

**Robert G. Nyaga, Ph.D.**  
Technical Director, Qualitative Research  
Busara Center for Behavioral Economics  
38 Apple Cross, Lavington, 00100  
Nairobi, Kenya  
[Personal Website](#)

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## EDUCATION

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### **Ph.D. Communication**

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

Aug 2020

### **Master of Arts Communication**

Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, USA

Aug 2016

### **Bachelor of Science Communication & Public Relations**

Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya

Dec 2013

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### **Technical Director, Qualitative Research**

Jan 2023- Present

#### **Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, Nairobi, Kenya**

- Managing a team of qualitative researchers in applying behavioral research combining qualitative research approaches with insights from behavioral science.
- Leading thought leadership in behavioral science and qualitative research through conference presentations, thought pieces, and engagements with clients and funders.
- Driving the long-term growth and positioning of the qualitative research in partnership with executive leadership, including overall talent strategy, learning, and development.
- Designing research studies and managing projects on cutting-edge SBC work and qualitative research.
- Enhancing organizational technical excellence through diagnosis of inefficient processes and designing solutions for upscaling across the organization.

### **Associate Director, Qualitative Research & Design**

July 2022- Dec 2022

#### **Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, Nairobi, Kenya**

- Provided leadership to a team of qualitative researchers, design specialists, and analysts.
- Led thought leadership initiatives focused on applying behavioral science and qualitative research at Busara through: training, conference presentations, and engagements with clients and funders.

### **Qualitative Research Specialist**

June 2020- June 2022

#### **Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, Nairobi, Kenya**

- Designed and managed qualitative research projects for a wide array of corporate organizations introducing new products to the market so as to ensure they have a clear understanding of the market dynamics before the actual deployment.
- Designed empirically driven interventions aimed at encouraging behavior change in sex and reproductive health, maternal health, nutrition, and WASH programs.
- Contributed to organizational strategy and growth by participating in business development activities, demand generation, and client management.

# Robert G. Nyaga

## Graduate Research Assistant

June 2016- Aug 2020

### Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

- This position entailed conducting research in cancer prevention and designing and implementing health campaigns on campus.

## Graduate Research Assistant

### Social Media Analytics and Command Center

### School of Communication, Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Aug 2014 - Aug 2016

- Conducted qualitative and quantitative social media data analysis using Nuvi, Geofeedia, Gephi, Google Refine, Rapid Miner, and NodeXL

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## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Adjunct Faculty,

May 2021- Present

### United States International University, Nairobi, Kenya

This position involves advising master's students writing graduate theses and teaching the following classes:

- Global Communication. A master's class of **25** students.
- Development Communication Theory. A master's class of **18** students
- Media Ethics: An undergraduate class of **25** students
- Behavior Change Communication. A master's level course focusing on design and evaluation of behavior change interventions. **14** students
- Risk Communication Class: A master's level course focusing on risk assessment and designing of risk communication strategies and techniques. **14** students
- Communication Research Methods. An undergraduate course introducing students to research in communication studies around the world. Enrollment: **15** students

## Graduate Teaching & Research Assistant,

Aug 2016 – Aug 2020

### Purdue University, Indiana, USA

Instructor of Record: Brian Lamb School of Communication for the following courses:

- Com 303: Intercultural Communication. Graduate Teaching Assistant of Record  
Enrollment: 25 Students
- Com 114: Fundamentals of Speech communication  
Enrollment: 50 Students
- Com 318: Principles of Persuasive Communication. Graduate Teaching Assistant Enrollment: 375 Students

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## PUBLICATIONS

### Manuscripts in press

Nyaga, R. (In Press). From Africa to the United States: Exploring African students' lived experiences at an American university. *Journal of International Students*.

Ndegwa, M.N. & Nyaga, R. (In Press). Young mothers' perspectives on maternal nutrition communication in Kenya's informal settlements: A case study of Pumwani Hospital. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Studies in Africa*

