

GENOWA ECHO

ENDLESS POTENTIAL

NEWSLETTER | VOL. 32 - MARCH 2026

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY



News Highlights

361 Modern Classrooms to be Ready by Term II

Enhancing **Food Security** through Improved Infrastructure

Combating **SGBV** Through School Systems

Longest **Zero** Maternal Death Since **2013**

Education Infrastructure: Governor Wanga Launches Second Phase of Ondoa Kaunda Classrooms Program, Targets 361 Modern Classrooms

By Collins Ogutu



In a landmark event demonstrating its unwavering commitment to early childhood education and community development, Governor Gladys Wanga officially commissioned the construction of 361 new Early Years Education classrooms across the county, marking the onset of Phase II of the Ondoa Kaunda Classroom Program.

The event took place at Osogo Primary School in Kwabwai, Ndhiwa, where nine new classrooms were handed over to serve young learners in every ward of the county.

The initiative is part of a strategic effort by the County Government to expand access to quality foundational education, ensuring that children begin their learning journey in safe, conducive, and stimulating environments. The classrooms are designed to promote early childhood development, laying the groundwork for lifelong learning and success.

A cornerstone of this ambitious project is the use of a labour-based community contracting model. This approach actively involves local artisans, fundis, and suppliers in the construction process, ensuring that resources circulate within the community.

361

**New Early Years
Education
Classrooms**

THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Ms. Roselyn Omollo
CECM Communications

Atieno Otieno
Chief Officer and
Editor-in-Chief

Steven Muga
Director Public
Communication & Sub Editor

Lawrence Magware
Managing Editor

Collins Ogutu
Editor

Eunice Atieno
Livone Molo
Geoffrey Khoore
Robert Wera
Photography

Carolyn K.
Design and Layout



County Government of Homa Bay

Homa Bay County
P.O. Box 469 - 40300,
Homa Bay.

communications@homabay.go.ke



By empowering the local workforce and businesses, the county not only accelerates infrastructure development but also creates jobs and strengthens household incomes.

“Together, the people of Homa Bay are not just constructing classrooms; they are building a stronger, more prosperous future for generations to come”

The construction is scheduled for completion within the next three months, bringing immediate benefits to both learners and local economies.

Governor Wanga highlighted that this expansion reflects a deliberate and structured strategy to promote equitable development across all wards. "By investing in early childhood infrastructure, Homa Bay County aims to address disparities in access to quality education, ensuring that every child, regardless of their geographical location, has the opportunity to learn in a safe and nurturing environment."



The project aligns with the county's broader vision of fostering sustainable growth, promoting community empowerment, and delivering value for money. It underscores a commitment to building a resilient future where education is accessible, inclusive, and of high quality.



The County boss stated that as the county continues to expand its educational infrastructure, it reaffirms its dedication to nurturing every child's potential and strengthening the region's social fabric. "Together, the people of Homa Bay are not just constructing classrooms; they are building a stronger, more prosperous future for generations to come," she remarked.

Agriculture:

County Makes a Step at Enhancing Crop and Animal Husbandry for Better Food Security

Governor Wanga Launches the Fourth Countywide Certified Seed Distribution Exercise

By Communication Team



TOTAL OF 136.76 TONNES OF SEEDS
117.98 Tonnes of Hybrid Maize seeds
18.80 Tonnes of Sorghum seeds

Governor Gladys Wanga has launched the fourth countywide seed distribution program to support farmers at the start of the long rains planting season.

During the event at Andingo in Homa Bay East, Governor Wanga emphasized her administration's commitment to empowering farmers and ensuring that every household has access to sufficient food. She recognized that farmers are the backbone of the county's food systems and economic stability.

"The long rains are here, the planting season has begun, and our farmers are ready. As a government, we must also be prepared to support them. Today, we initiate the distribution of quality seeds across the county because our farmers are the key to ensuring food security," Governor Wanga stated.

Under this program, the County Government of Homa Bay has procured a total of 136.76 tonnes of seeds, which includes 117.98 tonnes of hybrid maize seeds and 18.80 tonnes of sorghum seeds. The seeds were supplied by the reputable Kenya Seed Company and delivered to the county between February 28 and March 1, 2026, before being distributed to designated sub-county collection points for distribution to farmers.



