

# HIV and AIDS responses in the Kenya university sub-sector

This is a short synopsis of HIV and AIDS responses across the Kenyan university sub-sector. It is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all activities in the sub-sector. For each institution, contact names and details of people who will be able to provide more detailed information are listed.

## 1. KENYATTA UNIVERSITY



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Kenyatta University is located about 16 kilometres from Nairobi. It evolved from British Temple Barracks to Kenyatta University College, a constituent college of the University of Nairobi and it became a full-fledged university in 1985.

The university operated six faculties, which were de-established, and the university now offers its programs through schools. Namely, School of Pure and Applied Science, School of Education, School of Humanities and Social sciences and the School of Graduate studies.

Kenyatta University has a population of 14,000 students and 2,317 members of staff, and is in the forefront among Kenyan Universities, in HIV/AIDS programmes. These includes:-

- **Aids Control Unit (ACU)**

This was established to coordinate and formulate programmes for the management of the HIV/AIDS crisis within the university and the university neighbourhood.

The **mission** and the **vision** of the ACU *“is to promote activities that will lead to a relatively HIV/AIDS free environment”* and to develop a healthy and productive human resource for the nation.

- **HIV/AIDS policy**  
The university developed HIV/AIDS policy guidelines on prevention, management and control of HIV/AIDS at the institution.
- **Health services**  
The university offers health services to all students, members of staff and their families.
- **Curriculum**  
The university is offering a wide variety of courses at certificate, diploma and postgraduate levels, as well as a compulsory core – unit on HIV and drug abuse to all students. In addition, the School of Pure and Applied Science offers a course on nutrition and HIV/AIDS.
- **Orientation**  
The Aids Control Unit normally has a special session with all new students on campus, to discuss issues related to HIV/AIDS. The Vice-Chancellor also makes a public address to all 1<sup>st</sup> year students.
- **Annual HIV/AIDS Bulletin**  
The Aids Control Unit publishes the “ACU Bulletin” every year, which contains information on HIV/AIDS to the university community.
- **Peer education**  
The university established an HIV/AIDS peer education training programme that trains over 200 students and 6 members of staff annually.
- **Involvement in community improvement projects**  
The university plays a key role in mobilizing communities through the Aids Control Unit and the organization of Kenyatta University Outreach project (OKUO). Through OKUO, students, staff and the local communities participate in HIV/AIDS activities and other self-help projects.
- **Condom distribution**  
Condoms are readily available for the students and staff who need them at the Health Centre and in the students Hostels.
- **Counselling services**  
Counselling services are available to all students and are coordinated by the Dean of Students, and Aids Control Unit.

- **Voluntary Counselling and Test (VCT) Services.**  
The University offers VCT Services to students, staff and the local community.
- **Training**  
The Aids Control Unit provides, life skill training, which enable orphans to make informed decisions about their own lives. University leadership is involved in the training of community leaders and youth on HIV/AIDS so that they are sufficiently informed in order to control the spread of HIV/AIDS. The university also trains staff and students on how to care for infected and affected HIV/AIDS individuals
- **Research on HIV/AIDS**  
Research on HIV/AIDS is active at the University, particularly to the post-graduate students pursuing a Post Graduate Diploma in HIV/AIDS where a project is compulsory. The Aids Control Unit also continually assesses the impact of HIV/AIDS on the university community.
- **Community centre**  
The university is in the process of establishing a community resource centre, which is meant to serve both the university, the local community and to provide micro-finance programme to support people living with HIV AIDS (PLWHAS).
- **University HIV testing day**  
The Aids Control Unit organizes an annual HIV testing. The event attracts students, staff and the local community.
- **Awareness**  
The Aids Control Unit mobilizes the university community and the local communities on HIV/AIDS in a creative and sure way of communicating. This includes: students and staff drama, songs and puppetry presentations. The same mode is used to sensitise students in primary and secondary schools.
- **Students and staff HIV/AIDS organizations**  
Kenyatta University Students Aids Control Organization (KUSACO), the Kenyatta University peer counsellors, and the Kenyatta University Staff Anti-Aids Group (KUSAAG) are students and staff organizations which are actively dealing with HIV/AIDS in the university and its environs.

