



**COMPENDIUM OF
COUNTY INNOVATIONS
AND BEST PRACTICES
ON SERVICE DELIVERY**

9TH EDITION



JANUARY - JUNE 2025



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Maarifa Centre is the premier subnational knowledge hub established to serve as Kenya's knowledge sharing and learning platform to support effective governance and service delivery at the County level. The vision of the Centre is "To be Kenya's Premier knowledge sharing and learning platform for effective Governance and service delivery for sustainable development".



CoG Vision

Prosperous Counties that are drivers of socio-economic growth and development and quality service delivery



CoG Mission

To deepen devolution through coordination, consultation, information sharing, capacity building, performance management and dispute resolution.



CoG Values

Collaboration and Partnership; Integrity; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Innovation; Professionalism.



CoG Motto

48 Governments, 1 Nation

Maarifa Centre Motto

Sharing Kenya's Devolution Solutions

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALDEV	Arid Land Development Programme
AGPO	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities
AYP-EMC	Adolescent and Youth Program-Elgeyo-Marakwet County
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Land
BLS	Basic Life Support
CECM	County Executive Committee Member
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CHMTs	County Health Management Teams
CHPs	Community Health Promoters
CLA	Community Land Act
CMLC	Community Land Management Committee
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
Coronavirus Disease	COVID-19
CoG	Council of Governors
CORE	Community Road Empowerment
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DOT	Directly Observed Treatment
DLCI	Drylands Learning and Capacity Building Initiative
EABL	East African Breweries Limited
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCDC	Frontier Counties Development Council
FY	Financial Year
GoK	Government of Kenya
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HBV	Hepatitis B Virus
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRH	Human Resource for Health
JSDF	Japan Social Development Fund
KIAMIS	Kenya Integrated Agricultural Management Information System
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization
KATC	Kirinyaga Agriculture Training Centre
KIHBT	Kenya Institute of Highways and Building Technology
KeNHA	Kenya National Highways Authority



KeRRA	Kenya Rural Roads Authority
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
Km	Kilometer
KUSP I	Kenya Urban Support Programme
KWCA	Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
KWCA	Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
LAPPSET	Lapsset Corridor Development Authority
LVSr	Low Volume Seal Road
MDTS	Multi-Disciplinary Team Services
MYS	Murang'a Youth Service
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MCI	Mass Casualty Incident
NGAOs	National Government Administrative Officers
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLC	National Land Commission
NCA	National Construction Authority
NLC	National Land Commission
NDOC	National Disaster Operations Center
NIWASCO	Nithi Water and Sanitation Company
NIA	National Irrigation Authority
NCPB	National Cereals and Produce Board
NTLD-P	Lung Disease Program
OTZ	Operation Triple Zero
PMTc	Mother-to-Child Transmission
PWDs	Persons Living with Disabilities
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
SMEs	Small and Micro Enterprises
SATCC	Southern Africa Transport and Communications Commission
SHIF	Social Health Insurance Fund
TB	Tuberculosis
TIFA	Tuberculosis Implementation Framework Agreement
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWWDA	Tana Water Development Agency
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASREB	Water Services Regulatory Board

Foreword

It is with profound regard that I present to you readers this 9th Edition of the Compendium of County Innovations and Best Practices on Service Delivery. This series of publications contributes to a component of Kenya Vision 2030 that envisions a knowledge-based economy ultimately contributing to sustainable growth and prosperity.

Drawing from section 20 (b) of the intergovernmental Relations Act, the CoG Strategic Plan 2022-2027 has prioritized promotion of knowledge management, learning and innovation in Counties. The identification, documentation and capturing of best practices and innovations emerging from Counties in the course of service delivery has proved to be an effective tool in accelerating inter-County learning and exchange of ideas.

This 9th Compendium contains transformative County-led initiatives across health, youth economic empowerment, agriculture, land governance and natural resource management, among other sectors. Notably is how Kirinyaga County is empowering local communities through the “Wezesha Kirinyaga” program whose focus has been modernization of extension services, upscaling production, enhancing agro-market access and revitalizing the Kirinyaga Agricultural Training Centre. In Elgeyo Marakwet County, telemedicine is being utilised to facilitate HIV care and prevention services. To improve its disaster response capacity, Tharaka Nithi County is investing in knowledge transfer, equipment upgrading and institutional development. This is just a tip of the iceberg- this compilation is dotted with many more County success stories!

My desire is that this Compendium and others previously published will be a valuable resource for Counties who are eager to apply innovative solutions in service delivery, and that robust replication and scale-up of the initiatives therein will be witnessed. I encourage all our stakeholders and partners to engage with the Maarifa Centre platform on X @maarifa_centre, or visit the website at www.maarifa.cog.go.ke to interact with plenty more of County best practices and innovations.



H.E. FCPA Ahmed Adullahi, EGH
Chairperson
Council of Governors



“The identification and documentation of County innovations has proven to be a powerful tool in accelerating inter-County learning and the adoption of transformative service delivery solutions.



This edition is a celebration of achievements and a call to action for duty bearers to provide quality and accessible services for all Kenyans.

Acknowledgment

I would like to extend my gratitude to the FAO for their invaluable support in documentation of the success stories highlighted in this 9th series of the Compendium. I am convinced that the initiatives captured in this publication are a testament to the relentless dedication, innovation and collaborative spirit found in County service delivery. This edition is a celebration of achievements and a call to action for duty bearers to provide quality and accessible services for all Kenyans.

I convey profound appreciation to the County Knowledge Management (KM) champions for their commitment in supporting the CoG KM unit in identifying and documenting best practices and innovations. You are true champions of devolution!

To the team at Maarifa Centre that ensures production of this Compendium- thank you. I also acknowledge CoG technical teams that were part of this edition's development. I am proud of your passionate and meticulous efforts in writing, compiling, reviewing, and generating this publication with clarity and rigor.

CoG reaffirms its collective resolve to foster peer learning, scale up innovations, and strengthen partnerships for an inclusive and prosperous future.

Mary Mwiti, EBS
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

Kenya's devolution story reaches new heights in this ninth edition of our Compendium, showcasing how County Governments are translating policy into tangible results across critical sectors. These fifteen case studies represent the most innovative, impactful approaches to local development challenges emerging from Kenya's devolved units.

In the health sector, we see transformative models like Elgeyo Marakwet's integrated HIV care program and Trans Nzoia's reproductive health outreach initiative setting new standards for service delivery. The land, housing and urban development sector features cutting-edge work from Garissa and Laikipia Counties on community land registration, complemented by Murang'a's smart urban mobility solutions addressing growing urbanization pressures.

Agricultural innovation shines through Kirinyaga's Wezesha Dairy Program, while social inclusion advances through Murang'a's youth empowerment scheme. On environmental fronts, Mandera's greening initiative and Meru's application of Do-nou technology for rural roads demonstrate sustainable approaches to natural resource management. Tharaka Nithi's disaster risk management system offers valuable lessons in resilience building.

The Maarifa Centre stands ready to facilitate knowledge exchange from these innovations, ensuring their lessons inform both County planning and national policy discourse. This compendium arrives at a crucial moment in Kenya's devolution journey, offering evidence that when Counties combine visionary leadership with community-centric approaches, transformative development is not just possible but already happening across the nation.

We present these case studies as both celebration of progress and call to action, proof that devolution's promise is being realized through the dedication and creativity of County Governments and their partners.

When Counties combine visionary leadership with community-centric approaches, transformative development is not just possible but already happening across the nation.

1



HEALTH COMMITTEE



Advancing HIV Care and Prevention: Lessons from Elgeyo-Marakwet's Integrated Approach and Governance Strategies

Introduction

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) attacks the body's immune system, specifically the CD4 cells (T cells) critical for fighting infections. Without treatment, HIV reduces the number of these cells, making the body vulnerable to opportunistic infections. If left untreated, HIV leads to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), the final and most severe stage of the disease.

Since its discovery in the early 1980s, HIV has evolved from a poorly understood condition to one of the most researched diseases, with significant advances in management and prevention. Despite this progress, HIV remains a global concern, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where the majority of new infections occur.



Despite decades of progress, HIV remains a global concern—particularly in sub-Saharan Africa—where stigma, limited access to care, and systemic challenges continue to hinder prevention and treatment efforts.

According to the National Syndemic Diseases Control Council (NSDCC), a state corporation established under Section 3 of the State Corporations Act, Cap 446, through the National AIDS Control Council Order of 1999, there are 1,378,457 individuals living with HIV in Kenya and 16,752 new infections as of 2024.

Although health is a devolved function in Kenya, both the National and County Governments, in partnership with various local and international organizations, collaborate to implement new initiatives and campaigns aimed at eradicating the spread of HIV. These efforts involve strengthening prevention strategies, expanding access to treatment, promoting awareness and addressing the stigma surrounding HIV, all aimed at reducing new infections and improving the quality of life for people living with the virus.

Elgeyo-Marakwet, situated in the former Rift Valley region has a population of 454,480 people comprising 227,317 females, 227,151 males and 12 intersex individuals. The County has 99,861 households, with an average household size of 4.5 persons and a population density of 150 people per square kilometer. The County has a population of 4,900 individuals living with HIV.

Iten County Referral Hospital handles a caseload of 1,200 HIV patients, providing monthly medical consultations that include viral load monitoring, management of new infections and medication refills. Kenya, like other parts of Africa faces several cross-cutting challenges in HIV prevention and treatment, including drug shortages, stigma, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, limited access to testing and counseling services and insufficient community awareness. Additionally, governance issues pose significant challenges, affecting coordination, resource allocation and the effective implementation of HIV-related programs. These obstacles collectively hinder efforts to provide timely care, reduce new infections and enhance the overall well-being of those living with HIV.

Implementation of the practice

The County Government of Elgeyo-Marakwet has introduced a variety of interventions to tackle HIV, focusing on prevention, stigma reduction and the management of opportunistic diseases. One notable approach involves the use of telemedicine and technology to reach patients who face

challenges in accessing healthcare. Through the Multi-Disciplinary Team Services (MDTS), healthcare professionals, including doctors, nutritionists and counselors schedule virtual consultations with patients. This enables them to monitor patients' conditions, provide guidance on improving health and offer preventive measures against common opportunistic diseases.

The County has established a system where patients with high viral loads, such as adolescents are scheduled for specific days of the week to receive comprehensive care. On these designated days, nutritionists, counselors and doctors meet with the patients to provide treatment, monitor their viral loads and offer tailored support.

Through the Operation Triple Zero (OTZ), a cost-effective and high-impact initiative aimed at achieving zero missed appointments, zero missed medication doses and zero detectable viral loads, there has been a notable reduction in stigma, particularly among adolescents. The County, through the OTZ program facilitates gatherings during school holidays and midterms, where adolescents come together to share knowledge and support each other.

To enhance tracking and update data on clients attending specific clinics for medical checkups and viral load counts, the County has established a hotline. This allows for follow-up with various facilities to ensure that if a client misses an appointment at one facility, their attendance at neighboring facilities is monitored.

The County through the Department of Reproductive Health has also incorporated psycho-social support efforts by organizing peer-to-peer meetings in the hospital grounds for patients who require additional guidance, especially for those who struggle with alcohol dependence. In these meetings, patients share strategies for managing their medication and maintaining their health. For example, those who consume alcohol may advise others to take their medication a few hours before drinking or discuss how adhering to a specific schedule has helped them manage their viral load and maintain their lifestyle.

All these initiatives are outlined in the annual work plans to facilitate their implementation throughout the year. This approach aids in collaborating with partners, as it clearly identifies the challenges and priorities for the County, allowing them to incorporate these aspects into their own work plans. The interventions have led to a 4% improvement in HIV suppression rates, increasing from 90% in 2023 to 94% in 2024. Additionally, HIV prevalence has decreased to 1.9% in 2024, down from 2.5% in 2022.

To address the challenge of new HIV infections, which increased to 40% in 2024 from 34% in 2023, particularly among teenagers the County has adopted a comprehensive governance approach.

In 2022, the County Government of Elgeyo-Marakwet also launched the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) hotline. This initiative enables the County to monitor and track documentation and records of new infections, as well as address challenges across different healthcare facilities.

In 2023, the County began organizing peer-to-peer knowledge exchange forums, where specific groups of patients, such as those struggling with alcoholism and adolescents come together on a need basis and during school holidays. These forums provide a platform for discussing issues and challenges that are unique to their experiences.



Through innovative initiatives like Operation Triple Zero (OTZ), telemedicine via Multi-Disciplinary Team Services, and targeted peer support forums, Elgeyo-Marakwet County has achieved a remarkable 4% improvement in HIV suppression rates—rising from 90% in 2023 to 94% in 2024—while reducing HIV prevalence from 2.5% in 2022 to 1.9% in 2024.



Through a visionary telemedicine approach and strong leadership, Elgeyo Marakwet County is transforming HIV care—bringing services closer to patients, improving suppression rates, and reducing prevalence, all while setting a new benchmark in community-centered health governance.

In the same year, the County introduced a telemedicine approach using Multi-Disciplinary Team Services (MDTS). This allows patients to communicate with doctors and counselors handling HIV matters on need basis, anytime via phone calls, accessing health services and support from the convenience of their homes. So far over 50 patients have used this approach.

In 2024, the County, in partnership with the National Syndemic Diseases Control Council (NSDCC), designed the 2024-2028 Adolescent and Youth Program-Elgeyo-Marakwet County (AYP-EMC) guide to enhance and streamline strategies for improving health outcomes and support services for adolescents and youth in the County.

This guide, along with the County's HIV implementation plan and the HIV committee chaired by the Governor and deputized by the CEC for Health, ensures the sustainability of the County's initiatives to treat, prevent and manage HIV.



Deputy Governor Prof. Grace Cheserek and Elgeyo Marakwet County residents marking World Aids Day

Results of the practice

Improved HIV Suppression Rates: Enhanced interventions have led to a 4% increase in HIV suppression rates, rising from 90% in 2023 to 94% in 2024.

Reduced HIV Prevalence: The prevalence of HIV has decreased to 1.9% in 2024, down from 2.5% in 2022.

Enhanced Patient Support: The PMTC hotline and telemedicine approach have improved patient monitoring and support, facilitating better management of new infections and ongoing care.

Strengthened Governance: The involvement of the Governor and the CEC for Health in overseeing the HIV committee has enhanced the governance and strategic direction of HIV-related initiatives, ensuring effective implementation and sustainability.

Improved Adherence to Treatment: The Multi-Disciplinary Team Services (MDTS) approach and scheduled consultations have supported better adherence to treatment regimens, resulting in improved health outcomes for patients.

Lessons learnt:

- **Integrated Approaches are Effective:** Combining telemedicine, peer-to-peer forums and comprehensive guidelines (such as the AYP-EMC guide) has proven effective in enhancing patient care and support. Integration of various services ensures that patients receive holistic care, addressing both medical and psychosocial needs.
- **Governance and Leadership Matter:** Strong governance and leadership, exemplified by the involvement of the governor and the CEC for Health, are crucial for the successful implementation and sustainability of HIV initiatives. Clear oversight and strategic direction help in effective resource allocation and program management.
- **Community Engagement Reduces Stigma:** Engaging the community through peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and support forums plays a significant role in reducing stigma associated with HIV. Providing a platform for patients to share their experiences fosters a supportive environment and encourages openness.
- **Technology Enhances Accessibility:** The use of telemedicine and hotlines has improved accessibility to healthcare services, especially for patients who face logistical challenges. Technology facilitates timely consultations and follow-ups, ensuring that patients remain connected to care.
- **Data tracking and Coordination are Key:** Effective tracking of patient data and coordination between healthcare facilities are essential for managing HIV cases. Tools like the PMTC hotline help in monitoring patient records and ensuring continuity of care across different services.
- **Customized Support is Necessary:** Tailoring interventions to specific groups, such as adolescents or individuals with re-occurring conditions like alcoholism, improve the relevance and effectiveness of support services. Customization ensures that interventions address the unique challenges faced by these groups

Conclusion

The County Government of Elgeyo-Marakwet has made significant strides in addressing HIV through a multifaceted approach that integrates innovative strategies, strong governance, and community engagement. By implementing programs such as the PMTC hotline, telemedicine, and peer-to-peer support forums, the County has effectively improved access to care, reduced stigma, and enhanced patient outcomes. The 4% increase in HIV suppression rates and the reduction in HIV prevalence from 2.5% to 1.9% highlight the success of these interventions. The ongoing commitment to innovation, coordination and support reflects a robust framework for achieving long-term success in the fight against HIV.

Enhancing Reproductive Health Outcomes in Trans Nzoia County

Introduction

Reproductive health involves the well-being of individuals in matters related to the reproductive system, including family planning, maternal care, sexual health, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and fertility treatments among others. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya



Elgeyo-Marakwet County's success in HIV response underscores a powerful lesson: when innovation, leadership, and community engagement converge, health systems become more accessible, stigma is reduced, and patient outcomes improve. This integrated model offers a roadmap for sustainable, people-centered healthcare.

“

By leveraging data-driven collaboration, community leadership, and sustained advocacy, Trans Nzoia County has demonstrated that even the most complex reproductive health challenges—like teenage pregnancy—can be effectively addressed, with rates dropping from 42% to 17.5% in just two years.

article 43 (1a) guarantees every person the right to the highest attainable standard of health which includes the right to reproductive health care. This has been integrated into various frameworks which enhance service delivery at both the national and County Government levels.

Despite the existence of these regulatory frameworks many Counties still face challenges in addressing reproductive health, including limited access to quality services, inadequate health infrastructure, cultural barriers, lack of comprehensive education and insufficient funding.

Trans Nzoia County, located in the former Rift Valley region, is home to 990,341 people comprising 489,107 males, 501,206 females and 28 intersex individuals. The County faces several challenges related to reproductive health, including low reporting rates, a rise in teenage pregnancies, high poverty levels and frequent staff turnover.

