



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

OPENING REMARKS BY

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DURING THE

ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE SENSITIZATION ON TUESDAY,

29TH MARCH, 2022

FROM 10.00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

CHARTER HALL

- Members University Management
- Members of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Committee
- NACADA Eastern Regional Office, Ms. Alice Mwangi
- Staff,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning,

I am happy to join you this morning for this sensitization on Alcohol and Drug Abuse prevention strategies and dissemination of the findings of the baseline survey that was done in the year 2020. On behalf of the University of Embu Community, I would like to pass our appreciation to our facilitator for accepting our invitation to come and conduct this sensitization.

Substance and drug abuse in universities has become a major global concern and a serious challenge. Substances commonly abused include alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs, cannabis and other psychoactive substances. Reports from the World Health Organization and the United Nations indicate that worldwide, 5% of all deaths of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 are attributable to alcohol use (Source - UN).

In 2015, about a quarter of a billion people used drugs, of which around 29.5 million people – or 0.6% of the global adult population – were engaged in problematic use and suffered from drug-use disorders, including dependence.

The World Drug Report 2017 reveals that an estimated 28 million years of “healthy” life was lost worldwide in 2015 as a

result of premature death and disability caused by drug use (Source - UN).

In December 2020, the University of Embu Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Committee conducted a baseline survey to determine the prevalence of alcohol and drug use in the University of Embu so as to get a deeper understanding of the prevailing situation and the concerns. The findings of the survey would then inform policy formulation and provide quantitative measurements that will be tracked over the years to assess the effectiveness of any interventions or measures put in place by the University.

According to the survey, most of the employees were aware of activities undertaken to address alcohol and drug abuse in the University. About $\frac{3}{4}$ (Three –Quarters) of UoEm employees were aware of alcohol and drug abuse issues in the University.

More than $\frac{1}{2}$ (Half) (53.2%) of the employees were aware of counseling and treatment services available in the University for those with substance use disorder (SUDs) or addiction. Furthermore, almost $\frac{3}{4}$ (Three-Quarters) (73.9%) of employees were aware of the existence of a Workplace Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Management Policy in the University.

From the survey, it is evident that, members of staff seemed to be aware of the dangers of alcohol and drug use or abuse and the services available to them in case they need assistance.

On the side of students, alcohol and drug abuse affects the academic life of our students resulting in personal and social life deterioration, inadequate attendance, poor academic performance, and constant conflict with the law, among other issues. Its adverse effect on the physical and mental health of the students cannot be overemphasized. In addition, the attending negative consequences on the economic development of the Country which is robbed of a portion of its most productive section of society also cannot be ignored.

As we all know, alcohol and drug abuse leads to crime, violence and corruption and drains human, financial and other resources that might otherwise be used for social and economic development. This results in the destruction of individuals, families and entire communities which in turn undermines national economies.

In the workplace, alcohol and drug abuse has the potential to negatively affect the health, safety, productivity and performance of employees which can lead to the institution's inability to achieve its goals. We all know that alcohol and drug abuse affect service delivery, hence it is imperative that we protect our employees and students from becoming victims of the effects of alcohol and drug abuse.

I once again take this opportunity to thank NACADA for partnering with us to deliver this important message on addiction prevention to the University staff.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, it is my hope that this sensitization exercise will be of great benefit to us in our endeavour to ensure that the University of Embu becomes and remains a drug-free institution. With more than 30% of our employees comprising young people under 35 years, and over 95% of our students comprising youth under 25 years, anything that compromises their health and productivity should be of serious concern to the University Community and certainly the University Management. Both personal and institutional goals are at stake when the most able and promising sector of society is affected by a growing trend towards substance and drug abuse. That is why the issue requires constant awareness, attention and action at the individual, institutional and national levels.

As a University we have taken several measures towards this end. These include:

- Setting clear policies on Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the institution,
- Enforcement of appropriate laws,
- Organizing sensitization and awareness activities such as this one,
- Counselling and rehabilitation referrals

It is, therefore, my hope that this sensitization will be of great benefit to us all as we continue the fight against the menace of

alcohol and drug abuse in our institution. I wish you all a fruitful sensitization. I request all of us to engage freely with the facilitators and share experiences without fear.

With those remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare this sensitization on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Strategies officially open.

Thank you and May God Bless you.

Prof. Daniel Mugendi, Ph.D,

VICE-CHANCELLOR