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Talent Development: Governor Wanga Opens East Africa's First Residential Sports Academy

By Communication Team



Homa Bay County has made history by becoming the host of East Africa's first-ever residential sports academy, the Acakoro Football Academy Campus. This pioneering institution has officially opened its doors, establishing itself as a vital hub for nurturing both sporting talent and academic excellence among youth in the region.

During the opening ceremony held in Kome, Kanyamwa Kosewe, Governor Gladys Wanga praised the Acakoro Academy and the contributions of the Austrian Embassy in establishing this significant facility. She described it as a monumental gift to a county that has produced some of Kenya's most celebrated football icons, including national team captain Michael Olunga and legends such as Tom Ogweni, Tillien Oguta, and Otieno Solo.

The Acakoro Football Academy spans an impressive 20 acres and features state-of-the-art football fields designed to meet international standards, well-equipped educational institutions, comfortable boarding facilities, and a dispensary to cater to the health needs of students. The academy aims to provide comprehensive opportunities, offering academic and sports scholarships to talented youth from Homa Bay County and neighboring regions.

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“This academy represents a significant triumph for sports and serves as a powerful testament to the incredible possibilities that arise when vision converges with partnership. It showcases the strength of a community united behind a common aspiration.”

Governor Wanga remarked, “This academy represents a significant triumph for sports and serves as a powerful testament to the incredible possibilities that arise when vision converges with partnership. It showcases the strength of a community united behind a common aspiration.” To commemorate the occasion, she participated in a ceremonial practice match between academy students, highlighting the commitment to both sports and personal development.



Back in March 2023, Governor Wanga signed an agreement with the Acakoro Football Academy, alongside the Austrian Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Christian Fellner, sealing a partnership that laid the groundwork for this transformative project. The groundbreaking ceremony took place in June, signifying the start of construction efforts that have now culminated in the establishment of the academy. Managed by Mr. Lucas Mott, the facility is currently enrolling students, welcoming aspiring athletes from both the local community and the wider East African region.



Healthcare:

County Government Joins Global Outreaches, Develops Roadmap to 2030

Homa Bay Joins End Postpartum Hemorrhage Run

By Veronica Nyasoro



“Run for Her and Save Her Life,”

Homa Bay County has taken a significant step in maternal health by participating for the first time in the global awareness initiative dedicated to Postpartum Hemorrhage (PPH). The county joined six others during the second edition of the End Postpartum Hemorrhage Run, an event aimed at raising awareness and mobilizing resources to combat this critical health issue.

Launched in 2024 and attended by prominent Kenyan government officials and Olympian athlete Faith Kipyegon, the run reflects a growing commitment to address essential maternal health concerns that have long been neglected. The initiative underscores the urgent need for increased investment and attention to women's health issues, spotlighting conditions like PPH that result in substantial morbidity and mortality rates among mothers worldwide.

The run, themed “Run for Her and Save Her Life,” was organized in collaboration with key stakeholders, including the County Department of Public Health and Medical Services, the University of Nairobi, the Midwives Association of Kenya, and the Kenya Obstetrics and Gynecological Society. It aims to educate the public about PPH, the leading cause of maternal mortality across the globe, and to advocate for prevention measures to ensure that no mother suffers from excessive postpartum bleeding.

Every year, globally, approximately 35,000 to 65,000 women die from PPH, contributing to one in three maternal deaths. The statistics are particularly stark in sub-Saharan Africa, where the region accounts for nearly two-thirds of the world's maternal deaths, with Kenya experiencing over 3,000 maternal fatalities annually due to these preventable complications.



In Homa Bay County, PPH accounts for 35% of maternal deaths, prompting the county government to implement rigorous interventions aimed at reversing this trend. Encouragingly, the county has recorded only one maternal death in the last four months, a testament to the relentless dedication of health workers and the impactful partnerships formed with organizations such as Lwala Community Alliance and MCGL. This achievement highlights the potential for significant improvements in maternal health care through strategic collaboration and a focus on quality healthcare services.

One expectant mother shared her positive experience, stating, “I started my antenatal journey at three months. Through ANC clinics, individuals are guided on proper care during pregnancy, provided with essential medicines such as folic acid, and advised on the right foods to eat. The eight ANC visits help health workers identify any complications early, which is crucial in saving both the mother and child.”