Through advocacy and collaboration with various partners in the reproductive health sector, as well as County governance structures, efforts have been made to engage National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs) such as chiefs in awareness campaigns. County Health Management Teams (CHMTs) share data with NGAOs to support informed decision-making, which includes warning young men who exploit girls and raising awareness on the prevention of rape and teenage pregnancies. The County organizes quarterly stakeholder meetings where the church, partners and other relevant parties are involved in reducing teenage pregnancies. The sub-county focal person is given specific targets to meet within a set timeframe, including improving statistics on teenage pregnancies. These interventions have contributed to a significant reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate, decreasing from 42% in 2022 to 17.5% in 2024.



County health officers in reproductive health sensitizing community on teenage pregnancies and child spacing

Implementation of the practice

- In 2021, the County Government of Trans Nzoia, in collaboration with AMPATH, conducted a baseline survey to assess pregnancy rates in the County and identify strategies for improving the indicators. This baseline survey prompted county officials in the Department of Gender to maintain active and up-to-date records.

- In 2022, the Department of Education in collaboration with Jhpiego, launched advocacy initiatives during school closures. These initiatives included engaging youth through church events and designated dialogue days, where they discussed the importance of abstinence and the avoidance of early marriages
- That same year, the County organized a meeting with NGAOs and CHPs to share data on the teenage pregnancy rate. After data analysis the NGAOs were tasked with leading advocacy efforts within their respective capacities.
- Since 2023, through a partnership with Imarisha Dada program, young mothers who have dropped out of school receive psychological and counseling support. This is done for four months, where they participate in seven counseling sessions, resulting in a 50% success rate, with many of the young women returning to school after completing the sessions.

For long-term sustainability, the county is currently developing a comprehensive reproductive health policy. This policy aims to establish clear guidelines, improve service delivery, and ensure consistent access to reproductive health services. It will also address key challenges such as teenage pregnancies, maternal health and community education, while promoting collaboration among stakeholders to create lasting solutions.

Results of the practice

- Reduction in teenage pregnancies: The teenage pregnancy rate decreased significantly from 42% in 2022 to 17.5% in 2024, showcasing the effectiveness of targeted advocacy and community outreach programs.
- Increased awareness and community engagement: Collaboration with stakeholders, including churches, chiefs and local partners, has led to heightened awareness about reproductive health issues such as early marriages, sexual abuse and safe reproductive practices.
- Counseling and reintegration of young mothers: Through the Imarisha Dada program, 50% of young mothers who dropped out of school due to pregnancy have successfully returned to their education after participating in seven counseling sessions over four months. The psychological support provided has had a profound impact on their emotional and social reintegration.
- Improved data-driven decision making: County Health Management Teams (CHMTs) have been able to share timely data with National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs), leading to informed decision-making and better-targeted interventions at the community level.

Improved advocacy through schools and dialogue sessions: School closure periods were effectively used to hold advocacy sessions in churches and through community dialogue days, reaching out to youth on topics such as abstinence and the dangers of early marriages. This has contributed to positive behavioral changes among the youth population.

Lessons learnt:

- Data-driven decision-making facilitated more effective planning and improved outcomes. Sharing data between County Health Management Teams (CHMTs) and National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs) allowed for a better understanding of reproductive health challenges, such as teenage pregnancies and enabled the County to focus resources where they were most needed.



Through strategic advocacy, cross-sector collaboration, and psychosocial support programs like Imarisha Dada, Trans Nzoia County has made bold strides in addressing teenage pregnancies—cutting rates from 42% to 17.5%—while restoring hope and opportunity for young mothers through reintegration and education.



The success of Trans Nzoia's reproductive health initiative proves that when data-driven strategies meet community engagement and psychosocial support, real change happens—teenage pregnancies drop, young mothers return to school, and health becomes a shared responsibility.

- **Collaboration is key to success**
Partnerships with various stakeholders including government departments, NGOs like AMPATH and JHAPIEGO, religious institutions, and community leaders proved crucial in addressing reproductive health challenges. This multi-sectoral approach ensured that advocacy and interventions reached a broad audience and maximized the collective impact.
- **Community engagement drives behavior change**
Involving the community through advocacy sessions in churches, schools and dialogue days was instrumental in changing attitudes and behaviors related to reproductive health. Trusted figures like chiefs and religious leaders increased the acceptance and effectiveness of these interventions, highlighting the importance of grassroots involvement in public health initiatives.
- **Psychosocial support is essential for reintegration**
The success of the Imarisha Dada program demonstrated the importance of providing psychological and counseling support to young mothers. These interventions not only helped the individuals involved but also contributed to their reintegration into education. The structured counseling sessions were critical in addressing the emotional and social barriers that often prevent young mothers from returning to school.

Conclusion

The reproductive health initiative in Trans Nzoia County has demonstrated the power of collaborative, data-driven and community-centered approaches in addressing complex health challenges. By bringing together key stakeholders ranging from County officials, healthcare providers, NGOs and local leaders, the initiative achieved significant improvements in reducing teenage pregnancies, reintegrating young mothers into education and increasing awareness about reproductive health.

Enhancing Tuberculosis Management through Cross-Border Collaboration, Governance and Patient-Centered Approaches in Trans Nzoia

Introduction

Communicable diseases are illnesses transmitted either directly between individuals or indirectly through vectors like insects. These diseases arise from infectious agents, including bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. Transmission methods include direct contact, airborne droplets, contaminated food or water and vector-borne pathways. They include Chickenpox, COVID-19, Ebola, Hepatitis B, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs) and Tuberculosis (TB) to name a few.

Tuberculosis, a contagious bacterial infection caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* spreads through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, releasing tiny droplets containing the bacteria.

Though TB primarily affects the lungs, it can also impact other parts of the body, such as the kidneys, spine and the brain. There are three major types of TB.

Latent TB Infection: This is when bacteria remain in the body in an inactive state and cause no symptoms. However, it can become active, particularly when the immune system is weakened.

Active TB Disease: This occurs when the bacteria multiply and cause symptoms such as a persistent cough, chest pain, coughing up blood, fever, night sweats and weight loss.

Drug-Resistant TB (DR-TB): This occurs when the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria develop resistance to the standard drugs used to treat TB, particularly isoniazid and rifampicin, the two most potent first-line anti-TB drugs.

The successful treatment of tuberculosis (TB) globally has been hindered by several challenges, with one of the most significant being patients' failure to complete the full course of prescribed medication. This issue not only undermines the effectiveness of treatment but also contributes to the emergence of drug-resistant TB strains, complicating global efforts to control the disease.

In Kenya, under the Department of National Strategic Public Health Programs, the Directorate of Preventive and Promotive Health in the Ministry of Health hosts the National Tuberculosis, Leprosy and Lung Disease Program (NTLD-P). The program works with County Governments to formulate policies, set standards, develop capacity, identify and mobilize resources, ensure an uninterrupted supply of commodities, supervise, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of TB, Leprosy and Lung disease control activities.

Trans Nzoia County, located in the former Rift Valley Province, spans an area of 2,495.5 square kilometers and is home to 990,341 residents, as reported by the 2019 census. The County's border with Uganda renders it vulnerable to cross-border disease transmission, such as tuberculosis (TB).

Individuals who have not undergone early detection and have familial ties on both the Kenyan and Ugandan sides can inadvertently spread the disease. In such cases, treatment initiated in Kenya may go unnoticed in Uganda, leading to interruptions or inconsistencies in the treatment regimen.

Kenya currently offers a 9-month TB treatment regimen, whereas Uganda still follows an 18-month regimen. This disparity in treatment protocols, combined with frequent border movements and patient transfers, disrupt effective drug administration. Consequently, this leads to the development of drug-resistant TB strains.

Trans Nzoia County continues to face significant human resource for health (HRH) challenges, with various departments suffering from a shortage of healthcare workers and insufficient replacement of retiring staff. This shortage impedes early detection of diseases, leading to delays in diagnosing and treating tuberculosis (TB) and contributing to the development of more aggressive strains and their subsequent spread. Additionally, the County struggles with inadequate isolation facilities for TB patients. The lack of dedicated isolation areas means that TB patients are often placed in wards with other patients, increasing the risk of disease transmission.

The limited availability of genotyping sites for tuberculosis (TB) in the County has presented a significant challenge in accurately identifying drug-resistant strains. Genotyping is a crucial diagnostic tool that allows for the



Effective TB control in border counties like Trans Nzoia demands cross-border collaboration, consistent treatment protocols, and urgent investments in human resources and isolation facilities to prevent the rise and spread of drug-resistant strains.

differentiation of drug-resistant TB strains from drug-susceptible ones by analyzing the genetic makeup of the bacteria. It is essential for tailoring effective treatment regimens and managing the spread of resistant strains.

The absence of comprehensive policies and structured protocols has been a challenge. Improved governance would enhance the implementation of standardized protocols, ensure adequate resources for isolation and ultimately contribute to more effective management and containment of TB.

Despite facing various challenges inherent to being a border County, the region has actively collaborated with multiple partners to address and manage TB. In 2021 the County was ranked top 19 according to the National Tuberculosis, Leprosy and Lung Disease Program scorecard used to rank and evaluate TB in the Counties.

The program assessed the County based on the successful completion of the following requirements;

1. The number of TB cases diagnosed and documented in healthcare facilities.
2. Evaluation of diagnostic tests.
3. Transmission rate index.
4. Number of screened patients who have received medication.
5. Number of patients who have successfully completed treatment.
6. The program monitors TB patient contacts by tracking individuals receiving preventive therapy, those undergoing continuous treatment, patients quarantined at home with health workers delivering medication and those on treatment but traveling to Uganda to ensure they can access their medication.

Implementation of the practice

- In 2004, the County Government of Trans Nzoia partnered with AMPATH to enhance drug delivery and facilitate the collection of sputum samples via motorbikes from patients' homes to hospitals. This initiative specifically targeted TB patients who had already been diagnosed, screened and undergoing treatment. The treatment process involves conducting six sputum tests to monitor the presence of tuberculosis and for the patient to be declared cured.
- In 2020, Trans Nzoia County, in partnership with World Vision, conducted outreach programs to provide TB testing and treatment services in areas along the Kenya-Uganda border.
- In 2021, Amref in partnership with the County, implemented the Directly Observed Treatment (DOT) method by assigning dedicated healthcare officers to visit the homes of patients with drug-resistant TB. These patients, quarantined at home are provided with food and isolated to prevent the spread of the disease.
- The National Tuberculosis, Leprosy, and Lung Disease Program convenes all national TB coordinators hold quarterly meetings. During these sessions, challenges are identified, solutions are proposed and peer-to-peer exchanges take place to foster collaboration and improvement in TB management.
- A key challenge raised by border counties was the cross-border transmission of TB at various entry points, including dry borders like Busia, wet borders such as those near Lake Victoria, and pastoralist entry routes. Counties at these points, including Trans Nzoia, which hosts the Endebess border, submitted proposals to the National Tuberculosis, Leprosy, and Lung Disease Program which committed to address these concerns.



Despite being a border county facing cross-border health challenges, Trans Nzoia has demonstrated that strong partnerships, community outreach, and structured follow-up systems are essential in the fight against TB—proving that effective governance and collaborative action can turn constraints into progress.

- The NTLD-P strengthened the proposals and submitted them to the Tuberculosis Implementation Framework Agreement (TIFA), a USAID-supported project. TIFA facilitates TB-focused grants aimed at enhancing National TB Programs, empowering them to effectively manage their national responses and accelerate progress toward the elimination of TB.
- In 2023, the proposal was approved, and implementation began in 2024. The solutions included organizing meetings between the Ugandan and Kenyan sides, starting in Tororo, Uganda and later in Eldoret Kenya. These meetings brought together health directors to exchange knowledge and identify key challenges hindering TB elimination. A major issue highlighted was the difference in treatment regimens, with Kenya offering a 9-month regimen, while Uganda following an 18-month regimen.



Trans Nzoia County officials holding a strategic plan to end TB

- To integrate governance into TB management, the County established a technical working group comprising sub-county TB coordinators who identify treatment and prevention challenges and develop solutions. Additionally, the County organizes continuous sensitization forums where a cohort of TB patients undergoing treatment for drug-resistant strains is provided with food incentives and training on the importance of completing their full treatment regimen.

Results of the practice

- Improved Governance and Coordination: Strengthened oversight and collaboration through the technical working group has facilitated more effective decision-making and streamlined efforts in addressing TB treatment and prevention challenges. This has led to a more coordinated approach across sub-county health teams, improving the overall management of TB cases
- Increased Treatment Adherence: The provision of food incentives and educational programs for drug-resistant TB patients has led to higher rates of treatment completion.
- Reduced TB Transmission: Better patient management, including home-based care for drug-resistant TB patients, has contributed to a reduction in TB transmission within communities.
- Improved Cross-Border Collaboration: Engagement between Kenya and Uganda has fostered cooperation in addressing cross-border TB transmission, despite differences in treatment regimens.



The Trans Nzoia TB initiative illustrates the power of integrated governance, cross-border collaboration, and patient-centered care in combating tuberculosis. By aligning local action with international support, the County is not only improving treatment outcomes but also setting a precedent for coordinated health responses in border regions.

- **Enhanced Diagnostic Capacity:** Efforts to expand testing and monitoring of TB patients, especially in border areas, have improved early detection and timely treatment of drug-resistant TB cases.

Lessons learnt:

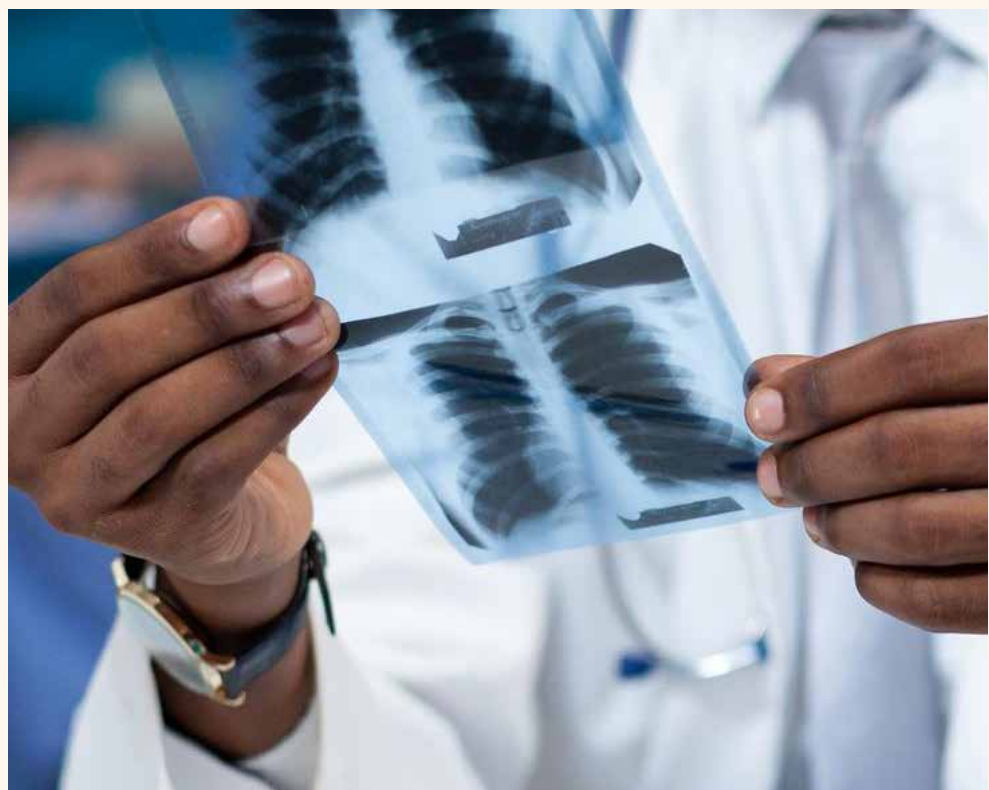
- The scarcity of genotyping and diagnostic testing sites hinders rapid identification of drug-resistant TB strains, therefore, there is a need for expanding diagnostic capacity.
- Offering home-based treatment with dedicated healthcare workers for drug-resistant TB patients helps prevent disease spread and ensures consistent medication delivery.
- Effective TB control in border regions requires cooperation between neighboring countries to address differences in treatment protocols and enhance disease management across borders.
- Providing food incentives and education to TB patients, especially those with drug-resistant strains, plays a crucial role in encouraging adherence to treatment regimens.

Conclusion

The implementation of governance-driven strategies and cross-border collaboration in Trans Nzoia County has demonstrated significant progress in the fight against tuberculosis (TB), particularly in managing drug-resistant strains. Through the establishment of a technical working group, improved coordination and oversight have strengthened the County's ability to address TB challenges more effectively. Further, cross-border engagement with Uganda has been crucial in addressing regional disparities in treatment protocols, advancing efforts to control TB transmission across borders. These efforts mark a critical step towards TB elimination, highlighting the importance of sustained collaboration, resource allocation and patient-centered approaches.



Trans Nzoia County's experience underscores that eliminating TB—especially drug-resistant strains—requires more than medicine; it demands governance, cross-border collaboration, and patient-centered care. When systems work together and patients are supported holistically, true progress becomes possible.





2



LAND, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT



Transforming Arid Lands into Lush Landscapes through the Greening Mandera Municipality Initiative

Mandera County has long faced significant environmental and socio-economic challenges, suffering from deforestation, desertification, and severe soil erosion that reduce agricultural productivity and biodiversity. Climate change has intensified these issues, bringing hotter temperatures and unpredictable rainfall patterns that disrupt local livelihoods and natural resources. Many residents, particularly women and youth across Mandera County, struggle with limited access to education, employment, and sustainable livelihoods, perpetuating a cycle of poverty. Gender inequality is prevalent, with vulnerable women, including widows, divorcees, and single mothers, often having fewer opportunities for income generation and social empowerment.



The Mandera Green Initiative proves that environmental restoration can go hand in hand with community empowerment. By transforming arid landscapes and planting over 500,000 trees, Mandera County is not just fighting climate change—it's creating a greener, more hopeful future for its people.



