

Plan to double student intake

10 public schools have got 6m each for double intake



Education Minister Sam Ogeri: Ministry in a bid to create more chances for secondary education through double shift in selected public day schools
Photo/File

By FAITH MUIRURI

Education ministry has introduced a double shift program in selected public secondary schools in the country in a bid to increase student enrolment. This essentially means that there will be two schools in one, with the first one starting early in the morning and giving way to the second one in the afternoon.

The program which is currently being im-

plemented in ten schools on a pilot basis, seeks to maximize the use of existing facilities to give a chance to the large number of students currently out of school due to lack of space.

The schools in the program include Rware High School (Nyeri South), Afraha High School (Nakuru), Kisumu Day (Kisumu East), Tudor Day Secondary (Mombasa) and Kericho Day (Kericho). Others are Nakuru Day (Nakuru), Kapsoya (Eldoret East), Lions High school (Kisumu East), Changanwe Secondary (Mombasa) and Ruaraka High school (Nairobi).

Each school has been given Kshs6 million to assist in the hiring of additional teachers, purchase of instructional materials and laboratory equipments. This is in addition to the Free Secondary Education (FSE) funds disbursed based on students' enrolment.

According to the Deputy Director of Secondary and Tertiary Education S. Kuria, the program will help solidify and sustain the gains already made in the sector.

Enrolment figures currently stand at 8.6

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Faulty law threatens future of CDF

By MUSA RADOLI

THE future of the multibillion shillings Constituency Development Fund that has been used to fund many projects across the country is in doubt.

The CDF kitty is steeped in endless controversies thanks to faulty laws governing its operations. Experts say that unless proposals to amend the CDF (Amendment) Act 2007 are implemented to seal the loopholes in the legislation, the kitty will not meet its noble objectives.

The proposals which are likely to have far reaching implications in the management of the CDF kitty are yet to be effected a year after a task force appointed to review the Act made them.

This is despite the endless social and forensic audits that point to blatant abuse and embezzlement of funds by the CDF committees in virtually all constituencies.

The CDF kitty remains the subject of controversy and fraudulent dealings which continue to undermine not only the management of the funds but also project implementation as were recently evidenced by the social audits in at least four constituencies in Nairobi.

The most glaring problem right from the word go is accessing information and CDF projects documents from most of the constituencies, especially those whose activities do not conform with the laid down procedures as far as the fund is concerned at constituency level.

Audit teams aver that apart from North Imenti, South Imenti (Eastern Province) and Rongai (Rift Valley) constituencies, accessing information and documents in most constituencies was a nightmare not only for the teams but also members of the public at con-

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Plan to double student intake

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million at primary school level, up from 5.9 million in 2003, while secondary school enrolment has grown from 0.8 million to 1.4 million over the same period.

Transition from primary to secondary schools has also improved from 43 percent in 2000 and 45 percent in 2003 to 67.5 percent in 2010.

However, 40 percent of the primary school who sit for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations every year still do not progress to the next level, according to statistics from the Ministry of Education.

The education official is nonetheless upbeat that the scenario is likely to change. He says the new program has the potential to double the enrolment figures at the secondary school level without increasing the facilities.

"The program is advantageous in that enrolment figures are set to go up especially in urban areas where there is insufficient land available for new schools or enlarging existing schools," he adds during an interview with The Link.

He says that only mixed day secondary schools have been included in the pilot project to enroll the large number of students who have been left out due to the few places available for admission in secondary schools.

"We are focusing basically on schools in urban setups where the numbers of students who want to join secondary schools far outweigh the available opportunities," he adds.

The double shift concept is all about two schools in one, where learning is divided strategically to bring more students in school.

"In the pilot stage, a double shift is considered as one school and therefore, there is only one head teacher in charge of the school. However, there are two deputy head



Government has a plan to introduce double shift program in selected public secondary schools to increase students enrolment.

teachers, one responsible for the morning shift and the other for the afternoon shift," he elaborates.

Mr Kuria says that the time table for the morning shift commences at 7am and runs up to 12.30pm with 5 hours of learning.

"At 12.30 pm, the first shift breaks for lunch, co-curriculum activities and private studies before going home. The second shift begins with co-curricular activities, private studies and lunch before going to class," he explains.

He says that schools implementing the concept have registered impressive results adding that the plan will be replicated in other schools in the next financial year.

To qualify for double shift, the implementing school must be located 3-5km from a primary school with a minimum population of

2,000 pupils.

Other factors for consideration include:

- The secondary school must be the only one within 5km radius that can operate a double shift to avoid duplication.
- The school must have adequate facilities like classrooms and laboratories that can sustain double shift.
- The school must have a minimum classroom ratio of 45:1
- The school must have a reliable water supply
- The school must have a title deed/allotment letter to indicate land ownership
- The school must have adequate playing grounds and recreational facilities
- The school sponsor and other stakeholders must be willing to pilot the double shift

In June last year, fresh guidelines were issued to help in the implementation of double shift program.

In a circular copied to all Provincial Directors of Education, the then acting PS Magdalene Wambua said that in case of teacher shortage, the school shall be allowed to hire additional BOG teachers at a maximum rate of 14,000 per month per teacher depending on qualifications and experience.

The circular stated that if teachers on the TSC payroll teach additional lessons in the second shift, they will be paid at a rate agreed on with the Ministry of Education.

"Given the intensity of the program, the BOG is required to provide lunch and transport to such teachers. The BOG is to evaluate staffing levels in the school and distribute duties to accommodate dou-

ble shift," read the circular in part.

The TSC teachers will be divided into two shifts so that each shift has a share of both TSC and BOG teachers.

Schools will be required to purchase additional facilities such as computers, printers, chairs and desks for alternate shift students to keep their books. The school routine shall be adjusted so as to begin at 7am for the morning shift and 1pm for the afternoon shift.

The program comes in the midst of other ongoing reforms in the education sector that have resulted in the expansion of secondary schools. The number of secondary schools has increased from 4,071 in 2003 to the current 6,432.

The increase is attributed to CDF and LATF infrastructural investment into the sub sector. In 2007 public secondary schools recorded the highest share of 5,127 of the total number of schools constituting 79.1 percent.

During the same year, Rift Valley recorded the highest number of schools at 1,178 followed by Eastern (1,111) and Nyanza (1,083). North Eastern recorded the lowest number of public schools with only 44 schools. Rift Valley registered the highest number of private secondary schools with 376 while North Eastern registered only 13.

The program is however faced with challenges with teachers being overstretched to cover both shifts. Education Secretary George Godia nevertheless says that more in-service teachers will be recruited through the Constituency Development Fund to address teacher shortages.

Currently, the shortage of teachers in public schools stands at 60,000.

He says the double shift model has worked in other developed countries and in Sierra Leone and is optimistic that it will work in Kenya.

Faulty law threatens future of CDF

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stituency level.

The rampant abuse of CDF and the challenges facing the implementation process cannot be wished away.

At stake are projects which have already consumed billions of shillings across the country but are far from being complete despite having been initiated years ago following the introduction of the CDF fund by the ninth parliament through the CDF Act 2003.

The Fund, sometimes dubbed the contractors' development fund, has in most cases served to oil the pockets of unscrupulous contractors who collude with the CDF committees and government officials to defraud the kitty of hundreds of millions of

shillings annually.

Flouting of the CDF regulations, inflating the cost of building materials and under supply of materials have become the order of the day.

Improper tendering procedures and blatant disregard and abuse of procurement procedures, is deeply entrenched seemingly without redress.

And although, the CDF law stipulates that all projects whose total cost is more than Kshs10 million must be tendered and advertised in at least one local daily newspaper, virtually no constituency abides by this.

In other cases friends, relatives, political supporters and even members of the CDFCs conspire to award themselves the project tenders without even attempting to advertise despite the

existence of the law.

In Budalangi constituency, a contractor received a down payment of Kshs1 million on October 9, 2009, to start work on a Kshs10,946,488 classroom complex at the newly established Mundere Secondary school but he immediately abandoned the work after digging foundation trenches.

He demanded an upfront payment to continue with the remaining work. This was in contravention with CDF regulations that require suppliers be paid after evidence of completion of key work stages.

The Bill of quantity indicates that the project which kicked off in July last year, was scheduled for completion in two months time but there are no signs to meet the deadline, after the area

MP Mr. Ababu Namwamba and the current CDF committee stopped funding the project last year.

Such controversies are not just limited to the projects but also touch on fund managers posted by the CDF National Management Board in 2009. The murder of a CDF account manager in Bungoma district, after he allegedly questioned the whereabouts of Kshs100 million for the Saboti CDF constituency late in 2007 is just but a tip of the iceberg.

Many CDF Fund Managers have met stiff resistance and in some cases threatened with dire consequences if they interfere with established cartels. The issue here is that all these point to loopholes and flaws in the CDF statute as it stands.



Mr. Ababu Namwamba

Maseno University set to get new VC

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

MASENO University in Kisumu County will have a new Vice Chancellor by February this year.

The change of guard at the Lakeside varsity will mark the end of an era of Vice Chancellor Prof. Fredrick Onyango.

Prof. Onyango, whose abrasive, and at times arrogant personal style, did not always win him admiration among the lecturers and students, he helped turn around the university that was at one time tottering on the brink of collapse.

Speaking at the Maseno University open Information Communication Technology (ICT) day recently, Prof. Onyango said he took over when the institution was steeped in deep financial crisis and unable to service a Kshs200 million debt.

He says there was anarchy at the institution as workers salaries were not being paid. He says another problem that needed his immediate attention was the alarmingly high number of deaths related to HIV/Aids complications among workers and students.

Prof. Onyango says in the last 10 years, things have changed for the better because the varsity is now financially stable and has a functional welfare and health care system for both students and workers.

It has also diversified and expanded its academic programmes among other developments to make it among the most preferred institutions of higher learning. He was speaking during a function to launch the university's ICT hot spots presided over by Microsoft Regional Manager for East and Southern Africa Mr. Mark Matunga.

Prof. Onyango said the introduction of Anti-retroviral (ARVs) at the



Main entrance to Maseno University.

university has helped stem deaths among students and workers. However, the VC said the programme suffered a setback when a senior medical officer at the university vanished with a new ambulance and ARVs worth over Kshs.1 million he had been deployed to purchase in Nairobi.

The VC said to get the varsity back to sound financial footing; he had to institute some stringent measures that included debt reduction strategies through prudent financial management. He added that some painful and unpopular measures which included staff rationalization became inevitable. The changes were resisted and he was accused of changing systems to suit his interests.

"For 11 years, Maseno remained static and was almost being closed down, but after Kisumu acquired a City status, we started buying property including Royale (now Kisumu) hotel and the University Plaza," he

explained.

He added: "The ultra-modern Kisumu hotel (Royale) was dilapidated, infested with rats and cockroaches, but we have since transformed it after paying Kshs.82 million for it. I was even accused of embezzling Kshs.20 million in the purchase of the

property."

He said the claims were disapproved when a Government valuation report confirmed that the hotel was worth Kshs.96 million and so the University got value for its money.

"I think crazy, but think big", he declared, adding: "as a practical physicist, I had to think out of the box especially after World Bank funded computer purchase programme turned out to be like buying a cow without intestines. I had to get it working by establish our ICT initiative."

