
20TH OCTOBER 2024

GENOWA ECHO

ENDLESS POTENTIAL

MASHUJAA DAY SPECIAL



On September 14, 2003, University of Nairobi lecturer Dr. Chrispin Odhiambo Mbai was tragically killed in his home. His passion for a new Constitution was the motive behind his murder. Fortunately, his vision came to life with the Constitution's adoption in 2010, seven years after his death. The best tribute to him would be the full implementation of the Constitution, especially devolution, which he fervently supported. May his soul rest in peace.

The Message from **H. E the Governor**

Mashujaa Day is celebrated to honor the bravery and sacrifices of Kenya's national heroes who fought for freedom and prosperity. The theme of affordable housing reflects our vision of building a dignified life where every citizen lives in dignity. Housing is not only a basic human need but an inalienable right that Kenya owes its people. Access to affordable housing empowers families, opens opportunities for better education, healthcare, and economic prosperity.

Homa Bay County has invested in affordable housing construction, creating jobs, supporting local businesses, and providing opportunities for artisans and suppliers. A number of graduates from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions have been absorbed into the workforce, gaining hands-on experience and contributing to the construction of homes.

The county government has secured key partnerships with Habitat for Humanity, National Housing Corporation, and the World Bank to implement modern, sustainable technologies for energy efficiency and environmental conservation. The Homa Bay County Affordable Housing Project has been awarded the IFC-EDGE certification, making it the first affordable housing project in Africa to implement such innovative green building technology.

The greater idea of these programs is beyond housing.



It includes amenities such as schools, health centers, and recreational facilities to create thriving communities. The partnership with the World Bank through the second Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Program (KISIP2) aims to improve the Rusinga Old Town, besides Shauri Yako, Makongeni, Nyandiwa and A-Thousand Street, motivating real estate developers and entrepreneurs to establish modern and decent housing for residents.

The projects' impact extends beyond the construction of homes, catalyzing economic development in the region, boosting local industries, and creating opportunities for businesses and workers. Addressing the housing needs of Kenyans improves health and education outcomes, building a brighter future for the next generation.



H. E Gladys Nyasuna Wanga, EGH,
Governor for Homa Bay County

A Message from The **CECM COMMUNICATIONS**



GRACE MERCY OSEWE (MRS)

CECM COMMUNICATIONS

We are pleased to have Volume 22 of Genowa Echo serve as a special issue devoted to celebrating our past and current heroes and heroines who, in their service to the people, transformed the landscape of this county in a manner that etched their places within our folklore.

We have listed quite a number, categorizing them according to their areas of specialization including politics, education, industry, and research among others. We could not have exhausted the list, but we will always strive, in our subsequent editions, to be as exhaustive as possible.

As you read through the stories, feel challenged to enhance the legacies of our Mashujaa so we can individually and collectively make this county a better place that our children and their children will be proud to inherit.

Enjoy your read!

THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Grace Mercy Osewe -

CECM Communications

Atieno Otieno - Chief

Officer and Editor-in-Chief

Steven Muga - Director

Communications and Editor

Vickery Omwandho

- Deputy Director

Communications

Lawrence Magware -

Managing Editor

Bushnell Odhiambo - Editor

Collins Ogutu - Editor

Eunice Atieno -

Photography

Livone Molo - Photography

Geoffrey Khoore -

Videography

Robert Wera - Videography

Philip Ogai - Graphics

Renetech Graphics - Design
and Layout



County Government of Homa Bay

Homa Bay County

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

communications@homabay.go.ke

HOMA BAY COUNTY RESIDENTS ARE THE HEROES OF THE PAST YEAR



To get Homa Bay County on track towards achieving the aspirations of devolved units, Hon Gladys Wanga, then a gubernatorial candidate for that hotly contested 2022 election campaign; put governance, prudent financial management and service delivery, at the top of her ten-agenda of what was heralded as one of the most progressive manifestos ever used to run a gubernatorial campaign in Kenya. In it, the would-be second governor of Homa Bay County promised to establish a transformative, efficient and inclusive governance system, streamline financial management systems, modernize revenue collection and ensure financial accountability.

To achieve the financial management system component of this ambitious pledge, Governor Wanga committed to among other things, strengthening structures for sound financial management in the county, improving efficiency and creating transparent systems in financial management, facilitating the mobilization of the resources to support the county government programs and activities, establish county revenue authority, streamline revenue collection and chief of all, increase county's revenue collection by 60%.