A photo showcasing the Mandera Greening Program in action

In response to these challenges, the Mandera Municipality Green Initiative was launched in 2014 as a pivotal project within Mandera County's broader environmental strategy. With the full support of the County Government, this ambitious project specifically targeted the urban centers of Mandera and Elwak municipalities, aiming to combat climate change, environmental degradation, and socio-economic challenges faced by the local community. Key partners in the Greening Program include Equity Bank, KCB Bank, National Bank, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), and the County Departments of Environment and Climate Change. The County Government has been instrumental, allocating a substantial budget of KES 200 million annually to support the initiative's activities. These organizations provided crucial funding, logistical support, and technical expertise to drive the project forward.

The Greening Program is designed to enhance environmental sustainability across the County, with a particular focus on the municipality's urban areas. By increasing green cover, improving air quality, and combating desertification and soil erosion, the initiative has transformed arid landscapes. Over 500,000 trees have been planted, significantly improving air quality, reducing soil erosion, and combating desertification. The program has also beautified urban areas, creating natural boundaries for road reserves and promoting ecological balance throughout the County.

A critical aspect of the initiative has been its focus on community empowerment. The program has created stable income opportunities for over 1,500 residents across the County, with a particular emphasis on widows, divorcees, single mothers, and the youth. By providing training in tree planting, maintenance, and horticulture, the program has enabled residents to acquire valuable skills and earn sustainable incomes.

The journey was not without challenges. The municipality faced significant obstacles including water scarcity, resistance to change, and a lack of technical skills among some community members. To address these challenges, the program introduced several innovative solutions:

- Introduction of drought-resistant plant species.
- Promotion of water-saving techniques like mulching and water trucking.
- Continuous community sensitization and engagement with local leaders.

The Mandera Green Initiative's success has been recognized globally, with the County winning the prestigious International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) World Green City Awards 2024. This accolade highlights the power of local initiatives in addressing global challenges and reinforces the County's standing as a leader in environmental conservation and sustainable urban development.

Garissa County Government Leads the Way in Kamuthe's Transition from Trust Land to Community Ownership

Introduction:

Located approximately 40 kilometres southeast of Garissa town along the Garissa-Lamu Road, Kamuthe is a thriving community of pastoralists and farmers, with a population of 8,661. Situated within Garissa County, this community has, for generations, resided on land that, legally, was not recognized as their own. Under the colonial-era trust land arrangement, the local government held the land on their behalf, which significantly limited their authority over their ancestral territory and hindered their development opportunities.

The Constitution of Kenya 2010, specifically Article 63, which recognizes community land as a distinct form of ownership, defines community land to include land held under customary law, ancestral lands, land lawfully registered in the name of group representatives, and any other land identified as community land by legislation.

In 2021, the community embarked on a transformative journey to secure their land rights under the Community Land Act of 2016. Their vision was to transition from trust land to community land, giving them true ownership and control over their heritage. The Community land Act provides a legal framework for community participation in decision-making processes regarding land use, ensuring that the land is used sustainably for agriculture, grazing, conservation, and other development purposes, while also safeguarding the interests of current and future generations.

Before embarking on the registration process, Kamuthe residents faced a series of interconnected challenges that threatened their way of life and relationship with their ancestral lands. Uncontrolled migration and encroachment steadily eroded their territorial boundaries, while valuable natural resources, including medicinal plants with deep cultural significance, suffered from inadequate preservation efforts. The absence of formal land



The journey of Kamuthe is a testament to the power of legal recognition in restoring dignity, protecting heritage, and empowering communities. By securing their ancestral land under the Community Land Act, the people of Kamuthe have reclaimed not just territory, but their future.

security left the community vulnerable, creating an environment where external actors could exploit their resources with impunity.

The community existed in a state of information asymmetry regarding potential compensation for resource extraction, effectively excluding them from economic benefits derived from their own land. Meanwhile, outsiders conducted illegal mining operations that damaged the landscape, and private investors from distant regions engaged in systematic land grabbing that diminished the community's holdings. These pressures were exacerbated by recurring conflicts over increasingly scarce water and pasture resources, creating cycles of tension that threatened community cohesion and sustainability.

Implementation of the practice (Solution Path):



A photo of rare Zebras located at Kamuthe Wildlife Conservancy



Kamuthe's journey from marginalization to legal empowerment proves that when communities are informed, united, and supported, they can reclaim their land, protect their heritage, and shape their own destiny.

The journey toward land security began with community organization. Kamuthe established the Kamuthe Wildlife Conservancy as a Community-Based Organization (CBO), gaining recognition from the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA). This provided them access to technical expertise in conservation and connected them to a nationwide network of similar communities. They also formed a Community Land Management Committee (CMLC) encompassing 15 members including 4 women, 2 youths, 1 PWDs, 1 religious leader, to lead the registration process.

In July 2022, the interim Community Management Committee formally requested the Garissa Land Registrar to recognize Kamuthe residents as a community. This was followed by a request to register their land in March 2023.

On March 14, 2023, the Community Land Registrar awarded the elected committee with a certificate of registration, making history as Kenya's first trust land to transition under the new Act.

The registration process was comprehensive but structured:

- The community created a complete register of all members
- They compiled a detailed inventory of community land
- A sixty-day notice was issued for surveying, demarcation, and registration
- They conducted thorough adjudication to resolve any potential disputes
- Cadastral maps were forwarded to the registrar in July 2023



Kamuthe Community Land Management Committee members during the issuance of the Certificate of Registration



Certificate of registration of Kamuthe Community

Throughout this process, community unity proved essential. Where relationships were unclear or disputed, community elders drew upon generations of knowledge to trace family lineages and resolve uncertainties. This shared history and mutual recognition strengthened their application.

The County Government of Garissa provided technical support and coordination, while the Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC) and the Drylands Learning and Capacity Building Initiative (DLCI) offered both financial and technical assistance during the registration of Kamuthe Community Land. The National Government, through the Ministry of Lands and the National Land Commission, ensured legal compliance. International partners, including FAO, KWCA (with USAID support), and Community Land Action Now, contributed crucial expertise, advocacy, and resources.

Results of the practice (outputs and outcomes)-

With formal registration complete, Kamuthe now enjoys full rights to manage approximately 153,494 hectares of land. This transformation has yielded numerous tangible benefits:

- The community now has secure land rights with recognized ownership and clear boundaries. This enhanced stability has encouraged long-term investments and prevented land disputes, fostering both economic and social development.
- A stronger sense of cohesion has emerged among community members. They share information more freely and collaborate in decision-making. The 15-member committee includes representation from women, youth, persons with disabilities, and religious leaders, ensuring diverse perspectives inform governance.
- The community developed a land use plan with support from USAID through KWCA. They have divided their territory with purpose, creating separate areas for grazing, settlement, and conservation, each with its own title deed. This integrated approach balances farming, conservation, and pastoralism needs.
- New pathways for sustainable livelihoods have emerged, including potential carbon credit programs and mining projects. The community has hired and trained 12 local rangers who receive stipends for protecting the land and its resources.
- A wildlife conservancy management plan is being developed with support from FAO, awaiting validation from Kenya Wildlife Service. This plan will guide conservation efforts while supporting eco-tourism initiatives that benefit the community.



With secure land rights and a united vision, Kamuthe has transformed its ancestral territory into a foundation for resilience, conservation, and inclusive prosperity—proving that empowered communities are powerful agents of sustainable change.

- The community has initiated follow-up with the National Land Commission (NLC) to ensure compensation for land acquired by the LAPPSET infrastructure project, demonstrating how formal registration strengthens their negotiating position.

Lessons learnt:

- The County Government's support proved crucial in ensuring the success of Community Land by providing interventions and support at various stages of the process, including sensitization, awareness creation, and dispute resolution.
- Fast-tracking community land registration effectively addresses land disputes, insecurity, and inter-community conflicts by clarifying boundaries and ownership.
- Registration enables better planning for a County in matters of social services and infrastructure development in communities.
- Intergovernmental collaboration is critical in fast-tracking the registration of community land in Kenya. This includes the County Government and the Ministries and Agencies of the National Government.
- Ensuring all community members are aware and represented makes the process smoother. Kamuthe achieved this by including representatives from two sub-locations within Kamuthe Location in their management committee.
- Including women in the CLMC has empowered women generally, helping bridge cultural practices and gender divides while promoting inclusive decision-making.



Fast-tracking community land registration effectively addresses land disputes, insecurity, and inter-community conflicts by clarifying boundaries and ownership.

Recommendations:

- Inter-county coordination is essential in planning and registering community land that spans multiple counties to prevent partial registration. Collaboration ensures comprehensive land registration, avoids boundary disputes, and secures the community's land rights across all counties involved, while enabling consistent land management and legal protection.
- County Governments should fast-track the approval of community land use plans to ensure timely implementation of sustainable management practices, allowing communities to address urgent needs and prevent conflicts.
- Continued training and support for Community Land Management Committees is crucial for effective governance and sustainable resource management.
- Communities should establish clear procedures for resolving internal conflicts and boundary disputes with neighbouring communities.
- Given the challenges posed by climate change, communities need support to develop adaptive strategies that protect both livelihoods and conservation efforts.
- There is need to establish platforms for registered communities to share experiences and best practices in order to accelerate the learning curve for communities still in the registration process.

Further Reading:

- Community Land Act (2016), Government of Kenya
- Land Use Planning Guidelines for Community Lands, Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning

Photos taken during community sensitization forums





Registration of Kamuthe residents



Registration of Kamuthe residents



A photo of Tana River

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**MINISTRY OF LANDS, PUBLIC WORKS
HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

NOTICE OF A MEETING

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF
KAMUTHE COMMUNITY**

In exercise of the powers conferred to me by section 7(2) of the Community Land Act, 2016. NOTICE is hereby given that there shall be a public meeting of **ALL KAMUTHE COMMUNITY** members to elect the Community Land Management Committee members in accordance with the Act.

The above meeting will be held on **7th March 2023** from **11:00 a.m. at Kamuthe Trading centre.**

Dated at Garissa Lands Office this **15th day of Feb, 2023**

PHILIP M. MENGI
LAND REGISTRAR
GARISSA COUNTY/COMMUNITY LAND REGISTRATION UNIT


Funded by Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC)

Notice of a meeting to Kamuthe Community to elect committee leadership

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF LANDS AND PHYSICAL PLANNING

(r. 3(1))



APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF INTEREST/ CLAIM ON COMMUNITY LAND

To The Registrar of **GARISSA**

We the **KAMUTHE** community, hereby apply for recognition of our interest/claim in the community land referred to herein.

Our interest/ claim are as shown in the attached sketch diagrams /maps/plans and described in the Schedule

Schedule

S.No.	Locality	Approx. Area (Ha)	Current Use of the land.
	KAMUTHE		conservation grazing land Agriculture and

Details of the Applicant(s)

Name of Persons/Group/Community: **KAMUTHE**

Registration No.: **P.O. BOX 304 - 70100**

Postal/Email Address: **22223123**

Tel. No.: **Kamuthe 204**

Dated at **Kamuthe 204** day of **JULY 2022**

Signature of Chairperson

For Official Use Only:-

Signed _____

Registrar _____

Application of recognition of interest/claim on community land by Kamuthe community

Meru County adopts the Do-nou Technology in a bid to Transform Roads and Empower its Communities

Introduction

Road infrastructure serves as the backbone of economic development, connecting communities to essential services and unlocking opportunities for trade, education, and healthcare. In Kenya, the strategic development and maintenance of road networks has become a critical priority at both National and County levels, with transformative impacts emerging in previously underserved regions.

The Kenyan road network falls under a dual management structure. The National Government, through agencies like the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) and the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA), maintains major highways, international corridors, and strategic national routes that facilitate regional commerce and regional connectivity.

At the County level, devolved units assume responsibility for urban and rural access roads that serve as crucial links between communities and local economic centers. This decentralized approach has empowered Counties to address infrastructure needs with greater responsiveness to local priorities.

In Meru County, road infrastructure has faced significant challenges despite the region's agricultural potential and economic vibrancy. Many urban settlements and productive rural areas have remained underserved by quality road networks, limiting access to markets and essential services. Residents have contended with impassable roads during rainy seasons, excessive dust during dry periods, and extended travel times that affect productivity and quality of life.

The deteriorated condition of roads in urban areas like Majengo and Mjini has particularly hindered economic activities, with small businesses struggling to receive supplies and customers facing difficulties accessing commercial centers. Additionally, poor road conditions have compromised safety for pedestrians and motorists alike.

In addition to infrastructure challenges, the County faces significant unemployment issues, particularly among youth, women and People living With Disabilities. Limited economic opportunities have contributed to poverty and underutilized human resources, making innovative approaches that simultaneously address infrastructure and employment particularly valuable for the region.

Implementation of the practice (Solution Path):

In response to these challenges, the County Government of Meru embarked on a groundbreaking initiative funded by the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) and administered by the World Bank (WB). This Recipient-executed Small-scale Trust Fund project, implemented by Community Road Empowerment (CORE), introduces an innovative approach to addressing rural road infrastructure.

The Project development objective is twofold: to create employment opportunities and develop skills in labor-based road maintenance using the innovative **Do-nou technology**, and to improve basic access for the target population in the previously underserved urban communities of Majengo, Mjini, and Gitimbine in Meru Town.



Road infrastructure serves as the backbone of economic development, connecting communities to essential services and unlocking opportunities for trade, education, and healthcare.

The County specifically focused on community-driven development to create lasting impact. The solution not only improves road infrastructure but also builds local capacity through skills transfer and enterprise development. By selecting the Do-nou technology, Meru County emphasized sustainable, locally-implemented solutions that transform both physical infrastructure and economic opportunities for residents, particularly youth and women.



By selecting the Do-nou technology, Meru County emphasized sustainable, locally-implemented solutions that transform both physical infrastructure and economic opportunities for residents, particularly youth and women.



A photo of 'Do-nou' arranged in grid patterns awaiting topping with appropriate surfacing material

The Do-nou Technology: How it works

This technique involves packing locally available materials into gunny bags to create a stable foundation for rural roads. These soil-filled bags follow specific preparation steps:



One of the youth's beneficiaries showcasing the preparation of a gunny bag

Preparation of Soil and Bags:

- Local soil with the appropriate composition is selected and prepared.
- Each gunny bag is filled with precisely measured quantities of soil.
- Bags are securely tied to prevent spillage during installation.

1. Arrangement and Compaction:

- These packed bags (called ‘Do-nou’ in Japanese, meaning ‘soil bag’) are carefully arranged in grid patterns.
- The arranged bags are firmly compacted to form a sturdy base layer.

2. Installation and Surfacing:

- Once properly installed, this foundation effectively distributes vehicle weight, prevents soil erosion, and maintains structural integrity even during adverse weather conditions.
- The Do-nou base is then topped with appropriate surfacing material, resulting in roads that remain accessible year-round while requiring minimal specialized equipment for construction and maintenance.



A completed road section maintained using “Do-nou” technology

The method was chosen for several compelling reasons:

1. It utilizes locally available materials, reducing costs and environmental impact.
2. It creates employment opportunities for local community members
3. It is particularly effective on compact soil conditions prevalent in the region. It creates more durable road surfaces compared to traditional methods at the same cost

The project employs a distinctive 40-day timeframe per road section, minimizing community disruption while maintaining quality. Workers receive compensation following World Bank guidelines, enhancing commitment and productivity. A gender-inclusive approach ensures women’s meaningful participation throughout all project phases.

The initiative has rehabilitated 27 kilometers of road at a cost of KES 70 million (approximately KES 2.5-4 million per kilometer). Roads improved include Chief’s Camp-Karu Rd 40, Gathima-Tosha Rd 16/17, and Mate-Kirige-Nchaure Rd 32. All construction follows Ministry of Roads and Transport specifications while incorporating innovative local methods.



The Do-nou technology not only delivers durable, cost-effective roads using local materials, but also empowers communities through job creation, skills development, and inclusive participation—especially among women and youth.



This project exemplifies the power of inclusive infrastructure—where community-driven development, strategic government collaboration, and skills training converge to not only improve roads, but transform livelihoods for youth, women, and marginalized groups.

The project's success relies on collaboration between the Government of Kenya, Ministry of Roads and Transport, Kenya Urban Roads Authority, Kenya Roads Board, and Meru County Government. These entities provide technical and advisory support through a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

Meru County's contributions include strategic road selection based on local priorities, clearing road corridors, providing technical guidance aligned with development plans, and facilitating community engagement for project acceptance and sustainability.

Beneficiary Selection Process

The selection of project beneficiaries was conducted through a transparent public participation process. Information posters were displayed in the target communities inviting participation, with priority given to people living in the surrounding areas where the project is being implemented.

The target communities were selected through a series of consultations with the Meru County Government, considering several factors aligned with JSDF criteria:

1. Potential to enhance the impact of the Eastern and Western Meru Bypass roads financed by World Bank on local beneficiaries by improving community access to the newly constructed roads.
2. Presence of low-income and marginalized/vulnerable groups (specifically, single-headed households and households with unemployed or underemployed adults and youth).
3. Communities whose livelihoods are affected by limited road access due to reliance on unclassified and poor-condition access roads, which are not supported by any World Bank-financed project or program.

The project targeted 50 groups, each composed of 25 people, prioritizing youth, women, and other vulnerable groups, with the aim of improving their livelihoods. In total, 1,250 people directly benefited from on-the-job training and employment opportunities using Do-nou technology.

The project was structured around three interconnected components designed to maximize impact and sustainability. Component 1 focused on capacity building through community mobilization, targeted training, and institutional support to Meru County to ensure sustainable adoption of labor-based road maintenance technology. Component 2 centered on enhancing livelihood opportunities through the formation of Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) and providing them with essential technical and financial support. Component 3 encompassed project management, rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and strategic knowledge dissemination to document and share best practices with other stakeholders.