The maize varieties procured are DH04 and HB513, while the sorghum variety is Seredo, all chosen for their reliability, productivity, and adaptability to local climatic conditions.

Beneficiaries were selected through a public participation process conducted across all 40 wards from March 2 to March 6, ensuring fairness and community involvement in the selection. Each beneficiary household will receive two packets of either maize or sorghum seeds, benefitting an estimated 34,195 households throughout the county.



With proper agronomic practices, the maize seeds are expected to plant approximately 11,798 acres, yielding roughly 141,576 bags of 90 kg each, which translates to an economic value of about KSh 453 million. The sorghum seeds are anticipated to cover around 4,700 acres, with a projected harvest of 36,000 bags valued at approximately KSh 120 million.

Governor Wanga emphasized that access to quality farm inputs is a key priority for her administration. She noted that the seed distribution program is aimed at improving yields and enhancing resilience among farmers, particularly smallholder producers who make up the majority of the county's agricultural workforce.

She encouraged farmers to take full advantage of the rains and use the seeds effectively to boost production and increase household incomes, reiterating that agriculture remains a crucial aspect of the county's economic development strategy.

"We are investing in agriculture because it sustains our people and our economy. When our farmers succeed, Homa Bay succeeds.

We will continue to support them with the right inputs, knowledge, and extension services to ensure better harvests and improved livelihoods," she added.

The countywide seed distribution is part of broader agricultural support programs being implemented by the County Government of Homa Bay to promote food security, strengthen climate-resilient farming, and improve the livelihoods of farmers in the region.



Homa Bay Strengthens Livestock Value Chain with New Auction Facility

By Oketch Bernard

Governor Gladys Wanga commissioned the Miriu Livestock Auction Ring in Wang'chieng' Ward, Rachuonyo North Sub-County, marking a major milestone in the County Government's ongoing efforts to modernise livestock marketing and strengthen rural livelihoods across Homa Bay County.

Implemented through a labour-based approach that engaged residents, the project not only delivered essential agricultural infrastructure but also created employment opportunities during construction, reinforcing community ownership and participation in development.

The facility is equipped with secure fencing, controlled-access gates, a sanitation block, and a spacious trading shade, providing farmers and traders with a safe, organised, and dignified environment for livestock trading.

Speaking during the commissioning ceremony, Governor Wanga emphasised that livestock farming remains a critical pillar of the county's economy and a reliable source of income for many rural households.

“ Our farmers deserve modern and secure markets that support fair trade and enhance their productivity. We are empowering farmers economically, strengthening agribusiness, and creating sustainable opportunities for our communities ”



She noted that the establishment of structured livestock markets will improve transparency in trade, attract more buyers, and enable farmers to obtain better value for their animals while reducing losses associated with informal and poorly organised markets.

“Our farmers deserve modern and secure markets that support fair trade and enhance their productivity. We are empowering farmers economically, strengthening agribusiness, and creating sustainable opportunities for our communities,” said Governor Wanga.

The facility represents the county’s broader commitment to agricultural transformation by creating economic hubs that stimulate local commerce, improve animal welfare standards, and support inclusive growth. The auction ring is expected to enhance market efficiency, reduce congestion during market days, and promote hygienic trading conditions that benefit both farmers and buyers.

Governor Wanga further announced that similar livestock auction rings will be constructed across various parts of the county to expand access to organised livestock markets.

These include Kipasi Auction Ring in Lambwe, Suba North Sub-County; Rangwe in East Gem Ward, Rangwe Sub-County; Oriang’ in Central Karachuonyo, Rachuonyo North; Maram in Ndhiwa; Oyugis in Rachuonyo South; Ringa in Rachuonyo East; Sindo and Otati in Suba South; and Nyagweso in Kochia Ward, Rangwe Sub-County.