Increasing the county's revenue collection by 60% looked daunting and even the governor herself, let alone her think tanks could not have figured that it would be possible to achieve, way before her mid-term. But, in all credit and doubts, the revenue collection transformation under the leadership of Governor Wanga is coming out as the single-most undertaking that has thrust Homa Bay County up the league of counties, and a benchmark of her peers. From the reports by the Controller of Budget to the pollsters and from the floors of Parliament, the story of how Homa Bay County unleashed her potential in revenue collection despite it being a rural County



with minimal OSR avenues, is endlessly being talked about.

To put the revenue collection transformation in perspective, the County Government of Homa Bay under the leadership of H.E Gladys Wanga has had a remarkable growth of revenue from a paltry KES 312 million in the financial year 2021/2022, which was the final year of the previous regime to KES 859.45 million in the financial year 2022/2023 which she picked up midway in August 2022 to now a remarkable KES 1.116 billion in the just ended the financial year 2023/2024. This growth represents an accumulative increase of 257%, more than the 60% increase in ambition of the manifesto! The building block of this transformation has been increasing the monthly collection from a mere KES 25 million to a whopping KES 102 million, a growth of 308%.

Famous poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said, "The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night." It is unimaginable to think that the revenue growth under Governor Wanga just happened with a magic wand. With the people of Homa Bay County fully behind her, she set herself deliberately to achieve first things first, and fast. After setting up a revenue task force to advise her on how to fix the mess, Governor Wanga announced an immediate transition to implementing cashless revenue collection, banishing cash pilferages and plunder in the revenue collection process. She would then oversee a robust automation of all the county revenue collection processes.

There is more than the governor and the systems to this. The people have been receptive, and are motivated to support the governor in revenue collection, chiefly because they see the value for their money. Governor Wanga has been using the revenue to among other things, improve infrastructure and service delivery across the county, particularly in health and markets. Ambitious education programs are going on including Ondo Kaunda Classrooms Initiative, Fins to Swim and Fundi Mangula TVET Scholarships, school bursaries, construction of roads and seed grants to farmers and boda boda cooperatives among others.



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT



PROF. CHARLES O. OCHOLA

Prof. Charles Ocholla will go down in history as an academic who put Tom Mboya in the world map. Born in Rachuonyo East sub-county, Prof Ochola is the Vice Chancellor and Secretary to the Council of Tom Mboya University, having been the inaugural principal of the university's precursor the Tom Mboya University College of the Maseno University. Before his appointment to the current position, he served as the Acting Vice-Chancellor (Tom Mboya University) upon award of Charter to a fully-fledged University from 2nd August 2022 to 14th September 2023.

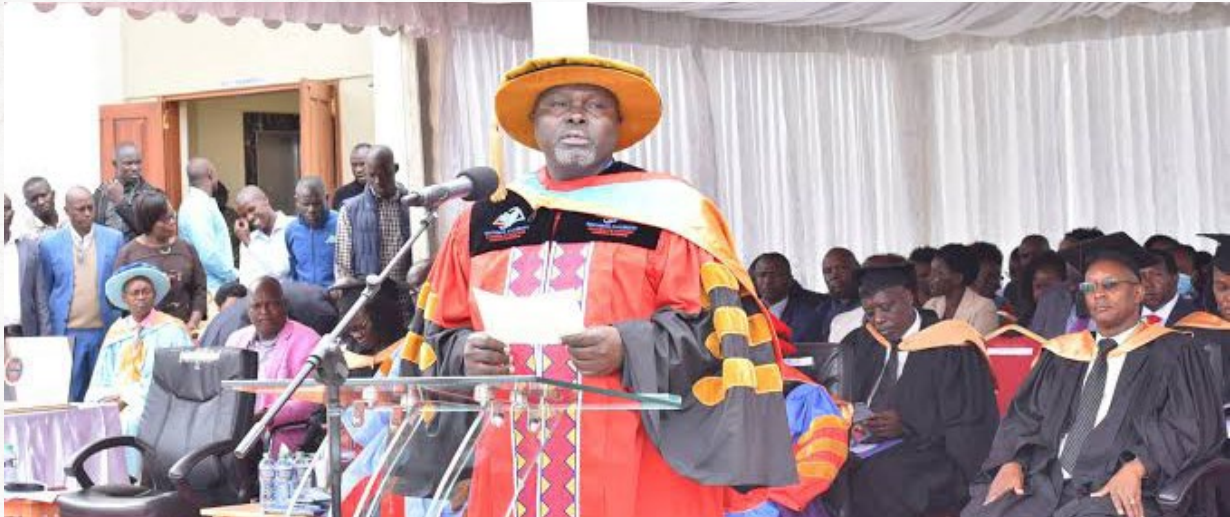
Prof. Ochola is an accomplished scholar and a Professional Social Demographer. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Geography and Master of Arts in Population Studies from the University of Nairobi and PhD in Demography from the University of Liverpool. Previously he served as Director of Students Welfare Services at Maseno University for Nine years, Co-Ordinator of Evening/ Parallel programmes, Chairman Department of Sociology at Maseno University, and National Council for Population and Development. He has served in the various Committees within the University Administrative structure.