Prof. Onyango said former Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Raphael Tuju contributed Kshs3 million through ACE Communications for the purchase of computers to make the ICT programme a reality.

Speaking during the launch ceremony, Mr. Matunga said Maseno was the first public university to establish ICT hotspots. "Maseno is a prestigious University and first Public Institution to set up hotspots which are operational within the Campus to enable students to access the internet at all times," he said.



A section of Maseno University Library.

Education ministry lays reform plan

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Ministry of Education has prepared a reform agenda to be debated in consultations with all stakeholders before it is forwarded to Parliament.

The planned reform agenda will include relevance of education to the country, access to education by all children, transition from early childhood to tertiary education, new structures of schooling, examinations and certification, curriculum and investment in education.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry Prof James Ole Kiyiapi says the review agenda will also include the role of religious organizations, head teachers and parents in the management of schools.

He said religious organizations were key stakeholders in education and invited them to nominate members to sit on the taskforce that will lead the review of the sector. The taskforce is expected to start work early this year.

"Kenyans want education that is globally competitive and responsive to the needs of this country," adds Ole Kiyiapi.

The general secretary of NCKK, the Rev Peter Karanja says sponsorship issues in some schools had become a source of acrimony between the church and Government, but the role of each institution would be clearly spelt out when the education Act is reviewed in line with the new Constitution.

The PS turned down a request to transfer head teachers with different Christian orientation from Christian sponsored schools, saying this amounted to discrimination on the basis of religion.

Ongeri calls for better reading culture

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE ministry of education is encouraging more local organizations and institutions devise ways of improving the reading culture in North eastern region.

According to scholars, North-Eastern Province's perennial low scores in national examinations have been blamed mainly on a poor reading culture among the students.

"It is true that our brothers in Wajir, Garrissa and the rest of the province, mainly live on meat and milk from their herds. However much they survive on it, I feel that it is also good for them to learn how to read and write. Over a decade (12 years ago) the world governments made a declaration in Dakar Senegal, that by 2015, all countrymen and women will be literate. It is so unfortunate that with only five years to go, some people in Wajir had to be shown on whether to tick yes or no during the August 4 refer-



Students and their tutor consults in a library. Local organizations and institutions devise ways of improving the reading culture. Photo/Malachi Motano

endum by polling clerks," says education Minister Prof Sam Ongeri.

According to the Minister, "The government is committed to

improve country's literacy level. This is why the government had even established a number of community Libraries. A part from the

Kenya National Library (KNLS), we have 'Dero' community Library in Asembo- Rarieda district, 'Nyamboye' in Nyamira and many others at the district level. However, the ministry alone cannot do everything at once and therefore still calls for support from more stakeholders even from the private sector".

Currently to help address the problem, the Nation Media Group and the Safaricom Foundation are sponsoring the programme 'Newspapers in Education'.

The programme, which is aimed at creating interest in reading at an early age, covers eight districts in the province which include Garrissa, Lagdera, Fafi, Ijara, Wajir East, Wajir West and Wajir North. It targets pupils in classes four up to seven at marginalized public schools.

Recently, Education minister Sam Ongeri, together with sponsors visited Garrissa Primary School, Hyuga Girls, Tetu Girls, Iftin Pri-

mary and Bouralgy Primary, which have benefited from the 'Newspapers in Education' project.

The Prof Ongeri praised the programme, saying it will help boost the reading culture. In an interview with The Link in Nairobi, the Education secretary, Prof George Godia, says the project will help in imparting knowledge to the pupils.

Experts also say other causes of poor performance in the province include the lack of enough district quality assurance and standards officers, and the nomadic way of life the residents lead.

The Ministry of Education had also responded by launching the 'Nomadic Education Policy' in a bid to address challenges facing education development in the region.

Prof Ongeri said the ministry is committed to providing quality education to all Kenyans. Fifty per cent of districts in the province do not have a single quality assurance and standards officer.

The value of teachers in society

As we welcome the New Year and focus on the implementation of the new constitution, we need to ask and answer this question: How much do we value our teachers in today's society?

In my view some intentional focus has to be on the teaching fraternity in Kenya. We have to pay great attention to education and the role of teachers. The role of teachers is fundamental in marrying the needs of society and the needs of the learners. Teachers are the society's ambassadors who are sent to prepare young citizens for their role in society. Teachers are the welcoming force that encourages children to get into the learning process and value school's importance in for their future and that of the country. Teachers need to be those persons who help children understand the world and what society expects of citizens. Teachers have to understand the student, identify their learning styles, empower them to build their strengths, and work with them to overcome their deficiencies.

Teachers are often involved in motivating pupils to learn, maintaining control in the classroom and the school and also creating an enabling environment for learning to take

place, this is coupled with socializing roles which include preparing pupils to participate in the way of life of the society. Good teachers constantly seek knowledge, are of good character, have high motivation and are creative, innovative and effective in the teaching strategies. Teachers have the key for providing a good environment for the learners. The benefits of having a pleasant environment are for the teacher and learners. But before this happens a teacher needs to be well prepared in order for the learners to receive the best.

Teachers by themselves have to understand their true and complete role as educators. And such a process has to begin with teachers being given the recognition that would allow them to be motivated to practice being true and complete educators. Helping teachers to understand their true role as educators therefore has to begin with the appropriate recognition for the value of service they provide to this country.

Learners on the other hand are deeply affected by the teacher's love and affection, his character, his competence, and his moral commitment. A popular teacher becomes a model for

COMMENT

By DON BONYO



his learners. The learners try to follow their teacher in his manners, costumes, etiquette and style of conversation. Teachers can lead learners anywhere; pupils often tend to determine their aims in life and their future plans, in consultation with their teachers. A good and visionary teacher plays a prominent role in making the future of his pupils.

The importance of a teacher as an architect of our future generations demands that only the best and the most intelligent and competent members of our intelligentsia be allowed to qualify for this noble profession. A teacher must be a model of faith and piety and should have a fairly good knowledge. A teacher should consider it his duty to educate and train his learners and should feel responsible for it. He should feel that his learners have been entrusted to him and he should avoid

any breach of the trust the society has reposed in him. He should be a sociable person with his roots in the society. People should take him as their well-wisher and a sincere friend who cares for their children.

He should actively participate in the social activities in a positive way. He should know the art of teaching with a deep insight into child psychology. He should always deal with the learners in a just manner. He should not lose his self-control on mistakes his learners may commit, and instead he should respect their feelings and ego, and should try to understand and resolve their difficulties with grace while keeping his cool. He should be able to smile in the face of bitter criticism on his opinions, and should not feel ashamed or humiliated to accept his mistakes wholeheartedly.

Whilst teachers are keen to deliver quality services in our schools, one of the biggest challenges for them in today's society is the fact that their role in school management keeps on changing. The school needs them as individuals, who can make decisions and cope with the stress of the changing world of schools while at the same time teachers need to be able to work

in teams, co-operate with colleagues and parents, they have to be part of the teams developing school development plans, they have to write project proposals for fundraising for the school programmes, they have to be public relations officers for their schools and need to do all these things for an unpretentious monthly income.

The society too has a lot of expectations from teachers; many actors are currently keen to analyze the policy framework that would be formulated to actualize the operation of the Teachers Service Commission as established in the new constitution. This is the time to reflect on the values we expect out of the teaching fraternity in Kenya. The teachers are best placed to share the challenges that they would wish addressed in the new policy framework. Parents on the other hand and children are also a critical group to make inputs to the framework for managing the teaching needs and teaching fraternity in Kenya. But would their voice find space in the policy discussion tables? Because of the value we have for our teachers in the society today, we have to expand the policy dialogue and discussion avenues and listen to as many views as possible.

By MALACHI MOTANO

STUDENTS training to become primary school teachers may soon pay more, if a proposal by heads of teacher training institutions is approved.

The Kenya Teachers College Principals' Association (KTCPA) wants college fees increased from the current Kshs29, 375 to Kshs40, 335.

The association secretary, Mr David Nyakaru, says the increase has been necessitated by the rising cost of living.

"The current fees structure has been in place for the last 15 years. Unless the proposals are passed, colleges will experience difficulties in implementing training programmes and this may adversely affect quality as most of the 18 public teacher training colleges need massive repairs," said Mr Nyakaru.

"The world is going the Information and Communication Technology way, but none of the colleges has a purpose built computer lab, and the funds from income-generating activities are unreliable and not sufficient," continues the

Teacher trainees to pay more



Education PS James Ole Kiyiapi (right) talks with the Rev James K. Ziro, the chairman of the Kenya Teachers College Principals' Association, after officially closing primary teachers colleges selection at the Kenya Institute of Special Education recently. Photo/Malachi Motano

Secretary

Among the items for which

the principals want allocations increased are "activity" by Kshs1,

700, "teaching practice" by Kshs1, 260, "local transport and travel"

by Kshs1, 800 and "tuition equipment and stores" by Kshs1, 200.

The KTCPA chairman, Mr James Ziro, also asked the PS to hasten the preparation of a curriculum that will enable the colleges to offer diploma courses.

According to Mr Ziro, the principals presented their proposal to curriculum developer, Kenya Institute of Education, a year ago but nothing has been forthcoming.

Prof Kiyiapi, who was meeting with the college principals for the first time since his appointment, asked for time to look at their proposals.

He formed a committee composed of representatives from the colleges and the Education ministry with him as the chair. The committee is scheduled to look into the issues before end of this month.

While admitting that there is a need to review the fees structure, Prof Kiyiapi said care was needed to ensure that the move doesn't punish students from poor families.

State sets up youth training centers

By PETER MUTUKU

THE government has established youth empowerment centers in 48 constituencies and will soon finance 76 more.

Assistant Minister for youth Affairs Wavinya Ndeti's Assistant Minister for youth Affairs Wavinya Ndeti says the centres will serve as one stop shop to provide reproductive health information and services to the youth, and support skills development in various areas.

"The establishment of Youth and Development Policy, the Children's Act, Gender and Development Policy and programmes such as Kazi kwa Vijana, and the youth development fund are aimed at contributing to the improvement of

quality of life and well being of the adolescence and youth in Kenya," says the Assistant minister. She says that fertility levels have remained high among Kenya's adolescence despite the decline experienced among other age groups.

"Almost half of the adolescence begin child bearing at the age of 19 years, with rural areas experiencing higher adolescent fertility than urban areas. The median age at first sexual intercourse is 17 years old," she adds during the World Starts with me Alumni Youth Advocacy (WAYAN) forum.

Contraceptive use among the adolescence is relatively low, leading to high levels of teenage pregnancy and related consequences, says the Assistant minister.

"One (1) out of every five (5) girls

aged 15 to 19 years who are sexually active are using a method of contraception of which only one in ten use modern method. This low use is mainly due to among other things, lack of access to needed reproductive health information and services, coupled with perceived hostility of service providers."

The total fertility rate among ages 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years is 10.3% and 23.3% respectively. The teenage pregnancy is high and leads to school drop outs among other negative consequences.