- **Students District Associations**  
Kenyatta University students have formed District Associations to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic in their home Districts.
- **Work-place programmes**  
Staff seminars and workshops are continually organized for HIV mobilization.
- **Open learning centres**  
These are used as avenues for HIV/AIDS mobilization especially for the students and staff who undertake off-campus programmes.
- **Management Board**  
Kenyatta University has a Management Board that makes decisions on HIV/AIDS programmes. It has representation from all Departments. The Director of ACU is the secretary of the Board, which is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.
- **Employment**  
The Aids Control Unit initiated for part-time students residential advisors to counsel them on alcoholism, drug abuse and issues related to HIV/AIDS. In addition, the university offers unique employment opportunities to two best 'trainer of trainers' graduating from the HIV/AIDS Peer Education Programme annually.
- **Herbal medicine**  
The university has employed herbalists who use alternative medicine to treat opportunistic infections.
- **Partnership**  
The Aids Control Unit collaborates with the Government of Kenya in HIV/AIDS Policy formulations. It also works closely with other organizations both national and international, in the management and control of HIV/AIDS. This includes: the Association of African Universities (AAU), the Association of American Universities and Colleges (AAU & C), the I Choose Life (ICL) and the Kenya Aids Vaccine Initiative (KAVI).
- **Use of puppetry arts in HIV/AIDS awareness**  
The university has trained students and staff in puppetry, music and dance for use in AIDS awareness. The groups are informally recognized and have performed in several African countries as well as China and Turkey. They have also performed at various institutions such as Meredith College, Duke University, John Hope Franklin College.

## **2. EGERTON UNIVERSITY**



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Egerton University is the oldest institution in Kenya. It was founded in 1939 as an Agricultural College. In 1986 it grew into a constituent college of the University of Nairobi and in 1987, it was granted the status of a university by an Act of Parliament. Currently, the university has a population of over 8,600 students and 500 members of academic staff.

The university responded to the effects of HIV/AIDS by developing effective teaching programmes and established an Aids Control Unit. The teaching courses include:-

- The university through the Faculties of Science and Education jointly identified under-graduate courses to incorporate HIV/AIDS into curriculum.
- Through the Faculty of Science a common university course "Biology of HIV/AIDS and society" was developed
- The university also organizes, seminars, workshops on HIV/AIDS.

## **3. MASENO UNIVERSITY**



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Maseno became a full-fledged university in 2001 through an Act of Parliament. The university student population approximate, to 4,000.

Though the university had no previous elaborate commitment to address HIV/AIDS, problems within its surrounding communities, prompted the university to develop programmes to control the spread of HIV/AIDS.

These include:-

- Topics related to HIV/AIDS incorporated into teaching programmes; the B.Sc. community development course, media and communication, community nutrition, community partnership and development, population and fertility.
- On-going research on management of ailments arising from HIV/AIDS infection using herbal medicines.
- Peer counselling programmes for students.
- Awareness campaigns and counselling for students.
- Formation of Anti-HIV/AIDS clubs.
- Training of syndromic management of sexually-transmitted infections.
- Increased supply and distribution of condoms.
- Teaching on sexually-transmitted infections and drugs dispensing.
- Prevention of mother-to-child transmission through counselling and treatment of sexually-transmitted infections (STI).
- Provision of health information to staff and students.
- The establishment of the Aids Control Unit to reduce the acquisition and spread of HIV/AIDS.

#### **4. MOI UNIVERSITY**



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Moi University was established in 1984 following the recommendations of a presidential task force, working on the need of a second university in Kenya. The university has since grown from a single faculty to a leading centre of excellence, research, scholarships and outreach. Over the years, it has expanded and today there are fourteen faculties, schools and institutes.

The university has initiated some activities on HIV/AIDS, these include:-

- (a) Student activities and teaching
- (b) Voluntary counselling and testing (VCT)
- (c) Research
- (d) Teaching of HIV/AIDS Units in some departments
- (e) University has well-established HIV/AIDS committees and clubs.

The university collaborates with many organizations and the Government of Kenya in HIV/AIDS programmes.

## **5. CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**



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The university started as a Graduate School of Theology known as the Catholic Highest Institute of Eastern Africa (CHIEA). The Institute (CHIEA) was founded in 1984 by the regional Ecclesiastical authority known as the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa. In 1992, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa became a private university.

The university has responded to HIV/AIDS by establishing committees among staff and students. The committee organizes voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) and AIDS Awareness Campaigns.

The university is currently developing a core course on HIV/AIDS and has appointed an HIV/AIDS co-ordinator, to co-ordinate all HIV/AIDS activities on campus.

