

GENOWA ECHO

ENDLESS POTENTIAL

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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY



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A Message from The CECM COMMUNICATIONS



GRACE MERCY OSEWE (MRS)

CECM COMMUNICATIONS

Often, July and August are transitional months from one financial year to another. The Implication of this is that a number of government activities, projects and programs that directly rely on the national exchequer release get to be put on hold awaiting facilitation. Despite this, this September Issue still presents to you an in-depth report of what we managed to undertake over August.

We had a special guest in the guise of the Head of State H.E President Dr William Ruto. Other than politics and the social event he presided over in Suba South, he commissioned key projects aimed at spurring economic growth in the county besides enhancing dignified livelihoods of our people.

In this Issue, we are thrilled to introduce a new feature - Focus on our municipalities. Homa Bay County is gravitating towards being an urban county and as a government, getting our municipalities live to their names is very important. Oyugis made a huge stride and we are elated to have it be our inaugural feature in this segment.

Additionally, we undertook a comprehensive public participation exercise toward overall development planning for the next financial year. H.E Governor Gladys Wang'a, has institutionalized public participation model as she seeks to make her administration people-centered and service oriented.

As you flip the pages, you will be interacting with these stories and many more lined up for you!

Enjoy your read!

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PRESIDENTIAL TOUR: PRESIDENT, AND GOVERNOR PRESIDE OVER THE COMMISSIONING OF KEY PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTY

By Communication Team

The latest visit by President Dr William Ruto yielded several integral people-centric projects aimed at transforming the lives of the people of Homa Bay County. The president was visiting for the second time this year to inspect and launch the projects funded jointly by the State, County government and development partners.

Joined by Governor Gladys Wanga, President Ruto first commissioned the Oyugis Water Supply and Sanitation Project at Atemo, Kojwach ward. The 12,300m³ capacity water treatment and supply plant aims to provide clean and safe water to over 11,000 households in Rachuonyo South and East sub-counties, and more specifically in Oyugis, Ringa and Kosele trading centers and surrounding areas. The project, delivered a decade later after it was commissioned is part of the five-part flagship water projects in the county which also has Kendu Bay, West Karachuonyo, Homa Bay Wastewater and Last Mile Project and Mbita-Ndhiwa-Homa Bay Cluster Project, all targeting over 78,500 beneficiary households in the county.

The Homa Bay Modern Fish Market is an ambitious project that is focused on overhauling the handling of fish value chain in the county and beyond. Built to accommodate the landing, storage, processing and selling of fish, the market at Koginga Beach in Homa Bay Town is a transformative project that on completion will help spur the economic growth of the entire lake region. President Ruto and his delegation inspected the ongoing works at the site and commended the progress with a forecast completion before the turn of the year.

Additionally, the rehabilitation of the Homa Bay Port impressed the Head of State, taking the cue from Governor Gladys Wanga that the full potential and readiness of Homa Bay Town being a city relies on how soon the town can be transformed into the region's transport and logistical hub. The revival of the lake transport will contribute immensely in restoring the economic growth within Homa Bay and beyond.

In Rusinga Island, the president flagged the construction of the 42km Rusinga Island Ring

Governor Gladys Wanga welcomes President William Ruto at Ringa Primary School ahead of the President's Development Tour to Homa Bay.

Photo Credit: Eunice Atieno





Inspection of the Homa Bay Modern Fish Market. Photo Credit: Livone Molo



President William Ruto splashes water from a bowser tap as he opens the Oyugis Water Supply and Sanitation Project. Photo Credit: Eunice Atieno

Road. The road will complete the linkage between the Island and Mbita Point mainland, enhancing trading and movement of people and goods thus stimulating economic growth in Suba North region. Roads remain the county's main ask from the national government and the construction of

the Rusinga Island Ring Road solves part of the problem, but Mbita-Magunga-Sori, Adiedo-Namba Karabok, Kadel-Huma-Kanyadhiang and the Lake Victoria Ring Road remains key road projects Ruto will have to deliver.



President William Ruto is shown the designs and graphics of the 42km Rusinga Island Ring Road. Photo Credit: Eunice Atieno

GOVERNANCE: EXTENSIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (C-ADP) FOR 2025-2026 ENDS WITH PRIORITY PROJECTS SUGGESTED

By Abnery Pajero

The County Government of Homa Bay successfully concluded a comprehensive public participation exercise for the Annual Development Plan (C-ADP) 2025-2026. This pivotal two-day event, which took place across all 40 wards, was aimed at gathering insights and priorities from residents and stakeholders to guide the county’s development agenda for the upcoming financial year.



