

# GENOWA ECHO

## ENDLESS POTENTIAL

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## News Highlights

*Irrigating Farmlands towards Food Security*

*Collaboration on Telemedicine in the Offing*

*Hospital supplies improving patient experience*

*Restoring Women's Health through Fistula Intervention*

# Food Security: Governor Gladys Wanga’s Irrigation Drive Transforming Agriculture in Homa Bay

By Oketch Bernard



**H**oma Bay County is undergoing a remarkable agricultural transformation driven by an ambitious irrigation agenda spearheaded by Governor Gladys Wanga, aimed at ensuring food security, boosting farmer incomes, and reducing reliance on rain-fed agriculture.

At the heart of this transformation is a deliberate push to unlock the county’s vast agricultural potential through strategic irrigation investments across all sub-counties. The Governor’s vision is rapidly turning previously underutilized and waterlogged areas into productive farming zones, positioning Homa Bay as a key player in Kenya’s food production landscape.

**The project has already benefited over 1,500 farmers.**

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One of the most notable success stories is the revitalization of the Kimira-Oluch Irrigation Scheme, where the Lake Basin Development Authority rehabilitated canals across 5,000 acres, transforming a 2,000-acre swamp into a thriving rice production hub. The project has already benefited over 1,500 farmers, significantly lowering production costs through a gravity-fed irrigation system and boosting rice yields.

The impact is far-reaching, with farmers not only embracing rice cultivation but also diversifying into high-value crops such as sunflower, soybean, and horticultural produce, enhancing both food security and household incomes.



Meanwhile, the flagship Nyamaji Irrigation Project in Lambwe Ward, Suba North Sub-County, is making significant progress under Phase One implementation. Key infrastructure components, including the pump house, rising main, Irrigation Water Users Association (IWUA) offices, and water storage tanks, have already been completed. The project is expected to open 1,500 acres for irrigation, creating a vibrant hub for modern, climate-smart agriculture.

Across the county, several other irrigation projects are at various stages of development, reflecting the scale and urgency of the county's agricultural transformation agenda.

In Kaksingri West, the Sindo Irrigation Water Project is currently undergoing stakeholder engagement, ensuring community participation and ownership in the project's implementation. In Gwasi North, the Madundu Irrigation Project has advanced to the procurement stage, signaling imminent commencement of works.

Further north in Kasungu Ward, the Mikuna Irrigation Project is undergoing design reviews, alongside the Nyalkinyi Irrigation Project in Homa Bay East, as the county refines technical plans to ensure efficiency and sustainability.

At the same time, the Nyandiwa Irrigation Project, covering both Gwasi North and South, is at the design stage, laying the groundwork for future implementation. Complementing these efforts is the ongoing construction of the Okundi Dam, where contractors are already on site, marking a critical step in enhancing water storage capacity to support irrigation and domestic use.

These projects collectively underscore a broader strategy by the Homa Bay County Government to build resilient agricultural systems capable of withstanding climate variability while maximizing productivity.

With Kenya currently producing about 290,000 metric tonnes of rice against an annual demand of approximately 1.2 million metric tonnes, Homa Bay's growing irrigation schemes are expected to play a crucial role in bridging the deficit, reducing imports, and strengthening national food security.

Governor Wanga's irrigation-led approach is not only transforming rice farming zones but also catalyzing growth in horticulture and other high-value crops, creating employment opportunities for youth and women while stimulating rural economies.

As implementation progresses across the county, farmers are already witnessing tangible benefits from improved access to water and increased yields to enhanced incomes and livelihood security.

Homa Bay's irrigation expansion is, therefore, more than just infrastructure development; it is a bold and strategic investment in the future, one that promises prosperity, resilience, and sustainable agricultural growth for generations to come.



