

RACHAEL WANJIKU GITIHA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rachael Wanjiku Gitiha is a Teaching Assistant and Researcher in the Department of Education, School of Education and Social Sciences, University of Embu. She is an education professional in the Social Sciences and emerging teacher educator, specializing in Instructional Methods and Educational Technology, with research interests in Educational Technology, Curriculum and Instruction, Teacher Education, Gender and Education, and Foundational Learning.

She holds a Bachelor of Education (Arts) in Kiswahili/Christian Religious Education, First Class Honours (2020), and a Master of Education in Instructional Methods and Educational Technology from the University of Embu (2024). She is currently a PhD student in Education at the University of Embu and is duly registered with the Teachers Service Commission (TSC).

Her professional experience spans classroom teaching, teacher training, curriculum development and evaluation, and educational research, providing a strong foundation in pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment. She is committed to strengthening curriculum relevance, embracing emerging educational trends, and advancing innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

She currently serves as a research assistant with HERI Africa, contributing to fieldwork, data collection, analysis, and scholarly writing focused on Mathematics education and improved learning outcomes. She also serves as Secretariat and Rapporteur for the Early Career Researchers (ECR) initiative under the Prof. Ciriaka Gitonga Mentorship Programme, supporting research coordination, scholarly engagement, and emerging researcher development. Her work is grounded in evidence-informed educational practice, inclusive learning, and the connection between research and practice.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Education, *University of Embu* (May 2025 - Ongoing)**
2. **Master of Education-Instructional Methods and Educational Technology (IMET), *University of Embu* (Scholarship Award), (February 2021 to September 2024)**
3. **Bachelor of Education (Arts) – Kiswahili/CRE – First Class Honours, *University of Embu* (August 2016-December 2020)**
4. **Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), Mean grade B, *Mema Secondary school* (2010-2015)**
5. **Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), (B plain), *Menengai primary school* (2002-2009)**

SHORT LEADERSHIP COURSESS & PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- Best Online Practices Review and Module Development for Online Programmes Workshop-University of Embu (2025)
- Early Career Researchers (ECR) Pre-Conference Mentorship Programme, University of Embu in conjunction with EDF-Kenya & EE4A (2025)
- Women Leading Change (WLC) Leadership Training Programme, University of Dar es Salaam Business School, Tanzania (2025) - intensive in-person training & professional one-on-one coaching.
- Market Place Simulation Training on Simulation based exercises, University of Embu (Nov, 2024).

WORK EXPERIENCE

Part-Time Lecturer/Trainer

1. Research assistant – HERI Africa, University of Embu (May 2026- Ongoing)

- Provide secretariat support during meetings, workshops, stakeholder forums & other programme activities
- Conduct monitoring visits to Mathematics Clubs in Embu & Tharaka Nithi Counties, including classroom observations & field-based data collection.
- Collect and document research data during field visits
- Analyze field data to generate findings that inform educational research
- Develop research outputs, (manuscripts, research papers and scholarly reports) from the field.
- Review and prepare manuscripts for publication
- Collaborate with fellow researchers & team in planning, implementing, documenting & disseminating research activities.

2. Teaching Assistant (TA), University of Embu (January 2025 - Ongoing)

- Teach three units per semester, as well as part-time units.
- Participate in module development for programmes in the Department of Education.
- Participate in Curriculum related meetings and workshops.
- Teach and supervise research projects for PGDE students

3. Part-Time Trainer, TVET Institute, University of Embu (UoEm)

- Diploma in Agriculture, Diploma in ICT, Certificate in ICT - Research Methods(Jan-July 2025)
- Diploma in Agriculture, Accountancy, Banking and Finance, Human Resource, Hospitality and Accommodation, Tourism, Information Technology, and Social Work- Communication Skills Unit, September (2024)- April (2025).
- Certificate in Accountancy, Stadi za Mawasiliano kwa Kiswahili unit, September 2024 - April 2025.
- Certificate in Business Management, Sales & Marketing unit, May - November 2024.

4. Part-Time Teaching - Department of Humanities, School of Education and Social Sciences, University of Embu (UoEm)

- Bachelor of Arts (Criminology & Security Studies) and Bachelor of Education (Arts): Communication Skills unit, September - November 2024.
- Diploma in Criminology & Security Management programme: Theories of Crime and Deviance Unit, January-April 2024.
- Diploma in Criminology & Security Management programme, Introduction to Social Psychology Unit, May- November 2023.
- Diploma in Social Work & Community Development: Vulnerable and Special Needs Unit, January-September 2023

5. Part-Time Teaching- Department of Community Health, School of Nursing, University of Embu (UoEm)

- Diploma in Community Health programme: Psychology in Community Health Unit (September - November 2023).

