

## **Promoting health and wellbeing among students in institutions of higher learning in Kenya through O3 Plus Project**

There was pomp and colour at the launch of the O3 Plus project at the University of Nairobi's Taifa Hall. The O3 Plus Project seeks to promote health and wellbeing among students in institutions of higher learning in Kenya.

The novel initiative is a collaboration between the University of Nairobi, UNESCO and Mount Kenya University. The signing of a partnership agreement signified the beginning of a project that will have a great impact on the youth in Kenya.

“The launch of the O3 Plus on Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future today is a major milestone in addressing a range of Health and Wellbeing issues young people are faced with, including EUP, GBV, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, mental health and access to accurate information on sexual and reproductive health and services for young people in higher and tertiary institutions,” said Prof. Hubert Gijzen, UNESCO Regional Director & Representative.

According to Prof. Gijzen, the initial phase of the project will be rolled out in all the 10 campuses of University of Nairobi and the main campus of Mount Kenya University providing an opportunity to boost the realization of positive health, education and gender equality outcomes of a combined 100,000 students.

The Chief Administrative Secretary, State Departments for Early Learning & Basic Education and University Education and Research, Ms. Mumina Gallo Bonaya, expressed Prof. George Magoha, CS, Education, sentiments with regards to those in leadership roles acknowledging and addressing the plight of the youth.

“The leadership and governance structures in our institutions of higher learning can no longer bury their heads in the sand as though nothing is happening with our youth. We have to take affirmative action that will salvage them.

On her part the Swedish Embassy's representative, Ms. Annika Otterstedt, advised the youth that the responsibility to acquire the knowledge of what can be done to change the world was upon them. She vowed that the Swedish government would continue supporting youth initiatives.

University of Nairobi's [Vice-chancellor](#), Prof. Stephen Kiama, pointed out the fact that university students lack information with regards to sexuality education.

“Very often, we wrongly assume that university students, being of majority age, have sufficient information that equips them to avoid negative health outcomes when students reach the tertiary level of education. While there has been significant focus and investments in Kenya on increasing the provision of sexuality education at the basic level, very little attention has been

paid to the status of sexuality education and service provision within higher and tertiary education institutions.”

Prof. Kiama’s counterpart from Mount Kenya University, Prof. Deogratius Jaganyi noted that education is a powerful weapon of change. He challenged the partners present to roll out the 03 plus project to various institutions in the country and to identify other areas of collaboration in a bid to strengthen the partnership and benefit the country.

The 03 plus project will go a long way in reducing incidences of mental health, new HIV infections, unintended pregnancy and gender- based violence while improving youth friendly services and creating a safe campus environment.

Click [here](#) watch the event's proceedings