## *Bilateral Talks:*

# County Exploring Partnership with Slovakia on Telemedicine Technology

*By Communication Team*



Governor Gladys Wanga, alongside her administration's Health Management Team, hosted a high-level delegation from Slovakia led by the European nation's ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Maroš Mitrík, accompanied by the CEO of Golden Systems Company. The visit formed part of a fact-finding mission aimed at gaining insights into the status of healthcare service delivery in the county, while advancing broader frameworks for international cooperation between Kenya and Slovakia.

Deliberations centered on identifying strategic areas of collaboration, with strong emphasis on investment opportunities within the health sector. Of particular interest was the integration of digital health solutions to enhance service delivery, improve access, and strengthen real-time patient management systems.

The discussions underscored the potential for structured Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to accelerate innovation, scale infrastructure, and deliver sustainable healthcare outcomes.

A key focus area was maternal health, especially addressing the high burden of hypertension, which remains a leading



contributor to maternal morbidity and mortality. In this regard, the delegation explored the deployment of remote monitoring technology by using portable digital patient monitoring devices capable of capturing vital signs, interpreting data in real time, and flagging high-risk or suspicious cases for timely intervention. Such solutions would be critical in strengthening early detection, referral systems, and continuity of care for high-risk mothers.

The engagement further examined how these innovations can align with national health reforms, particularly compatibility with Taifa Care, ensuring that proposed interventions are seamlessly integrated into existing health systems and priorities.

Overall, the visit marked a significant step toward deepening international partnerships, leveraging digital innovation, and unlocking investment pathways that align with the county's healthcare priorities, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for vulnerable populations.

## City in the Making:

# Homa Bay One of Two African Cities at the Smart Cities Event in Germany

By Lawrence Magware

**H**oma Bay Town was one of only two urban areas in Africa selected for the prestigious Global Urban Water Resilience and Drought Mitigation/Adaptation Program by the German Engagement Global Organisation, with Natitingou City in Benin being the other.

This significant achievement followed the town's participation in a rigorous Call for Applications and proposal pitching in 2025, where Homa Bay stood out as the only urban entity from Kenya and one of two in the entire African continent qualified for the Climate Resilience Deep Dive Program. Other beneficiaries worldwide included Dresden, Wuppertally, and Wonstorf in Germany, as well as Hyderabad in India, Akkaraipattu in Sri Lanka, and Niš in Serbia.

Homa Bay was represented at the event by City Manager Mr Sigar Agumba, whose leadership and vision have transformed the once-sleepy town into one of the most rapidly developing urban centres in Kenya.



Last year, Homa Bay Town became the first urban area in Africa to develop and implement a climate adaptation plan as part of its integrated development plan. Since then, the town has upgraded its drainage systems, improved physical planning, and enhanced mobility mechanisms in line with current global trends.

Under the Genawa Manifesto and the Homa Bay Development Blueprint, Homa Bay Town is earmarked to become a fully-fledged city by 2035.



## **Budget Making:**

# **County Concludes Extensive Public Participation Exercise for 2026/2027 Fiscal Estimates**

*By Collins Ogutu*



In a landmark move towards inclusive governance, the County Government of Homa Bay's Directorate of Budget and Economic Planning successfully concluded a comprehensive, countywide public participation exercise aimed at shaping the FY 2026/2027 Budget Estimates.

The initiative, which spanned five days and covered all 40 wards, marks a significant milestone in strengthening community involvement in county development planning.

Kicking off on Monday, April 20, 2026, the participatory process brought together residents, local leaders, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders from every ward within Homa Bay County. Over the course of the week, these forums provided a platform for citizens to voice their priorities, concerns, and ideas directly to county officials, fostering transparency and inclusivity in the budgeting process.

According to the County Budget and Economic Planning Director Willis Bolo, the exercise was designed to put citizens at the heart of decision-making.



"This is one of the most inclusive budget consultations we have ever conducted. Every ward had the opportunity to contribute, ensuring that the final budget reflects the real needs and aspirations of our people," he stated.

During these engagement sessions, residents actively participated in refining budget proposals, ranking priority investments, and identifying potential risks to implementation. Community members highlighted critical issues such as healthcare access, water supply, road infrastructure, agriculture, youth empowerment, and economic development as their primary concerns.