# Robert G. Nyaga

## Selected peer-reviewed publications (Arranged by year of publication)

- Alhaji, M. M., Umar, L., Yusuf, M. A., **Nyaga, R.**, Singh, J., Okafor, A., Meyo, F., Shayau, Z. H., Isah, Z. I., Abubakar, M., Umar, A. I., & Ozohu-Suleiman, Y. (2025). Supply and demand barriers to PHC maternal care services uptake: qualitative and behavioural insights from Gombe State, Nigeria. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 25(1), 939. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-025-08071-4>
- Alhaji, M. M., Yusuf, M. A., Umar, L., **Nyaga, R.**, Okafor, A., Meyo, F., Shayau, Z. H., Ozohu-Suleiman, Y., Isah, Z. I., Dodo, A. M., Abubakar, M., Umar, A. I., Abubakar, H., Kolo, H. N., & Adamu, U. S. (2025). Applying behavioral science to increase use of maternal care services: Findings from a field experiment in northern Nigeria. *Behavioral Science & Policy*, 11(2), 38–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23794607251382993>
- Okafor, A., Lilumbi, M., Nigudkar, A., **Nyaga, R.G.**, Wambua, R., Chouhan, K. (2025). *Applying HCD to improve the uptake of routine immunization: A case of South Sudan*. Busara Groundwork No. 27 (Thought Piece). Nairobi: Busara, 2025. DOI: [doi.org/10.62372/XYGP3979](https://doi.org/10.62372/XYGP3979)
- Nyaga, R.G.**, Wambua, R., Kaur, K., Okafor, A., Mahiaini, F. (2025). *Lessons from the field: what have we learnt from six years of doing qualitative research?* Busara Groundwork No. 22 (Lessons Learned). Nairobi: Busara. [doi.org/10.62372/TQUI9790](https://doi.org/10.62372/TQUI9790)
- Turere, I. & **Nyaga, R.** (2025). Risk communication strategies used during the rising water levels around Kenya's Lake Naivasha. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Studies in Africa*, 44(2), 75-87. <https://doi.org/10.36615/vf3wth53>
- Nyaga, R.G.**, & Wendel, S. (2024). *What is rigorous in-depth qualitative research in behavioral science?* Busara Groundwork No. 11 (Thought Piece). Nairobi: Busara. [doi.org/10.62372/LDGW4731](https://doi.org/10.62372/LDGW4731)
- Jang, C., Koki, E., **Nyaga, R.**, Okafor, A., Singh, J., Vang, A., & Wendel, S. (2024). *The Busara toolkit: Leveraging behavioral science for development*. Busara Groundwork (Research Agenda). Nairobi: Busara. [doi.org/10.62372/WQSB6195](https://doi.org/10.62372/WQSB6195)
- Nyaga, R.** (2024). Do You Chew? A qualitative examination of the perceptions of Kenyan students toward Khat (*Catha edulis*) in Kenya: *The Journal of Development Communication*, 35(2), 27-38. Retrieved from <https://jdc.journals.unisel.edu.my/index.php/jdc/article/view/264>
- Nyaga, R.** & Adu Gyamfi, P. (2024). A comparative study of HPV vaccine acceptability across global north and south countries: USA and Kenya. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Studies in Africa*, 43(1), 59-75. <https://doi.org/10.36615/jcsa.v43i1.2782>
- Nyaga, R.**, Hildenbrand, G. M., Mattson, M., Collins, B., & Masibo, L. (2021). How does privacy influence patient satisfaction? An investigation into how perceived privacy influences patient satisfaction among college students and staff in a large Kenyan university. *International Journal of Communication*, 15, 3908- 3927. doi:1932–8036/20210005
- Nyaga, R.** & Mattson, M. (2021). Does identification matter? How felt-connectedness among university students in Kenya and the USA influences health seeking behaviours. *Journal of Development and Communication Studies*, 8(2), 70-84. doi. 10.4314/jdcs.v8i2.5
- Nyaga, R.** (2020). The HIV/AIDS war in Kenya: An investigation into the perceptions of Kenyans

## Robert G. Nyaga

toward people living with HIV/AIDS and government's programmes. *African Journal of AIDS Research*, 19, 117-122. doi: 10.2989/16085906.2020.1758172

Perrault, E., Hildenbrand, G., & Nyaga, R. (2019). Epigeneti-what? Approaches on translating research for primary breast cancer prevention. *Frontiers in Oncology*. doi: 10.3389/fonc.2019.00267

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### CONFERENCES (\*Competitively Selected)

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\*Nyaga, R. & Kariuki, R. (2024). An assessment of data use in the health ecosystem in Ethiopia. Presented at the **2024 Africa Evidence Summit in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in June 2024.**