## **6. JOMO KENYATTA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (JKUAT)**



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Jomo Kenyatta University of agriculture and Technology was started in 1981, as a middle level college, offering engineering, food technology, horticulture, civil,

mechanical and electrical engineering. In 1988, the then Jomo Kenyatta College became a constituent college of Kenyatta University and in 1994, the college was transformed into a university through an Act of Parliament.

- **The response of the university community to HIV/AIDS**

The university developed the following aspects of staff welfare:

- Staff housing
- Medical services
- Nursery and primary schools

- **University health services**

The university offers health services to all students, members of staff and their families through the university hospital. These services have since been extended to the outside community at an affordable fee.

- **Preventing the transmission of HIV in the university community**

This was done through promotion of the use and availability of condoms, treatment of STI and behavioural change strategies.

- The university hospital, on regular basis supplies adequate condoms in the students' halls of residence, all toilets, in the hospital and at the family planning clinic.

- **Promoting abstinence and faithfulness**

The university hospital staff provides other integrated programmes aimed at preventing diseases, promoting good health and protecting the university and the surroundings from environmental, industrial and other health risks.

- The university also mobilizes students, staff and the local communities to recognize their strengths and weaknesses in handling AIDS-related concerns. It stimulates the community to identify and participate in community-based programmes.

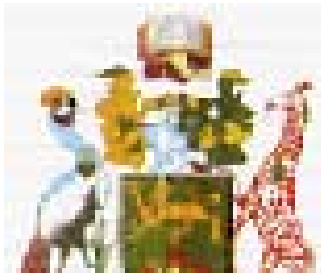
- **Peer education and counselling**

About 20 students were trained as peer counsellors and this team helps to breakdown the taboo on discussing HIV/ AIDS in the university community, they are effective in reaching out to most students.

- The Anti-AIDS clubs also publishes the '**students' digest'** yearly which contains information about HIV/ AIDS. The magazine is distributed to the university community and the neighbouring schools and middle level colleges.



## 7. UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI



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In 1970, the University College Nairobi, transformed into the first national university in Kenya and renamed University of Nairobi. In 1985, the university underwent major restructuring resulting in decentralization of administration by creation of six campus colleges headed by principles.

The University of Nairobi responded to HIV/AIDS by:

- **Improving the working conditions of the medical staff** that are considered to be at high risk of HIV infection.
- **Establishment of Students' Welfare Associations**  
Through coordination by the Dean of Students, students have been encouraged and assisted in forming associations that would help exchange ideas, promote peer support and increase their awareness and knowledge. Leading among them is the University of Nairobi AIDS Society.
- **Awareness creation**  
The university medical services have taken a leading role in promoting AIDS awareness amongst personnel through development of educative materials.
- **Incoming students are educated** on the seriousness of HIV infection in the Vice-Chancellor's address, to all new students on campus.
- **HIV/AIDS has been incorporated in some sporting activities** such as rugby and soccer.
- **Dean of Students organizes forums** where speakers are invited to discuss AIDS issues with students.

- **Condom distribution**

The university established AIDS-related services including condom distribution and counselling. Condoms are readily available, free of charge at the university health clinics. The kiosks owners within the students' halls of residence are also allowed to stock condoms, which they sell to students.

- **Counselling/chaplaincy**

To enable students make daily life adjustments and/or cope with major emotional difficulties, the Office of the Dean of Students maintains a regular counselling service on each campus.

- **Flexible programmes and bursary allocations**

There is a provision within the university regulations to allow students to withdraw from studies and resume later, particularly if this is caused by sickness. The university also tries to ensure that financial assistance is given to poor students, through the Higher Education Loans Boards.

- As regards to **people living with HIV/AIDS** (PLWAs) there has been respect on the part of the university administration for persons that wish that their sero-status remains confidential.

- University of Nairobi also established an **Aids Control Unit** to co-ordinate all HIV/AIDS activities in the university.

## 8. WESTERN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (WUCST)



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The University responded to the effects of HIV/AIDS by establishing an Aids Control Unit, to coordinate HIV/AIDS prevention and control within the university.

### **Vision**

The vision of the Aids Control Unit is to strive to create a large community of a healthy, well-informed and educated people on the realistic and impact of HIV/AIDS and on how to effectively develop and facilitate implementation of interventions geared towards mitigating the socio-economic effects of the pandemic.

### **Mission**

The mission of the unit is to apply, promote a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectional approach in dealing with a broad spectrum of HIV/AIDS related issues.

### **Activities**

The Aids Control Unit that was recently established aims to conduct various activities, which include: awareness, voluntary counselling, and testing, outreach among others.

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