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Mbarara University launches sh11b healthcare project

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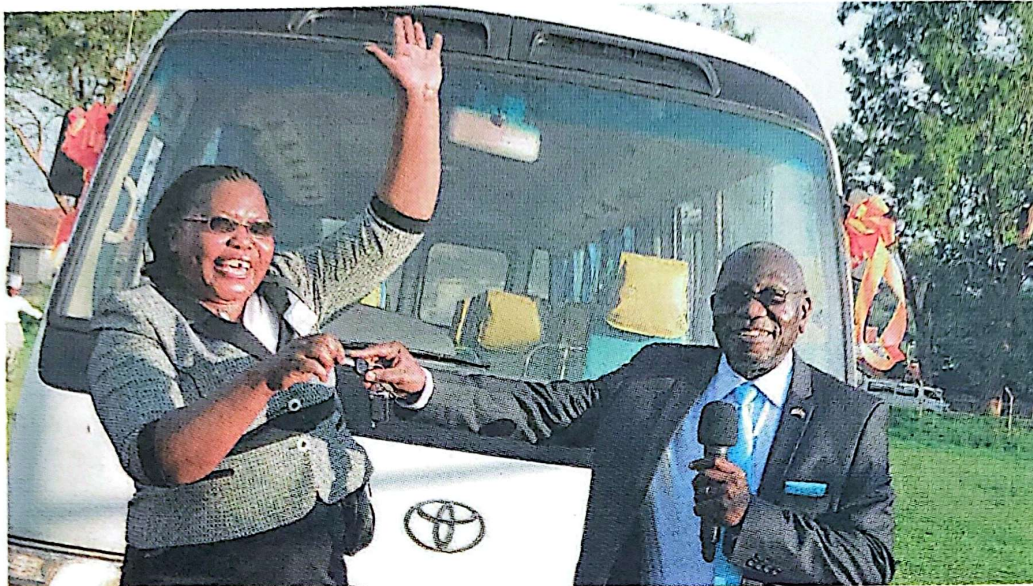
By A Ssengendo

Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) has launched a \$3m (about sh11b) project to strengthen health service delivery in the districts located in South Western Uganda.

The two-year project, branded 'First Mile', was launched on Tuesday at the university's pharmacology grounds. The launch attracted leaders of Massachusetts General Hospital in the US, Wyss Medical Foundation and some of Uganda's top physicians, nurses and public health practitioners. The project is funded by Hansjoerg Wyss Medical foundation, through Massachusetts General Hospital.

Speaking at the launch, Dr. Stephen Asiimwe, the programme director, Global Health Collaborative MUST, said the project is meant to improve patient care in Mbarara.

He added that it will also establish MUST as a premier academic medical centre focused on community-based healthcare delivery, research



Obua handing over the keys of a van donated by the 'First Mile', a health improvement initiative, to Dr Grace Namboze, the head of nursing department at MUST in Mbarara recently. Photo by Abdulkarim Ssengendo

and innovation for East Africa. The project will, in addition, promote innovative technologies to support patients, community health workers and frontline nurses.

Prof. Charles Olweny, the university chancellor, commended the long standing partnership between MUST and the project funders.

The funders will also

work with MUST's nursing department to strengthen community outreach and promote nursing leadership and research.

Steve Schawrtz Wyss, a board member of Wyss Medical Foundation, called for a combined effort in improving healthcare in the community by promoting more outreach programmes. Dr. O'Neil

Britton, the vice president, Massachusetts General Hospital, commended MUST for coming up with a project which encouraged them to fund it.

MUST vice-chancellor Prof. Celestino Obua challenged beneficiaries to take advantage of the programme and innovate what can be applied in the communities.