The project aims to improve 26 km of access roads connecting the 23 km Eastern and Western Bypasses. Officially launched on 27th April 2022, in Meru, the project is scheduled to conclude on 30th June 2025.

Results of the practice (outputs and outcomes)-

The project has achieved significant milestones across several dimensions:

Skills Development and Enterprise Formation

- 50 community groups have been formed and registered as Small and Micro-Enterprises (SMEs).

- 100 selected individuals (2 from each SME) have undergone intensive 6-week training by Kenya Institute of Highways and Building Technology (KIHBT) in Meru.
- As part of the Roads 2000 Program, the Ministry of Roads and Transport has supported these 100 people to undergo Labor-Based contractor and Do-nou technology training implemented by KIHBT.
- 33 SMEs have acquired Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) certification.
- 22 SMEs have obtained National Construction Authority (NCA) certificates, enabling them to tender for contracts at County and National Government levels.

Infrastructure Development

- 19.38 kilometers of roads rehabilitated using Do-nou technology and standard graveling with murrum/gravel material.
- Additional 7.4 kilometers planned, bringing the total to 26.78 kilometers upon completion.
- Strategic culvert installation and drainage alignments implemented in collaboration with the County and Kenya Urban Road Authority.

Challenges Encountered

Despite its successes, the project has faced several notable challenges:

1. Prioritization of Road Sections: Each community feels it should be considered first, creating difficulties in establishing a fair and acceptable order of implementation.
2. Beneficiary Selection Constraints: The project's focus on youth employment sometimes excludes older community members who could contribute effectively. Additionally, the limited number of positions available has been insufficient to meet the high demand from interested community members.
3. Topographical Challenges: The varied terrain in Meru County has presented technical difficulties for road construction and increased costs in certain areas.
4. Resource Limitations: Specific requests from homeowners, such as concrete construction at drainage points near residential entrances, have created additional resource demands beyond the planned budget.

Lessons learnt:

1. Establishing clear Memoranda of Understanding with project partners and stakeholders is essential for effective collaboration and role clarity.
2. There needs to be a detailed scope of what public participation entails, including guidelines on the expected number of participants and what constitutes adequate community involvement.
3. The Do-nou technology's labor-intensive nature not only addresses infrastructure needs but also creates employment and builds skills within the community.
4. The involvement of National agencies, County Government, and international partners provided comprehensive technical, financial, and advisory support crucial for project implementation.
5. By aligning with established programs like Roads 2000 and leveraging existing institutions like KIHBT, the project enhanced sustainability and institutional support.
6. The formation of SMEs and their certification with AGPO and NCA ensures continued income opportunities beyond the project lifecycle.



By blending innovation with inclusivity, the project not only rehabilitated nearly 20 kilometers of rural roads using Do-nou technology, but also empowered local youth and women through hands-on training, SME formation, and nationally recognized certifications—laying a foundation for sustainable livelihoods and resilient infrastructure.

7. The focus on underserved communities and marginalized groups has helped address inequities in infrastructure development and economic opportunity.
8. The year-by-year approach to training and road rehabilitation has enabled the project to refine methods and address challenges progressively.

Recommendation:

1. Scale the successful Do-nou Technology implementation from Meru to other underserved regions throughout Kenya.
2. Create dedicated budget lines within road maintenance funds to ensure sustained support for community-based infrastructure approaches.
3. Incorporate Do-nou Technology into technical training institution curricula to build a larger pool of skilled practitioners nationwide.
4. Develop government procurement guidelines that give preference to local SMEs for maintenance of community access roads.
5. Establish a mentorship program where experienced contractors provide guidance to emerging SMEs on technical and business management capabilities.
6. Implement a regular monitoring framework to track road conditions, economic activities, and livelihood improvements for quantifying long-term benefits.



Scaling the Do-nou Technology across Kenya means more than building roads—it's about embedding community resilience into national infrastructure. With the right policies, training, and support for local SMEs, we can transform rural access while creating livelihoods and sustainable enterprise.



Photos of; a) Chief's Camp -Karu Rd 40, b) Gathima-Tosha Rd 16/17 and c) Mate-Kirige-Nchaure Rd 32

Before

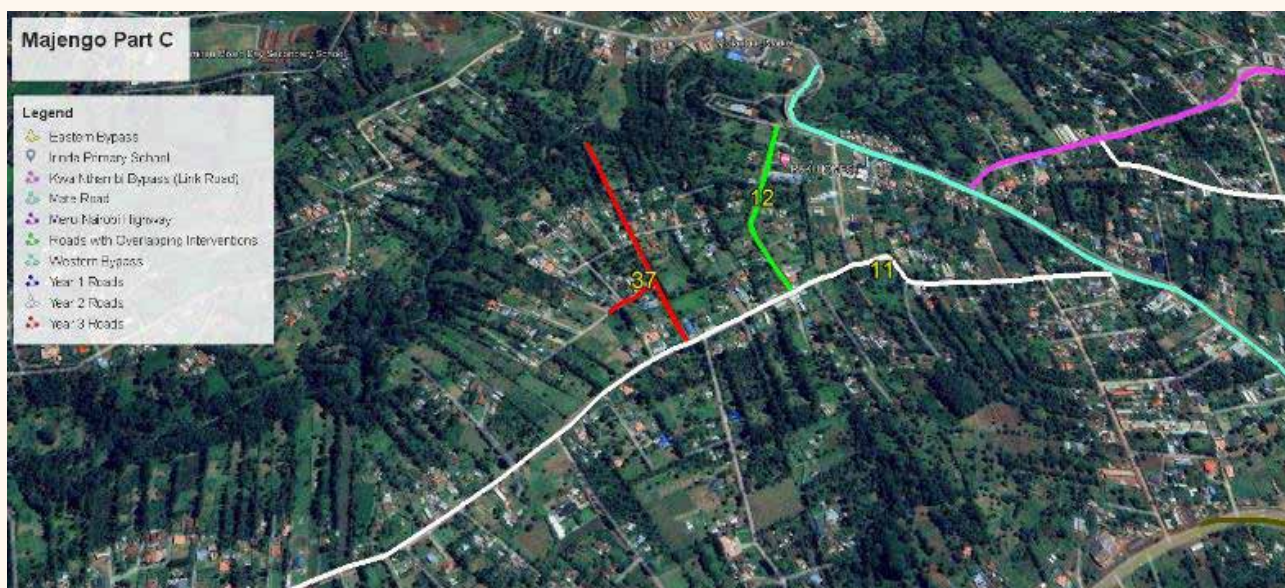


During

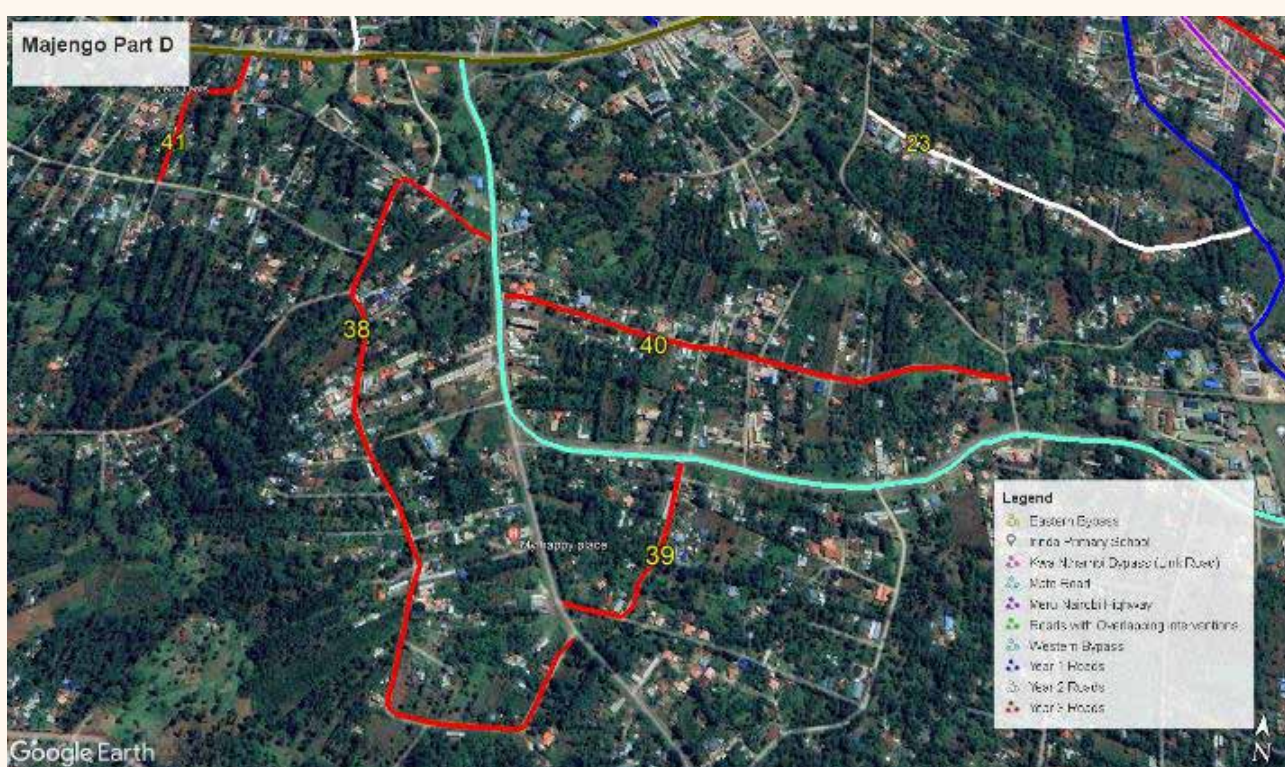


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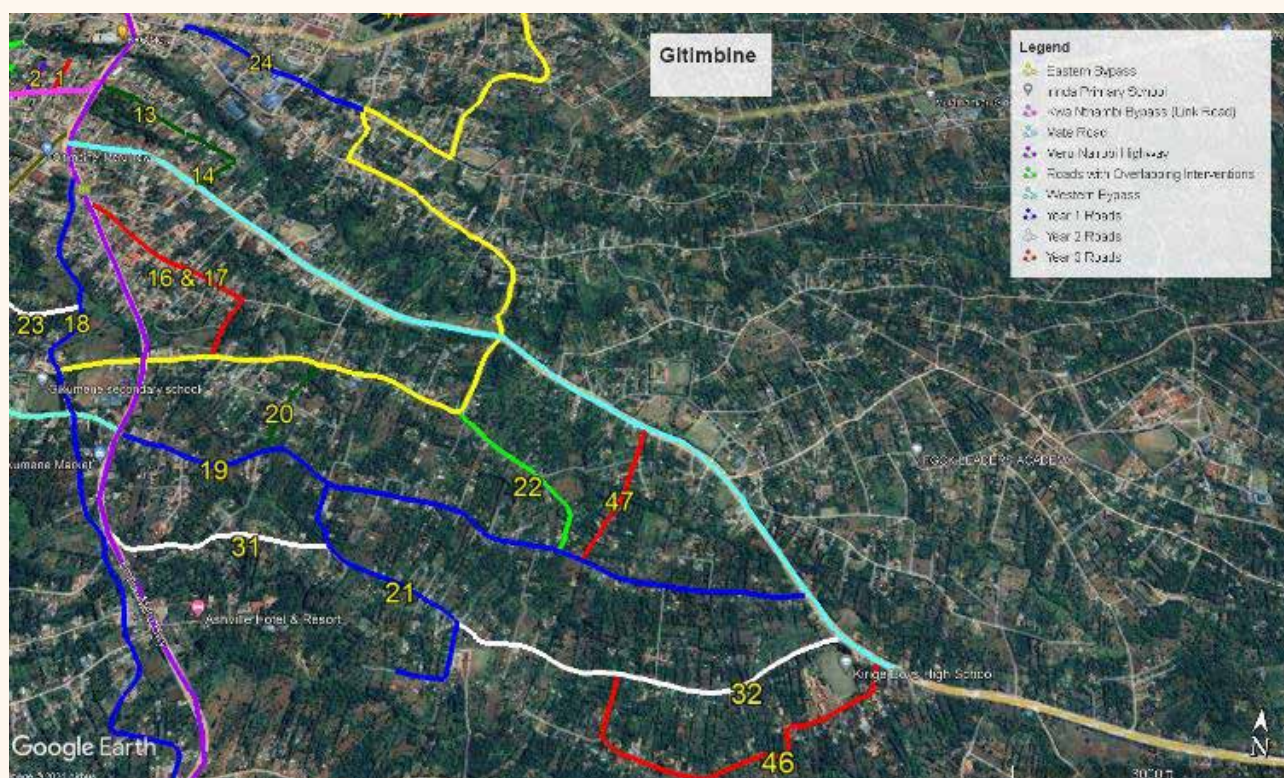




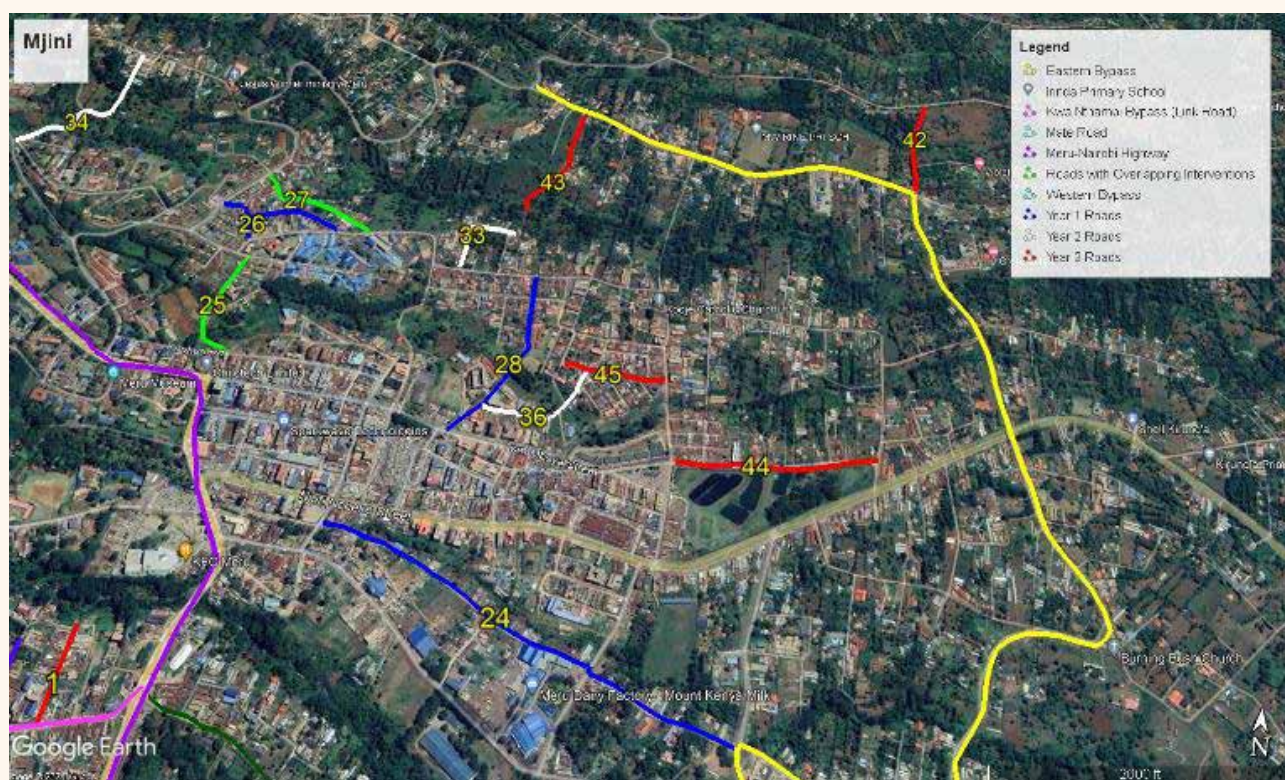
ROAD NUMBER	ROAD NAME	ROAD LENGTH
11	Kimanya-Ngurumo Kainyinginyo Road	1.6km
12	Calvary-Ngurumo Road	0.4km
37	Full – Gospel Kabii Road	0.3km



ROAD NUMBER	ROAD NAME	ROAD LENGTH
38	Bypass-M'karama Road	0.2km
39	Karingene-Bypass	0.3km
40	Chief's Camp -Karu Road	0.8km
41	Karingene Dispensary-Gachiege Road	1.2km



ROAD NUMBER	ROAD NAME	LENGTH	ROAD NUMBER	ROAD NAME	LENGTH
13	Mwiraria-Mate Road	1.0km	20	Nkungi-Bypass Road	0.5km
14	Mwiraria-Mate-Kanyuru Road	0.4km	21	Nchaure-Maigene-Assistant Chief Road	1.2km
15	Bravo- Mate Road	0.35km	22	Eastern Bypass-Kathare- Nchaure	0.9km
16 & 17	Mate-Gathima-Tosha	1.3km	23	Gikumene-Kaguru Road	1.4km
18	Camflames-Gikumene-Kwa Daudi	2.9km	31	Tungi Road	0.9km
19	Gikumene-Kwa Mbogori-Nchaure-Muringo-Obugi Road	2.60km	32	Mate-Kirige-Nchaure Road	1.45km
46	Karingene-Muringo bugi pry school	1.2km	47	Kathare Kwa Phillip Road	1.0km



ROAD NUMBER	ROAD NAME	ROAD LENGTH	ROAD NUMBER	ROAD NAME	ROAD LENGTH
24	Meru –Dairy Backstreet Kailanya Road	1.6km	34	Marua-Cathedral Road	0.65km
25	Hospital Road-CBK Road	0.4km	42	Mwirine-Chugu Road	0.2km
26	Ruaraka-Mjini-Floodlight	0.3km	43	Koje-Society Road II	0.45km
27	Mortuary –Mjini Social Hall Bypass Road	0.35km	44	Juakali – Mewass Road	0.4km
28	Koje-Full Gospel Road	0.40km	45	Koje-Shauri Road	0.25km
33	Koje-Society Road	0.28km			

Murang'a County Unveils Smart City Programme to enhance Urban Mobility and Connectivity

Introduction

Murang'a County's road network spans an impressive 5,053 km, with the County managing 3,006 km, yet only 21% of it is paved. This means that for many residents, rainy seasons bring impassable roads, while dry spells kick up dust that poses serious health risks.