Residents of Kasungwa Ward attending the ADP Public Participation at Kisui Youth Empowerment Centre. Photo Credit: Vickery Omwandho

The exercise covered several crucial sectors that are central to the county’s growth and development with residents prioritizing the provision of farm inputs and tractors for the Agriculture, Rural and Urban Development sector and opening, grading, gravelling, and culverting of roads to improve access and support other activities as well as piping and solar installation at water points to ensure reliable water supply and sustainable energy solutions as part of the Energy, Infrastructure, and ICT Development sector.

Further, under General Economic and Commercial Affairs (Trade) the residents identified upgrading of markets as a key priority to boost local commerce and economic activities while there was also a strong emphasis on provision of learning and

playing materials in all Early Years Education (EYE) Centers to enhance the quality of education. Construction and refurbishment of health facilities were identified as critical for improving access to healthcare services.

On Social Protection, Culture, and Recreation, upgrading playgrounds and providing sports items were noted as important for promoting social well-being and nurturing talent among the youth. Piping projects and solar installations at water points were underscored as essential for environmental sustainability and resource management dominated the Environmental Protection, Water, and Natural Resources sector.

The participation exercise brought together a



Students from schools in Gembe Ward taking part in the public participation. Photo Credit: Courtesy

diverse group of participants, including the general public, residents, persons abled differently, youths, civil society organizations, and various interest groups. Their input is invaluable in shaping the county's development priorities, ensuring that the plans reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

The feedback collected during this exercise will be instrumental in prioritizing projects and initiatives by the County Government of Homa Bay. By incorporating the views and priorities of the residents, the county aims to implement development projects that are not only effective but also resonate with the needs of the people.

Recognizing the critical role of public participation in development and policy planning, the exercise was conducted in alignment with the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, Article 220(2), and the Public Finance Management Act, 2012, Section 126. This commitment is further reinforced by Articles 1, 69(d) and 201 of the Constitution and Section 207 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2012, which emphasize the importance of involving the public in decision-making processes.



ADP Public Participation. South Kasipul Ward, Oyugis Community Youth Empowerment Centre. Photo Credit: Abnery Pajero

PARTNERSHIPS: GOVERNOR WANGA INKS MOU ON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE SERVICE DELIVERY

MOU WITH SHOFCO TO FOCUS ON SOCIAL SERVICES ACROSS SECTORS

By Lawrence Magware

H.E Governor Gladys Wanga put pen to paper to cement a social service partnership plan with the Shining Hope for Communities NGO. This Memorandum of Understanding makes the two entities to collaborate on transformative projects in education, healthcare, water and sanitation, economic empowerment, and youth development with both focusing on shared goals meant to uplift urban and rural communities by improving access to essential services and empowering youth to create sustainable futures.

Homa Bay County has been working with SHOFCO over four broad critical areas: Healthcare, Water and Sanitation, Education and Youth Empowerment, Gender and prevention of sexual abuse.

SHOFCO's approach to community development

is holistic, addressing multiple dimensions of poverty and inequality to create lasting change. Its programs focus on education, healthcare, water and sanitation, economic empowerment, community mobilization, and youth development, all aimed at improving the well-being and opportunities for residents in urban slums and rural areas.

SHOFCO and Homa Bay County have agreed to work together in areas of agriculture, water, environment, gender, health, education, and youth and women empowerment programmes in an initial five-year program that will oversee SHOFCO is sponsoring 250 TVET students in Homa Bay County. Others will be the establishment of water pans, safe houses for victims of sexual abuse, and resource centers for the communities among other key interventions.



Governor Gladys Wanga displays a copy of the signed MoU with SHOFCO-Kenya. Photo Credit: Eunice Atieno

COUNTY SET TO DEVELOP A STATISTICAL ABSTRACT TO FACILITATE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PLANNING



Governor Gladys Wanga and KNBS DG Dr. Macdonald Obudho exchanging copies of the MoU. Photo Credit: Eunice Atieno

By Communication Team

The Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) over the last month will allow a collaboration on creating the first County Statistical Abstract (CSA). This will enable the government to collect and provide comprehensive information on various sectors of the economy at the county and lower levels for planning, development, and improving our service delivery to the people of Homa Bay County.

