

# GENOWA ECHO

## ENDLESS POTENTIAL

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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY



### News Highlights

***Staff Complete Move to the New Headquarters.***

***County Leveraging GIS for Land Governance.***

***County, Sightsavers Roll Out Inclusive Education.***

***County Pioneers Smart Agriculture.***

# Governance: Operations at the New Headquarters Begin Amid Hope of Renewed Determination in Public Service Excellence

*By Communication Team*



**W**elcome to the newly inaugurated Homa Bay County Headquarters! After an extensive year of construction, the state-of-the-art facility is now fully operational, marking a significant milestone in local governance and service delivery.

"It's been a long journey. Many doubted our commitment to this project, labelling it a 'White Elephant' and attempting to dissuade us. Yet, through unwavering determination and faith, we have reached this remarkable moment. Today is indeed a day the Lord has made!" exclaimed Governor Gladys Wanga as she guided county staff through the vibrant and deeply meaningful interdenominational dedication service held in the amphitheatre, celebrating the opening of the new offices.

This impressive headquarters was developed through a lucrative rent-to-own partnership with the County Pension Fund, operating under the legal provisions established by the Infrastructure Financing Act.

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The facility serves not only as the heart of county administration but also as a hub of service delivery, housing over 1,000 government officials. Key features include an amphitheatre for civic engagement, a lactation room designed to support working mothers, and a comprehensive one-stop county service centre.

Additionally, the building accommodates executive offices, departmental offices, and boardrooms, ensuring all critical functions of the county government are housed under one roof.

The design and construction of this headquarters are aimed at significantly enhancing the operational efficiency of the county government, ensuring that it can effectively meet the needs of its citizens for generations to come.

In a notable address during the official opening of the headquarters, which coincided with the Devolution Conference 2025 held in Homa Bay, President William Ruto lauded the structure as not only a testament to the legacy of Governor Gladys Wanga but also a strategic asset that has the potential to redefine Homa Bay County's reputation and development trajectory under its visionary leaders. This headquarters stands as a beacon of progress and a commitment to improved governance in the region.



# **Digital Governance: EU-FAO Hands Over GIS Equipment to Homa Bay County to Boost Land Governance and Development**

*By Lawrence Magware*



“As a county, we will harness GIS technology to effectively map, monitor, and manage our resources,”  
stated Governor Gladys Wanga

We are delighted to announce that Homa Bay County has officially received cutting-edge Geographic Information System (GIS) equipment, generously provided by the European Union (EU) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. This significant initiative, spearheaded by Mr. Hamisi Williams, the Deputy FAO Representative to Kenya, is a crucial component of the EU-FAO funded Digital Land Governance Programme. The programme is designed to enhance food and nutrition security by improving land tenure systems and driving sustainable development in alignment with Kenya's Vision 2030.

"As a county, we will harness GIS technology to effectively map, monitor, and manage our resources," stated Governor Gladys Wanga during the ceremonial signing of the delivery particulars with Mr. Williams at her office. "This advancement will empower us to make informed decisions, enhance service delivery, and strategically plan for the development of our community."

Under the visionary leadership of H.E. Governor Gladys Wanga, Homa Bay County aims to leverage GIS as a transformative tool. This technology is set to play a pivotal role in facilitating evidence-based decision-making, optimizing service delivery, and guiding strategic development planning for the benefit of our citizens.

Key initiatives currently underway utilizing GIS technology include targeted efforts are being made to identify and map expectant mothers classified as high-risk to enhance their access to critical maternal health services, ultimately improving health outcomes for mothers and infants. Further, the initiative to name streets in Homa Bay Town is being implemented to aid navigation, streamline emergency response, and support urban planning and development.

The GIS has also been instrumental in the preparation of an integrated Local Land Use and Physical Development Plan for Homa Bay Municipality, which is set to create a strategic framework for land use, growth, and sustainable urban development of the county's biggest urban area. This is further being undertaken to support resource planning, environmental conservation, and sustainability efforts across the county.