Community Health Promoters (CHPs) play an instrumental role in enhancing maternal and child health throughout Homa Bay County. Acting as vital links between the community and the health system, they conduct household visits, provide essential health education, and support early identification of potential complications. Their ongoing dedication has been pivotal in reducing preventable illnesses, ensuring that mothers and children receive timely and adequate healthcare.



Homa Bay Marks World Contraception Day 2025 with Renewed Call for Equality in Access

By Abnery Pajero

On September 26, 2025, at Nyagoro Chief's Camp in Rangwe Sub-County, Homa Bay County joined the global community in commemorating World Contraception Day under the theme "Chaguo la Wote," which translates to "Choice for All." This year's observance was aimed at highlighting the importance of equitable access to contraceptive methods and reproductive health services for all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status.

Local health leaders emphasized the critical need for education around family planning and the availability of various contraceptive options. The event featured health talks, free distribution of contraceptive methods, and interactive sessions aimed at demystifying misconceptions surrounding contraceptive use.

“Access to contraceptive methods is not just a matter of personal choice, but a fundamental right that every individual should enjoy”

In her address, Health CECM Ms. Grace Osewe highlighted that comprehensive reproductive health services empower individuals, particularly women, by allowing them to make informed decisions regarding family planning and their health. “Access to contraceptive methods is not just a matter of personal choice, but a fundamental right that every individual should enjoy,” she declared.



Participants in the event included local leaders, healthcare providers, and community members who engaged in discussions about the need for improved reproductive health services, particularly in rural areas where access remains limited. The event served as a platform for stakeholders to reinforce their commitment to advancing reproductive health initiatives

through education and partnerships with various organizations.

This year's observance marked a renewed focus on addressing the disparities that hinder access to contraceptive methods, underscoring a collective call for action to ensure that family planning resources are readily available to everyone in Homa Bay County and beyond.

County Develop Health Sector Strategic Plan, Aligning Interventions with Needs

By Lawrence Magware

The County Department of Public Health and Medical Services has successfully finalized the zero draft of the Homa Bay County Health Sector Strategic Plan for the period 2025-2030. This comprehensive and forward-looking plan is meticulously designed to align healthcare priorities and interventions with the specific needs and challenges faced by the county's diverse population. It incorporates a thorough analysis of current health trends, demographic data, and substantial input from community stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, local leaders, and residents, ensuring that the proposed initiatives are both relevant and effective.





The strategic plan aims to significantly enhance access to quality healthcare services and improve health outcomes across various sectors, including maternal and child health, infectious disease control, and mental health services. It will directly address key public health issues such as the rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases, maternal mortality rates, and access to vaccinations, which have been pressing concerns for the local population.

Through targeted programs and strategic resource allocation, the plan seeks to promote wellness and prevent disease within the community, ultimately fostering a healthier Homa Bay. Specific initiatives will focus on expanding primary healthcare facilities, increasing the availability of essential medications, and enhancing health education programs to empower residents in their health choices.



During a comprehensive five-day workshop held in Kisumu, the leadership of the county's health sector, guided by Health CECM Grace Osewe, engaged in an in-depth review of the outgoing plan that was developed in for 2018-2023. This review was integral in informing the new planning process, aligning it with the current realities faced by the community. "Homa Bay County has undergone significant transformations in its health sector over time, and it is only appropriate that we come up with an even better document to carry us forward," emphasized Ms. Osewe, highlighting the commitment to continuous improvement.

The workshop was sponsored by Lwala Community Alliance and attended by subsector heads within the health fraternity, fostering collaboration and ensuring that a wide range of perspectives were considered in the development of the strategic plan. This collaborative effort exemplifies the county's dedication to creating a robust healthcare framework aimed at securing a healthier future for all residents of Homa Bay.



Child Welfare:

County Government Now Targets Improved Eye Health Among Learners and Community Members

By Collins Ogutu



In a joint effort to enhance visual health and educational outcomes, the County Departments of Education and Health, in partnership with Sightsavers under the School Health Integrated Program (SHIP), successfully conducted a comprehensive medical outreach at Shauri Yako settlement, Homa Bay, aimed at addressing vision challenges within the community.