A status report of young people in Kenya by the Centre for the Study of Adolescent (CSA) reveals that 80 percent of all abortion cases reported in health facilities are among women aged between

17 and 25 years. Four out of ten women who die from abortion complications are aged between 15-19 years.

According to the recent Kenya Demographic and Health survey (KDHS), about 23 of young women of 15 to 19 years are pregnant with first child and 50% of young people have begun child bearing at the age of 20 years.

Currently only 12 percent of public health facilities in the country can provide youth friendly services. Health care providers are not adequately equipped to provide information and social services to enable the youth make decisions and choices that would guarantee their health and well being.

The ministry of Planning and National Development and Vision 2030 through

the National coordinating Agency for Population and Development, (NCPD) in collaboration with the ministry of public health and Sanitation together with other stakeholders, have developed a plan of action to guide the implementation of the adolescence reproductive Health and development policy. This plan links the information to behaviour change and delivery of reproductive health services.

Rosemarie Onyando, the national Director for Centre for Study of Adolescence (CSA), says although HIV prevalence has been declining and is currently estimated to be 6%, young people continue to bear the brand of the epidemic prevalence at 12% nationally."

The government must therefore initiate reforms such as upgrading health facilities, training youth friendly staff and make reproductive health services affordable," she added.

More teachers needed – Onger



Education Minister Prof Sam Onger accompanied by Central Provincial Director of Education Mr. Patrick Nyagosia (right) waves unto parents and students of Mweiga Adventist Secondary School in Kieni West district recently during the official launch of the school. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE government requires an additional 46,000 teachers to address shortages in public schools.

Education Minister Sam Onger says that despite the hiring of over 20,000 teachers through the Economic Stimulus Programme five months ago, the Ministry is still faced with shortages.

He however said that currently, there were about 245,000 teachers around the country but noted that they are not enough.

“We cannot deny that there is an acute shortage of teachers around the country. My ministry still requires 46,000 teachers to address shortages despite the over 20,000 teachers hired under the Economic Stimulus programme,” he said in

Kieni.

The Minister said that the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme had continued to register phenomenal growth with children previously out of school being enrolled.

He said that in primary schools alone, 8.6 million children have joined the primary schools in public sector while the number of secondary school students has risen from 717,000 to 1.4 million.

Onger however said that he does not support the motion in parliament aimed at scrapping off Kenya Primary Certificate Examinations (KCPE) noting that the examination was a one time event aimed at assessing the progress in learning.

Onger at the same time lament-

ed over the acute shortage of vehicles in his ministry.

Onger said that after the creation of new districts, many District Education Officers have no vehicles to facilitate their work.

He said he has requested the treasury to ensure that they get more vehicles for all districts in the country.

“I know we do not have enough vehicles in the ministry especially due to the creation of new districts. I have requested the treasury to help in this problem,” said the minister.

The Minister was speaking at Mweiga Adventist Secondary School in Kieni West District during the official launch of the school.

Some DEOs in the country are said to be walking to their work places and require vehicles to en-

able them move around schools.

The Mweiga Adventist Secondary School’s project has so far cost over Kshs6.5 million.

The school which currently has 24 students has five classrooms, permanent boys and girls dormitories to accommodate 100 students each.

The school rests on a 3.5 acre land owned by the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

It was officially registered by the Ministry of Education in July 2010.

The school offers foreign languages such as French, German, Chinese and Spanish.

It aims to build a modern Science Laboratory by 2011, administration block by 2012, school bus by 2013, aviation lessons by 2012 and driving lessons by 2011.

Kisii schools ordered to follow fee guide

By BOB OMBATI

SCHOOLS in Kisii will for the first time follow the approved fee guidelines from the Ministry of Education once schools reopen.

Area District Education Officer, Joshua Kisuya, said that the ministry has not issued any new fee guideline circular for 2011, adding that all schools must adhere to the existing guidelines.

Kisuya however said that schools that intend to hike their fee must seek the approval of their respective District Education Boards and the ministry of education.

The DEO at the same time said the Free Secondary Education (FSE) funds have been disbursed to schools and therefore respective institutions must utilize the funds properly to make sure that students are retained in schools. However, a survey by The Link established that most schools in the area had imposed extra levies which had forced students especially orphans to stay at home.

Buyonge secondary school Principal, Evans Magembe admits that his school has over 100 total orphans who cannot afford to pay Kshs3000 per year to keep them in school.

Magembe appeals to the government to fully support education for total orphans to help them complete their education without disturbance.

He says the school management has been forced to source funds from other vote heads to buy food to keep orphans in school at the expense of other development projects.

“The children have a right to education. So the management supports them so that they can excel in their studies to be useful, accountable and responsible citizens,” says Magembe.

The Principal appeals to the government to come up with another scheme that will help bright orphans pursue further education.

Busia schools want to raise fees

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

PARENTS and Teachers Associations (PTAs) and the Board of Governors (BOGs) from various secondary schools in Busia County are seeking the approval of their respective District Education Boards to increase fees this year.

Most of the proposals that have been forwarded to the District Education Boards suggest that parents pay Kshs3000 per student up from the current Kshs2,000 this year to reflect the current economic hardships.

A spot check by The Link established that most schools have been operating on tight budgets due to lack of adequate funds. The secondary school principals who talked on condition of anonymity said that failure by the government to disburse funds on time had destabilized operations in most schools and pushed them to depending on the PTA fund which is not adequate.

The Busia District Education Officer John Owino said he will soon convene a District Education Board meeting to scrutinize the proposals and advice respective schools.

State urged to employ nursery teachers

By JOEL JUMA

THE secondary school head teachers want the government to fast track the process of employing nursery school teachers in order to improve quality of the education in public schools.

Their association said that the government should move faster to employ the pre primary school teachers saying that the new constitution underscores the need to provide quality education to all children.

“Education is compulsory and the teachers need to have their qualifications stipulated instead of having some class eight leavers being hired to teach,” said the association’s Western branch chairman Kahi Indimuli.

Indimuli explained that many parents preferred to enroll their children in private schools on grounds that teachers in public schools were not delivering effectively due to poor payments. Indimuli explained that there are over 2,000 teachers who have been trained on early childhood development courses in the province

and need to be hired by the Ministry of Education to teach nursery pupils.

The chairman was speaking at Moi Girls Vokoli in Sabatia district during the graduation ceremony for over 500 graduands. The ceremony was also addressed by the area DC William Kiprono and the Western Provincial Director of Education Kenneth Misoi.

Misoi said that the training of nursery school teachers shaped the quality of education and should be allocated more resources.

He regretted that some children were learning under trees as communities have not put up classrooms for the pre primary schools. “Classrooms should be set aside for the nursery children the same way it is happening for those in upper level,” said Misoi.

Kiprono urged MPs to allocate funds for primary education in their Constituency Development Funds (CDF) to ensure that the sector is equipped with adequate resources.

Kiprono said that the purchase of teaching aids for pre primary children should not be left to parents.



Secondary school heads in a past retreat. Photo/File

Gichaga calls for youth education

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

JOMO Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology (JKUAT) chancellor Prof Francis Gichaga has underscored the need to educate youths in the country.

Gichaga said there is every need to educate young people and prepare them for leadership roles to enable them address the challenges of the future.

"We believe that giving the youth education and knowledge will go a long way in equipping them with the necessary skills and resources for survival," he said.

He was speaking during the 26th graduation ceremony of Kagumo Teachers College in Nyeri County recently where he was the chief guest.

About 240 teachers graduated during the occasion.

He was accompanied by the college BoG chairman Dr Macharia Kiruhi, Tetu MP Hon Francis Nyammo and Principal Mr J. Kihungi.

The chancellor at the same time expressed the need to address the rising levels of unemployment through industrialization.

"A national economic growth rate of about 10 per cent would be required for the nation to



JKUAT chancellor Prof Francis Gichaga (right) chats with Kagumo Teachers College Board of Governor chairman Macharia Kiruhi during the 26th graduation ceremony at the college grounds in Nyeri. Photo/ Joseph Mukubwa

achieve industrialized status by year 2030.

"We need to add value to the produce that we get from our local agricultural sector, to enable farmers reap highly from the local and international markets," Prof Gichaga added.

He added that industrialization includes identifying minerals like iron ore and coal which can be transformed to various forms of steel to pave way for steel related industries and create job opportunities for Kenyans.

"The Jua Kali industries through the adoption of efficient technologies in their processes can help cut a niche for their products in the international market," added the chancellor.

Gichaga said through industrialization, Kenyans can improve their standards of living through utilization of scientific technology and innovative approaches.

He said teachers should in-

clude I.C.T in their learning programs and emphasis on science driven courses saying these are the core subjects that can raise the living standards of Kenyans.

"Thus, I would like to encourage you as teachers to take special interest in Sciences so that you can inspire students to perform well in those subjects. This however, does not imply that we abandon other subjects but rather we should aim at enriching the humanities subjects with doses from the Science related subjects," he added.

The Vice chancellor said there is need to restore dignity in the teaching profession saying teaching is a noble profession which had been eroded by a few disgruntled individuals and said it was time teachers served as role models for the society and students as well.



Tetu MP who is also the Kagumo Teachers College BoG ex-official Hon. Francis Nyammo (right) with Tetu DC, Mr Herman Shambi, during the 26th graduation ceremony of the college. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

State set to start e-learning in coast

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE Ministry of Education has dispatched a team of experts in Coast Province to conduct a feasibility study on the viability of introducing the e-learning programme to schools in the area.

The team is currently assessing whether schools in the area have the required infrastructure to successfully undertake the programme.

Teachers in selected schools will undergo training to equip them with valuable skills that will enable them to implement the e-learning programme.

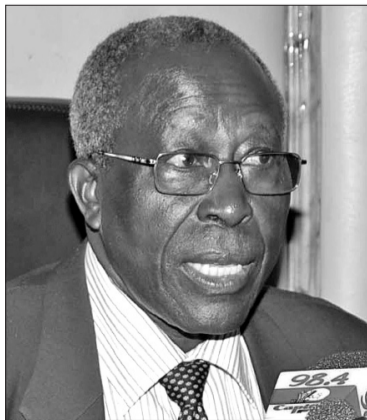
A ministerial circular dispatched to the schools indicate that only

schools with enough classrooms to accommodate good number of students will be equipped with the computers.

The schools must also have reliable power supply to avoid unnecessary disruptions during learning.

The principal of Lutsangani Mixed Secondary School in Bahari constituency Mr Raphael Diwani whose school is earmarked for the programme says that the experts who visited his school took details of many things including power supply, classrooms and names of teachers who have knowledge on information technology.

The head teacher says the school currently has 12 computers which have been donated by the



Prof. Ogeri: Education minister

Kenya Ports Authority.

He said other prominent people including the chairman of Kenya

Coconut Board Dr Tutus Kadere who is also a member of the school Board of Governors has pledged to donate some more computers.

The school BOG chairman Mr Boniface Mwamuye says e-learning programme comes at an opportune moment when most schools are faced with an acute shortage of teachers.

Mr Mwamuye says e-learning will reduce workload on teachers who will not have to attend classes regularly.

Leaders in coast province have welcomed the idea of introducing e-learning programs in the area and urged the managers of the schools to ensure they avail the required facilities.