Key Responsibilities

- Prepare and deliver lectures, course outlines, teaching materials, and e-learning content.
- Develop, administer & moderate assessments, including CATs, main, special & supplementary examinations.
- Prepare TVET students for KNEC examinations and provide academic support.
- Invigilate & mark examinations, ensuring compliance with examination procedures & timely submission of examination materials.
- Analyze and participate in the moderation of examination results to support quality assurance.
- Maintain academic & examination records and participate in university meetings and other assigned activities.

6. Teaching Assistantship: Co-teaching with Unit Lecturers - Department of Education

- 4th Guidance & Counselling & 3rd Instructional Technology: (Sep- Nov 2022, October 2021).

Key Responsibilities

- Organizing learners in their respective class groups.
- Moderating and assessing group presentations.
- Guiding students in designing instructional resources (2D & 3D) & also assessing during presentations.

7. Marking Assistant: School of Education and Social Science, Departmental Examinations.

- Instructional Technology (ECT 301) Semester 1 (January- April 2025) (2024/2025 AY).
- Guidance & Counselling (EPS 401) Semester 1 (January - April 2025) (2024/2025 AY).
- Educational Psychology (EPS 202) Semester 1 (January- April 2025) (2024/2025 AY).

8. Teaching Practicum (Kiswahili /CRE): DEB Muchonoke Secondary School, Siakago Embu (May-July 2019)

- Teaching Kiswahili and CRE in various classes.
- Organizing lessons: Preparing teaching documents and T&L resources.
- Mentoring Form Four students, coordinating students during Christian Union sessions & games.
- Acting as a Teacher on Duty (ToD) when scheduled.

9. Enumerator- 2019 Census: Kenya Population and Housing Census (KPHC) (August 2019)

- Identifying assigned enumeration area and locating all structures.
- Visiting every household and administering questions.
- Recording particulars of all persons.
- Making call backs on respondents who could not be interviewed.
- Preparing debriefing notes for the supervisor.
- Sending data to the KNBS server.
- Returning to the supervisors all census materials used and unused.

10. KCSE Best Student Working Opportunity (3 months)- Mema Secondary School, Menengai West, Nakuru

Key responsibilities and duties

- Teaching Kiswahili (Form 3) and CRE (Form 4) as well as mentoring them.
- Assisting the school bursar in receipt preparation, updating school ledgers, & preparing balance sheets.
- Assisting the school secretary in typing of minutes after BOM and PTA meetings.
- Performing other duties assigned by the administration.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Appointment as a member of the Early Career Researchers (ECR) Pre-Conference Planning Team, University of Embu (2025).
- Letter of Appointment as Secretariat and Rapporteur, ECR Initiative, University of Embu (2025).
- Certificate of Completion in Women Leading Change Professional Leadership Coaching (2025).
- Scholarship award to pursue Master of Education in Instructional Methods and Educational Technology- University of Embu (2020-2022).
- First Class Honours, Bachelor of Education (Arts)- Kiswahili/CRE, University of Embu (2020).
- Registered member of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC).
- Certificate in Information Technology & Computer Packages.
- Certificate of Recognition as an enumerator in the 2019 Census.
- Letter of recommendation for Teaching Practicum (2019).
- Letter of employment, Best KCSE Student Working Opportunity - Mema Secondary School (2015).
- Letter of youth recommendation: AIPCA Church, Nakuru Parish (2025).
- Certificate of participation in Rongai District, Nakuru Students Science Congress.
- Certificates of merit - Best Student - Mema Secondary School (2010-2012).

RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. **Revitalizing Education Research Ecosystem through Graduate Students, University of Embu: Funded by Echidna Giving- served as Research Assistant, Secretariat and Rapporteur.**

Key responsibilities

- Serves as Secretariat and Rapporteur for the Early Career Researchers (ECR) initiative.
- Coordinating communication, documenting key deliberations, & execution of meetings & follow-ups.
- Synthesizing discussions and ensuring timely dissemination of reports to relevant stakeholders.
- Fostering meaningful connections between ECRs and the institutions, contributing significantly to the institutional broader goal of enhancing research capacity and collaborative engagement.
- Collecting data, analyzing results, writing manuscripts and supporting publication outputs.