As the principal, acting VC and now the VC, Prof. Ocholla has overseen a remarkable transformation of what was once a miniature of a farmers' college – the Homa Bay Agricultural Training College. In the beginning, Prof. Ocholla only had the luxury to admit a paltry 114 students in September 2016 and at that time had 19 staff which included seconded (13) staff from Maseno University and staff inherited (6) from



Homa Bay ATC. Currently, the university is on the verge of its third graduation ceremony with over 8,000 students pursuing their education dreams. Other than an increase in student enrolment and growth in staff numbers (both teaching and administrative), Prof Ocholla has overseen the completion of the renovation of existing infrastructural developments and initiation of

new projects including a multi-storey tuition and administration block commissioned last year as well as the near-completed multipurpose block that should house four amphitheatres among other modern features. Most importantly, Prof Ocholla has revitalized research activities, the establishment of linkages and collaborations, and community engagement through extension and outreach.



MS. JEMIMA ANYANGO OYUGI

Ms. Jemima Anyango Oyugi was born and grew up in Kanyaluo, Rachuonyo North Sub County. She is a mother, an entrepreneur and a Rotarian. Ms. Jemima is among the high-ranking founders of the Rotary Club of Suna Migori, whose main goal is to advance world understanding, goodwill and peace by improving health, providing quality education, improving the environment, addressing issues of water and sanitation and alleviating poverty.

In a show of her commitment as a Rotarian, Ms. Jemima has played



full equipment of 2 boreholes at Seme Kaima village in July 2023, and the dedication of the same was done by H.E. Hon. Gov. Gladys Wanga.

Motivated by her experience of the abundant way of life that Rotary has given despite her background, Ms. Jemima through her scholarship program has overseen the full and partial sponsorship of over 100 high school students, 15 students in institutions of higher learning, and distributed over 9,000 sets of reusable sanitary towels to the girls in schools.

She attributes her passion for community service to her experience growing up knowing what it means to have nothing. By joining the Rotary club in 2010, she confesses to having found more than she bargained for – she has found friendship, fellowship, family, fun, diversity of ideas, and most importantly the opportunity to know and discover the world through quality service and offering new & superior lifestyle.

a lead role in the Suna Migori Rotary Water and Sanitation Program in Migori and Homa Bay Counties. Working with their international partners, the club has provided 56 water tanks, drilled 7 boreholes and built over 100 latrines. The most recent yet remarkable project was the drilling and

Currently, Ms. Jemima serves at the club as the young generation director and chair for the scholarship program as well as the Club's President nominee for 2025/2026.





CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

ORIANg' WOMEN POTTERY GROUP

At Oriang Women Pottery Group in Kendu Bay, Homa Bay County, 23 women make a living through the messy but viable enterprise of pottery. The desire to preserve the Luo culture and tradition is what drives the Oriang' pottery industry in the Karachuonyo constituency to keep operating.

It started in 1981 after the then Karachuonyo MP Phoebe Asiyo, through a German organisation known as the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, discovered a clay-based soil useful for making pottery at Oriang' in the constituency.

Asiyo, through her influence, wooed more than 200 women. Some were registered under Maendeleo ya Wanawake (MYW) Organisation to join the industry, and she became its leader. The women got empowered because they had a source of earning a living. The money they got from pottery works could also be used as a contribution to the MYW. Most of the women took advantage of joining the industry because they were coming from around.