Homa Bay Takes Centre Stage at 9th Africa Agri Expo

By Oketch Bernard



The County Government of Homa Bay proudly flew the county's flag at the 9th Africa Agri Expo held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi. Through the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Development, the county leveraged the prestigious continental forum to showcase its vast agricultural potential, promote strategic value chains, and court investment to accelerate sustainable transformation.

Held under the theme "Driving Africa's Agri-Food Transformation through Innovation, Technology, Investment & Sustainability," the expo brought together policymakers, investors, agribusiness leaders and innovators from across Africa, providing a powerful platform for dialogue, partnerships and deal-making within the continent's evolving agri-food ecosystem.



Homa Bay's presence was strongly felt when the Chief Officer for Agriculture and Irrigation, Ms Judith Ombok, moderated a high-level panel discussion on "County Perspective: Unlocking Africa's Potential – Business Opportunities in Agriculture and Livestock." With poise and authority, she steered the conversation while articulating the county's strategic vision for modern, climate-smart and investment-ready agriculture.

Her moderation highlighted Homa Bay's comparative advantages, including expansive arable land, irrigation potential, livestock development opportunities and blue economy prospects along Lake Victoria, positioning the county as an emerging frontier for agribusiness growth and value addition.

She was ably supported by Hon. Lazarus Ojango, Chairperson of the Agriculture Committee in the County Assembly of Homa Bay, and Hon. Walter Adongo, a member of the same committee, whose contributions underscored strong legislative backing for policies that attract investors, empower farmers and strengthen market linkages.

By taking an active role at one of Africa's leading agricultural expos, Homa Bay County signaled its determination to move beyond subsistence farming and firmly anchor agriculture as a driver of economic growth, job creation and household income improvement. The county's engagement at KICC reflects its broader commitment to innovation, technology adoption and strategic partnerships that will shape the future of agriculture in Homa Bay and beyond.



County Strengthens Food Safety and Smart Farming Through Aflatoxin Control and Digital Soil Mapping

By Bernard Oketch



The County Government of Homa Bay is rolling out a dual agricultural transformation drive targeting food safety and climate-smart productivity in a bold step toward strengthening farmer incomes and food security.

Under the Kenya Cereals Enhancement Programme – Climate Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods (KCEP-CRAL), implemented in partnership with BOOST, the county convened a high-impact one-day Training of Trainers (ToT) to equip frontline agricultural officers with practical skills on the use of aflatoxin testing kits and hygrometers.

The initiative directly addresses post-harvest losses and food contamination risks that have long undermined farmer earnings and consumer safety.

In a major boost to grassroots farmers, the programme distributed one modern aflatoxin testing kit to BOOST implementing units in Homa Bay and 584 simple hygrometers to 292 BOOST primary farmer groups. The hygrometers will enable farmers to accurately measure grain moisture content before storage, significantly reducing the risk of aflatoxin contamination, while the testing kits will facilitate timely detection, protect consumers, and unlock better market access for safe produce.

The government is committed to transforming agriculture through knowledge, innovation, and adherence to safety standards by empowering officers and farmer groups with modern tools to strengthen post-harvest systems, safeguard household health, and enhance the competitiveness of Homa Bay produce in local and regional markets.

At the same time, the county is embracing data-driven farming through a groundbreaking Digital Soil Mapping initiative implemented in collaboration with the National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (NAVCDP) and the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO).

Together, the two interventions form a powerful agricultural value chain strategy that will protect produce after harvest while improving productivity from the soil upward. By tackling aflatoxin contamination and soil fertility challenges simultaneously, the County Government is reducing post-harvest losses, lowering production costs, minimizing environmental degradation, and boosting crop yields.

For a county whose economy heavily depends on agriculture, these initiatives represent more than technical upgrades; they are strategic investments in resilience, competitiveness, and sustainable livelihoods. As climate variability continues to challenge farming systems, Homa Bay's embrace of modern testing technologies and digital soil intelligence positions the county at the forefront of smart, safe, and climate-resilient agriculture.



Maternal Health:

County Strengthens Referral System, Records Longest Break in Maternal Death Since Onset of Devolution

By Abnery Pajero



Homa Bay County recently achieved a remarkable milestone by recording zero maternal mortality for over five months, thanks to the Active Referral and Thrive Campaign. This success stems from the County Referral Strategy launched by Governor Gladys Wanga, which has improved patient movement and communication within the health system.