Abreast of these challenges, particularly in urban areas, the County is transforming its urban landscape with the Smart City Programme, a game-changer for mobility, connectivity, and economic growth.



Murang'a County Road

Through the Smart City Programme, the County is enabling seamless transport, thriving businesses, and a more inclusive, accessible future for all by upgrading roads and drainage across key urban areas.

Implementation of the practice

In 2022, Murang'a County set out on an ambitious plan to redefine its urban areas with the Smart City Programme. The initiative aims to construct 40 km of paved roads by 2026/27 at a cost of Ksh. 1 billion. To initiate this transformation, the County allocated Ksh. 175 million in FY 22/23 and Ksh. 150 million in FY 23/24. Since inception of the programme, the County has constructed 7Km of paved road annually.



Through the Smart City Programme, Murang'a County is redefining urban mobility and economic growth by investing in paved roads and drainage. With only 21% of the 3,006 km county-managed road network currently paved, this Ksh. 1 billion initiative is a bold step toward inclusive, accessible, and resilient cities. By 2026/27, we aim to deliver 40 km of paved roads—unlocking opportunity, improving health, and connecting communities, one kilometer at a time.



With 14 towns already benefiting from the Smart City Programme, Murang'a County is driving inclusive growth through innovation in road construction. By embracing Low Volume Seal Road (LVSR) technology, we're building cost-effective, durable roads tailored to local terrain and traffic needs. This transformative investment is not just about roads—it's about connecting communities, enhancing access to services, and unlocking economic potential across every constituency.



Ongoing construction of road in Kabati town

As of February 2024, 14 towns in Murang'a County have benefited under the initiative. These towns include:

1. Maragua in Maragua Constituency.
2. Gatura in Gatanga Constituency.
3. Kabati in Kandara Constituency.
4. Kangari in Kigumo Constituency.
5. Murang'a Town in Kiharu Constituency.
6. Kangema in Kangema Constituency.
7. Kiriaini in Mathioya Constituency.
8. Kahatia in Kiharu Constituency.
9. Kaguku in Gatanga Constituency.
10. Gacharage in Kandara Constituency.
11. Kanyenyaini in Kangema Constituency.
12. Zebka and Kenol Town in Maragua Constituency.
13. Kamune (ongoing) in Mathioya Constituency.
14. Cabros Murang'a Town in Kiharu Constituency

Private contractors have been engaged through open tendering to actualize the County's vision of smart cities. The County employed innovative road construction technologies tailored to local terrain. A key approach is the Low Volume Seal Road (LVSR) technology, a cost-effective bitumen standard technology adapted from the National Government's Road 2000 Strategy for sealing gravel roads in rural areas.

LVSRs are designed to carry low traffic of about 200 vehicles per day and are unlikely to reach design traffic loading exceeding one million cumulative standard axles over a 20-year period (Department for International Development, 2006). In contrast, high volume traffic roads carry traffic of over 1000 vehicles per day (Ministry of Roads and Transport, 2023).

LVSR technology enables development of road with low traffic to be economically justifiable (SATCC, 2003). Their construction cost is relatively low compared to conventional roads as they are constructed using locally

available materials, they follow the existing alignment with provisions for non-motorized transport and adopt low-cost road safety measures (Pinard et al., 2015). Additionally, LVSR use surface dressing where a thin layer of bitumen is sprayed onto road surface followed by a layer of stone chipping as opposed to asphalt concrete that is used in standard roads. The photo below shows a typical LVSR constructed in Murang'a.

Other methods, including cabro and concrete paving, are also being deployed to enhance resilience and longevity.



Concrete road in Mjini, Murang'a



Cabro Road in Gatura, Murang'a



By leveraging Low Volume Seal Road (LVSR) technology, Murang'a County is proving that even roads with lower traffic volumes can be developed economically and sustainably. Using locally available materials, surface dressing techniques, and low-cost safety designs, LVSRs offer a cost-effective alternative to conventional asphalt roads. Combined with other resilient methods like cabro and concrete paving, this approach is redefining rural and urban mobility, enhancing accessibility, and fostering economic transformation across the County.



The Smart City Programme is not just about roads—it's about transforming lives. With over 118,000 urban residents now benefitting from paved roads, Murang'a County has seen tangible improvements in mobility, economic activity, access to essential services, and environmental health. These all-weather roads connect people to opportunities, industries to markets, and communities to better healthcare and education—paving the way for inclusive, sustainable development.

Results of the Practice

Construction of paved roads has benefitted over 118,000 residents in the urban areas (KNBS, 2019). Key benefits include of the smart city programme include:

1. **Improved mobility:** Paved roads have facilitated smooth and efficient transport in all the urban areas by reducing travel time and vehicle wear & tear. The roads are all weather and ensure that people and goods can move quickly and reliably even during adverse weather conditions.
2. **Economic Growth:** Paved roads promote trade by connecting producers to market. Additionally, they attract investment in industries. For example, the newly constructed Kabati Road links the County Industrial park to the main road.
3. **Access to Social Amenities:** Paved roads ensure that essential services such as healthcare, education and emergency response are more accessible thereby promoting social inclusion. The Kabati Road in Kabati town has linked an Early Childhood Facility to the main road thereby enabling accessibility of the facility to the local community.
4. **Environmental and Health Benefits:** The paved roads help reduce dust pollution and social erosion.



Kabati Road has connected an ECDE Centre to the Main Road thereby providing access

Lessons learnt:

- Adoption of innovative and alternative road construction technologies can help reduce the cost of construction. These technologies can be used depending on the traffic volumes and terrain.
- Interdepartmental collaboration during planning is critical for optimal utilization of infrastructure. The infrastructure department collaborates with other departments such as trade, education, and health to ensure that the project implemented have maximum benefits to the community.

Recommendations

- Development of road assets maintenance strategy is critical to ensure that the road maintenance is sufficiently budgeted from the onset. This should include routine and periodic maintenance.
- Development of LVSR roads should include strategies to upgrade them to the standard requirements after generating sufficient traffic and capacity. This can include collaboration with National Government Road Agencies such as Kenya National Highways Authority and Kenya Roads Board.

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Adopting innovative and context-specific road construction technologies—like LVSR—significantly reduces costs while improving access and mobility. When combined with interdepartmental planning and strategic maintenance, these approaches can unlock long-term socio-economic benefits. Future success depends on sustained investment, collaborative governance, and the ability to scale infrastructure in step with growing demand.

PHOTO GALLERY



Site demarcation before road construction in Kabati



Ongoing excavation Works



Completed Kabati Road with Markings, Side walk and drainage



Boda Boda Shade in Mjini, Murang'a County



Cabro Road in Gacharage Market

The Successful Transition of Group Ranches to Community Land in Laikipia County

Introduction

Laikipia County, located in the former Rift valley province, spans approximately 9,462 square kilometers and has a population of around 518,560 people, based on the 2019 census. The geography of Laikipia is diverse, featuring highlands such as the Aberdare Ranges and Mount Kenya, as well as lowland areas suitable for pastoralism and wildlife conservation. Laikipia County is home to 13 former group ranches, which collectively represent approximately 10% of the County's total land area cutting across 2 wards.

Group ranches were introduced by the colonial government as a means of controlling grazing, since wanton grazing had been blamed for land degradation (Kenya, Protectorate 1956). They were also presented as a compromise between conflicting communal ownership and private ownership interests. During this period, the Swynnerton plan had come up with the Arid Land Development (ALDEV) programme, with funds allocated to arid and semi-arid areas to initiate and enforce rotational grazing. Consequently, according to Matui et al. (2006:2007), the colonial government sought to bring meaningful development among the communities whose livelihood depended solely on pastoralism.

The Land (Group Representative) Act was first applied in the Maasai districts (Kajiado and Narok). Group ranches were then established in other ecologically similar areas in Rift Valley and Coast Province. According to Galaty (1994), the concept was a hybrid of Maasai customary land tenure and private land tenure. It involved setting aside a piece of land that was recorded and registered as a "Ranch" that was legally owned by a group of people (Rutten, 1992). The system offered them security of tenure and protected their land from loss to other tribes (GoK, 1996). According to Kameri Mbote (2013), group ranches gave a window through which group or community ownership could be exercised in Kenya.



Ilgwesi I- Mayanat Community Land in Laikipia County

The transition from group ranches to community land has been a significant shift in land tenure, aimed at providing stronger protection and security for local communities. This change is grounded in the legal recognition of community land in the 2010 Constitution, which acknowledges collective land ownership and offers legal mechanisms for its protection. The shift empowers communities by giving them greater control over land use and management decisions, fostering sustainable practices, and promoting



The transition from group ranches to community land in Laikipia County reflects Kenya's broader commitment to securing pastoralist livelihoods through collective land ownership. Rooted in colonial reforms and evolving through constitutional recognition, this shift enhances tenure security while aligning land governance with community-based stewardship.



The transition from group ranches to community land, anchored in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Community Land Act 2016, represents a bold step toward securing collective land rights. By merging traditional systems with legal governance, communities now have the tools to manage their land sustainably, resolve disputes amicably, and protect their resources from external exploitation—ensuring long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits.

environmental conservation. It also enhances social cohesion by encouraging collaboration and unity within the community.

The legal framework for this transition is primarily shaped by the Community Land Act, which guides the process of land registration, governance, and dispute resolution. This framework ensures that land remains in the hands of the community and provides protection from external exploitation or commercial encroachment. Community land management committees are established to oversee land use and ensure that decisions align with the community's interests. This collective governance system helps to resolve conflicts amicably, promoting long-term stability and growth.

However, challenges persist in balancing traditional customs with modern legal structures, and some individuals may resist relinquishing personal land claims. Despite these hurdles, the transition is designed to offer greater land security, environmental sustainability, and empowerment, ultimately benefiting the community as a whole.

Implementation of the practice

Before the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, customary land ownership in Kenya was recognized either as Trust Land or Group Ranches governed by the Trust Land Act, Cap 288 and the Land (Group Representative) Act, Cap 287 respectively. Article 63 of the Constitution merged these two categories into community land.

The Community Land Act (CLA) 2016 was enacted to provide for the management and administration of community land as well as the role of County Governments in relation to unregistered community land.



Ingwesi I-Mayanat Community Land Manager

The Constitution vests community land to communities identified on the basis of ethnicity, culture or similar interests. It also defines community land to include land held by groups under the Land (Group Representatives) Act and the unregistered land held by County Governments in trust of communities under the Trust Land Act. The Community Land Act 2016 repealed the Land (Group Representatives) Act, Cap 287 and Trust Lands Act, Cap 288 and provided for a mechanism through which land held under the Group Representatives Act is transitioned into community land.

According to data from the Rights and Resources Initiative, approximately 69.1% of Kenya's total land area is considered community land, representing around 39.3 million hectares out of the country's 56.91 million hectares total landmass.

In Kenya, there are 24 Counties that host community land, including 315 former group ranches. However, by July 2023, only 46 of these group ranches had successfully transitioned as required by law, accounting for just 15% of the total (Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development). This slow progress highlights the challenges faced in fully implementing the legal framework for community land management and the need for further efforts to ensure that more group ranches transition in line with the law.

Laikipia County with 13 former group Ranches namely, Musul, Ilpole, Ol Munichoi, Nkiloriti, Kijabe, Il-Mutiok, Ingwesi, Kurikuri (Shulmai), Ingwesi I-Mayanat, Tiamamut, Koiya, Morupusi and Lekuruki has successfully achieved 100% transition from the Group Ranches to Community Land in 2 Wards with exercise completed between 2019 to 2023.

The Ingwesi-Mayanat community land in Laikipia is approximately 6463.5 Hectares with an approximately 8,000 community members within 15 villages. Each village elects a representative to form the Community Land Management Committee, ensuring that all areas of the community are actively involved in the governance and management of their shared land resources.



Photo taken During Ingwesi I-Mayanat Community Land Assembly

The transition of the Ingwesi I-Mayanat community land involved a collaborative approach that was critical to its success, with key stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels all contributing to the process.

The County Government played a central role, acting as the main facilitator in community sensitization efforts. Through extensive outreach and awareness campaigns, the County Government ensured that community members fully understood the benefits and responsibilities associated with the transition to community land. This outreach was crucial in fostering community buy-in and support. Moreover, the County Government was involved in closely monitoring the entire process, ensuring that it proceeded efficiently and in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Financially, the County also provided substantial support to cover logistical costs, such as organizing meetings, training, and registration processes, which were vital for the smooth progression of the transition.

On the national level, the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning, provided essential technical support, through Its expertise in surveying, mapping, and dispute resolution. Collaboration between County and National



The transition Laikipia County stands as a national benchmark in the successful implementation of the Community Land Act, having achieved 100% transition of all 13 former group ranches into community land. Through strong county leadership, collaborative stakeholder engagement, and sustained community sensitization, Laikipia has demonstrated that secure land rights, participatory governance, and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand to empower communities for generations to come.



The successful transition of Ingwesi I-Mayanat to community land is a testament to the power of multi-stakeholder collaboration—where County and National Government, the National Land Commission, FAO, and Impact Africa came together to blend policy, technical expertise, and grassroots empowerment. This partnership has not only secured land rights but also established a resilient foundation for sustainable land governance and community-led development.

Governments ensured the registration aligns with national policies while addressing local challenges such as historical injustices, and land disputes.



Ingwesi I-Mayanat Community Land Management Committee Chairperson and 2 other Members

The National Land Commission (NLC) played an oversight role, ensuring that the process adhered to national land laws and policies. Beyond monitoring, the NLC supported the initiative by building the capacity of technical officers. This capacity building was essential, as it equipped local officers with the knowledge and skills to handle technical aspects such as land registration, boundary demarcation, and the resolution of potential disputes. By strengthening local governance structures, the NLC contributed to the long-term sustainability of the community's land management systems.

Development partners' support also played a crucial role in the transition process. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations provided both financial and technical support, ensuring that sustainable land management practices were embedded in the community's approach to land use. FAO's expertise helped the community understand best practices for environmental conservation, agricultural productivity, and land stewardship. Additionally, Impact Africa, provided both financial backing and technical resources to enhance the capacity of local leadership and community members. Their support included training on governance and land management, as well as assisting with the implementation of sustainable land-use strategies.

The collaborative efforts of the County and National Government, the National Land Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and Impact Africa not only facilitated a smooth transition but also set a strong foundation for the community's future land governance.

Results of the Practice

1. Representation of the people living with disability, adoption of a third gender rule in the community land management committee and registration of women in the community land register.
2. The continuous updating of the community members in the community land register ensures that every individual is registered upon reaching the age of 18. This process guarantees that all eligible members are recognized and included in community land matters, promoting fairness and transparency in the distribution of land-related benefits.

3. The County Government has been able to deliver services to the community due to more organized structure and understanding of the needs for the community collectively.
4. Conduction of public participation by the community land management committee and other stakeholders has enabled the community to agree on the best way to utilize the natural resource in the community land including mining of construction sand and quarry activities etc
5. Opened partnership with different stakeholders including County Government and other development partners especially in capacity building and developing of the by-laws to govern the Community land.
6. Equality among community members in benefit-sharing, particularly regarding the benefits derived from community land resources, ensures that every member enjoys an equal share. In the case of the Ingwesi – Mayanat community land, a bursary program has been established (from sale of construction sand) to support the education of community students in colleges, providing them with equal opportunities for learning.
7. Community members ability to elect their representative in the community land management committees enhancing accountability, promoting transparency, and empowering communities to have greater control over their land and its resources.
8. Reduced disputes over land use and promoting collective decision-making. This shared governance structure ensures more equitable and transparent land management, fostering cooperation and peaceful relations within the community. As a result, the community benefits from strengthened social ties and greater stability.

Lessons learnt:

- A clear Resource Mobilization Strategy is critical to engage development partners to support the process of the Community land registration including provision of technical capacity.
- Adopting alternative justice resolution methods, particularly through the involvement of community elders, is crucial in resolving disputes related to community land especially in determining the community members during the registration.
- Continuous sensitization of communities is critical to ensure understanding of the law requirements especially in terms of representation in the Community land management committee. This has helped in dealing with cultural practices which omitted women from leadership and representation.
- Community-led processes, ownership and involvement in the registering community land builds trust and commitment in ensuring the achievement of the transitioning.

Recommendations

- The transition and registration of group ranches to community land fosters a more structured and sustainable approach to resource management, enabling the community to effectively exploit resources while ensuring their protection and long-term preservation. This process encourages responsible stewardship and strengthens the community's ability to safeguard its natural assets.
- Collaboration among County Governments, Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning, the National Land Commission (NLC), development partners, and community themselves is essential for the successful transition of group ranches to community land. This collective effort ensures a coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable process, with community members playing a key role in decision-making. It provides legal, technical, and financial support to safeguard land rights and enhance resource management.



The transition to community land has not only empowered marginalized groups through inclusive representation but also fostered transparency, equity, and accountability in land governance—ensuring that every member, regardless of gender or ability, has a voice and a stake in their shared natural resources.



To ensure sustainable and inclusive land governance, County Governments must prioritize technical and resource support for communities in developing comprehensive land use plans. At the same time, the Ministry of Lands and other stakeholders should establish clear guidelines for annually updating community land registers—promoting transparency, minimizing disputes, and strengthening community-led planning.

- The County Government should prioritize in giving technical and resources support to registered communities in the developing of comprehensive land use plans. This includes facilitating access to expert guidance, tools, and funding to ensure the plans are well-informed and tailored to community needs and aligned with the County level plans and other long-term plans.
- Stakeholders led by the Ministry of Lands need to prioritize on creating detailed guidelines for the annual updating of the community land register. Regular updates will enhance transparency, prevent disputes, and ensure the register remains a reliable resource for planning and decision-making.

