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# Homa Bay Set to Make History as It Prepares to Host 2025 Devolution Conference

By Steven Muga



Governor Wanga and the elected MPs from Homa Bay

**H**oma Bay County is gearing up to host the 2025 Biennial Devolution Conference, a national gathering that brings together thousands of delegates from across Kenya to take stock of the country's devolution journey. Scheduled for August 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> at Tom Mboya University grounds, the conference is themed *"For the People, For Prosperity: Devolution as a Catalyst for Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice."* This year's event is expected to attract over 10,000 participants, including government officials, governors, development partners, civil society actors, scholars, and citizens.

**“For the People,  
For Prosperity:  
Devolution as a  
Catalyst for  
Equity, Inclusion,  
and Social  
Justice”**

The selection of Homa Bay as host is symbolic and an endorsement of the county's growing capacity to deliver daunting tasks, and is also a testament to the maturity of its devolved systems. Under the stewardship of Her Excellency, Governor Gladys Wanga, the county has undertaken a well-coordinated effort to ensure all aspects of the event, from infrastructure to security, accommodation to digital readiness, are in place to welcome the nation and the world.

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*Group photo of the DevCon steering committee and Homa Bay County MCAs*

In the heart of Homa Bay town, the main conference venue is undergoing rapid transformation. The grounds of The Homa Bay High School are being prepared to host a world-class dome capable of accommodating up to 5,000 people in plenary. Additional tents, break-out spaces, exhibition booths, and VIP lounges are also being erected. Roads leading to the venue are being rehabilitated, while ongoing beautification, drainage improvements, and enhanced lighting are giving the town a fresh look.

Water and sanitation services are being reinforced to meet the high demand during the conference period. Homawasco, the county's water utility company, is installing temporary ablution facilities and large-capacity water tanks across key sites. The county public health department is working closely with national agencies to ensure public health protocols are observed before and during the event.

In anticipation of the thousands of visitors expected, the county has mapped and catalogued over 3,000 rooms across hotels, guesthouses, and homestays within Homa Bay town and surrounding towns such as Kendu Bay, Oyugis, Rodi Kopany, Mbita, Asumbi, and even parts of neighbouring Counties. The county government, in collaboration with the government stakeholders and private sector actors, is working to ensure all facilities meet the standards required for comfort, hygiene, and safety.

Beyond the conference logistics, Homa Bay is preparing for an economic moment. Local businesses are already registering increased activity in hospitality, catering, transport, printing, entertainment, and events management. It is projected that the conference could inject over Kshs. 100 million into the local economy over one week, creating income and job opportunities for hundreds of residents and service providers.

Security preparations are in top gear. A joint task force comprising the National Police Service, intelligence units, and county enforcement officers has been set up to coordinate all security operations before and during the event. Delegates can expect round-the-clock surveillance, crowd control protocols, and designated secure zones at the venue and around town.

.....  
**3,000**  
 ROOMS ACROSS HOTELS  
 .....

Emergency services are also being scaled up. Fully equipped ambulances will be on standby, backed by medical tents and mobile clinics at the conference venue. County health facilities, led by Homa Bay Teaching and Referral Hospital, are on alert to handle any health-related emergencies swiftly and efficiently.



In the spirit of digital transformation, the county, in partnership with the Council of Governors and telephony service operators, is laying down the infrastructure to support a fully connected conference. High-speed internet, electronic registration systems, real-time streaming platforms, and a fully equipped media centre are part of the setup. A dedicated communication secretariat has been formed to handle press relations, delegate communication, and public updates.

But perhaps more significant than the event itself is the opportunity Homa Bay sees to tell its own devolution story. From education and healthcare to youth empowerment, climate action, and infrastructure development, the county will showcase its achievements through exhibitions and site visits. Guests will be able to experience first-hand projects such as the *Genowa Ondoa Kaunda EYE* classrooms, the upgraded Kabunde airstrip, the lakefront development (comprising amphitheatre, pier, modern fish market), the solar-powered cold rooms in Mbita and Homa Bay municipal markets, road and market modernization efforts under the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP 2).