2. **Optimizing parental empowerment & engagement for ECDE: A pilot project in Embu County, Kenya (2021/2023 FY): Funded by Spencer Foundation- served as Research Assistant.**

Key responsibilities

- Training on data collection procedures.
- Familiarizing oneself with the project objectives & the tools to be used.
- Piloting the research instruments & noting the areas that require rectification & improvement.
- Creating rapport with the research participants & enlightening them on the project.
- Administering interview-guided questionnaires to participants for data collection.
- Overseeing the preparation of research materials & research kits prior to data collection.
- Preparation of training venues and organizing training materials.
- Accounting for all research materials and the return and filing of the research documents.
- Writing debriefs, reports, findings & compiling them from other research assistants.
- Acting as liaison between the Principal Investigator (PI) & other research assistants.
- Attending any meeting as required by the PI and writing minutes of the same.

ASSIGNED & ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Invitation to give a career talk to St. Elizabeth Parochial Junior School, Ishiara, on Study Skills in preparation for KJSEA, University of Embu (March 2026).
2. University of Embu Mentorship: Sensitizing High School learners on the importance of education, and selection of university courses for School of Education and Social Sciences Programmes (June 2023).
3. Participated in Designing Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) Curriculum, School of Education and Social Sciences – University of Embu (September 2022).

<u>Key responsibilities</u> - Structuring the course purpose and course descriptions for ECDE units - Formulating expected learning outcomes for 44 ECDE units. 4. Student Representative – Master of Education Instructional Methods and Educational Technology Programme (2021 – 2024). 5. Class representative – Undergraduate classes - University of Embu (2016 – 2020).			
WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES			
- Education Evidence for Action (EE4A) & Education Deans Forum – Kenya (EDF-K) Conference, University of Embu. Theme: “<i>Reimagining Education in Kenya: Reforming Teacher Education for Sustainable Development.</i>” 27th -28th August 2025. - Early Career Researchers (ECR) Pre-Conference Mentorship Programme, University of Embu in conjunction with EDF-Kenya & EE4A. Presented on: “<i>Strengthening the Education Eco-system: Revitalizing University Academy and Research through Graduate Students.</i>” 25th -26th August 2025. - Women Leading Change (WLC) Conference, University of Dar es Salaam Business School, Tanzania - Professional Leadership Coaching (September - November 2025). - Online Practices Curriculum Review & Module Development for Online Programmes Workshop (August 2025).			
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE			
- Tree Planting: University of Embu Tree Planting Day (April 2025) - Embu Town Clean-Up, Kenya Tenri Society, 24th Hinokishin Day Celebrations (25th May 2024) - Red Cross Blood Donation, University of Embu (August 2024). - Participated in Expo for Market Place Simulation at the University of Embu (November 2024) - Participated in Rongai District, Nakuru student Science Congress (2013) - Mentorship: High School Students Educational talk (Mema & Ugweri Secondary School) - Church Youth Assistant Secretary- A.I.P.C.A church Mang’u Nakuru. (2010-2013)			
PUBLICATIONS			
1. Gitiha, R. W., Rugano, P., Wakhu, S., & Muriithi, C. G. (2024). Students’ perceptions towards the uptake of educational technologies in Christian Religious Education. <i>Cogent Education</i>, 11(1), 2310968. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2310968			
THESIS			
1. Gitiha, R. W. (2024). <i>Teachers’ and Students’ Perceptions towards Uptake of Educational Technologies in Christian Religious Education in Secondary Schools in Embu County, Kenya</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Rachael Wanjiku Gitiha).			
PGDE SUPERVISION			
S/N	Title	Student	Year Awarded
1.	Examining Digital Literacy Skills among University Students in Kenya	Chepkemoi Doreen	2025
2.	Influence of Parental Involvement on Students Academic Performance in Public Day Secondary Schools in Embu West Sub-County, Embu, Kenya	Nzioki Justus Mutisya	2025
3.	Examining Pedagogical Practices and Challenges in the Implementation of Competency-Based Education in Junior Schools in Murang’a County, Kenya	Nyang’au Christine Kemunto	2026

REFEREES

Prof. Ciriaka Gitonga

Associate Professor, University of Embu.

HERI Africa Research Chairs Coordinators

In-charge ECR Mentorship Programme

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Dr. Peter Rugano

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Dr. Simon Karuku

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