The initiative primarily targeted out-of-school children, learners from schools not covered by the program, and adults requiring vision screening. SHIP's core focus is on the early identification and correction of refractive errors and other eye conditions among school-aged children in primary and Junior Secondary Schools.



During the outreach, individuals diagnosed with refractive errors received on-the-spot reading glasses, providing immediate relief and support for better learning and daily activities. Those exhibiting more complex or different eye conditions were referred to the Homabay County Teaching and Referral Hospital (HBCTRH) for further evaluation and management by specialized eye care professionals.

The eye screening exercise was efficiently conducted by expert ophthalmologists and optometrists from the HBCTRH Eye Unit, ensuring participants received professional, targeted, and timely care. This collaborative effort underscores the county's commitment to improving visual health, supporting the well-being of its residents, and fostering an environment conducive to learning and development.

The County Department of Education and partners remain dedicated to expanding such health initiatives, aiming for a sustainable approach to eye health that benefits the entire community.

Furthermore, in a strategic effort to enhance community health initiatives, Sightsavers, in partnership with the School Health Integrated Program (SHIP), successfully conducted a one-day Gender and Disability Inclusion Training workshop for 72 Community Health Promoters (CHPs) from Homabay Sub-County. The event aimed to strengthen capacity among frontline health workers to promote inclusive and equitable eye health services within their communities.

The training session covered critical topics, including addressing gender barriers to community-based vision screening, implementing gender-responsive practices, and understanding power dynamics and gender-based violence prevention in school settings. These areas are vital for ensuring that health interventions are sensitive, accessible, and effective for all community members, regardless of gender or disability.

These initiatives underscore the county government's commitment to ensuring that every learner is empowered to succeed through comprehensive school eye health service—delivering early screening, effective treatment, and eye health education to enhance academic achievement and lifelong well-being.



Urbanization:

Homa Bay Slums Upgrades Turning the Future City into a Model Urban Centre

By Abnery Pajero

The transformation of Homa Bay's informal settlements is gathering pace as the execution of works under the Sh1.4 billion Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP 2) engages top gear towards the home stretch.

Across six settlements, Shauri Yako, Makongeni, Sofia, Nyandiwa, Rusinga Old Town, and A Thousand Streets, signs of progress are hard to miss. Once, narrow roads and muddy tracks were opened and upgraded, creating vital links to the wider town economy. Drainage systems have been laid to ease the constant threat of flooding. Elevated pressed steel tanks are being erected to guarantee residents a steady supply of clean water. Solar-powered streetlights and towering high masts now illuminate spaces that were once plagued by insecurity, turning them into safe zones where businesses can thrive even after nightfall. Modern ablution blocks and newly constructed vending platforms are enhancing sanitation and opening new business opportunities. For the first time, Homa Bay town residents will have a shared public open space equipped with a children's park stocked with modern-day sanitation facilities and a lactating mother's room, all secured within a perimeter wall.

The results are already being felt on the ground. Residents speak of safer neighbourhoods, improved livelihoods, and a growing sense of pride. For 28-year-old Mary Atieno, a mother of two in Shauri Yako, the vending platform will be a game changer. She recalls how selling vegetables by the roadside often meant struggling against dust, rain, and constant harassment. With a proper stall, she will serve her customers in dignity, double her income, and even save for her children's education.

The project has also injected new life into the local economy through its labour-intensive approach. Hundreds of youths and women have been hired to take part in construction activities, from laying concrete on roads to masonry. This not only provides short-term jobs but ensures that residents themselves are part of the effort to rebuild their neighbourhoods.

With less than eight weeks to go before the IDA financing window closes, the County Project Coordination Team is confident it will deliver the remaining works ahead of the December 5, 2025, deadline.





The Informal Settlements in Homa Bay, previously characterized by scenes of squalid living conditions, poor lighting, crime, and undignified trading spaces, are steadily and surely being replaced by improved living conditions, reduced crime, enhanced lighting, and dignified trading spaces.