PHOTO GALLERY



Photo taken during community land sensitization

The Makutano Market Revitalization: How Strategic Transformation Revitalized Trade in Meru County

Introduction

Located in the Eastern region of Kenya, Meru County flourishes as a vibrant hub of agricultural abundance. The County is known for its rich produce of both food and cash crops. Miraa, a stimulant crop, has a market that has grown significantly over time despite facing various challenges. The main food crops produced in Meru include maize, beans, potatoes, and bananas. Farmers in Meru County sell their products through different channels, including direct sales to traders and local markets. Most of these produce end up at the local markets for retail.

The County's agricultural success has led to substantial growth in the trading sector. According to the Meru County Integrated Development Plan (2018-2022), the County has over 1,000 traders who sell their products across 10 fresh produce markets, with a combined capacity of 500 stalls, though the recommended capacity is 700 stalls (Meru County Department of Trade, 2019). This trader population increased significantly to 1,500 by 2020 (Meru County Economic Survey Report, 2021), creating significant pressure on the existing market infrastructure.

Market planning and development has been a critical challenge for Meru County's administration. With limited market capacity and growing trader numbers, market congestion became inevitable. Among the various markets in the County, Makutano market emerged as a focal point of these challenges, serving as a central hub for agricultural trade in the region.

The Challenge

The infrastructure limitations led many traders to establish informal selling points along roadsides. This created multiple problems for the community, including traffic congestion and safety hazards. The County faced challenges in maintaining orderly commerce, with roadside selling creating unclean and unsafe spaces throughout commercial areas. Traders working in these conditions reported difficulties related to exposure to weather elements such as rain and dust.

From the consumer perspective, the congested roadside trading environment created safety concerns. The crowded spaces became hotspots for petty theft, while the lack of designated parking areas made shopping inconvenient. Inside the official markets, stall owners faced their own challenges. They complained about the deteriorating condition of market facilities and found themselves in constant conflict with roadside traders who effectively blocked customer access to the formal market spaces. These roadside vendors often offered products at lower prices by avoiding government fees and taxes, creating unfair competition.

Despite the County's efforts to construct additional market stalls, the problem persisted as many traders continued to prefer roadside operations due to better visibility and customer access.

Implementation of the practice (Solution Path):

To address these mounting challenges, the County Government, through funding from the Kenya Urban Support Programme (KUSP I), initiated a comprehensive transformation of the Makutano market (Kenya Urban



Meru County's vibrant agricultural economy has fueled rapid growth in the trading sector, but this success has outpaced market infrastructure. The resulting congestion—especially at key hubs like Makutano Market—has pushed traders to informal roadside selling, compromising safety, cleanliness, and fairness in trade. Addressing this challenge calls for inclusive market planning that balances trader needs with public order and infrastructural sustainability.



Effective market rehabilitation goes beyond infrastructure—it requires inclusive civic engagement, coordinated enforcement, and strong local governance. In Meru County, resistance gave way to ownership as traders embraced a transparent process, culminating in a self-governance system that now ensures order, accountability, and sustainable market operations.

Support Programme Implementation Report, 2022). The process began with civic education campaigns for traders to help them understand the benefits of the rehabilitation and secure their buy-in. Despite these efforts, there was significant resistance from traders who feared losing both their established spaces in the market and their regular customers once the rehabilitation was complete.

After extensive consultation and assurance from County officials, traders eventually accepted the rehabilitation plan. The County then implemented a temporary relocation strategy, moving vendors to a designated section of the Makutano Bus Stop. This area was carefully subdivided to ensure both public transport operations and trading activities could continue without mutual interference. Enforcement of this transition required coordinated efforts from the County Government, Municipal manager, elected Committee members, and local police to ensure compliance from all traders.

The rehabilitation project took two years to complete, addressing the environmental challenges that had previously plagued traders, including exposure to dirt, wind, and rain. Upon completion, traders were systematically relocated back to the renovated market.

Following their return, the traders established a self-governance system through a committee comprising seven members (4 men and 3 women), democratically elected for five-year terms. This committee was tasked with market governance and ensuring traders' needs were adequately addressed. The committee implemented a robust Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to resolve disputes efficiently. Their regulatory framework included strict enforcement measures, such as a three-month expulsion for any trader found violating established rules. This governance approach proved effective, with most issues being resolved at the committee level without requiring County Government intervention.



The ground floor of Makutano market where traders selling fresh produce are stationed

The market transformation dramatically increased capacity, expanding from an initial 114 traders to accommodating 460 vendors, representing a significant improvement in the County's market infrastructure and economic opportunity.

Results of the practice (outputs and outcomes)-

The Makutano market transformation yielded several significant improvements:



A section of the parking spaces that have been freed after the restriction of roadside trading

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The transformation of Makutano Market demonstrates how well-planned infrastructure, inclusive design, and effective governance can revitalize local economies. From vertical market organization and weatherproof trading spaces to enhanced security and regulatory enforcement, the rehabilitated market has fostered a safer, more profitable, and dignified environment for both traders and customers—setting a benchmark for future urban market development.

- **Improved Infrastructure:** The market now features modern facilities with ample parking space to accommodate both traders and customers. The Committee leadership ensures traders benefit from adequate security and modern sanitation services throughout the facility. One of the most notable design improvements is the vertical organization approach: groceries and fresh produce vendors operate on the ground floor, creating easy access for customers with heavy purchases, while traders selling clothing, salon services, and other non-perishable goods are strategically positioned on the upper floors.
- **Enhanced Trading Environment:** Traders enjoy increased sales in a more attractive, weather-protected environment. The secure environment allows traders to safely leave property at their stalls overnight without constant fear of theft, reducing the daily burden of transporting all goods to and from the market. Perhaps most importantly, the covered structure protects produce from contamination and allows for business continuity regardless of weather conditions.
- **Improved Regulation and Compliance:** County enforcement against roadside selling and the establishment of informal mini-kiosks (vibandas) near the market premises has successfully channeled customers into the formal market. Though occasional nighttime roadside trading occurs, the committee governance system effectively manages most violations, escalating only complex issues to County leadership.
- **Safety and Security:** Both traders and customers report feeling safer in the new market environment compared to the previous roadside trading arrangement. The clear layout, designated pathways, and organized stall arrangement have substantially reduced opportunities for petty theft and other security concerns that previously beset the area. This enhanced security creates a positive cycle where increased safety attracts more customers, which in turn generates more business for traders and tax revenue for the County.



The Makutano Market rehabilitation illustrates that successful market development hinges not just on infrastructure, but on people. Civic education fosters understanding and buy-in; strong, accountable leadership drives progress; and continuous government support sustains momentum. When marketplaces are well-organized, safe, and inclusive, they not only empower traders—they transform local economies.

Lessons learnt:

- **Importance of Civic Education:** Effective civic education is crucial in helping citizens understand new initiatives and securing their buy-in for development projects.
- **Leadership Matters:** The quality and effectiveness of the elected committee leadership significantly impacts how progressive the traders will be and how well they can benefit from market facilities.
- **Government Support:** Ongoing support from the County Government has been instrumental in sustaining the improvements and addressing challenges as they arise.
- **Organization Drives Commerce:** A well-organized marketplace attracts customers and enables traders to sell their produce without interruptions, creating a virtuous cycle of economic activity.
- **Safety Enhances Trade:** Both traders and customers value and respond positively to improvements in safety and security.

Recommendation:

- Based on the Makutano market experience, the following recommendations can be made for similar market development initiatives:
- Invest adequate time and resources in civic education to ensure citizens understand what is being introduced and to secure their buy-in for development projects.
- The committee leadership elected matters significantly in how progressive the traders will be and how well they can benefit. Support for leadership development and good governance should be part of market development plans.
- Continuous support from local government is essential for the sustainability of market improvements and addressing emerging challenges.
- Market designs should prioritize security, organization, and protection from environmental factors to create an environment conducive to commerce.
- Establish clear governance structures with appropriate enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with market regulations and the resolution of disputes.

PHOTO GALLERY



A photo of fresh produce in Makutano market



Clean and decongested paths leading to the upper floors of the market



Water tanks for water provision and storage used for cleaning of the market as well as the toilets



The leadership of the committee for Makutano market

3



AGRICULTURE AND CO-OPERATIVES



Transforming Agriculture in Murang'a County through the Inua Mkulima Support Programme

Introduction

Murang'a County's agricultural support previously relied on a cash subsidy system plagued by fraud and inefficiency. Many farmers received less than KES. 800 per month, which was insufficient to meet their needs. To address these challenges and enhance agricultural productivity, the County Government rebranded the Agricultural Subsidy Fund into the Inua Mkulima Support Programme.

The Inua Mkulima Support Programme aims to empower farmers by developing four key value chains: milk, mango, sorghum, and maize. The Programme Policy 2023 focuses on providing training, certified seeds, and fertilizer to farmers.

For maize, 57,975 farmers were registered in the Kenya Integrated Agricultural Management Information System (KIAMIS) database. Each farmer received a 2 kg packet of certified maize seeds, 8 kg of planting fertilizer, and 8 kg of top-dressing fertilizer. Seeds were sourced from trusted institutions like the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and Simlaw Seeds, while fertilizers were procured from the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB). The seeds were specifically tailored to suit the diverse climatic zones within the County, ensuring optimal growth and productivity. For instance, farmers in the tea zones received the H6213 variety, those in the Upper Coffee Belt were given the Embu variety, and farmers in the Lower Coffee Belt and Lower Murang'a received the Ukamez and DHO4 varieties.



To tackle inefficiencies and fraud in its previous cash subsidy system, Murang'a County launched the Inua Mkulima Support Programme—an ambitious initiative focused on building resilient value chains in milk, mango, sorghum, and maize. Through strategic farmer registration, climate-specific certified seeds, and access to high-quality fertilizers, the programme equips thousands of farmers with the resources and knowledge needed to increase productivity and secure livelihoods.



H.E. Dr. Irungu Kang'ata, CBS handing over certified maize seeds to farmers during the launch of Inua Mkulima Programme.



Farmers showcasing packets of certified maize seeds received for planting.

Additionally, a partnership with Joy Millers Limited guarantees market access for the farmers, with maize being purchased at KES. 3,500 per 90-kg bag. The distribution of inputs took place from 23rd September to 12th October 2024, aligning with the anticipated planting season.

Sorghum farmers also benefit from a partnership with East African Breweries Limited (EABL) ensuring a guaranteed market and price for their produce.

A key feature of the programme is the Inua Mkulima Card, replacing the previous cash subsidy system. In partnership with Cooperative Bank of Kenya, this card allows farmers to access essential goods and services, including food, agricultural inputs, school fees, and hospital bills. Benefits are capped at KES. 2,400 per quarter, with hospital support having started in October 2024 following the rollout of the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF) in July 2024. The card provides the County Government with real-time expenditure data, enabling better decision-making and planning for future agricultural interventions.

Implementation of the practice (Solution Path):

The implementation process leveraged on existing policy framework which was already in place to guide the programme's transparency, accountability, and consistent support for farmers.

Establishment of Strategic Partnerships

Key partnerships were formed with stakeholders to ensure market access and input provision. For instance, Joy Millers Limited guaranteed a competitive price for maize, while EABL partnered with sorghum farmers. These partnerships provided farmers with guaranteed prices, eliminating market uncertainties and reducing post-harvest losses.

Farmer Registration and Database Management

To ensure transparency and accountability, the County Government used the Kenya Integrated Agricultural Management Information System (KIAMIS) for farmer registration. A total of 57,975 farmers were registered, spanning the milk, mango, sorghum, and maize value chains. This ensured that farmers across all sectors were included and properly tracked.



Through the Inua Mkulima Support Programme, Murang'a County has revolutionized agricultural support by ensuring timely access to quality inputs and guaranteed markets. Farmers received maize inputs ahead of the planting season, with assured buyback prices of KES. 3,500 per 90-kg bag. Strategic partnerships—with Joy Millers for maize and East African Breweries Limited for sorghum—secured stable incomes and minimized post-harvest losses.



The Inua Mkulima Support Programme has empowered Murang'a farmers through timely, tailored input distribution and the Inua Mkulima Card, providing quarterly support worth KES. 2,400. With guaranteed markets, improved yields, and climate-specific inputs, the programme has enhanced food security and farmer incomes—offering a replicable model for agricultural transformation in other counties.

Distribution of Tailored Inputs

The programme provided tailored inputs for each value chain. Farmers in all four sectors received essential resources like certified seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural tools sourced from trusted organizations, such as KALRO, Simlaw Seeds, and NCPB. The distribution of inputs was planned according to the climatic zones and planting seasons, ensuring maximum productivity for each type of crop.

Issuance of Inua Mkulima Cards

The Inua Mkulima Card replaced the previous cash subsidy system. In partnership with Cooperative Bank of Kenya, farmers received KES. 2,400 worth of credits every quarter, which could be used to purchase essential food items, agricultural inputs, and services. This system provided flexibility to meet diverse needs and improved livelihoods.

Results of the practice (outputs and outcomes)-

- Farmers have earned additional income from the subsidies and utilized the Inua Mkulima Cards to purchase essential products and services, supporting their households and agricultural activities.
- Farmers now enjoy a guaranteed market for their produce, reducing market-related uncertainties and minimizing post-harvest losses.
- With enhanced inputs and guaranteed markets, maize production has increased, contributing to improved food security in Murang'a County.

Lessons learnt:

- Providing subsidies and guaranteed markets encourages farmers to increase production.
- Procuring farm inputs from certified organizations ensures higher yields.
- Tailoring inputs to specific climatic zones maximizes productivity.
- Aligning distribution with planting seasons enhances programme success.

Recommendation:

The Murang'a County Inua Mkulima Support Programme showcases the significant benefits of targeted agricultural interventions. By integrating subsidies, partnerships, and tailored solutions, the programme has successfully boosted agricultural productivity, ensured food security, and improved farmer incomes. Other Counties are encouraged to adopt similar programmes to enhance agricultural output, promote economic growth, and uplift farming communities through sustainable practices.

Photographs captured during various distribution events highlighting the County's commitment to empowering farmers through the provision of certified maize seeds and fertilizers.



The Impact of the Wezesha Kirinyaga Agriculture initiative on dairy farmers

Introduction

Kirinyaga County, situated in the former Central Province, covers an area of 1,478.1 square kilometers and is home to a population of 610,411. The County derives its leadership strategy from the Mountain Cities Blueprint, which outlines its vision 2032. The Mountain City Blueprint is supported by four main pillars namely Agriculture, Social-economic, Urban Development and Private sector as demonstrated below.



Through the ‘Wezesha Kirinyaga’ initiative and the Agricultural Transformation Strategy 2023–2027, Kirinyaga County is modernizing agriculture, empowering communities, and unlocking economic growth by focusing on commercialization, agro-processing, market access, and sustainable resource use.

To execute activities aligned with the four pillars, the County coined the phrase “**Wezesha Kirinyaga**” The mantra aims to empower local communities and address the challenges faced by youth, women and marginalized groups, encompassing concerns such as unemployment, escalating poverty rates and the need to improve the quality of coffee and tea production.

Under the agriculture sector, the County has committed substantial efforts to boost productivity, optimize land use, establish markets for agricultural goods and encourage value addition. In executing the activities under the agriculture pillar, the County is guided by the following five mandates:

1. Enable food production and ensure safety.
2. Promote the growth of agro-based industries.
3. Promote the sustainable use of agricultural resource base.
4. Facilitate both domestic and international trade.
5. Implement measures to prevent and control pests and diseases in crops and livestock.

To fortify the five essential mandates within the agriculture sector, the County Government has developed a Wezesha Agricultural Transformation Strategy (2023–2027). This strategy prioritizes crucial areas for effective implementation the departmental mandates including;

1. Modernization of extension services
2. Upscaling production to commercialization thresholds
3. Enhancing agro-market access
4. Promotion of agro-processing industries
5. Revitalization of the Kirinyaga Agriculture Training Centre



Through the Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Veterinary, and Fisheries, the County Government of Kirinyaga coordinates various farmer groups categorized by different agricultural enterprises such as fish farming, dairy and other livestock and crop enterprises. These are organized into 942 farmer groups, each consisting of 25-30 farmers with each group integrated into a value chain system.

Implementation of the practice (solution path)

In 2017, recognizing the need for strategic development, the County Government of Kirinyaga convened a team of economic advisors. Their primary task was to identify pivotal pillars essential for advancing the goals outlined in the Mountain City Blueprint.

By 2018, the economic advisors formulated the Mountain City Blueprint and provided a comprehensive framework to guide the implementation of the Wezesha Kirinyaga initiative, aiming to address economic challenges and foster sustainable growth.

In 2019, the Wezesha Kirinyaga policy was developed, serving as a foundational document to support and reinforce all initiatives and activities outlined in the Mountain City Blueprint. This policy aimed to provide a structured approach to achieve the region's economic objectives.

As of 2020, the County embarked on the practical execution of activities outlined under the identified pillars within the Mountain City Blueprint. Simultaneously, during the same year, a concerted effort was made to fortify the Dairy value chain. This involved a strategic focus on specific services aimed at enhancing and promoting the overall efficiency and productivity of the dairy sector as follows:

1. Digital extension
2. Farmer training
3. Artificial insemination
4. Animal Diagnostic Centre
5. Affordable Working Capital
6. Fodder Bulking and Conservation
7. On-farm feed formulation
8. Milk Aggregation and Chilling
9. Milk Market and Value Addition
10. Milk Processing



Through the Wezesha Kirinyaga initiative, the County has empowered 942 farmer groups across key value chains by integrating services such as digital extension, AI, feed formulation, and milk processing—transforming the dairy sector into a model of productivity and value addition.



Kirinyaga County has strengthened its dairy value chain by organizing farmers into enterprise-based projects, deploying 80 ward-based trainers equipped with motorcycles for accessibility, and establishing a state-of-the-art Animal Diagnostic Center to support animal health and productivity.