In many forums, participants emphasized the importance of investing in primary healthcare facilities, improving water infrastructure to combat shortages, and enhancing access roads to facilitate trade and mobility. Youth groups called for increased support for entrepreneurship and skills development programs, underscoring their role in driving economic growth.

Participants also took the opportunity to commend the administration of H.E. Governor Gladys Wanga for recent strides in service delivery and governance reforms. Many expressed appreciation for efforts to increase accountability, transparency, and community participation in decision-making processes.

“The progress we see today in health, education, and infrastructure is inspiring. We feel more involved and confident that our voices are making a difference,” said Jesse Okelo, a resident of West Kamagak Ward, Rachuonyo South Sub County.

The County Government assures that all input and feedback collected during the forums will be factored into the final budget. This alignment aims to ensure that public resources are directed toward high-impact projects that address the most pressing needs of the people.

County officials have emphasized that this participatory approach is part of their broader strategy to strengthen democratic governance, foster trust, and promote sustainable development.



As the exercise concluded, the message from Homa Bay County leadership is clear: “40 wards. One voice. One shared future.” The government reaffirms its commitment to working closely with the county residents to realize a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable county.

This exercise sets a precedent for future participatory budgeting initiatives, illustrating that when citizens are actively involved, development becomes more inclusive, effective, and reflective of the collective will.



## ***Local Development:***

# **Remba, Ngolo and Kobuya Reap Big from Governor Wanga Development Tours**

*By Communication Team*



**T**o advance equity in development across diverse regions and communities, Governor Gladys Wanga recently conducted development tours to Remba Island in Suba West and the Ngolo Area in Rachuonyo North, which are among the more marginalised areas within the county.

During her visit to Remba, the Governor officially commissioned a classroom completed under the Ondoa Kaunda Classroom Initiative at Remba Primary School. This initiative has notably increased pupil enrollment on the fishing island, which now exceeds 400 students, demonstrating its positive impact on local education.

Governor Wanga also pledged to upgrade the Remba Dispensary into a fully-fledged health facility to better serve the health needs of the residents who rely on this vital service.





In Kobuya, the county’s border region with Kisumu County, Governor Gladys Wanga committed to upgrading the Kobuya Dispensary to make it operational round the clock, including offering maternity services. Further, the Nyakwere/Miriu market will undergo renovations on its roofing and drainage, even as the county government will move in to regulate sand harvesting in the area in line with the recently enacted County Mining and Sand Harvesting Policy.

Over the past four years, Governor Gladys Wanga has implemented a development blueprint focused on people-centered, ward-based initiatives that directly address the needs and challenges faced by residents. She has successfully overseen the execution of more than 1,400 projects across the county. These projects encompass a wide array of sectors, including water supply improvements, road construction, the establishment of fish landing sites, and agricultural extension programs, all of which contribute to enhancing the quality of life for the people in the region.

In Karachuonyo Constituency, Governor Wanga committed to a comprehensive transformation plan for the Ngolo Area of North Karachuonyo Ward. This ambitious plan includes several key projects that will significantly improve local infrastructure and public services. One of the highlights is the renovation of Ngolo Dispensary, designed to enhance healthcare accessibility and quality for the community.

Additionally, the construction of the Ngolo Bridge, which will provide a crucial link between the villages of Kanjira and Kibiri, is set to improve transportation and connectivity in the region. Furthermore, the establishment of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre of Excellence at Ngolo Comprehensive School is aimed at providing high-quality early education, ensuring that children in the area have a strong foundation for their academic journeys.



## Healthcare:

### County Overseeing Steady Healthcare Provision Across the Board

#### *Countywide sensitization on E-Voucher Vaccination Programme Concludes*

By Abnery Pajero



The County Government of Homa Bay has officially launched the Homa Bay Multisectoral Action Plan for Adolescents and Young People's Health, marking a significant step toward addressing the pressing health and social challenges facing young people in the county.