As the Project moves to its closure phase, the determination is clear: beyond roads, lights, and drains, the project is about dignity, empowerment, and transformation, turning once-forgotten settlements into livable, inclusive, and safe urban spaces. For thousands of families in the six settlements, KISIP 2 is no longer just a promise; it is a new reality taking shape before their eyes.

The Project Coordinator, Madam Norseja Bayer, reiterates the County's commitment to ensuring the project is delivered within the stipulated timeline. "We have overcome the initial hurdles, and the work is now moving forward.

By the time we are done, our informal settlements will be more connected, more secure, and more resilient."

KISIP 2 is funded by the World Bank, the French Development Agency (AFD), and the Government of Kenya, with the County Government of Homa Bay leading implementation.



Agriculture:

Livestock Vaccination Underway as County Leverage Coffee Expo to Enhance Coffee Value Chain Development

Countywide sensitization on E-Voucher Vaccination Programme Concludes

By Oketch Bernard



The County Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Development, in partnership with the National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (NAVCDP), has successfully concluded a week-long sensitization exercise across all sub-counties on the transformative E-Voucher Vaccination Programme.

This ambitious initiative, targeting over 206,000 cattle as captured in the KIAMIS database, is a major step in protecting farmers from the devastating losses caused by Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). Through the programme, farmers will access vaccination services at a highly subsidized rate of only Ksh. 50 per animal, while the County Government, through NAVCDP, pays Ksh. 110 per animal.

This cost-sharing model is set to ease the financial burden on livestock keepers while boosting animal health and productivity.

The sensitization brought together key stakeholders, including NGAO officers, ward agricultural and livestock officers, Community-Driven Development Committee (CDDC) representatives, Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) chairs, and lead farmers. These groups, having received intensive training, will now cascade knowledge to the grassroots level, ensuring that farmers are fully informed and prepared to benefit from the programme.

County officials hailed the exercise as a game-changer that will not only shield farmers from animal disease outbreaks but also strengthen food security, enhance incomes, and uplift rural livelihoods.

“This programme is more than just vaccination, it is about protecting livelihoods, securing our economy, and empowering farmers,” a county official remarked during the closing session.

With the sensitization exercise now complete, Homa Bay is set to roll out mass recruitment and training of paravets who will drive the vaccination exercise. Using the Safaricom e-voucher redemption platform, these paravets will facilitate seamless access to subsidized vaccination services, ushering in a new era of livestock disease control and agricultural transformation in the county.



Homa Bay Taps into Regional Coffee Knowledge at Kahawa Festival 2025

By Oketch Bernard

The Kahawa Festival 2025, held in Moshi, Tanzania, from October 3rd to 5th, was a remarkable celebration of coffee and community that brought together coffee enthusiasts, farmers, traders, and industry experts from across East Africa. The event highlighted the diversity, innovation, and passion that continue to shape the coffee sector in the region. Homa Bay County was ably represented by the Chief Officer for Agriculture and Irrigation, Ms. Ombok Judith, who joined other delegates in exploring opportunities to strengthen cross-border collaboration and enhance coffee production back home.

The festival provided an excellent platform for knowledge exchange and networking. Participants were exposed to Tanzania's specialty coffee, sustainable production systems, and innovative processing techniques — valuable lessons that can be adopted to improve the quality and competitiveness of Kenya's coffee, especially in emerging coffee-growing counties like Homa Bay.

Beyond learning, the event also offered space for meaningful engagements with coffee farmers, traders, and exporters, paving the way for future partnerships and market linkages that can uplift local coffee value chains.

A highlight of the festival was the barista and cupping competitions, where participants showcased remarkable skill, precision, and creativity in coffee preparation and tasting. Observing these sessions provided deep insights into quality control, branding, and presentation — all vital components that can inspire similar improvements within Homa Bay's growing coffee industry.

For Homa Bay, the lessons drawn from the festival are clear. There is a need to embrace sustainable coffee production by promoting environmentally friendly farming practices that enhance both yield and quality. Equally important is fostering community engagement to strengthen relationships among farmers, cooperatives, traders, and consumers.



By doing so, coffee can become a driver of local economic empowerment. Additionally, investing in capacity building through training programs for farmers, baristas, and coffee entrepreneurs will build skills and expand opportunities within the sector.

