

# Karatina University to green Nyeri

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## Karatina University is undertaking a project to green Nyeri County.

The project in the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Research and Student Affairs, has established environmental clubs in 25 primary schools in four sub-counties in the county.

The sub-counties include Mathira, Othaya, Tetu and Kieni. Ten of the schools will be in Mathira, six in Tetu, four in Othaya and five in Kieni.

"Establishing environmental clubs in primary schools has inculcated environmental values in the young children at an early age. This will make them appreciate the benefits from the environment so they can conserve the same," said Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho.

Prof. Obudho who is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Research and Student Affairs as well as the project co-ordinator said this in a brief sent to the media.

She added that the reasoning behind targeting primary schools is based on the Biblical Principle in Proverbs 22:6 that; "Train a child the way he should go and when he grows up, he will not depart from it".

The Professor named the project's objectives as to establish a botanical garden and nature trail and establish Environmental Clubs in selected twenty primary schools in Nyeri County.

Others are to carry out re-forestation in degraded parts of Nyeri County through planting of indigenous trees to simulate a natural forest and using the botanical gar-



Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Research and Student Affairs at Karatina University plants a tree accompanied by an official and primary school students.

den and nature trail to create awareness on environmental conservation among the youths.

She said the management of each school has agreed to set aside a small area in their school compounds for the establishment of a forest.

"The project team has been assisting members of the Environmental Clubs in each school to establish a tree nursery which will provide seedlings that they will use to establish a school forest," she noted.

It is targeted that each school should plant 50 tree seedlings totaling to 1,150 trees over one year period.

The university don said the sustainabil-

ity of the project is guaranteed as the pupils will continue even after the project is completed.

"It is hoped that the project will be rolled out to other counties in the country to enhance the forest cover. This will go a long way in mitigating the negative effects of climate change," she went on.

She said since the project started, 25 environmental clubs have been established, enabled members to participate in the International Day of the forest and planted trees in Kieni.

The Professor also noted that there is an ongoing process of establishing a botanical garden at Karatina University for

creating awareness on environmental education.

The institution has also managed to foster joint environmental activities with Nyeri County Government and Kenya Forest Services (KFS) and trained patrons of the Environmental Clubs.

She said in future there will be a fund-raising to include all primary schools in Nyeri County.

The fundraising will carry out the same project in the remaining 46 Counties and seek collaboration with other like-minded organizations so as to plant more trees in Kenya and enhance forest cover.

The project will also do proposal to the relevant authorities in the Government to make tree planting mandatory to all Kenyans during the International Day of the forest.

"Environmental degradation coupled with global climate change are concerns world over. This degradation is more pronounced in Africa where poverty has led to massive destruction of forest resources," she said.

She added that: "Our forests are our very existence. If we look after our forests, they will look after us. They have enormous influence on global climate and local weather, sources of food, medicine, raw materials and oxygen among other benefits."

The rate of destruction of Kenya's forests, she intoned, is alarming and currently, the forest cover is estimated at seven per cent which is way below the expected level of at least ten per cent.

The University is located a few metres from an extension of the Mount Kenya forest which has faced destruction from forest fires and high demand for forest products.