\*Nyaga, R. & Meyo, F. (June, 2024). Social and behavior change strategy to improve maternal nutrition in Ethiopia. Presented at the **74<sup>th</sup> International Communication Association Conference in Gold Coast, Australia in June 2024.**

\*Nyaga, R. Chouhan, K., & Meyo, F. (2024). Social and behavior change strategy to address open defecation in Ethiopia. Presented at the **3<sup>rd</sup> National Social and Behavior Change (SBC) Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2024.**

\*Nyaga, R. Hildenbrand, G., Mattson, M., & Masibo, L. (2019). Does perceived privacy influence patient satisfaction among college students? A comparative study of students at a Kenyan university and those at a large American Midwestern university. Presented at the **International Communication Association Convention in Washington, D.C., USA, in May 2019.**

\*Nyaga, R. & Adu Gyamfi, P. (2024) A comparative study of HPV vaccine acceptability across global north and south countries: USA and Kenya. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Studies in Africa*, 43(1), 59-75. <https://doi.org/10.36615/jcsa.v43i1.2782>. Presented at the **World Social Marketing Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa in April 2023**

\*Nyaga, R. (2019). Do You Chew? A Qualitative Examination of the Perceptions of Kenyan Students Toward Khat (*Catha edulis*): A Case of a Large Kenyan University. Presented at the **2019 National Communication Association Convention in Baltimore, M.D., USA, in November 2019.**

\*Nyaga, R. (2018). The HIV/AIDS War in Kenya: An Investigation into the Perceptions of the Public toward People Living with HIV/AIDS and the Kenyan Government's Commitment to Eradicate HIV/AIDS. Presented during the **2018 Central States Communication Association Convention, Milwaukee, WI (Presenter, Top Paper Panel).**

\*Nyaga, R. (2017). How "Social" Are the Healthcare Providers? An Analysis of the Social Media Presence of Two Leading Teaching and Referral Hospitals in Kenya. Paper presented during the **2017 Central States Communication Association Convention, Minneapolis, MN (Presenter, Top Paper Award).**

\*Nyaga, R. (2016). From Africa to "The States": A qualitative examination of the experiences of African students in America. Paper presented during the **2016 National Communication Association Convention, Philadelphia, PA (Presenter).**

## Robert G. Nyaga

**\*Nyaga, R.** (2016). The attitudes and knowledge of Kenyans toward condoms and HIV/AIDS: A study of social media content. Paper presented during the **2016 National Communication Association Convention, Philadelphia, PA (Presenter)**.

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### COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING AND GRANTS (\*Above \$1,000)

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**Global Synergy Grant \$7,500 (Purdue University).** Funded research on communication about HPV Vaccination and barriers to HPV vaccination.

**Brian Lamb School of Communication, Purdue University, Research Grant \$10, 000.** Used to cover costs related to data collection for dissertation focusing on HPV vaccine in Kenya from June 2019 to Aug 2019.

**PROMISE Award Research Fund, Purdue University, \$1,500:** Provided by the College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University. Used to collect data on the HPV vaccination intentions of students in Kenya in June 2019 to August 2019.

**College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University, Training Funds \$1,850:** Used to meet training expenses for the Applied Management Principles (mini-MBA) organized by the Krannert Business School.

**Purdue University, Summer Research Grant \$3, 597:** Used to conduct research on cancer prevention in developing countries.

**PROMISE Award Research Fund, Purdue University, \$1,500:** Provided by the College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University. Used to conduct research on patient satisfaction with the healthcare system in Kenya in May 2018.

**PROMISE Award Research Fund, Purdue University, \$1,500:** Provided by the College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University. Used to conduct research on khat in Kenya in May 2017.

**Purdue University Peace Project Grant \$1,000:** Used to conduct groundwork in Kenya to assess the feasibility of Purdue Peace Project's operations in Kenya.

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### LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES

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- a. **Peer Reviewer:** I review journal submissions for the *Communicare: Journal for Communication Studies in Africa*, and conference submissions for International Communication Association.
- b. **Master of Arts Thesis Supervision (Ongoing) at United States International University, Africa**
  1. Ruchiami, K.C. (Ongoing). *Influence of "Angaza-Kifafa" Health Communication Campaign on Stigma Reduction and Treatment Uptake Among People Living with Epilepsy in Kilifi County, Kenya*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.
  2. Mpamugo, S. (Ongoing). *The Influence of Students' Satisfaction With Digital Communication Platforms On University Brand Perception: A Case Study of United States International University – Africa Blackboard Usage*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.