## County Treasury Completes Public Participation on Development Priorities for 2026/2027

*By Lawrence Magware*

The County Department of Finance and Economic Planning successfully concluded its first round of the 2026/2027 budgeting cycle, marked by a comprehensive public participation initiative focused on the Annual Development Plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

Throughout the county, residents gathered at designated locations in their respective wards, engaging in discussions to prioritize their development needs as the county government prepares to implement a series of projects earmarked for the current financial year. During the launch of this important exercise, the Acting Chief Officer for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr. Lawrence Smith, emphasized the significance of community input, encouraging attendees to provide honest assessments of the ongoing projects while also collaborating on future planning.

"This public participation initiative offers us a vital opportunity to listen to your feedback," Dr. Smith stated. "We urge you to speak freely, without the fear of victimization, about where we can enhance our project implementation efforts."

The participation exercise spanned all wards and included a diverse representation from village cluster leaders, community opinion leaders, as well as segments of the population including the youth, women, and persons with disabilities.



***This public participation initiative offers us a vital opportunity to listen to your feedback,***





The community identified several pressing priorities, with the need for clean and safe water, accessible and quality healthcare services, an improved road network, and enhanced food security consistently topping the list.

The county government remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering good governance and accountability. The officials recognize the critical role of citizen involvement in formulating effective development strategies and policy planning that promote inclusive, equitable growth, and service delivery across the region.



## ***Education for All:***

# **County, Sightsavers Escalate Inclusive Education Programs To Improve Pres-School Learning Outcomes**

**Homa Bay County Advances Inclusive Education and Disability Rights with New Policy Frameworks in Collaboration with Sightsavers**

*By Collins Ogutu*

**T**he Department of Education, Human Capital Development and Vocational Training, in partnership with Sightsavers, successfully convened an inception meeting for the Technical Working Group tasked with reviewing and developing key policies and legislative frameworks aimed at advancing inclusive education and disability rights within Homa Bay County.



The primary focus of this initiative is the formulation of the Homa Bay County Disability Act, Homa Bay County Disability Policy, and the Homa Bay County Inclusive Early Years Education Policy and Act.

These measures are designed to create an enabling environment that recognises and values diversity, reduces barriers to participation, and promotes social integration for all children and persons with disabilities.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Joseph Goga, the County EYE Director, emphasised the significance of these policies: "Our goal is to foster an inclusive society where every child, regardless of their abilities, has access to quality education and equal opportunities. These policies will serve as foundational tools to protect rights, promote participation, and ensure that no one is left behind."

The policies aim to promote inclusivity in early childhood education and beyond, protect the rights of persons with disabilities, ensure equitable access to quality education for all learners, reduce social and physical barriers to participation and support the development of a society that values diversity and social cohesion.

This collaborative effort underscores the commitment of the Department of Education and its partners to mainstream disability rights and inclusive practices into the county's development agenda.

The initiative aligns with national and international commitments to promote inclusive education and social justice.

Festus Kang'alya, Sightsavers Programmes Officer, Kenya Country Office, highlighted the importance of partnerships: "By working together, we can create sustainable solutions that address the needs of persons with disabilities and foster a more inclusive society. We are committed to supporting Homabay County in this vital journey toward equity and social inclusion."

The Department of Education and Sightsavers reaffirm their dedication to ongoing stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and the effective implementation of these policies to ensure meaningful impact at the community level.