KUPPET members to pay more

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) has revised its monthly contributions for its members by 100 per cent.

The over 30,000 members will now be required to pay Kshs400 from the current Kshs200 flat rate.

The move is meant to ensure that the union members pay uniform contributions to the body instead pegging their dues on percentages of their earnings as it is the case in the Kenya National Union of Teachers.

Kuppet National Chairman Akello Misoro and the National Treasurer Njenga Mwehi said the matter has already been approved by the top organ.

"We are set to have the union deliver better services. The contributions will ensure that the branch executive secretary is made a full time employee for the members," said Misoro.

Misoro explained that the union constitution has been reviewed to include the new contribution rates.

He explained that the union elections set for later this year will see the members electing officials based on the current 47 Counties.

"We shall have 47 branches as some of the branches are set to be merged to work in-line with the new constitution," said Misoro who was speaking in Kakamega town.

But a section of members said that they were shocked with the new rates. Behan Ashilaka who is the Kuppet Vihiga branch executive Secretary said that the delegates were ambushed in ratifying the new deductions.

Ashilaka explained that some of the members were faulting them for approving the new rates without consulting them. "Majority of the members are preferring an increment of one hundred shillings," said Ashilaka who spoke in Kakamega town.

The union national vice chairman Zadock Kisienya said that the union has also created various positions to ensure that women take 30 percent of the slots in the management of the body.

Kisienya said that the post of a Deputy Secretary in Charge of Gender has been created at the national level apart from those of Directors of Tertiary, Secondary and Special Interests.

Mwehi explained that the branch executive secretaries will be at the level of Governors and Senators in Counties as they will enjoy more powers compared to the current state.

"We have branch executive secretaries who still work as classroom teachers but from next year, such officials will have offices to enable them make independent decisions without fearing retribution from head teachers and education officers," said Mwehi.

Rugut roots for quality education

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

PROVISION of quality education is the only way Kenya can achieve its cherished dream of development and national cohesion, Central PC Kiplimo Rugut says.

The PC who spoke in Othaya where he presided over a graduation ceremony at Othaya Teachers College recently said education would enable Kenyan Children embrace patriotism and shun negative ethnicity.

“Education for wholesome life is the ultimate desire for this nation today and this institution must gear up towards this direction”, he said.

The P.C commended the college for providing a learning opportunity for the big number of school leavers in the region against hard economic times and complementing government’s efforts in fulfilling Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Vision 2030.

“I am confident Othaya Teachers College has the ability to compete satisfactorily with other similar institutions and effectively adjust to stringent demands of our economy”, said the PC.

Touching on education matters in the new district, the P.C said enrolment in primary schools and transition to secondary and tertiary institutions had risen, a factor attributed to the introduction of free primary education by the government back in the year 2003.

He however noted the enrolment at Early Childhood and Development Centers and primary schools had dropped over the last two years due to the migration of landless families to Kieni East District and return of IDPs back home.

“To mitigate on declining enrolment, I urge parents to take their children for ECDE at the right age, between 3 and 5 years,” he advised.

About the college, the P.C noted enrolment for Diploma Courses had risen since its inception in



Central PC Mr Kiplimo Rugut (with specs) arrives at Othaya Teachers College with other college officials during the first graduation ceremony of the college recently. Inset: Some of the graduands of Othaya Teachers College during the first ever graduation ceremony.
Photos/Joseph Mukubwa

2007 and predicted a brighter future for them.

He urged the graduands to teach children virtues of hard work, moral values and integrity that would shield them against negative influence as they had been equipped with the necessary skills enabling them to start the much needed process of change.

“This is the only way we will be able to curb organized crime, alcoholism and corruption,” he noted.

While addressing the gathering, the Director Othaya Teachers College, Mr Ngunjiri Wanjohi said the college had attained a national outlook with admissions targeting students from all the corners of the country.



The college which was registered by the Ministry of Education in year 2007 admitted its first students in May 2007 a step which the director says takes into cognizance all conditions outlined by the Ministry of Education.

It is the only existing private Teachers college offering Diploma courses in the country. Others are Kagumo Teachers Training Col-

lege, Kenya Science and Presbyterian Teachers College RUBATE.

The director said plans are underway to introduce Diploma and Certificate courses in Early Childhood Development (ECD) next year.

He called on Donor Funding Agencies, Government, CDF and HELB to assist students with financial problems.

Teachers Sacco told to go online

By AGGERY BUCHUNGU

A KENYA National Union of Teachers (KNUT) official wants Bungoma teachers Sacco to embrace new technology and start posting its budgets and activities on the website.

The Bungoma west branch KNUT Assistant Executive secretary Mr. Moses Masika says that if the society’s activities go on line, then communication between the Sacco and members will be easy.

Mr. Masika avers that the move will assist members to access information about their loan application status from any corner of the country.

“Once our activities go on line members in Mombasa or any other parts of the country will be able to monitor their loan applications and repayment schedules from wherever they are without having to travel to Bungoma town”, he says.

The trade unionist at the same time calls on the officials of Bungoma teachers sacco to be transparent and accountable.

He urges the society officials to always inform members about new products and consult them before investing their money.

This, Mr. Masika adds will help restore the society’s lost glory and at the same time attract more teachers to join it.

Bungoma teachers’ Sacco is synonymous with coups. Successive office bearers have always been hounded out of office unceremoniously amid claims of corruption.

The move is so worrying that subsequent office bearers are tempted to loot because their positions are not guaranteed.

However, the current society chairman Mr. Gabriel Wasike says that his team is determined to turn around the society despite challenges that exist. Mr. Wasike points out that the society is set to restructure its operation to ensure compliance with the recently gazetted and enacted Sacco Societies Regulatory Act (SASRA).

Consequently, Mr. Wasike urges the Sacco members to cooperate as some of the compliance measures may inconvenience them. He discloses that the new law lays more emphasis on the capital base and proposes that members raise their share contribution by Kshs. 500.00.

The chairman notes with pride that as at September 30, 2010, the society had loaned out a total of Kshs100,503, 025 to its members.

Mr. Wasike however, regrets that the monthly contribution rate is very low and cannot compare with the increased need for loans.

He, as a result, urges the society delegates to go down and educate members on the benefits that accrue from high saving culture.

Medic urges teachers to be ethical

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

A MEDICAL Officer attached to the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) is appealing to teachers to relate with their students professionally.

Speaking at Sisokhe Secondary School in Kakamega County, Dr. Brown Mapesa cautioned teachers against engaging in unethical behaviour with students, saying that such actions are bound to jeopardise their career ambitions and expose them to unnecessary litigations.

Dr. Mapesa was the chief guest during the institution’s Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The Medical Officer urged teachers to abide by the code of conduct outlined by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) adding that once professional conduct is inculcated in their practice, most schools will reg-

ister improved performance.

Consequently, Dr. Mapesa challenged teachers to rise up to the task of moulding students to face the challenges they encounter daily at school.

“Once you conduct yourselves within the laid down TSC code of conduct and assist students positively, then you are truly a professional, Dr. Mapesa added.

He observed that unfortunate cases like teachers losing their jobs because they are sued by parents for impregnating their female students will cease if teachers can respect their oath of office.

Dr. Mapesa, at the same time appeals to parents not to accept negotiated compensation deals from teachers who impregnate their daughters. “You will only be ruining your daughters life if you accept to be compensated by culprit teachers”, he

says.

Noting that teaching and learning has undergone tremendous transformation over the years, Dr. Mapesa challenges teachers to rise up to the challenge and become computer literate.

This, Dr. Mapesa adds, will enable teachers to carry only a flash disk which they will project for teaching using computers.

“Once you become computer literate you will be able to study and obtain degrees through e-learning besides finding your work as a teacher easy, he says.

Dr. Mapesa reminds teachers that the modern student is intelligent adding that he can easily embarrass a teacher who does not keep abreast with changes in their field of study.

Consequently, Dr. Mapesa appeals to teachers to seek to improve their capacity in order to keep up with

emerging issues in their field. “You will surely be obsolete if you retain academic papers you acquired in the old days”, Dr. Mapesa tells the teachers.

Dr. Mapesa’s remarks come at the time when learning in both primary and secondary school in the country is set to go on line.

Already the Kenya institute of Education (KIE) has come up with a digitalized content for lower primary and secondary schools to enhance effective use of information communications Technology (ICT).

However, the implementation programme is being hampered by lack of electricity especially in rural areas where majority of both primary and secondary schools are situated.

Another hurdle towards the realization of the programme is lack of adequate computer literate teachers at the two levels of education.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

We support double shift

THERE is no gainsaying that more secondary schools are needed to cope with the rising number of primary school leavers who seek chances to pursue further education at secondary level.

This certainly calls for very deep thinking to come up with ways of providing enough admission opportunities for the seekers of secondary education. Maximizing the use of existing facilities in schools is one option. Building more new schools is another.

And expanding the physical capacities of existing secondary schools to enroll more students is yet another solution. The long and short of what we are saying is that education stakeholders led by the ministry of education should come up with very innovative ways of creating enough space in secondary schools for all Kenya Certificate of Primary Education graduates who qualify for admission into secondary schools.

The decision by the education ministry to experiment with double intake in selected day secondary schools across the country is one such very innovative idea whose time has come. It is imperative to note that it was the double intake concept that helped to remove the backlog of students who were waiting to join public universities.

However, double intake alone could not solve the problem and therefore the authorities decided on massive expansion of public universities and at the same time they licensed credible groups to start up private varsities to take in additional students.

But even that was not enough since the quest for degrees in Kenya was insatiable by just those moves. Thus they decided to open up parallel learning programs that continue to offer opportunities to those who had given up hope of ever getting university education.

As the education ministry pilots this innovative idea they have to keep a keen eye on its impact on quality of education in such secondary schools. Certainly more resources needs to be injected into the program beyond the Kshs 6 million the 10 selected schools have been given.

It is our view that over reliance on CDF and BoGs to provide critical support for the schools may not be wise given the various factors at play in those organs.

Meanwhile we strongly support the pioneering schools in the program include Rware High School (Nyeri South), Afraha High School (Nakuru), Kisumu Day (Kisumu East), Tudor Day Secondary (Mombasa) and Kericho Day (Kericho). Others are Nakuru Day (Nakuru), Kapsoya (Eldoret East), Lions High school (Kisumu East), Changamwe Secondary (Mombasa) and Ruaraka High school (Nairobi).



COMMENTARY

Legal riddles over CDF

THREATS by the public to take legal actions against sitting MPs over mismanagement of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) have been escalating since the establishment of the kitty in 2003.

Despite the many complaints leveled against the MPs and their CDF management teams in many constituencies across the country, the irony is that there are only about five cases filed in court so far across the country.

Even parliament agrees that there are many legal loopholes in the CDF statute which require urgent attention. The CDF National Management Board (NMB) says that as at the end of August last year, it had identified and forwarded to the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) nearly 40 cases for further investigation and prosecution.

These cases have accumulated since the inception of the fund in 2003. They do not include private cases by aggrieved constituents.

The murder of the Saboti Constituency CDF manager is still unresolved. His only mistake was to question the disappearance of Kshs100 million from the kitty.