Many residents in Homa Bay and beyond still prefer clay pots rather than aluminum cookware because they believe it is good for their health as they can get iron from the clay used in making the wares. Besides the alternative and the ornamental significance of the wares, the group has ensured that the traditional culture of the Luo is preserved through their industry



HEALTH, SCIENCE, AND RESEARCH



**ALPHONSE OKUKU
NYANGWESO**

Before the Kolunga Community Dispensary was established in 2005, during the establishment of the Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centers, residents of the entire western parts of Rusinga Island had no means and no respite in their quest to find healthcare,

especially to HIV/AIDS-related matters, contributing to high morbidity and mortality rates among one of the country's high fishing communities.

After leaving school in 1999, the then 20-year-old Alphonse Okuku Nyangweso plunged himself into community service to save her community.

He founded an NGO called Kageno which he managed to use to mobilize resources with which he established Kolunga VCT which would later morph into a dispensary, the first in Rusinga after the government-owned Tom Mboya Health Center. Mr. Okuku established the center with the sole purpose of serving the community during that time. Now fully registered under the law, the institution provides health services inclusive of inpatient services, outpatient services, mother and child health, laboratory, pharmacy, maternity, Cancer screening, post-natal, and family planning services.

Alphonse Okuku's healthcare provision through the Kolunga Dispensary and the community health outreaches has transformed Rusinga Island's medical landscape to an extent that of all the islands within Kenya's side of Lake Victoria, Rusinga records the least of deaths associated with communicable waterborne diseases and has the fewest households still practicing open defecation.



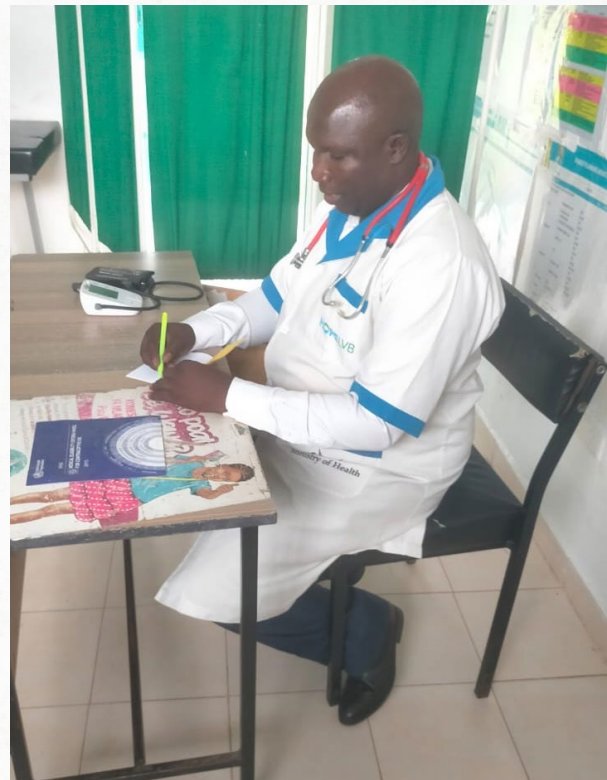
STEPHEN OTIENO JUMA

The 42-year-old nursing officer from Pala Boya, Ndhiwa subcounty has been the face of the Odaso Health Center in Kanyamwa Kosewe Ward and has transformed the facility despite its remote location within the Ndhiwa interiors. A diploma holder in Nursing from the Kenya Medical Training College, Stephen's dream was always to be a health practitioner while growing up and while going through Pe-Hill High School. Since leaving the college in 2007, he has had a tremendous journey in his practice that has seen him hold briefs including g at KEMRI before he joined the government in 2012 where he was the pioneer nursing officer at Kome Dispensary before moving to Nyamanga dispensary.

But it is at Odaso where Stephen has been making

a name for himself. Opened in 2022, Stephen has overseen the quickest growth of a health centre ever seen in Homa Bay County. He has overseen a tremendous improvement in health indicators including deliveries, ANC visits, CWC visits, FP and OPD. Locals and his supervisors attribute these achievements to Stephen's focus on good community linkages doing referrals extending his working hours to accommodate night deliveries, frequent conversations with both the county and sub-county health management teams and always being in touch with community leaders for the betterment of the facility.