Looking ahead, Homa Bay County is well positioned to harness these lessons to unlock its coffee potential. With its fertile soils, conducive climate, and scenic attractions such as Ruma National Park and Mfangano Island, the county can integrate coffee tourism into its agricultural development agenda.

This will not only promote the local coffee brand but also attract visitors eager to experience Homa Bay's natural beauty and hospitality.

The Kahawa Festival 2025 was, without doubt, an enriching experience that reaffirmed the value of regional collaboration and innovation in agriculture. Under the able leadership of Her Excellency Governor Gladys Wanga, Homa Bay County remains committed to applying these insights to strengthen its coffee value chain, empower local farmers, and contribute to the broader growth of Kenya's coffee industry.



Disaster Preparedness:

County, UK Partners Team to Enhance Fire and Disaster Preparedness

By Raymond Kirui



Over 72 emergency responders from Homa Bay and Bomet counties completed a 16-day intensive fire brigade training program aimed at enhancing the region's capacity for disaster response and lifesaving operations.

The training took place at Raila Odinga Stadium and the Homa Bay Pier, organized by the County Government of Homa Bay in collaboration with Operation Florian and Workington Rotary International. It brought together firefighters, paramedics, and mechanics—key frontline responders responsible for protecting lives and property during emergencies.





Throughout the two weeks, participants engaged in both theory and practical sessions covering a wide range of critical areas, including:

Fire Appliance Safety: Vehicle and personal protective equipment (PPE) inspection, and readiness of firefighting equipment.

Pump Operations and Drills: Handling high- and low-pressure pumps and managing water supply.

First Aid and Trauma Care: Resuscitation, recovery positions, and simulations for mass casualty response.

Equipment Maintenance: Testing pumps and ladders, applying antifreeze, and servicing engines for reliable performance.

During the closing ceremony at Governor's Park, County Secretary Prof. Benard Muok,

representing H.E. Governor Gladys Wanga, commended the trainees for their discipline and commitment.

"This program has significantly improved our region's ability to respond to emergencies more effectively and professionally. The County Government remains dedicated to the ongoing training and equipping of emergency responders to ensure a safer Homa Bay." Prof. Muok stated.

He praised the collaboration with Operation Florian and Workington Rotary International, describing it as a model partnership that illustrates the power of international cooperation in building local resilience.

This 16-day training represents a major milestone in Governor Wanga's efforts to strengthen emergency preparedness, professionalize fire services, and enhance community safety across Homa Bay County.



Citizens' Corner:

A Tribute to Governor Gladys Wanga

By Beryl Ouma



Once staggering, struggling, unseen,
Now it rises, a jewel on the nation's crown.
She came with a vision,
A conviction deep as the lake's own song,
A belief that Homa-Bay could stand a global tall.
Homa-Bay, the land of endless potential,
Now hums with the rhythm of progress.

Roads, once weary paths of dust,
Now stretch like lifelines across the land
Opening markets, linking homes,
Carrying dreams from the village to curve a city,
A hopeful fulfillment like a good dawn.

The blue economy breathes new,
Her waters are calling investors from far and wide
Tourism dances in Nyawita campfires,
Where fellowship glows beneath the stars.
And in the valley, the rare Roan strides,
Golden antelope of heritage restored,
A symbol of freedom, a promise of rebirth.

Then rose the stadium, of dreams poured into
pillars of pride.
A global stage towering over the Asego soil,
Where youths find wings of the crowned vision
fulfilled.
Her leadership for all.

For a child in school,
A mother in care,
For a farmer whose hope is sharpened,
She smiles, yet burns with fire within
For a passion for tomorrow,
For inheritance, for her children, for all.

From Machakos to Homa-Bay,
The name resounds: Gladys Wanga.

A woman of courage, a leader of grace,
Her arms wide for nations' her steps bold for
time.
Generations will call her blessed,
For the roads that carried progress,
For the crowned pride in a stadium,
For the waters that birthed wealth,
For the partnerships forged for the economic
muscle
For the people she lifted with dignity and love
Gladys Wanga, the golden woman of the Bay,
Hero of our days, a marvel of our nation,
Yet still, only at the dawn of her song.

*Beryl Ouma is a former secondary
school teacher and the author of
Beryl Poetry*



***"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***