



FOCUS BRIEFS

OCTOBER 2020

Beyond the #hashtag

In recognition of the prevalence of mental illness, FOCUS Kenya has undertaken the responsibility of raising awareness on mental health as a prevalent issue among the youth, destigmatizing as well as promoting help-seeking behavior for those with mental health challenges. The one-week online Mental Health Campaign took place from 26th to 31st October, using the hashtag #focusingonmentalwellness.



MENTAL WELLNESS CAMPAIGN



Featuring students' stories, a film, poems, spoken word, and blogs, the campaign sought to advocate for the Church, faith-based Organizations, Government, and Institutions of higher learning to raise their involvement in preventing and curing mental illness.

Beyond the hashtag and information on the online platforms, we carried out a mental wellness clinic where students called in to speak with a peer counselor and we were able to reach and assist 35 students. We also released a one-session study guide to facilitate discussions among the students and Associates on the subject. The guide is available for use on our website free of charge.

<https://www.focuskenya.org/literature/>

We culminated the week with a wonderful webinar on building resilience for mental wellness. You could follow the discussion via this link: [http://bit.ly/Resilience on MentalWellness](http://bit.ly/Resilience_on_MentalWellness)

We were able to reach out to at least 500,000 people through our social media platforms with over 10, 000 people joining in the conversation. We desire to see many more people getting help through an expanded safe space for self-expression, prayer, and treatment. This is our desire, to go beyond the hashtag and provide real help to the suffering world.



DANCING IN THE “LOCKDOWN”



University of Eldoret Christian Union Elders Celebration

Ordinarily, final year students would have a semester-long events under the FOCUS Vuka Fyt program (Finalist Transition induction) culminated by what has been famously known as the Elders Dance.

CUs employed varied approaches to equip their finalists for transitions. The Central Rift Region organized a Regional Finalists Forum on 18th of October 2020. Through the zoom session, the participants would be challenged to lead an impactful life after campus. During the session, one of the final year students promised to remain focused on Christ in a very corrupt world. His prayer that resonates with many of his colleagues is that he will not waiver in his faith after stepping out of campus.

SEKUCU finalists had only two weeks in school and all they could do was to organize a bash on 17th October 2020. The 52 finalists who attended the event had a good platform to interact with each other. Their fellowship was visible, as they had a difficult time bidding each other farewell. “But what has a beginning must as well have an end!” one of them admitted.

Moi University West Campus CU Elders were not left behind either. They danced their way out of campus.

We thank God for the opportunity to shape these graduates for the period they were in the CU. We wish them all the blessings as they seek to be the light and salt of the earth, wherever God will send them.



Moi Uni. West Campus Elder's Dance



Kenyatta University CU Elders' Celebration



Finalist in SEKU celebrating their last moments in campus

EMERGING MINISTRY PLATFORMS

FOCUS staff work involves meeting with students to strategize, plan, implement, and review programs. Other times they meet with individual students or those in small groups for mentorship and discipleship. For the past several months as students have been away from school, staff have had to invent ways of achieving the same goals. Peter Lemaron, a Staff in Pwani Region devised a program he calls One on one with Lemaron using Calendly App to create time in his schedule for one on one meetups with Students for mentorship & discipleship.

“When planning my weekly schedule,” he says, “I set aside time to meet Students. I schedule these meetings on my Calendly app. I then share a link with the different Students and Student groups to book the most appropriate time for the meetings.”

He testifies of fruitful meetings he has had with students which involve getting to know each other deeper, answering doctrinal questions as well as praying with those in need.

Pray for the FOCUS Staff to remain passionate despite the digital fatigue that is occasioned by lengthy online meetings.





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VIRTUAL FIRST YEARS



Open air Sunday service for the first years of the Kisii University Christian Union

Traditionally, CUs enlist first years to the Christian Unions alongside the college or university orientation activities. This year, first-years reported to their respective institutions virtually. We praise God for the CUs' efforts to mobilize students amidst the new environment. There have been numerous efforts to ensure that many first-years have had the opportunity to hear the Gospel and the existence of the Christian Union and the request for them to plug in for spiritual formation.

Kisii University Christian Union employed both virtual and physical mobilization tactics with an enormous support from the administration. On Sunday 19th October approximately 850 first years attended the first CU meeting and 43 of them gave their lives to Jesus. The new believers will be taken through the new believers' class by the continuing students to ground them in their faith. Much has been done to them as far as the first impression is concerned, to help them acclimatize.

Kenya School of Law is a very unique institution where the CU begins and ends every year. Students who have never met each other physically come together and start their school year Christian fellowship. There are never any continuing students. This year the new students have done Bible Study, Weekly services, and even nominated leaders.



Over
400 Virtual
Bible Study
Groups

DISCIPLESHIP **UNBOWED** BY SOCIAL DISTANCE

10,000 Students
participating in
weekly
Bible Study
Meetings

Over 20,000
Students
involved in
weekly Prayer
Meetings

Example

in KMTCC Kisii
Campus CU

Like in many other CUs Bible Study meetings have been conducted via WhatsApp every Thursday from 8 pm to 10 pm for the last 7 months, with an average of 20 students taking part in the studies, using the FOCUS Special Bible study Series.

THE GIFT OF STEM

We are grateful to the STEM alumni for stepping in to support student's ministry in different institutions. Through the Regional and Cohort Alumni forums, the former Staff are able to network, fellowship among the STEM Alumni working in the various Regions. This gives an opportunity to spur one another to stand up and be counted in the nation and the Church based on the convictions built in STEM.

Due to uncertainties occasioned by Covid-19, the STEM Cohort 2020/21 could not start their term in August as it is the practice. However, during this period, the team has had virtual capacity development forums to prepare them for the task of ministry ahead as well as affirming their call to serve among students.

Pray for a training scheduled for 17th – 19th November 2020 focusing on ministry partnership development and resource mobilization ahead of their commencement of their term in January 2021. Pray that these efforts will be fruitful and the Lord will continue to equip the team for effective service.



FOCUS ASSOCIATES ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL ACTION



The North Rift Region FOCUS Associates Branch held an online discussion on the controversial Health Reproductive Bill on 15th August with 35 Associates participating. The discussion sought to elevate the sanctity of life from a theological perspective against the proposals in the Bill. The ultimate purpose of the discussion was to come up with a group as well as an individual's memorandum to Parliament. The submission, among many others, contributed to the rejection

of the Bill in its entirety. This was a great win for Christians who value the sanctity of life as revealed in the Scriptures yet it is a solid reminder of our social and governance responsibilities as believers. The session raised the urge in Associates to continually engage in national matters henceforth.



Ngong Road FOCUS Associates in a breakfast meeting on 7th November. Prof. Dankit Nassiuma, AIU Vice Chancellor speaking to the 20 Associates in attendance challenged them on the need to harness the opportunities, moving on with faith and not fear, believing in God for what He will do beyond the pandemic.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

2020 marks a five-year journey since we started implementing the 2016 Strategic Plan. Engagement with Stakeholders is complete and drafting of the new SP has commenced with an aim of unveiling it in December 2020.

FOR SUPPORT AND CONTACTS

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Reaching Students, Changing Nations