Wezesha Kirinyaga Dairy Wheel



The County has organized all dairy farmers into distinct projects, with groups specializing in various enterprises such as feed processing and fodder bulking. This approach is replicated across all ten value-addition projects, as illustrated in the dairy wheel above.

The County, through the Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Veterinary and Fisheries has 80 trainers deployed to the 20 wards to provide comprehensive training to farmers. The training sessions cover a diverse range of subjects, encompassing crucial topics such as fodder bulking, milk aggregation and artificial insemination. These trainers play a pivotal role in equipping farmers with the necessary knowledge and skills, fostering advancements in various aspects of dairy farming and contributing to the overall development of the agricultural sector within the County.

The County has provided these officers with motorcycles, facilitating their mobility across different Wards. This enables them to promptly assist farmers whenever challenges arise, or their services are needed.

The Kirinyaga County Government has established an advanced Animal Diagnostic Center, where two highly skilled veterinary officers are dedicated to the crucial tasks of diagnosing diseases in animals. Beyond mere diagnosis, their responsibilities extend to anticipating and formulating effective solutions for emerging health issues within the animal population. This initiative reflects the County's commitment to ensuring improved

health and livestock welfare, promoting disease prevention and addressing the challenges posed by new and evolving veterinary concerns. Through this specialized Centre, the County aims to enhance the overall health management of animals, thereby contributing to the sustainability and prosperity of the agricultural sector.

Through the Kirinyaga Agriculture Training Centre (KATC), there has been enhanced training and extension services. The Centre has ensured a high quality of vines and fodders provided to farmers for their animal consumption.

The County Government has further empowered farmers by providing feed-making machines to various farmer groups. This empowerment allows them to benefit not only within their respective groups but also by selling the produced feed to other farmers outside the group and sharing the profit.

In addition to furnishing farmers with feed-making machines, the County has equipped them with grass cutters and various other agricultural machinery for fodder preservation. Further, the County through KATC undertakes the crucial responsibility of repairing and maintaining the machines provided at no cost.

To support the marketing aspect, the County has provided different groups of farmers with coolers and chillers and empowered local cooperatives including Kirima, Rukingu and Rung'eto with yoghurt processing units.



Kirinyaga County has enhanced animal health management and agricultural sustainability through its specialized Animal Diagnostic Centre and the Kirinyaga Agriculture Training Centre (KATC).

Digital Extension



Farmer Training



Artificial Insemination Services



Animal Diagnostic Center



On-farm feed formulation



Milk Aggregation and Chilling



Milk Market and Value Addition



Results of the practice

1. **Enhanced Standards of Living:** The County has positively impacted the lives of over 50,000 farmers in Kirinyaga by ensuring they earn a minimum of KES. 1,000 per day from different agricultural value-addition projects.
2. **Increased Milk Production:** The County has successfully increased milk production from an average of five liters to seven liters per cow daily. This results from a strategic focus on enhancing dairy cattle breeds through the implementation of Artificial Insemination techniques.
3. **Dairy Value Addition:** In a bid to increase farmers' earnings through dairy value addition, the County has strategically installed yogurt-making equipment at key locations, including Rung'eto, Rukingu, and Kirima Farmers' Cooperative Society. These machines can process up to 500 liters of yogurt in a day. This initiative has not only added value to dairy products but also created new opportunities for economic growth within the dairy industry.
4. **Livestock Disease Management:** Establishing a County Livestock Diagnostic Center in Kirinyaga has significantly improved real-time diagnosis capabilities. This has played a crucial role in enabling the timely management of livestock diseases, ensuring that farmers receive prompt and accurate information, allowing effective disease control and prevention measures.

Lessons learnt:

1. There is a need to consider the establishment of additional Livestock Diagnostic Centers and the training of additional officers. This strategic initiative aims to mitigate the substantial workload currently shouldered by the existing centre, ensuring more efficient and comprehensive livestock disease management services.
2. To achieve success within the dairy sector in the Counties, it is important to adopt strategic measures that synergize various aspects such as feed processing, animal diagnostics, artificial insemination, equipment provision and marketing.
3. The strategic organization or clustering of farmers into distinct groups stands as a key factor contributing to the success of diverse value-addition chains within the agricultural sector in Kerugoya. This has helped the County streamline resource allocation, implemented targeted interventions, and fostered collaborative efforts, ultimately promoting sustainable agricultural development and improving the overall economic well-being of the farming community.



Kirinyaga County's integrated approach to agriculture has improved the livelihoods of over 50,000 farmers, boosted daily milk yields, and expanded dairy value addition through yoghurt processing. The establishment of a Livestock Diagnostic Centre has enhanced disease management. Key lessons include the need for scaling diagnostic services, integrating value chain components, and organizing farmers into specialized clusters for greater impact.



Tharaka Nithi County, largely arid and semi-arid, faces severe climate-induced disruptions in rainfall patterns, threatening food security for over 65,000 farming households. In response, the County Government has initiated a biannual seed distribution program to build resilience among vulnerable farmers and safeguard livelihoods.

Conclusion

The multifaceted initiatives undertaken by the Kirinyaga County Government have yielded commendable outcomes, significantly impacting the agricultural sector and the livelihoods of its farmers. The concerted efforts to enhance standards of living, increase milk production through innovative breeding techniques, promote dairy value addition and improve livestock disease management underscores the County's commitment to fostering sustainable agricultural practices.

These efforts not only reflect a dedication to economic prosperity but also highlight a wholistic approach to improving the overall well-being of the farming community. As the County continues to implement strategic measures and invest in cutting-edge agricultural technologies, it is poised to further elevate the resilience and prosperity of its agricultural sector, ensuring a brighter and more sustainable future for its farmers and the entire region.

Further reading

1. <https://kirinyaga.go.ke/>
2. <https://kirinyagaassembly.go.ke/>

Tharaka Nithi County Promotes Food Security through Free Certified Seed Provision

Introduction:

Tharaka Nithi County is categorized as an Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) in Kenya. The County presents a diverse landscape characterized by stark contrasts: rugged, drought-prone lowlands dominate approximately 70% of its territory, while the remaining 30% comprises fertile highlands (Tharaka Nithi County Integrated Development Plan, 2023-2027). This topographical variety creates distinct agricultural zones, with the eastern lowlands featuring thorny bushland and scattered acacia trees typical of semi-arid ecosystems, while the western highlands near Mt. Kenya showcase lush vegetation and year-round streams. The County's elevation ranges from 600 meters above sea level in Tharaka to over 2,500 meters in the highlands (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2022), creating microclimates that influence farming possibilities across different regions.

Climate change has significantly altered traditional rainfall patterns in Kenya and East Africa at large. In Tharaka Nithi County, the long rain season traditionally began around the 15th of March, but climate change effects have disrupted this predictability, threatening agricultural productivity and food security for thousands of households. Each year, approximately 65,000 farming families face food insecurity due to these erratic weather patterns (Kenya Food Security Steering Group, 2023), leaving them vulnerable to malnutrition and economic hardship as crop yields diminish and traditional planting calendars become unreliable.

The County Government of Tharaka Nithi, led by the Governor, H.E. Muthomi Njuki, EGH, through the Department of Agriculture, designed a biannual seed distribution program to combat these challenges. This initiative focuses on supporting vulnerable farmers who are often the first victims of changing rainfall patterns, aiming to enhance food security and build agricultural resilience across the County.

Implementation of the practice

The process begins with comprehensive planning meetings and stakeholder consultations several weeks before each distribution season, bringing together County agriculture officials, ward administrators, and community representatives to ensure successful delivery and maximum turnout. Planning includes aligning distribution to budget allocations, procurement of certified seeds from approved suppliers, and ward-specific distribution schedules. The effectiveness of the process has gradually improved over the years, resulting in a better-coordinated exercise being carried out in subsequent seasons.



H.E. Muthomi Njuki, EGH participating in the handing over of certified seeds to affected families

“

The biannual seed distribution in Tharaka Nithi County is preceded by extensive planning and stakeholder consultations, ensuring alignment with budgets and ward-specific needs. Over time, this coordinated approach has significantly enhanced the efficiency and impact of the program.



By aligning seed distribution with meteorological forecasts and engaging National Government Administration Officers for coordination and security, Tharaka Nithi County ensures timely, targeted support to vulnerable farmers. The program, now covering all 15 wards, benefits over 100,000 people annually by enhancing resilience through access to drought-tolerant and quick-maturing seeds.



Ms. Kelly Karimi Chief Officer, Gender and Social Services distributing seeds in various parts of the County to PWDs and elderly women

Distributions are strategically timed based on Kenya Meteorological Department forecasts, ensuring farmers receive seeds at the optimal planting time aligned with predicted rainfall patterns. The County's agriculture department works with meteorological experts to analyze seasonal rainfall projections, helping farmers maximize germination rates by planting just before rains arrive.

National Government Administration Officers, including deputy County Commissioners, chiefs, and assistant chiefs, are engaged early to create buy-in and provide security during distribution events. This collaboration represents an effective model of intergovernmental cooperation between National and County officials.

Distribution venues are strategically located across each ward to reach farmers most in need. The County employs a targeted approach to identify vulnerable households, particularly smallholder farmers, women-headed households, and elderly farmers. By providing drought-resistant and quick-maturing seed varieties, the program helps ensure food production despite increasingly unpredictable weather.

Results of the practice

- On average, 100,000 people benefit from the program annually, representing approximately 30% of the County's population (Tharaka Nithi County Department of Agriculture Impact Assessment, 2023). The distribution network has expanded to cover all 15 wards, ensuring equitable access across the County's diverse geographical regions.
- The County has documented significant improvements in key performance indicators related to crop production and nutrition.

Household food security assessments indicate that beneficiary families have increased their maize yields by an average of 42% and bean production by 36% compared to previous seasons when using non-certified seeds (County Agricultural Extension Services Survey, 2023).



Residents during on of the distribution drives of certified

- The distribution events have evolved into platforms for public participation. During the 2023 distribution cycles, over 15,000 residents provided feedback on various County initiatives, contributing valuable insights that informed subsequent development planning. This participatory approach has strengthened the social contract between citizens and County leadership.

The program has also generated positive spill over effects beyond agricultural productivity:

- By bringing together diverse community members during distribution events, the program has helped reduce inter-ward tensions and promoted a shared sense of County identity.
- The program's integration with community health initiatives has increased household enrolment with Community Health Promoters which is improving preventive healthcare outreach in remote areas and resulted in increased uptake of interventions such as registration with the social health authority.

Lessons learnt:

- The consistent presence of County leadership, particularly the Governor, during distribution drives has proven crucial for strengthening public trust and program credibility. When citizens see high-level officials directly involved in service delivery, it significantly enhances program legitimacy and community buy-in.
- The program's adaptive approach to climate change, which involves distributing fast-growing seeds timed precisely with rainfall onset, helps farmers navigate unpredictable weather patterns, providing a model for climate-responsive agricultural interventions.



Tharaka Nithi's seed distribution program has evolved into a powerful tool for civic engagement and social cohesion—gathering over 15,000 citizen inputs during 2023 alone, while also boosting healthcare access and fostering unity across wards. The consistent involvement of County leadership and climate-responsive strategies have enhanced both credibility and agricultural resilience.

- The program demonstrates how agricultural interventions can effectively serve as platforms for addressing multiple development objectives simultaneously. By intentionally integrating food security goals with public participation mechanisms, healthcare outreach, and youth engagement, the County has maximized the return on investment for each distribution activity.

Recommendations:

- Implementing robust systems to assess the program's financial, social, and economic impacts annually. There needs to be an establishment of clear indicators that track not only immediate outputs (seeds distributed), but also medium-term outcomes (yield increases) and long-term impacts (household food security). Regular impact assessments can help justify continued investment and identify areas for improvement.
- Engaging warehousing and collateral services from the Kenya National Trading Corporation to handle surplus production. Creating accessible storage infrastructure can help farmers capitalize on post-harvest price increments and reduce losses, turning the productivity gains from improved seeds into sustainable economic benefits.
- Establishing supportive policies to sustain the seed distribution program, including action plans for addressing logistical challenges. Counties should consider embedding seed distribution within broader agricultural development strategies and securing multi-year funding commitments to ensure program continuity regardless of political transitions.
- Prioritizing the distribution of fast-growing certified seed varieties that can thrive despite rainfall uncertainties. There is need for partnerships with research institutions to identify and propagate locally-adapted, drought-resistant varieties that maximize productivity under changing climate conditions.

Further reading:

- <https://www.facebook.com/GovernorTNC>
- www.tharakanithi.go.ke
- Tharaka Nithi County Department of Agriculture Impact Assessment, 2023
- County Agricultural Extension Services Survey, 2023
- Tharaka Nithi County Integrated Development Plan, 2023-2027



o secure long-term impact, Tharaka Nithi must institutionalize robust systems for tracking results beyond seed distribution—measuring yield gains, food security, and economic returns. Investing in storage infrastructure, securing multi-year funding, and partnering with research institutions for climate-resilient seed varieties will transform the program from seasonal relief into a sustainable engine for agricultural resilience and rural prosperity.

Photos taken during seed distribution drives



4



GENDER, YOUTH, SPORTS, CULTURE & SOCIAL SERVICES



Murang'a County Building Communities through the Youth Service Programme

Introduction:

The Murang'a Youth Service (MYS) is an initiative by the Murang'a County Government aimed at empowering young people through short-term employment, vocational training, and business support. Under this programme, youths engage in community service activities such as town cleaning and drainage maintenance while earning a stipend. The initiative is anchored in the **Murang'a County Youth Service Policy 2023**, which seeks to provide employment opportunities and equip youth with self-employment skills for a sustainable future.



The Murang'a Youth Service exemplifies how county-led programs can unlock youth potential by blending civic engagement with practical skills training. Through short-term employment and structured mentorship, the initiative transforms community service into a launchpad for self-reliance, guided by the Murang'a County Youth Service Policy 2023.



A group of youths celebrating graduation after completing their Technical Vocational Education and Training



H.E. Dr. Irungu Kang'ata and DG, H.E. Stephen Munania awarding a certificate and seed capital to a youth during the TVET graduation ceremony.

How the Programme Works

The programme begins with a two-month community service phase, where the selected youths participate in various community activities such as town cleaning, drainage clearing, and environmental conservation. During this period, they receive a daily stipend of KES. 400, out of which KES. 100 is allocated to their parents as an incentive to encourage commitment and responsibility.

Following the community service phase, participants transition into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses that are fully funded by the County Government. These courses provide hands-on skills in various trades, equipping the youths with competencies that enable them to pursue self-employment or secure formal jobs.



A group of youths demonstrating their masonry skills acquired during the vocational training period.

Upon successful completion of the vocational training, graduates receive seed capital of KES. 15,000 to kick-start their businesses based on their acquired skills.

To further support their entrepreneurial journey, they are granted a one-year tax exemption certificate, allowing them to establish and stabilize their businesses without immediate financial pressure.

Implementation of the practice (Solution Path):

1. Recruitment process:

- The recruitment process begins with a public call for applications, where interested youths register at their respective ward offices.
- Eligible applicants participate in a balloting exercise at the Chief's camp, ensuring a fair and transparent selection process.
- From each ward, 30 youths are selected to take part in the two-month employment phase, followed by vocational training.



By combining hands-on education, seed capital of KES. 15,000, and a one-year tax exemption, the program enables youth to transition into entrepreneurship or formal employment, laying a foundation for sustainable livelihoods and long-term economic inclusion.



By engaging over 4,000 youths in structured community service and vocational training, the Murang'a Youth Service has not only increased employability and reduced crime, but also empowered young people with practical skills and purpose. The initiative proves that short, well-structured interventions can unlock youth potential and drive meaningful change.

2. Funding & policy support:

- The programme is financially supported through the County's Sports & Youth budget which ensures its sustainability over time.
- A well-defined County policy framework governs the implementation, monitoring, and expansion of the initiative, ensuring efficiency and long-term impact.

3. Expansion & growth:

- After a successful pilot phase, the programme was progressively expanded to cover all 35 wards in Murang'a County.
- To date, 4,000 youths have benefited from the programme. An additional cohort commenced in January 2025, demonstrating the County Government's commitment to youth empowerment.

Results of the practice (outputs and outcomes)-

- Over 4,000 youths have been engaged, offering them earning opportunities while contributing to community service.
- Each cohort has shown improved performance in vocational training exams, demonstrating the youths' dedication and commitment to their studies, as they put in more effort to achieve better results.
- A portion of the stipend (Ksh.100) is allocated to parents to encourage commitment, ensuring accountability, which has seen a significant number of youths benefit.
- Participants gain hands-on experience in carpentry, tailoring, mechanics, and agribusiness, increasing employability.
- Engaging youth in structured activities has led to a significant decrease in crime and substance abuse, reducing idleness.

Lessons learnt:

- The programme maximizes youth potential through structured community service and training.
- Short courses provide tangible skills, leading to self-employment and job opportunities.
- Testing the programme before full implementation helped refine its structure for better outcomes.
- Keeping youth engaged reduces their likelihood of engaging in crime and substance abuse.

Photo Gallery



Youths ready to engage in various community service activities



Youths engaged in town cleaning, drainage clearing, and environmental conservation.



Youths undergoing vocational training



Youths at the Murang'a youth graduation ceremony



H.E. Dr. Irungu Kang'ata, CBS, presenting an award to a differently-abled youth during the Murang'a youth graduation ceremony.



Youths at the Murang'a youth graduation ceremony

5



DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT



Tharaka Nithi County's Fire and Rescue Knowledge Exchange Transforms Emergency Response

Introduction

In recent years, the world has witnessed an alarming surge in natural and human-induced disasters. According to the State of Wildfires 2023–2024 report by Copernicus, wildfires alone accounted for 16% of global carbon emissions, causing hundreds of deaths and catastrophic losses in Chile, the U.S., and parts of Europe. Kenya has not been spared—urban centers and rural communities continue to suffer from frequent fire outbreaks, often exacerbated by delayed emergency response, inadequate equipment, and a lack of technical expertise.