## ***Genowa Ondoa Kaunda EYE classrooms,***

In addition to formal sessions, the county has prepared cultural and recreational activities to allow guests to explore the natural and cultural wealth of Homa Bay. Excursions to Ruma National Park, Mfangano Island, Lake Simbi Nyaima, and cultural performances from the local talents are part of the broader hospitality plan.

Governor Gladys Wanga has described the upcoming conference as “a celebration of devolution in action,” adding that “Homa Bay is not only ready to host, we are ready to lead.” Her remarks capture the spirit with which the county is approaching this opportunity, not as a one-off event, but as a platform to position itself as a hub of investment, innovation, and inclusive growth.

As the countdown to the Devolution Conference continues, all signs point to a well-prepared host that is ready to rise to the occasion.

Homa Bay is welcoming to Kenya. Homa Bay is welcoming history!

*Mr. Muga is the County Director for Public Communication*



*Governor Gladys Wanga(center) gives a nod to the newly launched Mama Pack Maternity Program, one of the CSR ahead of DevCon.*

## ***Power to Read:***

# **Governor Wanga Leads the County in Celebrating a Milestone as Fundi Mang'ula Scholarship Program Graduates 541 Students**

*By Collins Ogutu*



**H**er Excellency, Governor Gladys Wanga, last month led the county to celebrate one of her landmark accomplishments as the county's governor when, in a momentous celebration of youth empowerment and economic progress, Homa Bay County marked a significant milestone with the graduation of 541 students from the inaugural cohort of the Fundi Mang'ula Scholarship Program.

# **541** STUDENTS

*Governor Wanga following the proceedings during the graduation. Photo Credit: Livone Molo*



The event took place at the Paul Mboya Vocational Training Centre (VTC), Rachuonyo North Sub County, highlighting the county's unwavering commitment to developing practical skills among its youth.

Launched through a strategic partnership with KCB Foundation, the Fundi Mang'ula Scholarship Program is designed to equip young people with hands-on training in vital trades such as welding, plumbing, tailoring, electrical installations, and automotive repair. The initiative aims to foster self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and job creation, aligning with the county's broader vision of inclusive economic growth.

The graduation ceremony was a proud moment for residents and stakeholders alike, emphasising the transformative power of targeted skills development. Among the graduates, 164 top performers received full kits of tools and equipment, enabling them to immediately apply their new skills in real-world settings and start generating income.



Addressing the crowd, Governor Gladys Wanga expressed pride in the achievements of the young graduates. Today's milestone is a testament to our commitment to youth empowerment and economic development. With the skills acquired through the Fundi Mang'ula program, our young people are now better equipped to build, fix, and innovate—driving our county forward," the Governor stated. She also extended gratitude to KCB Foundation for their unwavering support, emphasising that such collaborations are vital for transforming potential into prosperity.

This initiative underscores the recognition that investing in vocational training can unlock vast economic opportunities and uplift entire communities. The program not only provides technical skills but also encourages entrepreneurial spirit, positioning graduates as potential job creators rather than job seekers.

The county leadership reaffirmed its dedication to scaling such initiatives, aiming to reach more youth across Homa Bay. As the young graduates step into their futures, they symbolise hope and resilience, embodying the transformative impact of vocational training on individual lives and the broader community.

As Homa Bay County continues to invest in sustainable development, innovation, and youth empowerment, the celebration marks a pivotal step towards building a more prosperous and inclusive future for all residents.



An aerial view of the Fundi Mang'ula Scholarship graduands. **Photo Credit: Livone Molo**



Visiting the various exhibition booths.  
Photo Credit: Livone Molo

## DevCon2025:

# Devolution Sensitisation Week Reaches 25,000 Residents with Free Medical and Legal Clinics

By Abnery Pajero

The County Government of Homa Bay, in collaboration with the Council of Governors (CoG) and a consortium of development partners, successfully hosted a week-long Devolution Sensitisation Week, delivering impactful services to more than 25,000 residents across the county. The event, held in the lead-up to the national Devolution Conference slated for August, sought to bring government services closer to the people while showcasing the tangible gains of devolution at the grassroots level.