Investigations by *The Link* confirmed that out of the thirty five cases only two were taken to court by KACC while the rest seem to have either been forgotten in the files or investigation is ongoing albeit slowly.

There are only two CDF criminal cases on record that were both concluded recently at the high court in Nairobi that roped in national board officials. They involved a CDF secretary and board member whose names were not immediately available but withdrawn under section 87(a) of the criminal penal code under un-clear circumstances.

The other criminal case number 032/41/05 at the high court in Kisumu is still ongoing classified under criminal cases that involve CDF committee members of un-

COMMENT

By MUSA RADOLI

specified constituencies charged on February 19, 2007.

Other cases most of which have either been dismissed or are pending in court were initiated mostly by private prosecutions through lawyers in various constituencies across the country.

The prosecutions department under the Attorney General Chambers virtually having no cases under its own auspices for prosecution as far as the CDF is concerned.

In Budalangi constituency, the incumbent MP Ababu Namwamba has disowned projects started by his predecessor until they are cleared by independent auditors.

A similar case is brewing up in Coast province in Ganze constituency, where the MP, Francis Baya says his predecessor guzzled millions of shillings from the CDF kitty through ghost projects.

An audit is currently being done to find out exactly how much was lost, where and how on the CDF projects as part of evidence to be adduced in courts.

The Link established the source of these disagreements are that new MPs and their incoming CDFCs have in some cases expressed reluctance to inherit the CDF affairs for various reasons - key among these is the state of bank accounts and controversies around ongoing projects.

There are disputes on the amounts in the banks, allegations of illegal withdrawals and suspect payments. Many of the disagreements rotate around a moratorium on funding of new projects announced by the national office in December 2007 to cushion the kitty from election-related misuse.

The CDF board says though many of the new crop of MPs have pledged make CDFCs as broadly

representative as possible, indications are that many have not done so.

The bulk of these cases are being held at the law courts at the district level throughout the country.

From Nyanza, cases have been filed against Ugenya, West Mugirango and Nyaribari Chache constituencies.

Elsewhere in western province, the scenario is no different where Malava constituents took their MP and cabinet minister Soita Shitanda to court accusing him of various alleged abuses of the CDF fund but the case was thrown out with costs to those who had sought legal action. In the Rift valley a brother to the former Eldama Ravine MP, Musa Sirma, was last year charged with allegedly misappropriating more than Shs1.5 million from the CDF kitty in the sprawling Rift Valley province.

Mr. Kipkemei Sirma and Gilbert Cheruiyot were charged before a court in Eldama Ravine with mismanaging CDF funds. The case was initiated by the new CDFC team under the new MP, Moses Lessonet.

Mr. Lessonet, the new Eldama Ravine MP, has written to the Kenya KACC asking it to audit projects worth Kshs50 million in the constituency.

Currently misappropriation of CDF funds can only be arbitrated or prosecuted by KACC but this will change soon since the committee is in the process of creating a CDF complaints office."

Even though the CDF Amendments 2007 Act created an arbitration window to date no arbitration committee has been constituted.

Even so, most serious complainants have chosen the judicial route with virtually none seeking the intervention from the Funds Arbitration Committee.

Perhaps the amendment of parliamentary standing orders to create a new parliamentary oversight committee to deal with the CDF will help to unlock the stalemate.



The Link is published monthly by the Institute for Civic Affairs and Development (ICAD)

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The Link

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Deaf teachers row to fight against discrimination

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE Kenya Federation for Deaf Teachers (KFDT) has vowed to fight widespread discrimination against deaf teachers and learners perpetrated by fellow teachers, employers and parents.

The federation will also advocate for employment of deaf teachers, promote the use of sign language in schools to accommodate deaf learners and advance research opportunities for deaf teachers and learners.

In an interview with The Link in Kisumu, the chairman Austine Otieno Okech said a lot of ground work has been covered in the welfare of teachers with disabilities and added that starting this year deaf candidates will sit for some papers in both KCPE and KCSE, set in sign language.

The chairman who is also a deaf teacher at the Maseno School for the Deaf in Nyanza province added that soon, Kiswahili papers will be set in sign language for the sake of the deaf learners. The move comes shortly after the registration of KFDT six years after its establishment (2003).

The plan to form the union followed realization that the deaf were poorly represented in the giant Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and their grievances and distress went unaddressed.

According to the chairman, KNUT had refused to offer them special seats despite paying their monthly dues to the union. The chairman says that rough the union's advocacy programmes, parents have enrolled their deaf children into special schools thus giving them a lifeline.

"Through international linkages, KFDT has established internal scholarship programs where the global deaf teachers association based in the USA is sponsoring many deaf teachers in



Deaf pupils of Maseno school pose for a group photograph by the assembly hall. Photo/Malachi Motano

various Teachers Training Colleges (TTCs) in the country," he said.

KFDT being the only such outfit in Africa, has also influenced Uganda's deaf teachers into forming a similar organization.

The union today has regional representatives in the eight country's provinces. The national office holders and the regional representatives form the National Governing Council (NGC) which meets thrice a year to address the welfare of the members. The chairman and his secretary Bernard Ochieng' were elected in Nakuru last year on a popular platform by members.

The union admits that many problems still afflict the organisation, key among them include the isolation of the deaf teachers by their hearing colleagues, discriminative school administration that assign major responsibilities to hearing teachers at the ex-

pense of the deaf teachers, that all the deaf school heads don't have hearing impairment, yet the institutions should be spared for the deaf ones.

Employment remains a major challenge to these teachers as various Board of Governors (BOGs) do not hire them upon completion of college hence they are forced to do without income. The union complains that many teachers without hearing impairment have been employed at the deaf schools yet they are not competent enough at the sign language, a move that serve to disfranchise deaf teachers.

Willis Okutwa a member of the union laments, "Out of 200 teachers that were recruited early in the year, only one is a deaf teacher. TSC head office have poorly trained interpreters who cannot effectively communicate to them whenever seek to have their problems addressed."

Othaya to use CDF to improve education

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OTHAYA Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee will channel most of its funding towards educational and health projects.

Speaking in Othaya during a funds drive in aid of Kagonye Secondary School, the CDF Chairman Mr Karanja Mwangi said most of the funding will be disbursed to learning institutions in the area to enable them develop infrastructure and enhance learning environment.

Karanja disclosed that the constituency had been allocated Kshs54 million which he said will be properly utilized to steer development projects in the area. He thanked the school's management for utilising the Kshs260,000 they had received from CDF kitty effectively and promised to allocate them an additional Kshs 300,000 to complete pending projects.

The school's BOG chairman Engineer Isaiiah Mutonyi noted that parents in the area had shown their goodwill by agreeing to develop the mixed secondary school which was started in 1979 by the local community.

The Engineer congratulated the students for raising the school's mean grade from D- to C and urged them to forge ahead with the same spirit.

The school's principal Mr Ayub



Kagonye Secondary School Principal Ayub Njenga (left) with BoG chairman Engineer Isaiiah Mutonyi takes a jig with pupils of Kagonye Primary School. This was at Kagonye secondary school in Othaya recently during the fundsdrive in aid of the secondary school. Photos/Joseph Mukubwa

Njenga said the school was admitting more students from the area due to increased population in the surrounding areas. Njenga said the funds raised will enable the school make education accessible to more students in line

with the governments target of Education For All (EFA) by 2015.

"The school's BOG, PTA and other stakeholders came up with a proposal to start a third stream by the year 2011 to stem the wastage of young brains,"

Sharp differences over model school

By BEKADZO TONDO

SHARP differences between officials of the Ministry of Education and Public Works over the actual cost of a classroom at Ngoloki Secondary School which is slated to become a centre of excellence in Wundanyi constituency under the Economic Stimulus Programme.

The project which was supposed to take off five months ago is still awaiting the two government departments to resolve the stalemate. According to education officials a standard classroom should cost about Kshs750,000 but their counterparts in the Ministry of public works insist that the cost currently stands at Kshs1 million.

Though education officials contend that public works is better placed to give cost estimates, they feel that the Kshs1 million recommended to put up one model classroom was too much.

Local leaders have joined the fray and feel that it is a big shame for the officials of the two ministries mandated to oversee community projects to derail the implementation of the same projects.

Area MP Thomas Mwandeghu accuses officials from the two ministries of engaging in sideshows instead of focusing on completion of the projects.

Mwandeghu pledged to convene a stakeholders meeting to discuss the issue. Mr Pascal Mwandime from Wundanyi suggested that the project be handed over to the community and the officials from the two ministries act as overseers and providers of technical knowledge. Under the Economic Stimulus Programme, each constituency was allocated Kshs30 million to oversee the construction of centres of excellence.

Wundanyi leaders recommended that the allocation go towards the construction of Ngoloki model secondary school in Mwanda location.

However, the story is different in Bahari constituency where construction of the proposed Ngombeni Secondary School is nearing completion with the first group students set to join form one next year. The only problem facing the school is that leaders have not agreed if the school should serve boys or girls.

said the principal.

However, the principal noted the school was facing challenges of expansion due to lack of resources and the red tape at the Nyeri County Council which had hindered school's re-registration bid due to land ownership issues.

But the representative of the district education officer Mrs E. Munene said her office would assist the school register as a three streamed school.

"This school has shown an upward trend in performance for the last three years and my office will continue assisting it in every way possible," she said. The principal noted the school was first awarded a trophy in year 2006 for being the second most improved school in both Nyeri North and South districts. He further noted the school had picked nine trophies at the zonal level for best performance in various subjects in KCSE in District schools category in 2008 and 10 trophies in year 2009.

"We were ranked in position 279 out of 941 in the province while in the whole country we were position 2,073 out of 5,422," said the principal. Kagonye secondary school has a student population of 346 which comprises 260 boys and 86 girls. The school had a mean of C- in year 2009 KCSE.

Amolo's advice on new Law

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Chairman of Action Aid International (Kenya) wants Kenyans to participate fully in the implementation of the new constitution so that they can reap highly from the historic document.

Mr. Otiende Amolo says that Kenyans must engage in the constitutional implementation process right from the beginning so that they can become part and parcel of the process.

This, he said will avoid a scenario where the process is hijacked by individuals driven by ulterior motives that were currently playing out at national level.

The chairman spoke during the official launch of a civic education workshop on the implementation of the new constitution at a Busia hotel recently.

Mr. Amolo said that the workshop was the first in a series that his organization will be conducting throughout the country to help increase public participation in the implementation process.

He said that specific attention will be drawn to chapters that deal with the Bill of rights, representation of people, devolved government and public finance respectively.

New soccer academy to promote peace

By BOB OMBATI

A KENYAN philanthropist has launched a soccer academy in Kisii County to foster unity and enhance peaceful co-existence between the border communities.

Located along the Kisii-Trans Mara highway, the Otwoma Soccer Academy targets youth from the two communities, who will participate in tournaments along the common border.

Speaking during the launch, the philanthropist, Haroun Otwoma said the academy will accord children from both the Masai and Kisii communities an opportunity to interact and exploit their talents in various sporting activities.

Otwoma said that a series of tournaments between teams from Gusii and Masai communities have been organized saying that teams from the two communities will periodically play at home and away to enhance peace.