Currently, the facility is doing 4-7 deliveries per month, a significant number due to the facility's location and accessibility. Stephen has always put serving the community ahead of anything else to ensure the facility is delivering good numbers in our health indicators. He is a self-motivated nurse who is dedicated to his work in serving people to achieve the best health status by conducting health talks, community dialogue and action days, ensuring that I'm available to give services.



SPORTS & TALENTS

GEORGE 'SONKO' OMONDI OUMA

When the history of Homa Bay County youth football teams is written, Sonko's name will occupy a chapter or two. In 2023, the Kasipul-born tactician led the all-conquering Genowa Boys to unprecedented glory in all the tournaments they took part in. Assisted by his protégé and loyal assistant Robert 'Nassri' Ouko, George led the lads to lift the Kenya Youth Soccer Association (KYSA) tournament for the first time of asking, beating all on their way to the triumph in Chuka, Tharaka Nithi County.

The KYSA heroics would be repeated at the inaugural National Talanta Hela Tournamnet where the Boys would go on to lift the trophy inside a fully packed Nyayo National Stadium with the Head of State Dr. William Ruto also in attendance alongside other senior state and sports officers.

A trained coach with a UEFA Class C coaching license and a holder of a Diploma in Leadership Institute from Change College in the USA., Sonko has coached internationally in the United States for three years, working with Youth Programs at Portland Timbers, Spartans, and Portland



United. Locally, he is the founder of Oyugis Soccer Academy in Kasipul Constituency, one of the highly talent-churning academies within the western Kenya region and arguably the leading in Homa Bay County. He has also coached with the Kenyan Under 17 national team.

JOHN OMIRA MILUWI (1944 – 1997)

If you have ever watched *Gorillas in the Mist*, a 1988 American biographical drama film directed by Michael Apted from a screenplay by Anna Hamilton Phelan and a story by Phelan and Tab Murphy then you should know John Omira Miluwi. The late John is the character Sembagare or simply Actor in the movie.

Born and raised in Wakula, Mfangano Island, John, who was locally known as Gudu Omira, never had a dream of ever appearing on the big screen, if at all he even had an idea of what a big screen was. His setting was his Wakula village he got a chance to study at Amukuruma in Kakamega where he had an opportunity to be a casual labourer with Kenya Wildlife Service which would see him work at the Mt. Kenya Conservancy stationed at Narumoru. His diligence and astuteness would see John be promoted to a full-time ranger where he took an interest in mountain climbing.

After one day rescuing an unknown white climber on the Batian peak of Mt. Kenya, John would not only be awarded a Head of State Commendation but also be seconded to visiting filmmakers who were doing both a documentary and an exploration of the African rainforests. Without any auditions, these Austrian filmmakers soon contracted John for their pioneering blockbuster, *Gorillas in the Mist*, John becoming one of the first Kenyans to appear in Hollywood and bestselling movies of all times.



TRAILBLAZING WOMEN IN POLITICS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

LYDIA HONGO

Lydia Atieno Hongo is a dynamic and community-oriented social change advocate from Homabay County, Kenya. With a profound commitment to social justice and community empowerment, Lydia is recognized for her leadership in advocating for gender equality and youth involvement in Governance.

As the founder of Inuka Community Developers Network, her journey is characterized by a relentless pursuit of creating spaces where young women and young people can thrive, particularly in areas like economic empowerment, and sexual and reproductive health rights. Her personal values are rooted in resilience, integrity, and a strong belief in the transformative power of grassroots initiatives to drive sustainable development.



Inuka is a dynamic youth-led organization that was established in 2020 and officially registered in 2022. Its transformation from a youth group to a community-based organization marks its commitment to fostering positive change. Inuka's core mission centers on promoting sustainable community growth by harnessing local resources and cultivating partnerships.

Lydia's impactful initiatives are geared towards empowering young individuals, particularly youth, Adolescent Girls, and Young Women, across key thematic areas: Advocacy for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, Women's Economic Empowerment, Meaningful Youth Participation in Leadership and Governance, and Agri-Innovation. Lydia received recognition/Award during the 2023 Annual Kenya's Sustainable Development Goals Forum and emerged overall winner in the Category of community-based organization promoting Gender Equality.