Nationally, reports by the National Disaster Operations Center (NDOC, 2024) indicate that cities such as Nairobi have recorded over 130 arson-related incidents since early 2024. Markets, schools, and residential buildings remain highly vulnerable, particularly in informal settlements where poor urban planning, limited infrastructure, and insufficient funding hinder the development of structured disaster management plans.

Counties across Kenya face similar challenges in disaster management, including insufficient firefighting personnel and equipment, with many relying on skeletal teams and outdated or donated fire engines. Compounding this issue is the limited training available to responders, as most lack formal fire and rescue skills, leading to inefficiencies during emergencies. Additionally, weak inter-county coordination persists despite disasters often crossing borders, resulting in fragmented response efforts that hinder effective crisis mitigation. These systemic gaps underscore the urgent need for structured capacity-building initiatives like Tharaka Nithi's pioneering program.

Tharaka Nithi County, though not as frequently affected as urban areas, has experienced its share of fire incidents, particularly in markets and schools. Recognizing these gaps, the County took a proactive step toward resilience by forging a groundbreaking partnership with the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (UK). This collaboration established the Fire and Rescue Knowledge Exchange Program, equipping local responders with the skills, tools, and networks needed to mitigate disasters and save lives.

Implementation of the practice

The journey began in 2019 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Tharaka Nithi County and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, spearheaded by H.E. Governor Muthomi Njuki, EGH. The collaboration aimed to strengthen local disaster response capacity through knowledge transfer, equipment donations, and institutional development.



Bedfordshire trainers demonstrating hydraulic rescue tools during a fireman training session



As disasters become more frequent and complex, counties like Tharaka Nithi are showing the way forward through innovative partnerships. By collaborating with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, the County is building vital local capacity, bridging systemic gaps, and demonstrating that preparedness and training are key to saving lives and protecting communities.

Prior to this initiative, Tharaka Nithi County's fire response capabilities were severely limited, operating with only two full-time personnel and no dedicated fire engines. The transformative support from the UK delegation included two modern fire engines, protective gear (helmets, suits, and breathing apparatus), emergency medical kits, and hydraulic rescue tools ("jaws of life").

These critical donations marked a defining moment, enabling the County to establish a fully functional Fire and Rescue Department that has since expanded to 22 well-trained personnel, fundamentally transforming emergency response capacity.

Recognizing that disasters transcend administrative boundaries, the County proactively extended the program's benefits to neighboring Counties; including Isiolo, Meru, Embu, Wajir, Nyeri, and Marsabit through cross-county training workshops. These collaborative efforts led to the adoption of standardized response protocols across the region, fostering a unified and more effective approach to disaster management that has strengthened resilience throughout Eastern Kenya.

A key factor in the program's success was its strategic partnership with the County Department of Public Health to integrate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) into fire response operations. Firefighters received comprehensive training in trauma care, Basic Life Support (BLS), and Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) management. This critical integration ensured that first responders could deliver immediate medical aid at emergency scenes, significantly improving survival rates and transforming the County's overall emergency response effectiveness.

Results of the practice

- **Expanded capacity and reach:** The program has transformed Tharaka Nithi's fire and rescue capabilities, growing from just two personnel to a fully operational 22-member team equipped with modern skills and tools. This expansion has enabled the County to establish a full time emergency coverage, ensuring rapid response to incidents across urban and rural areas.
- **National and Regional recognition:** The program spurred collaboration across 6 neighboring Counties, standardizing protocols and establishing similar partnerships with international agencies. This demonstrates the model's scalability and transformative potential beyond Tharaka Nithi. Its success attracted Kisumu and Mombasa Counties which joined training workshops and replicated partnerships.
- **Faster, more efficient emergency response:** The introduction of the toll-free emergency line (1513) has modernized public access to help, with call volumes rising to an average of 20 emergency responses per month, an increase of over 200% from pre-program levels. Dispatches now occur within minutes, compared to previous delays of hours, drastically reducing property damage and saving lives.
- **Cost-effective equipment procurement:** Since 2019, the partnership has secured 31 emergency vehicles through donations, saving Counties an estimated KES 279 million (based on an average cost of KES 9 million required to procure a fully-equipped rescue truck). This has allowed limited budget allocations to be redirected toward training, capacity building, referral services and community preparedness programs.
- **Women empowerment in emergency services:** The program has actively promoted gender inclusivity, recruiting and training 7 female firefighters, and a first in the region. These women now serve as role models, inspiring more young women to join the profession while strengthening community trust in emergency services.



From just two personnel and no fire engines to a fully equipped Fire and Rescue Department, Tharaka Nithi County has redefined rural emergency response. Through strategic partnerships and cross-county collaboration, the County is not only saving lives but setting a new national standard for disaster preparedness.



Hands-on training in trauma care, CPR, and triage has empowered responders to deliver life-saving aid on-site—cutting fire-related fatalities by 40% and accelerating recovery. With six counties now united under a shared disaster framework, Eastern Kenya is setting a powerful example of resilience through collaboration.

- **Enhanced medical response capabilities:** Through hands-on training in trauma care, CPR, and emergency triage, responders now provide life-saving first aid before victims reach hospitals. This has led to a reduction rate of approximately 40% in fire-related fatalities, with survivors recovering faster due to timely interventions.
- **Stronger regional disaster coordination:** The program's success has spurred cross-county collaboration, with 6 neighboring Counties adopting joint training and response frameworks. Regular simulation exercises and shared resources have created a unified disaster management network, improving resilience across Eastern Kenya.

Lessons learnt:

1. International and inter-county collaborations provide critical resources, expertise, and funding, accelerating capacity development.
2. Ongoing, practical drills in firefighting and medical response ensure teams remain prepared for real-world emergencies.
3. Counties must develop autonomous, well-equipped units to reduce reliance on overstretched national agencies.
4. Community sensitization in schools, markets, and high-risk areas has proven vital for early fire detection and prevention.
5. Enforcing building codes, land-use regulations, and disaster policies is crucial to reducing risks in informal settlements.

Recommendations

1. Advocate for national and donor funding to replicate the program in all 47 Counties.
2. Establish functional interconnected emergency numbers linked to County response teams and hospitals.
3. Integrate fire safety and basic emergency response into school curricula to build a culture of preparedness.
4. Invest in Kenyan-made firefighting equipment to cut costs and boost sustainability.
5. Include psychological first aid and trauma counseling in responder training to support both victims and emergency teams.

Further reading:

- Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue (2024). Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Team returns after successful training mission in Kenya Article available at <https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/news/bedfordshire-fire-and-rescue-team-returns-after-successful-training-mission-kenya>
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- Jones, M. W., Kelley, D. I., Burton, C. A., Di Giuseppe, F., Barbosa, M. L. F., Brambleby, E., ... & Xanthopoulos, G. (2024). State of wildfires 2023–24. Earth System Science Data Discussions, 2024, 1–124.
- https://www.researchgate.net/figure/A-summary-of-the-major-fires-disasters-in-Kenya_tbl1_228509872
- <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/health/opinion/article/2001502698/how-impunity-and-corruption-fuel-disasters-and-claim-kenyan-lives>
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- www.tharakanithi.go.ke

Photo Gallery



Official handover of donated emergency vehicles and equipment



Responder Training session during the 2024 Firemen Training



A photo of an Inter-county training session held in 2024



A photo of Bedfordshire team during the responder training during the 2024 Firemen Training



Public Launch of Disaster Management Unit in Chuka Municipality

6



WATER, FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



The County Government of Tharaka Nithi Embarks on Providing Sustainable Solutions for Safe Water

Introduction

Access to safe water is crucial for community well-being. According to UNICEF (2024), 59% of Kenyans have reliable access to safe drinking water, an improvement from 47% in 2000. County Governments, including Tharaka Nithi, have developed policies to improve water access, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions where water scarcity is a major challenge.

For many households, fetching water is time-consuming and physically demanding. Climate change has worsened water shortages, making it essential to implement sustainable solutions. The high cost of developing and maintaining water infrastructure has led to increased reliance on public-private partnerships (PPPs) to bridge the gap.

To expand water access, Tharaka Nithi County sought support from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. With this support, key water supply schemes—including the Chuka and Chogoria Bulk Water Supplies—were handed over to the Nithi Water and Sanitation Company (NIWASCO) for maintenance and service provision by August 2024.



With climate change deepening water scarcity, Tharaka Nithi County is bridging the gap through strategic partnerships—transferring key bulk water schemes to NIWASCO to ensure sustainable, reliable access to safe water for its communities.



A photo of Chuka Bulk Water Supply Scheme

These bulk water systems were designed to improve water distribution efficiency and reduce non-revenue water losses.

However, despite these improvements, many households and trading centers remained underserved. In response, the County embarked on drilling and rehabilitating boreholes in semi-arid areas. While this provided a temporary solution, long-term sustainability became a challenge.

The lack of structured maintenance led to frequent borehole breakdowns, as communities lacked both technical capacity and financial resources for upkeep.

Implementation of the practice

Under the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2023-2027, the County Government prioritized cost-effective strategies to ensure

sustainable water access. This led to a partnership with eWATER Services, a UK-based company specializing in water management technology, and Maji Popote, a local private service provider.

A legal framework was established in collaboration with the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB) to support this initiative. The agreement facilitated a long-term PPP, ensuring that borehole rehabilitation and management were backed by a reliable, technology-driven approach.



H.E. Muthomi Njuki, EGH, County leadership representatives and partners during the launch of one of the water kiosks in Nkondi Ward

In 2023, Governor Muthomi Njuki spearheaded the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with eWATER Services and Maji Popote. The partnership enabled:

1. **Installation of smart water kiosks equipped with prepaid water access systems.**



A fully functional solar-powered smart water kiosk



A photo of a resident showcasing the prepaid smart token given to registered users for accessibility.

“

By integrating smart water technology through a strategic PPP with eWATER Services and Maji Popote, Tharaka Nithi County has embraced a sustainable, tech-driven model for water access—anchored in policy, powered by innovation, and built to last.



By January 2024, over 100,000 liters of treated water had been dispensed, reaching more than 1,250 households. To date, over two million liters have been distributed—bringing clean water closer to families and ending the long, exhausting treks in search of safe drinking water.

These kiosks feature automated dispensing units linked to a digital payment system, allowing users to access water seamlessly. Each registered user receives a smart token that can be loaded with funds via M-Pesa, ensuring affordability and convenience. The automated system regulates water flow, preventing wastage and ensuring equitable distribution.

2. **Maji Popote to manage operations and maintenance, ensuring round-the-clock functionality.** Their responsibilities include regular servicing of kiosks, responding to technical issues, and ensuring adequate water supply at all times. They also facilitate community training programs on kiosk usage and water conservation practices.
3. **A digital monitoring platform to track water usage, ensure transparency, and reduce losses.** The platform provides real-time data on water dispensed, payment transactions, and operational status of kiosks. This helps in identifying areas of high demand, predicting maintenance needs, and minimizing non-revenue water losses through efficient management.

eWATER Services funded infrastructure development, including borehole rehabilitation and kiosk installation, while Maji Popote committed to overseeing daily operations, maintenance, and revenue collection.

Results of the Practice

By January 2024, over 100,000 liters of treated water had been dispensed, reaching more than 1,250 households. To date, over two million liters have been distributed—bringing clean water closer to families and ending the long, exhausting treks in search of safe drinking water. Phase one of the project included piloting smart water kiosks at three key sites: Nkondi Water Supply (Nkondi Ward), Njukini Giekuri Water Supply (Nkondi Ward) and Barrier Murigi Kaareni Water Supply (Igambang'ombe Ward).

Each site features solar-powered smart water kiosks installed within 150-200 meters of homesteads. Registered users receive prepaid smart tokens, which they load via M-Pesa to access water. Revenue collected from users is reinvested in maintenance, ensuring sustainability without reliance on government subsidies.

Beyond household supply, the project has benefited local businesses, schools, and health centers, ensuring a steady water supply for essential services. The digital monitoring system has also enhanced efficiency by tracking water usage patterns and identifying areas for improvement.

Lessons learnt:

- Engaging the community throughout the implementation process fosters ownership, ensuring long-term sustainability and better project adoption.
- A clear strategy for transitioning operations and maintenance to local entities is essential for ensuring continued service after Maji Popote's contract period ends.
- Water supply systems are critical infrastructure, requiring strong community sensitization and security measures, such as collaboration with the Water Police Unit, to prevent vandalism.
- County leadership endorsement enhances public acceptance. Community trust in water projects improves when County leadership actively supports and communicates the benefits of initiatives, particularly when international organizations are involved.

Recommendations

- Upgrading existing boreholes with solar power and sufficient storage tanks can facilitate the adoption process by eWATER and Maji Popote, accelerating implementation in other Counties.
- For large-scale water treatment plants, collaborations with the National Irrigation Authority (NIA) and Tana Water Development Agency (TWWDA) can significantly aid in resource mobilization for construction, maintenance, and expansion. This ensures that water projects serve more households at the sub-county and ward levels.

Further reading:

- <https://www.ewater.services/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/GovernorTNC>
- www.tharakaniithi.go.ke
- <https://www.unicef.org/kenya/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

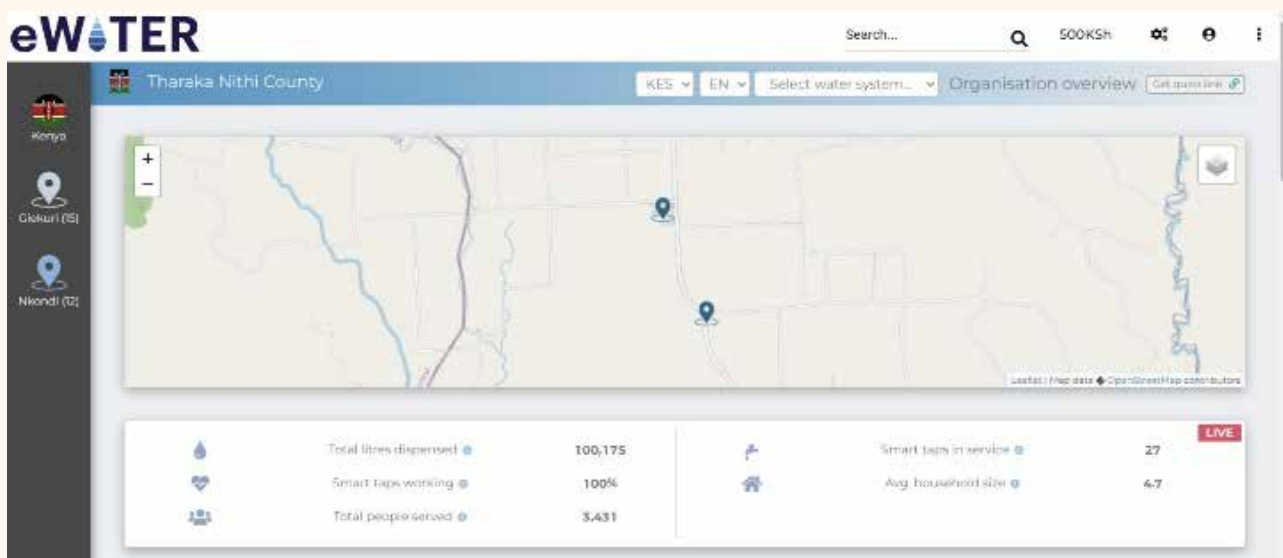
PHOTO GALLERY



eWATER Services poster operations and maintenance contacts



A photo of an operational smart water kiosk



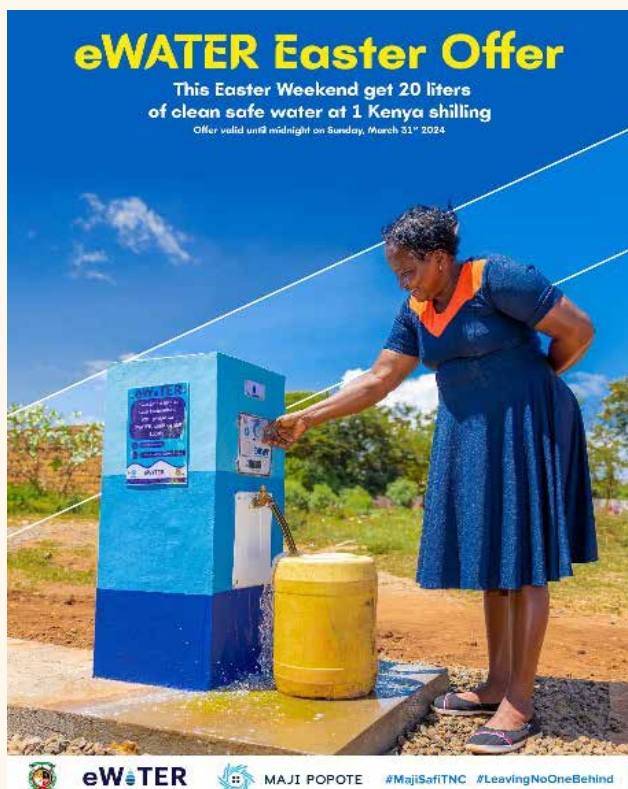
Performance dashboard indicating increased consumption of domestic water



A photo of a technician installing a smart water kiosk



eWATER Services kiosk serving members of the public



Sample offer for eWATER services during Easter of 2024



Payment guidance poster on the side of a eWATER Services Kiosk

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1

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Name	Designation	County
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Mr. Michael Mundenyo	County Chief Planner	Laikipia
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Appendix 2

County Logos



County Government of
Elgeyo Marakwet



County Government of
Garissa



County Government of
Meru



County Government of
Kirinyaga



County Government of
Laikipia



County Government of
Murang'a



County Government of
Tharaka Nithi



County Government of
Trans Nzoia



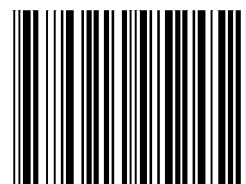
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