The Action Plan stands as a key deliverable of the recently concluded Adolescents Symposium, which convened over 400 young people alongside government officials, civil society actors, and development partners under the theme "Empowered Adolescents, Empowered Communities." The forum provided a platform for dialogue, reflection, and consensus-building on practical solutions to improve adolescent health outcomes.

While Homa Bay has made significant strides on public health indicators, it continues to grapple with some of the most acute adolescent health statistics in Kenya. Current data indicates a teenage pregnancy rate of 23 per cent, HIV prevalence at 15.2 per cent, approximately four times the national average and gender-based violence rates that exceed national benchmarks. These challenges underscore the urgent need for a coordinated, evidence-based response.

The Multisectoral Action Plan directly confronts these realities through a comprehensive and costed framework structured around six strategic pillars:

prevention of teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS response, elimination of gender-based violence, promotion of mental health, social and behaviour change interventions and strengthened governance and accountability systems.

By aligning efforts across sectors, the plan seeks to enhance coordination, optimise resource utilisation, and ensure sustained impact. It emphasizes accountability mechanisms and targeted interventions designed to expand access to quality, adolescent-friendly services, while also addressing the underlying social and structural drivers of vulnerability.



The launch of this Action Plan signals a transition from dialogue to implementation, demonstrating the County Government's commitment to securing a healthier, safer, and more empowered future for adolescents and young people. Through sustained collaboration with partners and active engagement of young people themselves, Homa Bay is poised to accelerate progress toward improved health outcomes and inclusive development.



## County Government Acquires KES 21 million in Essential Medical Equipment

*By Abnery Pajero.*

The County Government of Homa Bay has taken a significant step toward improving maternal and newborn health outcomes following the receipt of a consignment of essential medical equipment valued at approximately KES 21 million. This milestone has been achieved through a strategic partnership with MCGL Jhpiego, underscoring the county's commitment to strengthening health systems and delivering quality, life-saving services to its residents.



The newly acquired equipment includes oxygen support systems, neonatal resuscitation units, precision monitoring devices, and simulation tools for continuous clinical training. These resources are critical in addressing longstanding gaps in maternal and newborn care, particularly during high-risk moments such as labor, delivery, and the immediate postnatal period.

By enhancing the readiness and capacity of health facilities across the county, this investment is expected to significantly improve the quality of care provided to mothers and newborns. Frontline healthcare workers will now be better equipped to manage complications, respond promptly to emergencies, and deliver skilled care that meets established clinical standards.

Notably, the inclusion of simulation and training equipment will play a key role in continuous professional development. Through regular capacity-building sessions, healthcare providers will refine their skills in areas such as



neonatal resuscitation and emergency obstetric care, interventions that are critical in reducing maternal and infant mortality.

This initiative aligns with the county's broader health agenda of reducing preventable deaths and advancing universal access to quality healthcare. It also reinforces ongoing efforts to integrate innovation and strengthen service delivery in our health systems.

As these life-saving tools are deployed across health facilities, the impact is expected to be far-reaching, supporting safer births, healthier newborns, and stronger communities throughout Homa Bay County.

## From Silence to Strength: How the Fistula Camp in Homa Bay is Restoring Women's Lives

*By Abnery Pajero*

**A**t Rachuonyo County Hospital, hope arrives quietly but leaves loudly, in the smiles of women reclaiming their lives.

Every quarter, the hospital becomes more than a place of treatment.

Through a partnership between the County Government of Homa Bay and the Fistula Foundation, it transforms into a sanctuary of healing during the Fistula Camp, where stories of pain are rewritten into testimonies of resilience and renewal.

For years, Vivian Achieng carried a burden few could see, but one that shaped every aspect of her life. At 38, the mother from Ahero recalls how her condition began in 2005 after a Caesarean section.

What followed was more than a decade of living with involuntary urine leakage, a condition that often forces women into isolation, stripped of dignity and confidence. Social gatherings became uncomfortable. Simple routines turned into daily struggles. Silence and isolation became her shield.

