumpectomy) considering that cancer was in stage one, my age and the weight the diagnosis had weighed on me.
- ▶ The surgery removed the lump leaving the breast intact.
- ▶ I underwent chemotherapy, surgery, followed by radiotherapy. The treatment did not spare me side effects.
- ▶ I did not want to see anybody.
- ▶ After treatment and all the side effects had cleared, **one thing stood: the psychological trauma.**
- ▶ I later went down with degenerative disease of the disc, which prompted a spinal surgery.



# Family support gave me hope



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# Side effects and mental anguish



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# Education Diverted My thoughts

- ▶ I sought refuge in education
- ▶ I wanted to be distracted from my thoughts, the thoughts that I was going to die.
- ▶ I graduated with a degree in nursing and immediately enrolled at the UoN for a Masters degree in Project Planning and Management
- ▶ Unfortunately on the day of graduation I was being operated in India.



# At Apollo Hosp: Didn't attend my graduation



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# Education diverted thoughts and gave comfort



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- ▶ While doctors gave me three years to live
- ▶ I gave myself three years to change my life and die a different person by enrolling for PhD
- ▶ I joined UON on crutches
- ▶ The lecturers and students supported me so much
- ▶ I could not sit for more than 30 minutes
- ▶ On the lift the lectures could always request students to help
- ▶ **My pain was gone**, I developed strong love and passion for my lecturers. They supported me in all ways.





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# Education renewed my strength



# Back on my feet with FHI360





# Worry over COVID-19



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Normal human response to threat:

- ▶ Fear, worry, and stress
- ▶ Change in lifestyle
  - Movements are restricted
  - Livelihoods threatened
  - New realities of working from home
  - Temporary unemployment
  - Home-schooling of children
  - Lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues

All these can easily cause mental health disorders

▶ Hard times call for hard decisions to safeguard one's mental stability

▶ Education can be a great opportunity to distract someone from fears and worries

▶ A case Study on response to crisis through education reveals that learning can be a good options

# COVID-19 crisis: Published instead of worrying



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When COVID-19 came, people with chronic illness had to work from home. Instead of worrying, I published my thesis

- ▶ "Influence of Access to Quality Services on Performance of Family Planning Programs in Kuresoi North Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya", published in EJBMR Volume-5, Issue-3. Link:  
<http://www.ejbmr.org/index.php/ejbmr/article/view/307>
- ▶ "Influence of Management Competency on Performance of Family Planning Programs in Kuresoi North Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya", published in EJBMR Volume-5, Issue-3. link:  
<http://www.ejbmr.org/index.php/ejbmr/article/view/306>



# COVID-19 crisis: Published instead of worrying



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- ▶ Influence of Quality Counselling on Performance of Family Planning Programs in Kuresoi North Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya American Journal of Applied Psychology Volume 9, Issue 4, July 2020, Pages: 88-98 Received: May 5, 2020; Accepted: Jun. 4, 2020; Published: Jul. 4, 2020





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# Thank God for Preserving My Life





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# Special thanks

- ▶ My daughter: Sharon Wangeci
- ▶ My Parents: Mr. & Mrs. Wambugu
- ▶ My former employers Jhpiego Kenya and Ministry of Health
- ▶ Friends and relatives
- ▶ Clergy team
- ▶ County leadership of Kirinyaga, Kitui, Baringo and Nakuru
- ▶ FHI 360, for giving me an opportunity to advance my career
- ▶ My colleagues at USAID Afya Uzazi program and the counties of Nakuru & Baringo
- ▶ University of Nairobi for giving me an opportunity to pursue my career and to share my experience



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# Thank God for Preserving My life

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-wambugu-722a6970/>



Jennifer Wambugu ·