Key features include expert-to-service referrals, allowing specialists to reach patients directly, and new telemedicine capabilities that enhance decision-making. Laboratory networking has also improved, speeding up diagnostic processes, while technologies like Zipline drones provide timely delivery of medical supplies to remote areas.

Efforts continue to enhance the system, including refining communication protocols, post-discharge follow-ups, and plans for centralised ambulance operations, including pre-positioned fuel and two boat ambulances. An upcoming Emergency Referral Call Centre will further improve emergency response, staffing dedicated ambulance personnel for skilled transport care.

The county is fostering partnerships across the health sector and developing a County Referral Protocol to streamline procedures. These initiatives highlight the effectiveness of leadership and innovation, significantly advancing maternal health and establishing a resilient emergency care system.

Disaster Preparedness:

County Partners with Kenya Red Cross and Meteorological Department to Enhance Localised Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems

By Collins Ogutu



The County's Directorate of Disaster Management and Special Programs, in collaboration with the Kenya Red Cross (KRC) and the Kenya Meteorological Department, conducted a four-day Participatory Scenario Planning Workshop aimed at strengthening local multi-hazard early warning systems. The workshop is part of ongoing efforts to integrate scientific forecasting with indigenous knowledge to improve community resilience against climate-induced disasters.

Under the auspices of KRC's program titled *Strengthening Local Early Action Capacities for Climate-Induced Disasters in Kenya*, the Participatory Scenario Planning approach seeks to enhance the accuracy and relevance of climate information.

The goal is to enable key sectors such as Agriculture, Water, and Health to make better-informed decisions, ultimately reducing disaster risks and supporting resilient community development.

Ms. Elizabeth Abala, Program Officer overseeing the project, explained that the initiative is being implemented in three counties: Homa Bay, Tana River, and Garissa.

The project aims to improve early warning systems by integrating scientific weather forecasting with indigenous knowledge, ensuring that local communities retain their traditional understanding of weather patterns while benefiting from modern technology.



The workshop brought together local leaders, community members, scientists, and disaster management officials to deliberate on scenarios and develop strategies that are context-specific, culturally sensitive, and sustainable. The participatory nature of the process ensures that community voices are central to the formulation of early warning systems, making them more effective and trusted.



As climate variability continues to pose significant challenges to Kenya's vulnerable regions, initiatives like this are vital in fostering adaptive capacity and safeguarding livelihoods. Homa Bay County's commitment to strengthening early warning mechanisms underscores its dedication to disaster preparedness and community resilience.

By integrating indigenous insights with scientific forecasting, the county and its partners hope to create a more proactive approach to disaster risk management that anticipates hazards and mobilizes communities to respond effectively, ultimately saving lives and protecting assets.

Safer Society:

County Strengthens Efforts to End Gender-Based Violence Through Community and School Programs

By Antonine Abiero

The County Government of Homa Bay is taking significant steps to combat gender-based violence (GBV) through a series of community engagement and educational initiatives. Led by the Department of Gender, Inclusivity, Women Empowerment, and Social Services, the county government has intensified its efforts to raise awareness, support survivors, and foster a culture of respect and safety across the county.

In collaboration with the CSA Network and the Luo Council of Elders, the department has organised mentorship sessions targeting both girls and boys in schools and community settings.

These sessions aim to educate young people on the adverse effects of GBV, particularly in digital spaces, and promote behavioral change. During February alone, over 1,200 individuals received training and sensitisation on GBV issues, equipping them to become advocates for change within their communities.





County officials emphasised that addressing all forms of violence, including online abuse, is crucial to creating an inclusive environment where women and girls can live free from fear and discrimination.

They urged community members and leaders to remain vigilant and proactive in tackling GBV, highlighting that collective efforts are vital to building a safer and more equitable society.

As Homa Bay continues its drive to eliminate gender-based violence, the county reaffirms its commitment to gender equality and the well-being of its citizens.





"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