One of the major highlights of the week was a three-day Free Medical Camp conducted at Onundo Stadium in Mbita Sub-County. The camp was officially launched by H.E. Governor Gladys Wanga, accompanied by Mary Mwititi, CEO of the Council of Governors, senior officials from both levels of government, and health sector partners.

The medical outreach delivered a full spectrum of health services, including cancer and eye screening, immunization, HIV testing and counselling, malaria diagnosis, phlebotomy services, general consultations, and laboratory tests. These services were provided by a multi-agency team comprising county health workers, national health agencies, and non-governmental organizations.



*This medical camp reflects our commitment to making healthcare accessible to all, particularly the underserved and remote communities,*





"This medical camp reflects our commitment to making healthcare accessible to all, particularly the underserved and remote communities," said Governor Wanga. "It is also a testament to the power of devolution in transforming lives through effective, people-centred service delivery."

In tandem with the health services, the County Government also partnered with legal experts and land rights advocates to run a Legal and Land Rights Clinic at the same venue. These sessions focused on sensitising residents about their legal rights, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, land ownership, title deed processing, and inheritance laws. The clinics attracted hundreds of participants each day, particularly women, youth, and persons living with disabilities—groups that often face significant legal and bureaucratic barriers in accessing justice and land documentation.

Residents were able to consult directly with legal officers, receive guidance on succession matters, understand their constitutional rights, and lodge complaints or inquiries regarding land disputes. The initiative brought critical justice services directly to the people, especially those who cannot afford legal representation or face challenges accessing formal courts.

Beyond health and legal services, the Devolution Sensitisation Week also featured public education sessions on the devolved system of governance, citizen participation in budgeting and planning, and awareness creation on available county services. County departments showcased their programs through interactive booths, allowing the public to engage directly with officers and learn how to access services ranging from agriculture and education to trade, water, and youth empowerment.

By the close of the week, over 25,000 residents had been reached with various services, an impressive demonstration of what well-coordinated, devolved government functions can achieve when taken directly to the people.

The Devolution Sensitisation Week served not only as a delivery platform for critical services but also as a platform for listening to citizens' voices, deepening public trust in government, and demonstrating the power of collaboration across sectors.

As the county prepares for the upcoming Devolution Conference in August, Homa Bay County continues to position itself as a model for people-driven governance, innovative service delivery, and inclusive development.





## *Run with the Roan:*

# Governor Wanga Launches 2nd Edition Countdown with A Mock Run

*By Oketch Bernard*



**T**he expansive grasslands of Ruma National Park in Ruma Kaksingri Ward bustled with energy on Friday as Homa Bay County staged the “Run with the Roan” mock exercise, blending athletics, conservation advocacy, and economic opportunity in a landmark event.

Held as a precursor to the main marathon scheduled for August, the exercise aimed to raise awareness on the urgent need to protect the endangered Roan antelope, a majestic species uniquely found within Homa Bay County. The event attracted hundreds of residents, local athletes, conservation partners, county staff, school groups, and traders, all rallying around a shared message of environmental stewardship and community health.

Governor Wanga, accompanied by the Minority Leader in the National Assembly, Hon. Junet Mohammed, flagged off the event under clear morning skies. Addressing the crowd beforehand, she spoke passionately about how sports can drive unity, foster healthy living, and position Homa Bay as a premier destination for eco-tourism anchored on its rich biodiversity.

The mock exercise was inclusive by design, drawing young athletes eager to showcase their talent, alongside senior citizens and persons living with disabilities, all highlighting the county's commitment to ensuring no one is left behind. Local cultural groups added color along the route with spirited songs and traditional dances, celebrating Homa Bay's rich heritage.

Traders around the park entrance and finish line benefited from the event's economic spillover, selling water, fresh fruits, beadwork, and branded memorabilia. Hoteliers and transport operators also reported increased activity, providing an early glimpse into the tourism potential of linking sporting events with conservation efforts.

In her remarks after the run, Governor Wanga said she was honored to participate not only as a leader but as a runner, showing that conservation, health, and prosperity require hands-on involvement.