## Robert G. Nyaga

### **c. Master of Arts Thesis Supervised (Graduated) at United States International University, Africa**

1. Ng'ang'a, K.N. (2025). *Visual Representation of Science Communication: A Case Study Exploring Researchers' Use Of Engagement And Science Reporting Materials In Kenya*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
2. Ahmed, M.Y. (2025). *Representing The Self Through Consumerism On Instagram: A Study Of Young Adults' Brand And Product Representation*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
3. Karanja, K.W. (2025). *The Role Of Kenyan Social Media Influencers On Travel Related Decision Making*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
4. Nkonge, M.K. (2025). *Exploring The Role Of Tiktok In Shaping Contraception Knowledge And Use Among Female Undergraduate Students: The Case Of USIU-Africa*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
5. Nyabuto, C.M. (2025). *Influence Of Communication On The Uptake Of Iron And Folic Acid Supplementation Among Pregnant Women in Nakuru West, Kenya*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
6. Wachira, A.W. (2025). *Enhancing Open Communication On Menstrual Health Between Mothers and Adolescent Daughters In Nairobi, Kenya's Kawangware Informal Settlement*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
7. Ndegwa, M.N. (2024). *Exploring Young Mother's Perspectives On Pumwani Hospital's Communication Strategies To Promote Maternal Nutrition In Mathare*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
8. Turere, I.A. (2022). *Climate Change Risk Communication And Adaptive Behavior In The Rift Valley Lakes Regions: A Case Study Of Lake Naivasha*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
9. Okindo, I. (2023). *Role Of Risk Communication In Adoption Of Health Behaviors: A Case Of Youth In Kibra Informal Settlement, Nairobi*. United States International University, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

### **d. Purdue University, Global Ambassador**

Aug 2018 to Aug 2021

- Organized recruitment initiatives on behalf of the Purdue Graduate School aimed at engaging prospective graduate students from Kenya and Africa at large.

### **e. Member, By Laws Ad Hoc Committee of the Senate of College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University**

Jan 2019 to Mar 2019

## Robert G. Nyaga

- Conducted reviews of the by-laws of the Senate of College of Liberal Arts with respect to the mandates and composition of the standing committees and revised outdated clauses.

**f. Vice President International Relations and Cultural Inclusion, Aug 2017- May 2018**  
**Communication Graduate Students Association (CGSA), Purdue University**

- Organized events aimed at bringing American and international students at Purdue together to enhance inclusion and diversity between groups from different cultural backgrounds.

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### ACADEMIC HONORS AND AWARDS

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- **2019 Bilsland Fellowship Nominee** for the Brian Lamb School of Communication, Purdue University.
- **Fellow of the 2018/2019 Cancer Prevention Internship Program-** A one-year opportunity that is awarded to only four graduate students at Purdue University. Fellows design and implement service-learning activities aimed at creating awareness among the college fraternity.
- **Best Student Debut Paper 2017:** Presented at the Central States Communication Association Convention in Minneapolis, MN (March 2017).

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### PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

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**Google UX Design Professional Certificate Course** 2024

**Applied Management Principles Certificate (Mini-MBA),** 2019

Krannert Business School, Purdue University

**Graduate Social Policy Certificate,** 2019

Department of Political Science, Purdue University

**Certificate in Foundations of College teaching,** 2018

Purdue University

**Certified Public Secretary of Kenya** (at Section 5 out of 6 Sections) 2014

Kenya Accountancy and Secretaries Examinations Board

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### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

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- International Communication Association Jan 2019- Present
- National Communication Association May 2016- Present
- Africa Social Behavior Change Alliance May 2023- Present
- Africa Social Marketing Association March 2023- Present

### REFERENCES

Dr. Marifran Mattson (**Chair**, Dissertation Committee)  
Head of Department, Brian Lamb School of Communication  
Purdue University  
West Lafayette, IN, USA, 47907-2098  
E: [mmattson@purdue.edu](mailto:mmattson@purdue.edu)

Dr. Steve Wendel,

## Robert G. Nyaga

Co-Founder & Head of Methodology,  
SistemaFutura

E: [steve@sistemafutura.com](mailto:steve@sistemafutura.com)

Dr. Gilbert Nyaga (**Career Mentor**)  
Professor, D'Amore-McKim School of Business,  
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