

## SUMMARY

### **1. Introduction:**

The UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair on Women, Education, Community Health and Sustainable Development was officially given to Nairobi University in 1997 at the request of the Government Delegation to the UNESCO General Conference. The official launching of the Chair was presided over by the Director of Education, and the agreement signed by both the UNESCO Director General and the Vice-Chancellor, Nairobi University, in December 1997.

### **2. Mission:**

The mission of the UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair is to bridge the gap between basic education and higher education. By basic education it is meant the giving of life long skills to communities so that they can, in turn, sustain their own home grown development. Higher Education connotes the kind of skill training and learning given by Universities. The Chair is committed to harmonizing what Universities and communities are doing with a view to promoting sustainable development.

### **3. Activities:**

The pioneers of the Chair's activities were Master of Arts students who, through the aegis of a Community Based Organization, worked in Makueni District during their vacation, teaching women brick making and better farming methods.

Both students and staff have showed a lot of enthusiasm in the activities of the Chair. This is basically due to the innovative nature of the Chair. The most interesting aspect of the Chair is that it involves students, who volunteer their time to work with communities in support of local people's efforts aimed at uplifting the standards of living of such groups as women and youth. An example is what the Sociology Students' Association has shown it can do, i.e. working with patients from Mathare Mental Hospital, cleaning up the compounds, interacting with them, and trying to give them some hope. The students are also working with Women's Groups teaching them how to maximize their profits in whatever income generating activities they are involved in. Another initiative in this regard is a proposed programme for students' work with street children and the aged persons in Nairobi.

### **4. Linkages:**

The UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair is not working in isolation. From the beginning, it forged linkages with both local and international Universities. The Chair works closely with the Ministries of Education and Human Resource Development, Health and Agriculture. It is also forging linkages with other UN agencies, local NGOs, and CBOs, Pharmaceutical Companies and individuals in the Private Sector.

### **5. Management:**

The UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair in Nairobi is managed by a Steering Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs. The Chair Holder, who is appointed by both UNESCO and Nairobi University, does the day to day running of the Chair.

### **6. Expansion:**

From very humble beginnings, the UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair in Nairobi University is looking for funds to expand its activities to cover different geographical areas, academic disciplines, and attract new partnerships.

The current holder of the chair is Prof. Mbula Bahemuka. She has more than twenty years experience at the university. She trained in Sociology and philosophy and has published extensively in the area. She has

international and national consulting and research experience and serves on many boards whose responsibilities are development or, education or research.