She affirmed her administration's plans to intensify campaigns to protect the Roan antelope's habitat, while expanding opportunities for local communities through eco-tourism.

All eyes now turn to the main marathon event in August, expected to draw even larger crowds and national attention, firmly establishing Homa Bay as a hub where conservation, community wellness, and sustainable prosperity intersect.



## ***Education:***

# **County, SightSavers Unite to Promote Inclusive and Climate-Resilient Play-Based Learning**

*By Collins Ogutu*

In a concerted effort to advance early childhood education and cultivate inclusive, environmentally conscious learning environments, the Department of Education's Human Capital Development and Vocational Training, in collaboration with Sightsavers, aim to strengthen teaching strategies aligned with modern educational standards and foster a more inclusive approach to early childhood development.







At a workshop that brought together Early Years Education (EYE) teachers from 78 schools, along with Sub-County EYE Directors and Ward EYE Supervisors, they reviewed and refined pedagogical approaches that support play-based learning, inclusivity, and climate change integration within the curriculum.

Key focus areas of the intensive sessions included creating supportive learning environments conducive to play-based learning at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) level, developing inclusive teaching materials, adopting innovative pedagogical strategies, and embedding climate change awareness into the curriculum. Teachers were also introduced to new curriculum designs aimed at enhancing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

Throughout the event, participants engaged in practical activities such as designing tailored educational materials for ECDE learners, participating in tree planting initiatives to address climate change, and involving learners in creative modeling activities. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that children with special needs receive appropriate support, reinforcing the importance of inclusive education.

During the Homa Bay Sub-County session, County EYE Director Joseph Goga underscored the significance of fostering inclusive and climate-resilient learning environments. "This review aims to equip teachers with the necessary skills and resources to nurture every child's potential, regardless of their abilities, while also raising awareness about climate change through engaging activities," Goga stated.

The county's education leadership reaffirmed its commitment to scaling up these initiatives, emphasizing that nurturing inclusive, climate-conscious learners is essential for building resilient communities and ensuring equitable access to quality early childhood education.

This successful review underscores the collaborative efforts of the Department of Education and partners like Sightsavers in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future for young learners across Homa Bay County. Through such initiatives, the county aims to foster a generation of children equipped with the skills and awareness necessary to thrive in an increasingly changing world.

## Health:

# County Finalizes Framework on Emergency Medical Care, Strengthens Healthcare Delivery

By Abnery Pajero



The County Government of Homa Bay, through the Department of Public Health and Medical Services, has finalized the development of a comprehensive zero draft Emergency Medical Care (EMC) Plan (2025-2028).

Anchored in the World Health Organization's Emergency Care System Framework and aligned with the Kenya Emergency Medical Care Strategy (2020-2025) and Policy (2020-2030), the EMC Plan will serve as a critical guide for the practice of emergency care in the county, a key milestone in the county's journey toward achieving Universal Health Coverage.

With a vision to ensure universal access to the highest standards of emergency medical care across the County, this groundbreaking initiative, supported by Lwala Community Alliance and guided by the expertise of the Emergency Medicine Kenya Foundation, marks a bold step in operationalizing the Homa Bay County Emergency and Referral Strategy.

On another development, the County Government of Homa Bay remains committed to strengthening healthcare delivery across all levels, from rural dispensaries to major referral hospitals.

In the flood-prone and remote area of Chuowe Beach, Chuowe Dispensary continues to serve a dispersed population despite several challenges. Through strong partnerships, the facility has seen significant improvements, including the construction of a latrine, installation of water tanks, and much-needed renovations. With the support of 11 Community Health Promoters (CHPs) and an average of four deliveries per month, Chuowe remains a vital access point for essential health services.

**zero draft  
Emergency Medical Care  
(EMC) Plan (2025-2028).**



At Miriu Level 4 Hospital, the story is one of steady progress and proactive care. The hospital averages 50 deliveries per month and has achieved 70% of its target for first antenatal care (ANC) visits. While retaining clients through the 4th and 8th ANC visits remains a challenge, the facility has adopted a hands-on approach by calling mothers to encourage continued care. With 17 CHPs working under two active Community Units and recent renovations to the female and pediatric wards, Miriu continues to play a central role in delivering quality, dignified care to the community.