But within the walls of Rachuonyo County Hospital, that silence was finally broken. After undergoing corrective surgery during the Fistula Camp, Vivian walked out healed, her joy unmistakable, her dignity restored. Her smile told a story that words could barely capture, a story of freedom regained.

For Caroline Atieno, a 34-year-old mother of five from Kadongo, the journey was equally harrowing, though more recent.



Her condition began in December 2025 following a Caesarean delivery. Unlike many, she endured both urinary and fecal incontinence, an experience that compounded the physical discomfort with deep social stigma.

Daily life became a battle against embarrassment and exclusion.

Today, Caroline stands on the other side of that struggle. Following successful treatment at the camp, she celebrates not just healing, but a new beginning. One where she is no longer defined by her condition, but by her strength.

Behind these life-changing outcomes is a dedicated team of healthcare professionals whose diligent work delivers life-changing procedures and results.

Obstetric fistula remains one of the most devastating childbirth injuries, often linked to prolonged or obstructed labor and limited access to timely maternal care. Yet it is treatable and preventable. That is why these quarterly camps matter.

They are not just medical outreaches; they are lifelines. They reach women who have suffered in silence, often for years, offering them not only surgery but a chance to reintegrate into their families and communities with confidence.

Through this initiative, the County Government of Homa Bay continues to advance its commitment to accessible, equitable, and quality healthcare.

ensuring that no case is left unattended and no story of suffering goes unheard.



## Disaster Mitigation:

# Development of Disaster Risk Reduction Communication Strategy Takes Shape

By Collins Ogutu

In a bid to enhance disaster preparedness and response, representatives from various departments within Homa Bay County, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and key stakeholders convened for a four-day workshop at Mbita Tourist Hotel. The workshop aimed to develop a comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Communication Strategy, a critical tool for strengthening disaster management systems across the county.

Facilitated by the European Union (EU) Civil Protection and the Kenya Red Cross, the intensive workshop brought together experts from the Kenya Meteorological Department, government officials, community leaders, and CSO representatives to foster collaboration and share best practices in disaster communication. The goal was to create a unified framework that enhances coordination, information flow, and community engagement before, during, and after disasters.



During the sessions, participants deliberated on strategies to improve early warning systems, public awareness campaigns, and community participation in disaster preparedness activities. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that communication is inclusive, accessible, and culturally sensitive, especially given Homa Bay's vulnerability to climate-induced hazards such as floods, droughts, and disease outbreaks.





The development of this DRR Communication Strategy marks a vital step toward building resilient and inclusive disaster management systems within Homa Bay County. It aims to streamline information dissemination, foster trust among communities, and ensure timely responses to emergencies.

County officials expressed optimism about the strategy's potential to save lives and reduce the socio-economic impacts of disasters. "Effective communication is at the heart of disaster risk reduction. This strategy will empower communities with the knowledge and tools they need to protect themselves and their livelihoods," said the Ag. CECM for Governance, Administration, Communication and Devolution.

The workshop also highlighted the importance of integrating local knowledge and community participation into disaster risk management plans. By doing so, Homa Bay County aims to create a culture of preparedness that is sustainable and responsive to the unique needs of its diverse populations.

The finalized DRR Communication Strategy will serve as a guiding document for county authorities, development partners, and community organizations, ensuring a coordinated approach to disaster management that is proactive rather than reactive.



As climate vulnerabilities continue to pose significant threats, Homa Bay County's commitment to strengthening disaster communication underscores its dedication to safeguarding its residents and fostering resilience. The strategy will be officially adopted in the coming months, paving the way for more resilient communities and improved disaster response capabilities.



*"We have dedicated ourselves to transforming this county to enhance its competitiveness. To date, we have completed over 1,400 impactful projects throughout the county. While much work remains, we are confident that with another term, we will achieve our goals.." ~ Governor Gladys Wanga*