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) is a State Corporation established by the Statistics Act, 2006 and mandated to do the collection, compilation, analysis, publication and dissemination of statistical information, coordination of the national statistical system and offer custody for official government statistics. Part of its mandate is to offer county governments and other state agencies with technical support in developing their statistical abstracts.

The County Statistical Abstract (CSA) is a publication on available statistics on the demographic, social, governance, economic and environment of a county; with data from Departments and Agencies based in the counties (National & County Government). While making a case for her administration to develop its own CSA, Governor Gladys Wanga pointed out the gaps that exist in the running of the county due to lack of or insufficient data to rely on when making key decisions, especially within the financial planning spectrum.

While presenting the scope of the work KNBS will be undertaking Director General Dr Macdonald George Obudho, EBS, MBS said other than the overarching goal of better coverage, standards, and continuous improvement, collaboration between KNBS and the County Governments will emphasize Committees at the County levels, County Governments to collect data from its Departments,

KNBS to collect data from National Government and offer technical guidance/assistance with a plan to producing the CSA annually.

Homa Bay County joins Samburu, Siaya, Busia, Nandi and Uasin Gishu as the counties currently developing their first CSAs while Laikipia, Makueni, Kericho, Uasin Gishu, Nyandarua and Nakuru are onto their second-generation CSAs.





Chief Officer Dr. Kevin Osuri (second right) and senior hospital management display the Fadhili Awards for the most improved satellite blood bank facility. Photo Credit: Geoffrey Khoore

HEALTHCARE: HBCTRH - ONCE A SICKLING HOSPITAL NOW SAVING LIVES

By Lawrence Magware

The transformation of Homa Bay County Teaching and Referral Hospital is nothing short of miraculous. Once known as a death trap, the hospital has now emerged as a beacon of life, offering hope and healing to the community it serves.

The heartbreaking losses of patients due to a lack of blood reserves at the hospital in the recent past must have served as a catalyst for change.

Dr Kevin Osuri, the County Chief Officer of Health and a former unionist who was deeply involved in advocating for medical reforms, bluntly points out the possible causes of such deaths - over-bleeding and lack of immediate remedies back then. However, the hospital's recent recognition as the most improved satellite blood bank facility in Kenya signifies a remarkable turnaround.

The prestigious Fadhili Awards, presented by a consortium of leading blood banking agencies, honored the hospital for its

outstanding transformation. With a capacity to hold 1,500 pints of blood at any given moment and a turnaround time of seven days, the hospital has become fully self-sufficient in terms of blood collection and transfusion. This not only benefits the hospital itself but also supports 24 other subsidiary facilities in the county and neighboring counties.

The impact of this transformation is evident in the hospital's ability to significantly reduce maternal deaths related to blood complications. Patients like Magdaline Anyango, who once hesitated to deliver at the hospital due to a past traumatic experience, now express gratitude for the timely blood transfusion that saved their lives.

What even makes the facility stand out alongside all the aforementioned is the dedicated staff at the hospital, who have demonstrated a magnanimous calling to their motto: "Courtesy, Professionalism and Respect", dubbed CRP. You are assured of

a service that can assure you a life beyond the pain and pangs of illness.

With the hospital's success in transforming from a place of loss to a center of hope and healing, the community can now look towards the future with renewed confidence in its healthcare system.



The blood bank store at the HBCTRH. Photo Credit: Veronciah Nyasoro

SOCIAL SERVICES: MENTORSHIP PROGRAM WITH ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG PEOPLE CONTINUES IN SUBA NORTH



Prof. Jane Onditi leading student mentorship in Gembe, Suba North. Photo Credit: Courtesy

By Communication Team

Hundreds of students from various schools in Suba -North Sub County were mentored on skills and career development to address challenges they face during their education period.

While addressing the students and the mentors the University of Nairobi don Prof Jane Onditi who was the chief guest noted that mentorship programs are very important to students as it gives guidance and support besides helping them navigate their academics and personal challenges, develop skills, set career goals and build confidence. She urged the students to focus on their education as that was their main and only important thing in their level.

CECM Education, Human Capital Development and Vocational Training Hon. Martin Opere warned the students against engaging in relationships and the quest for easy money, urging them to focus on their studies as that was the best thing to do.

The area Member of the County Assembly also with the same narrative, telling the students to aim higher to achieve their dreams.



CSO Network Homa Bay County Chapter Secretary General Madam Leon in session with girls from across Gembe Ward schools. Photo Credit: Courtesy

A number of partners including the Waondo Progressive Development Group, mentors and county directors from the Education and Gender department attended the event.