These two facilities reflect the county's broader commitment to making healthcare more accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all residents, especially those in underserved and hard-to-reach areas.



## ***Public Communications:***

# **Homa Bay County Communication Officers Enhance Skills at Media Training Workshop**

*By Collins Ogutu*





**H**oma Bay County Government's Communication Officers participated in a comprehensive capacity-building and skills upgrading workshop for journalists and media practitioners, organized by the Media Council of Kenya at Kisii University.

The training aimed to equip participants with vital knowledge on emerging media practices and legal frameworks affecting journalism in Kenya. Attendees were introduced to an array of topics, including an overview of the Media Guide on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Data Governance Guide for media practice, and best practices for utilizing social media and the internet responsibly and effectively.

A significant portion of the workshop was dedicated to understanding the legal landscape governing media practice in Kenya. Participants engaged with detailed discussions on the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act (CMCA) of 2018, which addresses issues of cybercrime and digital security; the National Cohesion and Integration Act, aimed at promoting unity and preventing hate speech; and the Kenya Information and Communication Act (KICA) of 2012, which regulates communication services and broadcasting.

The training emphasised the importance of legal compliance and ethical standards in journalism, especially in the digital age where information spreads rapidly across online platforms. Homa Bay County's communication team expressed enthusiasm about the knowledge gained, highlighting its relevance to their ongoing efforts in transparent and responsible communication.

This capacity-building initiative enhances our effectiveness in delivering services, fostering transparency and building strong relationships with the public and underscoring the commitment of the Media Council of Kenya to enhance the professionalism of media practitioners and ensure they are well-versed in technological advancements and legal obligations that influence modern journalism.





## Agriculture:

# New Infrastructure in Town to Transform Homa Bay Extension Services

By Oketch Bernard

The County Government of Homa Bay, through its Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Development, in partnership with Enigma Four Ltd, concluded a two-day workshop aimed at gathering detailed information from extension officers and professionals in Homa Bay County to inform the final development of Agri Vuma. This innovative playroom is set to revolutionize extension services by streamlining data collection, reporting, and real-time farmer support across the county.

The workshop, attended by crop officers, veterinary officers, and irrigation officers drawn from various sub-counties, provided a valuable opportunity to incorporate practical insights that will enhance the software's efficiency and user-friendliness. Once fully rolled out, the system is expected to significantly improve service delivery, facilitate timely interventions, and ultimately boost agricultural productivity in Homa Bay County.

In her opening remarks, the Chief Officer in charge of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ms. Ombok Judith, underscored the significance of the software, describing it as a game changer for the department.

*"I am excited that we are actively involved in developing a system that we will ultimately use. This will be truly transformative; it will ease the workload of our extension officers and address longstanding challenges within the department,"* she said.

Ms. Ombok also encouraged all officers to contribute their ideas, efforts, and expertise to ensure the system's success and extended her appreciation to the Enigma Four team, led by CEO Mr. Brian Oyugi, for their commendable work and dedication to the project.

During the workshop, the three units, Crops, Veterinary, and Irrigation, explored key data points and information categories to be incorporated into the platform to enhance data quality and ensure the reliability of the collected information. This exercise now paves the way for the Agri Vuma team to analyse and synchronise this data before handing it over to the software team for integration. The next phase will involve mass training of all field officers who will use the system for data collection and service delivery.

Appreciating the collaborative effort, Mr. Bernard Omwanda, Chief Officer for Livestock Development, thanked the Enigma Four team and urged participants to give their utmost to the success of the project. "This is a critical milestone for our county. I encourage all of us to fully own this process because, at the end of the day, it is our farmers and communities who stand to benefit the most," he said. He further noted, "With this system, we can look forward to more accurate data, better planning, and ultimately more prosperous livelihoods for our people."

“ This is a critical milestone for our county. I encourage all of us to fully own this process because, at the end of the day, it is our farmers and communities who stand to benefit the most, ”













*"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*