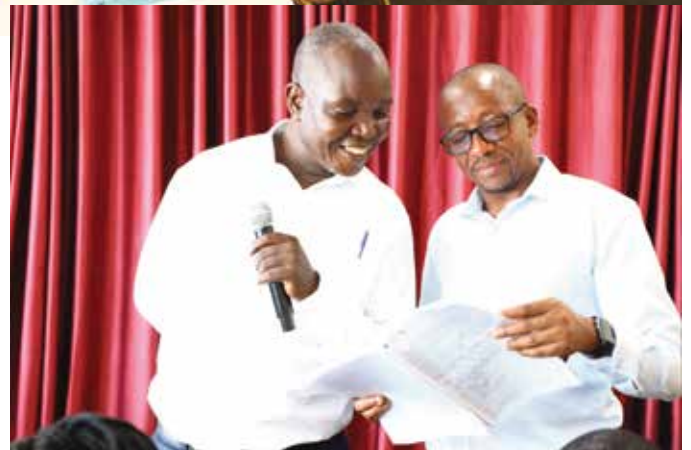
# Validation Workshop on Inclusive Play-based Toolkit Completed, Ushers Innovative Inclusive Pre-school Learning

*By Collins Ogutu*



**T**he Department of Education, Human Capital Development, and Vocational Training, together with Sightsavers, successfully hosted a two-day validation workshop on the innovative Inclusive Play-based Toolkit. The event brought together key stakeholders including Department Officers, EYE Sub-County Directors, Ward Supervisors, and select Teachers, all committed to advancing inclusive early childhood education.

Facilitated by expert officers from Sightsavers, the workshop focused on refining the toolkit, which comprises comprehensive lesson plans and activity areas tailored for pre-school education. The primary objective of the toolkit is to empower teachers with practical insights and effective strategies to foster inclusive learning environments where all children, regardless of their abilities, can participate and thrive.



“This initiative aligns with our broader goal of ensuring that every child has access to quality education,” said Joseph Goga, County Early Years Education Director. “By equipping our educators with these tools, we are taking a significant step toward achieving SDG 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all.”

Participants engaged in interactive sessions designed to validate and adapt the toolkit to meet local needs, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness.

The collaborative effort underscores the County Government's commitment to inclusive education and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The County Government of Homa Bay remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive educational framework that promotes equal opportunities for all learners, laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning and development.



## ***Agriculture:***

# **County's Food Security Plans Move to Climate-Smart Approaches**

## **Homa Bay Rolls Out Climate-Smart Agriculture Project in 28 Wards**

*By Bernard Oketch*

**T**he County Government of Homa Bay, through the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Development, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), has taken a bold step towards building climate-smart agriculture. The two institutions convened a one-day sensitisation meeting with Ward Agricultural Officers to roll out the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Project, which will be implemented in 28 selected wards across the county.

The project seeks to promote climate-resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable agricultural value chain technologies that will enable farmers to mitigate and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change while boosting food security and household incomes. Priority value chains identified for implementation include coffee integrated with fruit trees, African leafy vegetables, and dairy production.

To bring these innovations closer to farmers, the project will adopt the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach, an interactive, hands-on learning model that allows farmers to learn, practice, and share new techniques directly in their fields. The initiative is expected to transform local agriculture, foster resilience to climate shocks, and unlock new opportunities for growth within the farming sector.

Speaking during the meeting, Homa Bay Deputy Governor and CECM for Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Development, H.E. Joseph Oyugi Magwanga, emphasised the county's commitment to empowering farmers through climate-smart interventions. "Our farmers are at the frontline of climate change, and it is our responsibility to equip them with the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to thrive."



Through this partnership with FAO, we are confident that the Green Climate Fund Project will not only enhance agricultural productivity but also improve livelihoods and secure the future of farming in Homa Bay," he said.

The rollout of the Green Climate Fund Project aligns with Governor Gladys Wanga's development agenda, which prioritises sustainable agriculture and climate resilience as pillars of Homa Bay's economic growth. The county seeks to not only secure food systems but also position agriculture as a driver of prosperity and long-term environmental sustainability.



# County Receives 7 Tons of Sunflower Seeds Subsidy Programme

*By Bernard Oketch*



**T**hrough the Edible Oil Crops Promotion Project (EOCPP), Agriculture and Food Authority has allocated 7 tonnes of sunflower seeds to Homa Bay County for distribution to farmers under a subsidy model of buy one, get one free, at a cost of KSh. 385 per kilogram. The variety being promoted is Fedha, sourced from Kenya Seed Company.

The Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Development, in collaboration with the Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) convened a one-day sensitization meeting with Sub-County Agricultural Officers (SCAOs) and Ward Agricultural Officers (WAOs). The focus of the meeting was to deliberate on the promotion of edible oil crops value chains, specifically sunflower, soybeans, and groundnuts.

As part of the project's implementation strategy, efforts are underway to organize farmers into Common Interest Groups (CIGs), which will then evolve into Farmer Groups to champion the production and development of the targeted value chains.

The meeting also brought on board key stakeholders, including representatives from the Cereal Growers Association (CGA), which plays a critical role in farmer representation, provision of technical support, market linkages, and dissemination of agricultural information. In addition, Mama Millers participated as an important value chain actor, taking up the role of off-takers of sunflower produce from farmers.

In her closing remarks, the Chief Officer for Agriculture and Irrigation, Ms. Ombok Judith, expressed gratitude to the AFA team for their support. She reaffirmed that the county has prioritized the promotion of oil crops as part of efforts to bridge the national deficit in the edible oil sector. Ms. Ombok emphasized that this is why sunflower production continues to receive keen attention from the county.

7 tonnes

She further appealed to Mama Millers to complement government efforts by stepping in as reliable partners and off-takers, noting that while the 7 tonnes allocated is a good start, it will not be sufficient to meet the needs of all farmers.

This collaborative initiative is expected to boost the edible oil sector in Homa Bay by enhancing farmer capacity, strengthening value chain linkages, and creating sustainable market opportunities for oil crops.



## **Recreation:**

# **Homa Bay Lakefront Redefines the Town's Tourism Allure**

*By Communication Team*





Despite the ongoing construction efforts aimed at further upgrading Homa Bay Pier and enhancing the surrounding landscaping, the Homa Bay Lakefront is already redefining the town's aesthetic charm. This transformation positions the area as a vibrant new frontier for tourism, outdoor activities, and recreational facilities within the county's capital.

Stretching elegantly over two kilometres along the lakeshore, this lively promenade features a state-of-the-art pier constructed from robust concrete, thoughtfully designed to accommodate both fishing boats and leisurely pleasure crafts and passenger steamers.

The site boasts a spacious amphitheater with a seating capacity of 2,000, offering a perfect venue for community gatherings. An expansive, beautifully landscaped lawn invites picnics and social events, while a carefully paved concrete walkway meanders alongside the water's edge, presenting visitors with breathtaking panoramic views of the shimmering lake.

At the far western end lies the newly established Homa Bay Modern Fish Market, which not only showcases the rich aquatic bounty of the region but also serves as a vibrant hub for local fishmongers and talented artisans.

The lakefront recently played host to its inaugural major event at the amphitheater, where an enthusiastic crowd of sports fans gathered to witness a thrilling match in which Kenya triumphed over Zambia. This victory significantly boosted their chances of advancing as group winners in the recently concluded African Nations Championship tournament, co-hosted with Uganda and Tanzania.





The event was a spectacular display of community spirit and pride, surpassing all previously established sports fan zones in the country and earning recognition throughout East Africa.

Adding to its allure, the Homa Bay Lakefront now features the Golden Spot Club, a charming beachfront bar and restaurant that offers a diverse menu brimming with enticing African cuisines. Visitors can unwind with refreshing drinks as they bask in stunning sunsets glimmering over the Ruri hills, creating a picturesque atmosphere that beckons relaxation and a deep connection with nature.

The pier has quickly become a beloved location for outdoor photography enthusiasts, who flock to capture the captivating landscapes and vibrant life surrounding the lake, further solidifying the Lakefront as a must-visit destination in the region.





*"The lake represents one of our county's most valuable assets. We are committed to not only enhancing fish production from our waters but also maximizing the potential of the blue economy to foster sustainable economic growth within our community." ~ Governor Gladys Wanga*