Molly Ochar, the Quality Assurance Officer - HBCTRH, and participants display the advocacy banner of the Triple Threat.
Photo Credit: Livone Molo

YOUTH AND SOCIETY: COUNTY JOINS GLOBAL FETE IN CELEBRATING THE YOUTH

By Communication Team

This year's International Youth Day Homa Bay County Chapter was celebrated at the Raila Odinga Stadium, bringing together over 500 youths from across the county. The County Government of Homa Bay in collaboration with the state department of Youth Affairs and The CSO Network came together to organize the event.

The theme for the year 2024, "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development," underscores the crucial role of digital skills in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Set on every August 12, the International Youth Day recognizes the creativity that young people bring to the world and their potential to transform governance and other scopes the world unites to celebrate youth and their impact on society. It also offers a reminder to the world of the responsibility

to care for and guide the next generation and reflect on how to better encourage the youth to their full potential. It also celebrates the diversity of young people, serving as a reminder of the challenges young people globally face, including educational barriers, limited access to healthcare and economic instability.

In marking the day, the event, through panel discussions and presentations sought to explore the instrumental role of technologies and data in accelerating efforts towards achieving SDGs, including the role of young people in advancing digital transition; showcase diverse youth-led and focused digital solutions and innovations at the global and national levels that contribute to sustainable development and; provide a knowledge base for stakeholders, such as youth, civil society, and national governments as well as relevant UN agencies, to access data and insights on the topic.

In a speech read on his behalf by the Homa Bay sub-county Deputy Commissioner Mr. Charles Mwayaya, County Commissioner Moses Lilan emphasized the critical importance of digital inclusion as a key driver for sustainable development in Homa Bay County. He highlighted how digital technology can bridge gaps in access to essential services, such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, particularly for the youth. "Young people are catalysts for change and innovation in the digital era. I encourage them to harness digital tools to not only enhance their

personal growth and entrepreneurial ventures but also to actively participate in governance and community development."

CECM Sarah Malit whose department is in charge of youth affairs challenged the youth to fully exploit the digital tools to help them earn a living instead of misusing the gadgets. Mrs. Malit appreciated the role played by the partners in the digital development and challenged them to help incubate and mentor youth innovations in order to help the youth achieve their goals.



CECM Sarah Malit (in black coat) takes a jig during the IYD. Photo Credit: Livone Molo

FOCUS ON THE MUNICIPALITIES - OYUGIS MUNICIPALITY



View of Oyugis Town

With a population of approximately 53,433, including 9,084 classified as urban, Oyugis is an important urban center in the area. It falls under the administrative jurisdiction of Kasipul Constituency, along with Kabondo-Kasipul. The town comprises five County Assembly wards: West Kamagak, East Kamagak, West Kasipul, Central Kasipul, and South Kasipul. Administratively, Oyugis is part of Kasipul division, which, together with Kabondo, forms the Rachuonyo South District.

Oyugis town was duly conferred the status of a Municipality and issued with a Charter on 9th January 2023 by the Governor of Homa Bay County, Her Excellency Gladys Nyasuna Wanga, EGH, CBS, under Section 9(1) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011. Consequently, the Oyugis Municipal Board was duly constituted and the Municipal Manager appointed under Section 14 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011 on 4th May 2023 and section 29 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011 respectively.

The Manager, in consultation with the board has the key mandate to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Municipality under sections 28 (2), and (3) of the Oyugis Municipal Charter. Since

its establishment, the Oyugis Municipal Board has implemented key infrastructural projects and fostered community involvement to drive growth and improve the quality of life for its residents.





Oyugis Board Members Meeting with Bank Officials and Professionals

Achievements of the Oyugis Municipal Board

Oyugis Municipality has achieved notable milestones that have already begun transforming the town into a model of urban progress. One of the most visible achievements has been the installation of 84 state-of-the-art streetlights and a pedestrian walkway from DTB Bank to Winimum Hotel. The improvements have enhanced safety and security, while also showcasing Oyugis' commitment to urban infrastructure.

Furthermore, the Board has successfully organized five public forums and one major stakeholder dialogue with key players, including KCB and Equity Bank. These forums have fostered a culture of community engagement and dialogue, empowering local residents to contribute to the town's future. In addition, a 54-member diaspora committee dedicated to resource mobilization has been established to leverage external support for local initiatives.