Cattle rustling, noted Otwoma will be a thing of the past once members of the two communities interact periodically through sporting activities.

He appealed to border communities to organize various social activities that will help them embrace positive cultural practices from each other to enhance peace. Otwoma regretted events that followed the 2007 post poll chaos, saying the clashes would have been averted if members from the border communities interacted regularly through sports and other social activities.

The sponsor, who is based in Canada said that soccer clubs of Vaughan, ThoHIL and Rotary club of Mississauga international had donated football, uniforms and the computer and appealed to local leaders to support soccer to tap local talents.

He said he had met with the Kisii and Masai elders who had agreed to support the intertribal tournament to enhance peace which has remained elusive due to cattle rustling and land disputes along the common border.



President Kibaki ready to sign new constitution into law during promulgation at Uhuru Park. Photo/File

Amolo at the same time said that the Bill of Rights makes it mandatory for the government to provide housing, adequate food, clean water, health, social security and education to Kenyans.

The chairman pointed out that Chapter Seven of the new constitution on other hand deals with gender and ethnic balance in all organs of representation and expressively accords special attention to women and special groups in these organs.

He further stated that devolution specifically addresses issues of poverty, inequality and their causes which can be addressed through

devolution.

He further said that the new constitution if implemented fully will revolutionize the lives of majority of Kenyans who are currently entangled in poverty.

Meanwhile an NGO calling itself Christian Partners Development Agency (CPDA), is spearheading civic education in the area.

The programme officer Elizabeth Ongechi, says that organization was currently focusing on Governance and Democracy, Integrated Food Security for Sustainable Livelihoods.

Ongechi says that the organiza-

tion intends to carry out civic education on the new constitution in Busia, Bungoma, Kakamega and Vihiga counties.

The programme officer said that under the programme, citizens particularly women and youth will be empowered to understand, participate and monitor the implementation process under the banner 'Kuelewa, Kushiriki na Kufuatilia Utekelezaji wa Katiba'.

The programme will culminate with the establishment of County Shadow Assemblies, County Strategic Plans and integrity benchmarks for leaders, among others.

Row erupts over division of Lurambi

By JOEL JUMA

THE controversy surrounding the creation of constituencies has now extended to the grassroots.

A row is simmering among leaders in Kakamega County following the proposed sub-division of Lurambi constituency into two.

Leaders from the area are against the move to hive off Butotso North Location to Navakholo constituency arguing that the move amounts to dividing the local community.

Led by Jerry Wetindi and councilors Ponyochi Kunyobo, Hamisi Omuganda and the Kakamega County Council vice chairman Evans Ashibikha, the leaders said Lurambi division boundaries should be retained when the constituency is split into two.

"We asked for a split of the constituency but we said the provincial administration boundaries should remain intact," said Mr Ashibikha who read a signed statement during a leaders meeting at a Kakamega hotel.

The leaders have vowed to op-

pose the move saying the defunct Interim Independent Boundary Commission (IIBRC) made a mistake by taking the location to Navakholo.

Area MP and Gender assistant minister Manyala Keya however told off the leaders saying they have themselves to blame over the confusion.

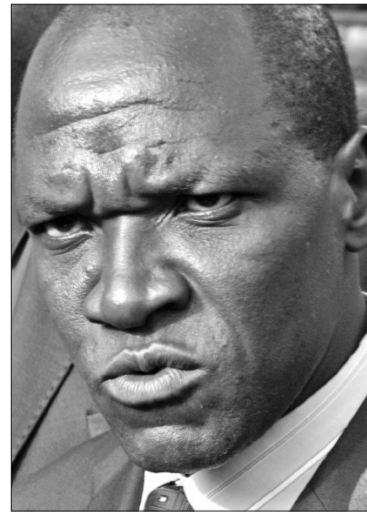
Mr Keya said he had proposed that Lurambi be sub-divided into three to avoid a mess of the boundaries.

"If we had united and spoke in one voice, these problems would have not occurred," he noted.

Keya said chances are high that the location will be taken to Navakholo because the population of the area needs to be balanced while splitting the area.

He explained in Kakamega town that the residents contributed to the confusion because they asked for one extra constituency instead of two.

"Each division had qualified to become a constituency but some leaders insisted on one. This was wrong as it meant the population



Dr. Khalwale

must be balanced," said Keya. Lurambi has about 300,000 people with three divisions of Lurambi, Navakholo and Municipality.

Mr Ponyochi accused Keya and Ikolomani MP Bonny Khalwale of meddling in Lurambi affairs.

Ponyochi told Khalwale to keep off Lurambi affairs to allow them work with Keya on development matters affecting the area.

Bondeni banned from getting funds

By JOEL JUMA

A PRIMARY school in Kakamega Town has been banned from receiving funds from any Constituency Development Fund (CDF) kitty for three years.

Bondeni Primary School municipality will not receive any funding after the management failed to account for over Kshs700, 000 received from the Lurambi CDF kitty.

The CDF Manager Robert Serem said the school will not be allowed to access money for development due to bad leadership and unaccountability.

Serem and other CDF committee members led by treasurer Manoah Wetuka and the anti corruption committee members headed by Ibrahim Sadala said the school will only get desks worth Sh100, 000 that will be purchased from a central pool.

Serem explained that the school management led by the head teacher Robert Opwora must account for all the funds they received for development programmes.

"A disbursement of Kshs850, 000 to this school by the Municipal Council did not make any difference," said Sadala, who is also the Chairman of the Islamic Preachers and Imams of Kenya Western branch chairman.

The officials were speaking during a meeting at the school where the Anti corruption campaign steering committee headed by the Ambassador Hukka Wario, Vice chairperson Rose Arunga were conducting a social audit of projects in the Western region.

Abigael Mbagaya, an official at Kenya Anti Corruption Commission (KACC) official said they will investigate the matter and give recommendations.

Mbagaya said information from the public will be analysed before action is taken against the culprits.

Opwora defended himself over the matter saying he was not the head teacher of the school at the time the funds were disbursed.

He added that some stakeholders were out to finish him. "Please I ask the area councillor not to finish me. I ask for forgiveness if there is any place I have differed with you," said Opwora.

Area councillor Peter Lutta accused Opwora of not consulting with stakeholders while undertaking projects in the school.

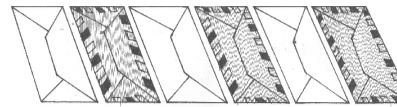
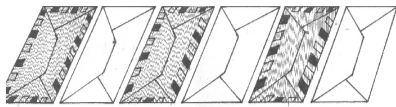
Lutta explained that despite being an ex-officio member of the school, he has never been invited to any meeting to deliberate implementation of projects in the institution.

He claimed the head teacher procures materials without consulting other stakeholders.

The school received another Kshs1.7 million from the Government for infrastructure development. Opwora said the money was used to construct a fence and a gate among other structures.

Kakamega Township Senior Assistant Chief Phillip Chunge rejected the CDF move saying that the red card should be lifted.

Chunge said innocent children should not be punished because of mistakes committed by the management.



Education system should change with needs of modern economy

KENYA'S Parliament was set to discuss a motion scrapping the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams. Indeed, there is widespread debate everywhere - riding the wave of reforms sweeping across the country - on the efficacy of the exam system and the general education system in Kenya.

Let us face it, the education system in Kenya is a sham, a big conspiracy by the lucky and the rich to lock out the disadvantaged from the real benefits of a good education.

It is a ploy for punishing and condemning millions of otherwise talented Kenyans into untold penury. The reasons are legion.

First, even before national examinations results for both Class Eight and Form Four levels are out, we all can guess which schools will emerge tops.

And as it continued becoming increasingly clear which schools rank highly in the country, the prestige associated with these schools has been piling pressure on school fees, making these schools unaffordable for many deserving children from poor families.

Thus, a boy or girl may be lucky, after putting in a lot of effort, to pass in KCPE with flying colours, but if the parents cannot afford the high school fees, the student is forced to join a village day school where his or her star dims until they fade into academic oblivion. Every year, big secondary schools hold parties to celebrate after many of their students attain the requisite grades to join university to study the so-called "marketable courses," which William Ruto thinks are more in line with Vision 2030.

As such, whether your child will miserably flop - and end up as a thug - or excels and becomes a high flier is something you can tell not from his/her ability, but by the kind of school they are in. This is atrocious, to say the least.

Education is supposed to be game-changer in social relations, the surest tool for upward social mobility in a corruption-free society.

And with good schools dependent on money, you begin to see why this kind of system will never help us close the yawning gap between the haves and the have-nots, a chasm that is rumoured to be widening at so dizzying a pace it has an ominous bearing on national security.

So where exactly is the problem? The problem is that we do not take into consideration two key factors. One is that not all our children are gifted in academics.

We have great artists, musicians, footballers and many other gifted categories of students. In any case, gone are the days when the most highly paid people in the country were in the so-called white collar jobs.

Concerned Kenyan,
Via e-mail.

New alcohol law comes into force

BARS will be allowed to open between 5 pm and 11 pm only during working days.

But on weekends, operators will be allowed to open from 2 pm but close at 11 pm.

These are some of the strict regulations gazetted by Internal Security minister Prof. George Saitoti to give the Alcohol Drinks Control Act the force to law.

Only members of exclusive clubs will enjoy the privilege of having alcohol at any time of day or night.

Restaurants can sell alcohol to diners to take with their meals at any time but open selling of alcohol will only be allowed between 5 pm and 11 pm.

Sellers of adulterated alcoholic drinks will be liable to fines of Kshs.10 million.

Prof. Saitoti said rules and standards for the sale of traditional liquors, including chang'aa will be announced latter.

Bars, hotels, supermarkets and night clubs will no longer freely sell alcohol to customers and will instead have to adhere to specific times for each of their categories, failure to which they will attract hefty penalties.

No night club will be allowed to sell alcohol before 7 pm and beyond 3 am.

Supermarket will be authorised to sell alcohol between 10 am and 8.30 pm.

Prof. Saitoti said the Act sought to provide order and to control of production, sale and consumption of alcohol, a move aimed at protecting Kenyans from harm occasioned by alcohol abuse. "We are aware of the drastic change in pattern of alcohol consumption in this



Alcohol brewers arrested: The new law regulates the time when alcohol can be sold

country. Flagrant breach of alcohol production ethics in order to maximise profits cannot be allowed to continue," said Prof. Saitoti.

Also in the rules gazetted yesterday are procedures for obtaining licenses and the fees payable.

The minister said new laws would mitigate the negative health, social and economic impact resulting from excessive consumption and adulteration of alcohol drinks.

"We want to correct situation that has been deteriorating over a long period of time. In some parts of the country very many youths

have been seriously affected," said Prof. Saitoti.

According to the new Act, persons seeking to manufacture or sell alcohol in a given locality must apply for license to do so from the new District Alcohol Drinks Regulation Committee.

Some of the issues to be gazette in the new regulations include the rule that there will be no alcohol selling outlets in schools and within a radius of 300 metres from any learning institution.

Jacob Ng'etich,
Nairobi.

Keep cheap politics out of the Hague cases

I REMEMBER there was a proposal for the ICC and a formation of a local tribunal to deal with the post-election violence.