The Municipality has also prioritized social cohesion through efforts such as community reconciliation at Athousand Street and organized clean-up campaigns in CBD. These initiatives have reduced waste accumulation, improved environmental hygiene, and fostered a sense of civic responsibility among residents. Additionally, the identification and marking of parking lots have contributed to decongesting the town center, creating a more

orderly and pleasant environment for businesses and visitors alike.

Oyugis Municipality has also successfully joined the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA), committing to climate action, sustainability, and enhancing energy access for a healthier, greener, and resilient future. CoM SSA is co-funded by the European Union (EU), the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID).

Economically, the inauguration of Rodi Kakuom Market has had a direct impact on promoting local business, empowering traders, and stimulating economic activity within the town.

The municipality has also successfully engaged owners of roaming animals in Oyugis, fostering collaboration to address the challenges posed by stray livestock. Through a series of community meetings and dialogues, the manager raised awareness about the negative impact of roaming animals on public spaces, safety, and cleanliness. His proactive approach led to the establishment of new regulations and enforcement measures, significantly reducing the number of stray animals. This achievement improved town orderliness.

Vision and Opportunities for the Future

Oyugis' achievements have paved the way for even greater opportunities in the future. The Municipality envisions a cleaner, more organized town that capitalizes on its strategic location along to attract investment and boost tourism. Cleanliness is not just an aesthetic goal; it has the potential to be a driving force behind Oyugis' economic transformation.

Drawing inspiration from cities like Kigali and Singapore, which have demonstrated the profound impact of cleanliness on urban development, Oyugis can implement strategies that improve public health, enhance the town's appeal, and attract both tourists and investors. Kigali, renowned for its commitment to cleanliness and community involvement, has become a thriving center for

international conferences, while Singapore's clean and green policies have made it a global financial hub.

Oyugis can emulate these successes through public awareness campaigns that emphasize the economic benefits of cleanliness. Infrastructure investments, such as pedestrian walkways, tree planting, and designated motorbike parking areas, will not only beautify the town but also improve mobility, reduce congestion, and boost air quality. Relocating hawkers to a designated market area and maintaining regular clean-up campaigns can streamline the town's appearance and attract more visitors and businesses.



Municipal Manager leading boda boda operators to demarcate temporary operation areas

THIS MONTH ON EXPLORE HOMA BAY COUNTY

Compiled by the Communication Team

KODERA FOREST: A LUSH PARADISE IN HOMA BAY!



Kodera Forest

Nestled in the picturesque upland plateau southeast of Homa Bay County, the captivating Kodera Forest spans over 703 hectares, making it one of Kenya's most densely populated forests. This natural gem is a remnant of the country's original rainforests, boasting a diverse topography with indigenous trees, grasslands, and open forest, all situated at an elevation ranging from 1250m to 2000m above sea level.

Step into the heart of Kodera Forest and immerse yourself in a breathtaking landscape adorned with canopied trees and flourishing flora. This compact forest offers an inviting terrain, perfect for explorers and nature enthusiasts alike. Its tranquil rivers and meandering roads not only add to the scenery but also make this natural haven easily accessible for all to enjoy.

A MAGICAL LEGEND: THE GOR MAHIA SHRINE



Gor Mahia shrine

The shrine on Sigama Hill in Kanyamwa is a place of great significance, where the remains of Gor Mahia, the renowned Luo magician and paramount chief of the 19th century, rest. It is a gathering place for locals, politicians, sports enthusiasts, and tourists from all walks of life seeking good fortune, blessings, and a glimpse into the rich history of this legendary figure. The football club, Gor Mahia, pays homage to his legacy and has become the most successful club in the country. The shrine, nestled under indigenous trees, holds valuable stone handiwork that offers a window into the past. When in Homa Bay, a visit to the shrine of Gor Mahia K'Ogalo might just uncover where your luck resides.

KAGAN-KOCHIA DANCERS: HOMA BAY'S CULTURAL EXPORT



Kochia-Kagan Dancers

The Kagan-Kochia Dancers, a group of traditional dancers from the Rangwe Sub-County, have been dedicated to preserving the incredible Ramogi dancing since their establishment in 1965. They have become a permanent fixture at national celebrations and holidays, as well as international events such as the Folklife Festival in the UK and the Smithsonian

Folk Festival in the USA. Renowned for their vibrant regalia and captivating dance moves, the group has earned a reputation as one of the most exciting performers of traditional Luo music. With their attention-grabbing ostrich feather headdresses and monkey fur outfits, the Kagan-Kochia Dancers are a must-have for any event in need of traditional entertainment.