The very people now opposed to ICC were the very people who proposed that ICC goes ahead to prosecute those involved in the violence. Why the hullabaloo now?

Leaders trying to politicise the issue should give us a big break. Let Kenya set an example to the rest of the world that impunity is a thing of the past. Kenya has suffered setbacks in giving justice to its citizens.

Whenever we hold elections blood is shed and people displaced. To ensure this does not happen again, let us give a chance to the ICC.

The more those named in the crime list defy pressure to step aside, the more the issue is likely to take political undertones that are not healthy for the nation. In my view, this is not about 2012 succession politics.

This is about Kenya and efforts to end impunity. This is about justice to people who innocently lost lives, property, were raped or maimed. Let us not politicise crime. We have suffered a lot.

Simon Chibole,
Eldoret.

* * *

Listening to the din all over after ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo made public his list of suspects, one gets the illusion that nobody is responsible for what happened after the 2007 poll.

For three years as those that were assailed by the violence languished, and continue to languish in camps, we actually did nothing to ensure justice for them to avoid political fall-outs and to guarantee our comfortable positions.

What the ICC has now done must be hailed by all patriots of this country as a landmark and a move in the right direction.

Let those mentioned go to The Hague and convincingly argue their cases. For all we know, somebody somewhere started the violence and this is what we all want to know.

Kabaria Muturi,
Nairobi.



The editor welcomes letters and comments on a variety of issues. The letters should be brief, topical and issue based. The editor reserves the right to edit for brevity or clarity.

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Anti-Aids war hots up in Busia County

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

COMMUNITY Based Organizations (CBOs) in Busia County have received funds to intensify campaigns in the fight against Aids.

The CBOs received a total of Kshs 6million from the National Aids Control Council (NACC) and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Services to assist in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

A total of Kshs3 million has however been pumped into women empowerment programmes under the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) programme.

Data availed to The Link by the Busia County Social Development Officer Margaret Ojago indicated that a total of Kshs0.8million had been disbursed to 16 community based organizations in Nambale District.

In Budalangi constituency, the department funded 17 self help groups to the tune of Kshs0.8million.

In Butula constituency, 12 self help groups were funded to the tune of Kshs0.6million.

The Busia County Social Development Officer urged beneficiaries to utilize the funds prudently to help make women self reliant and eradicate poverty.

Further nine groups from Funyula constituency were funded under the Total War Against HIV/AIDS (TOWA) programme.

The activities undertaken by the CBOs included HIV/AIDS counseling, testing and awareness creation on the dangers of HIV/AIDS pandemic.

According to the Funyula Constituency Aids Control Committee (CACC) co-coordinator, Mr. Livingstone Kadiki, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Samia district is 14percent which is far above the figure in Busia District which stands at 7.4percent

The HIV/AIDS coordinator who was speaking during a stakeholders forum, attributed the high prevalence to lack of behavioural change and outdated cultural practices such as wife inheritance and high poverty levels.

The constituency HIV/AIDS coordinator appealed to the residents especially the youths to discard retrogressive practices in order to reduce the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the district.

Semi-arid Mwingi to get fish ponds

By KAVYU-KURA

The Government has earmarked Kshs15 million for the construction of 500 fish ponds in the two semi arid constituencies of Mwingi through the Economic Stimulus Programme in the 2010/2011 fiscal year.

Residents of VP Kalonzo Musyoka's Mwingi North constituency will benefit from 300 fish ponds while in David Musila's Mwingi South constituency 200 ponds would be set up.

The revelation was made recently by the Mwingi District Fisheries Officer James Nganga during a departmental heads meeting chaired by the Mwingi Central District Commissioner Peter Kinuthia and attended by other DCs from the two constituencies.

The Fisheries Officer said the project will be implemented under the government funded Economic Recovery, Poverty Alleviation and Regional Development Programme (ERPARDP). He said already the Government has released the first tranche of Kshs7.7 million to jump start the project in the largely semi arid region.

Nganga said at the initial stage, about 150 fish ponds will be put up in Mwingi North constituency at a cost of Kshs3.7 million while another 100 fish ponds will be constructed in Mwingi South at a cost of Kshs2.5 million.

He added that the Government has also earmarked Kshs1.5 million for the construction of three shallow water retention reservoirs in each constituency measuring at least 6000 square meters.

The District Fisheries Officer said that the strategic objective of setting up the ponds was to enhance food se-



The 'Kisumu Ndogo' fish selling outlet in Mwingi town. The owner, George Katana (donning a turban), said he sources the fish from the faraway Kiambere dam. The fish ponds will make fish readily available. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

curity and improve nutrition and the health of people in the areas covered by the programme.

It was also aimed at generating income, wealth from fish sales as well as creating employment.

The Government will purchase fish feeds for the farmers for the whole cycle which will last seven months before harvesting, said the DFO.

He added that each fish pond will be supplied with 1000 small fish that

were expected to be nurtured in the 300 square meters ponds.

Mwingi Central DC said there was need for farmers to be enlightened on the benefits of fish farming as an enterprise for commercial purposes as well as exploring means of setting up aquaculture parks.

He said farmers should take up the venture and exploit the opportunity being availed adding that fish was in high demand in Mwingi town and the market was readily available.

DC added that small scale irrigation activities in food and fodder crops for human and livestock consumption alongside fish production will also be initiated around the fish pond areas.

Kinuthia said the programme will help build human resource capacities for farmers through trainings, strengthening of the coordination offices and fish farming institutions to ensure farmers increase their income and become self reliant.

Voters cautioned against electing MPs

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Western Province Cooperative Insurance Company (C.I.C) Director Mr. Michael Wambia, has told voters not to elect people who stay and have invested outside the counties.

Speaking at Bungoma County hall during Bungoma teachers savings and credit cooperative society (SACCO) Special Annual General Meeting (SAGM), Mr. Wambia said, "People to be elected senators and governors must be approachable and residents in the counties".

At the same time Mr. Wambia cautioned area residents against electing present and former members of parliament (MPs) as senators and Governors.

Noting the poor state of infrastructure in the region Mr. Wambia observed that it would be suicidal to elect the present and former MPs in the devolved governance structure.

He urged area residents to elect visionary leaders for the senators and governors seats instead of known politicians who have nothing new to offer.

After the passing and subsequent promulgation of the new constitution, many people in the four counties of Western Province have declared interest to vie for senators and



Parliament in session.

governors seats.

Majority of both the sitting and former MPs have also announced their intention to contest for either the senators or the governors seats.

It is however strange to note that many people in the counties including those who have developed appetite for the seats do not know how the devolved structures of governance will operate.

This is true because parliament is yet to put in place necessary legislation on how the 47 counties will op-

erate, moreover there is lack of civic education on the new constitution.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) operating in the area have not educated the masses on the content of the new constitution.

They claim that their efforts to have masses understand the implications of the new constitution in their social, economic and political development are being hampered by lack of budgetary allocation.

The Western Kenya Human Right Watch (WKHRW) Executive

director Mr. Job Bwonya discloses that he applied for funds to run the programme but is yet to get the money.

'I applied to Uraia and other donors for funds to enable my organization to carry out civic education on the new constitution but have not gotten the money' Mr. Bwonya told The Link on phone.

Mr. Bwonya argues that the masses need to become fully conversant with the contents of the new constitution in order to make informed decisions during the Election Day.

However, the region's politicians are busy jostling for the devolved seats regardless of whether the voters know the functions of county governments or not.

It is also imperative to note that Western region has the highest number of presidential aspirants.

So far five politicians from the Luyha community have developed appetite for the presidency

The five are; Chris Okemo, Bifwoli Wakoli, Moses Wetangula, Cyrus Jirongo and Eugene Wamalwa.

During the last general election the community had only one presidential candidate: Mr Nixon Wanyonyi Kukubo who contested the seat on Republic Party of Kenya (RPK) but performed dismally.

Open Kadhi courts in all counties —Jirongo

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

ALL the 47 counties should have a Kadhi's court, according to Lugari Member of Parliament Mr. Cyrus Jirongo.

Currently, there are eight Kadhi courts in the country but the Government is contemplating raising the number to fifteen.

The cities and towns that already have or are earmarked for the Kadhi's courts includes; Nairobi, Mombasa, Hola, Kwale, Garissa, Lamu, Wajir, Bungoma, Nyeri, Marsabit, Nakuru, Malindi, Kisumu, Isiolo and Eldoret.

Mr. Jirongo, however, asserts that he will lobby parliament for more Kadhi's courts adding that each county must have a Kadhi's court to cater for the Muslims' interests.

"Time is ripe for each county to have a Kadhi's court in order to commensurate with the Muslim population in the county, the Lugari Mp says.

The MP who is the leader of KADDU party concurs with those who feel that the population figure of Muslims released by the minister for National planning Mr. Wycliffe Oparanya is not true.

During the last National population census, the number of Muslims in the country was placed at 4.3 million people.

However, results from a few parts of the country were not included in the final population tally due to some anomalies in the counting procedure.

Perhaps it was on this basis that Muslim leaders vehemently contested the community's population figure releases by the Government.

Mr. Jirongo was speaking recently at Jamia Mosque in Kakamega town during a fund raising ceremony for the Mosque where he was the chief guest. During the function, a total of Kshs252, 720 was collected with Mr. Jirongo giving his personnel donation of Kshs100,000.

Nyeri youth turns garbage into gold

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

YOUTH from the sprawling Majengo slums in Nyeri town are reaping highly from recycling waste materials in their vicinity.

The over 70 youth have turned waste materials into a gold mine as they also strive to keep the environment clean. Instead of engaging in crime, the

youngsters have formed an association known as Friends of Environment, whose main task is to separate biodegradable materials from the non biodegradable and sell them.

"We collect the biodegradable rubbish from the slums and separate them from materials which cannot decompose. We then keep the biodegradables in a humid place to hasten the process of decomposing. After the manure is ready

we sell it to farmers," says Mr Mark Ngunjiri, who is the chairman.

The non biodegradables such as polythene bags and plastics are sold separately. The glass bottles and metals which cannot decompose are sold off to scrap dealers.

We sell others and burn others since we want to keep the environment clean. "Last year we made over Kshs100, 000 after selling manure and other waste

materials. This year we shall make more money. We don't need other jobs. As long as there is a ready market for the waste materials, we shall remain busy and earn a living," added the association organizing secretary Mr Julius Wachira.

A member Mr Moses Mwangi says that he has been brought up in the slums and has remained jobless until few years ago when they formed the association. "This is a very good income generating project of collecting wastes in the slums and making money. We only need support from a sponsor. We want to be entrepreneurs," said the chairman.

The association is however looking for a sponsor since they are working under risky conditions and lack vital equipments for their work.

The youths who have joined hands with others from Ruring'u area want an organization which can give them a grant so that they can buy a recycling machine which costs about Kshs5 million. This machine will help to recycle some of the wastes and also will separate biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes.

The machine can also create employment for over 200 youths.



TOP: Youth from Majengo in Nyeri town who are members of the Friends of Environment association prepare manure from wastes. BELOW: Youth from Majengo in Nyeri town with their manure for sale. Photos/Joseph Mukubwa

Punish errant committees —Khalwale

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE CDF Committees which are not able to utilise funds availed to them will be censured.

Ikolomani MP Dr. Bonny Khalwale says it is wrong for the CDFCs to fail to disburse public money to identified development projects immediately they receive the cash from the Exchequer.

Dr. Khalwale discloses that some CDFCs take long to implement CDF funded projects even if there is money for the project in their bank accounts.

He wondered why there is deliberate attempt by some CDFCs to delay releasing the funds to projects when the money is just lying in the accounts.

The MP's remarks come at the time when some CDFCs funded projects in Western Province have stalled over the years for lack of funding.

This is being attributed to lack of political good will or the CDFCs failure to allocate adequate funds to the projects.

For instance water projects in Lurambi and Kanduyi constituencies have stalled due to what locals term as irresponsible political leadership.

There are also several other projects such as health facilities, education institutions and roads in the entire Western region that have been denied funds from the CDF kitty and other public coffers.

Speaking in Kakamega town recently, Dr. Khalwale challenged his colleagues in parliament to ensure that no project funded by public money is done half way and abandoned.

He says that MPs have a responsibility to ensure that all identified and prioritized projects in their respective areas are fully implemented.

"It is the work of MPs to ensure that all development projects are adequately funded to facilitate their completion within the stipulated time," the MP concludes.

State in all out war on Malaria

By JOEL JUMA

IN a bid to fight malaria in western Kenya, over 14,000 mosquito nets are set for distribution in all district hospitals in western Kenya.

The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation in collaboration with UN-CEF have donated the nets as part of integrated strategy to fight malaria.

The Western Provincial Director of Public Health and Sanitation Dr Quinto Ahindukha said that the move is meant to reduce cases of malaria that currently stands at 29 percent.

"We want the cases to go down to

20 percent by next year," said Ahindukha. He said malaria cases despite having been reduced from 46 percent two years ago to 29 percent, the disease still remains among the top ten killers of the residents.

Ahindukha was speaking at Sheywe Guest House in Kakamega during a stakeholders convention meeting.

The former Chairperson of the National Aids Control Council (Nacc) Prof Miriam Were and the provincial Public Health Officer Timothy Olubero also addressed the meeting.

Ahindukha said that polio campaigns are set to take off in the region.

He said districts selected for the campaigns have been told to identify areas where the communities will get the vaccines. Ahindukha explained that the exercise will take off in churches and in all health centres as more health workers will be brought on board to assist in ensuring that all children are vaccinated.

The Provincial Public Health Officer on his part said the Government has spent over Kshs48 million in expanding health institutions in the region. He said that the expansion was meant to ensure that medical services become accessible to the patients.

He said that each constituency was given Kshs20 million to identify a health centre that can be equipped with facilities as part of improving medical services. Matungu MP David Were said that he used the funds to expand Lung'anyiro health centre. He said a maternity wing is being constructed following the sponsorship.

Planning minister Wycliffe Oparanya allocated the funds on equipping Shikunga health centre in his Butere constituency while an assistant minister and Lurambi MP Manyala Keya channeled the money to Lwesero health centre.

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**JANE
MURUTU**

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

A monthly supplement funded by European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Looking into the future

AS the year begins, it is an opportune time to reflect on the past as we think of and plan the next one.

For the Partnership for Peace Project it means that we plan the final year of the project, however, we believe that the structures set in place will be sustained after the project duration.

Before the end of 2010, we received a monitoring and evaluation report from our external evaluator. The evaluator not only visited a number of CSOs in the partnership, but also the local partners and co-ordination office.

The evaluator concluded that the project seems to have come well underway towards achieving the expected results.

Indeed, the evaluator was categorical that so far, the project has had an impact beyond the expected results, which will significantly contribute to achieving the project objectives.

The objectives include reduction of violent community conflicts in Kenya specifically strengthen the capacities of non-state actors as means to mitigating community conflicts in 3 provinces in Kenya

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**HANNA
CARLSSON**

by improving their knowledge base and know how in early warning mechanisms, informal mediation, field based political analysis, policy oriented conflict research and policy dialogue.

To crown the year with those words is very encouraging for us all. However, the report does not end there, it continues to state, which is really pleasant for KAS to hear, that "a major achievement is the increased recognition of the three partner organisations as well as the CSO partners because of their participation in a project led by KAS and funded by the EU.

This recognition has created legitimacy for what the organisations are doing in the area of peace work. For those organisations that were already involved in peace activities even before the post-election violence, the recognition factor is even more visible" the evaluator concludes.

In 2011, we will further strength-

en the regional peace-networks and actively engage in policy dialogue with state actors. The purpose of the policy dialogue is to improve formal conflict prevention strategies and once and for all tackle the sources of conflict.

By now, working groups have been formed in the three regions to draft working papers based on a specific source of conflict in the respective region.

The working papers will be discussed in regional meetings attended by provincial administration, members of parliament, representatives of political parties, police administration, representatives from the judiciary, and the partnering CSOs.

There will also be meetings on a national level to make sure that policy makers will be enlighten so that actions can take place.

From our interaction with partnering CSOs, we know that a lot of peacebuilding activities are taking place in the regions. Some approaches are more successful than others and in order to learn from best practices and share experiences exchange visits will take place between the three different regional peace-networks and its members.

Hopefully, the exchange visits will not only improve CSOs peace-building work but also enhance the knowledge of the regional peace-networks. Unfortunately, not all members of the network can participate but the selection will have set criteria and will be very transparent.

In between the formal and informal policy dialogue meetings and exchange visits the expert pools and the networks members will get further training. From training evaluation reports we have learnt that there are some areas which need further practical training.

I hope that when 2011 ends I will be able to look back with a great sense of pride by virtue of what will have been achieved then.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your long-term commitment to Partnership for Peace and a lasting peace in Kenya. I wish you a Happy New Year!

The writer is the International Manager of the Partnership for Peace Project. For comments or suggestions write to:
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Understanding the youth in new dawn

BY CHRIS OWALLA

THE word 'youth' for many years connotes different things to different people in Kenya.

However, when the word 'youth' is put in the context of democracy, pluralism and politics then it is important to embrace an inclusive definition.



By
**CHRIS
OWALLA**

For political reasons anybody could claim to be a youth and that was the order of the day during the one-party Kanu dictatorship. This is also being witnessed in the composition of Constituency Development Funds Committees.

A widely adopted classification of youth is based on age and this has also been defined in the Constitution as from 18-35 years. This categorization on the basis of age has brought forth the political perspective of youth as a sector that is not yet ripe for political leadership, but on behalf of whom all politicians are

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Reflecting on our peace journey

THE emergence of the initiative on partnering for peace in the larger western region of Kenya came when the communities inhabiting the area badly needed it.

Smarting from the Post Election Violence (PEV) most of them had their misconceptions and stereotypes confirmed and cemented in light of what had happened during the tumultuous moments.

In the past one year, the project has been characterized by activities geared towards building the capacities of non-state actors to mitigate, intervene, facilitate or informally mediate in the event of tensions or impending conflict.

In February for three weeks consecutively we held introductory meetings, where CSOs in the same region were introduced to each other besides being enlightened on the project, both overall and specific objectives and the dissemination of the results of the research: The Invisible Violence.

The initiative started by helping CSOs to find common ground on issues of conflict and co-existence. This was not an easy venture due to the disparate expectations and capacity levels within the involved institutions.

While the task at hand required



By **JANE MURUTU**

considerable time and capacity to execute, most of the

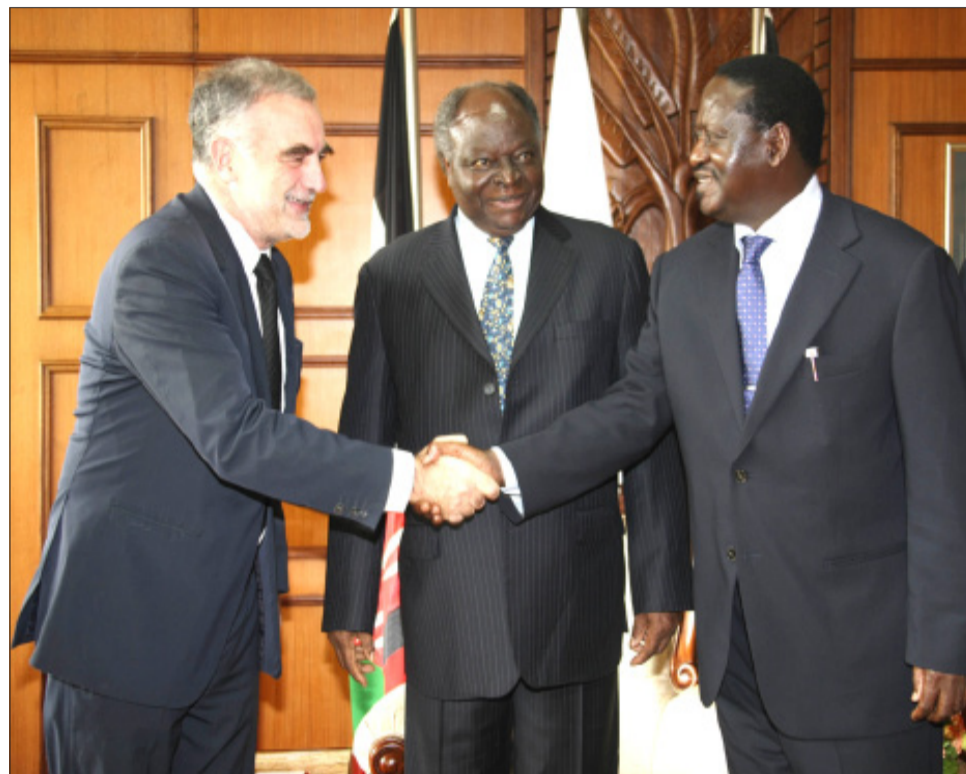
mapped organizations were nascent and required a great deal of mentoring and nurturing.

However, going forward, the delay and resources spent on leveling the expectations and enhancing capabilities have been worthwhile. The process has taken shape and communities are now weaving their own conflict prevention mechanisms and early warning systems.

A curriculum for extending the capacity enhancement objective had been prepared and as we turn into the new year, there will be renewed effort to make the localized curriculum available to the civil society organizations in the project and initiate the utilization of the same.

The reach out to communities has been extensive but concerted. Youths and women have been brought on board while the counsel of the elders such as the Marakwet Council of Elders remains the forte of the initiative.

Going forward, we realize that the



President Kibaki (centre), PM Raila Odinga shaking hands with ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo during the later's visit to investigate Post-election violence.

sustenance of tranquility and peaceful co-existence is a collective function of all members of the community irrespective of their societal standing.

The provincial administration has been very supportive and we have

partnered in many ways. They have also in many occasions invited us to their meetings of which we really appreciate.

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Our work in Mount Elgon area

IN the past year, the Mt. Elgon Resident Association (MERA), with funding from the Partnership for Peace Project funded by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) and the European Union (EU), implemented various peace projects in western province.

Through a process involving all stakeholders, we developed programs to support about 40 Civil Society Organizations in Western Province.

Of the 40, eight CSOs were from Mt. Elgon and Cheptais Districts. We strengthened their capacities to mitigate peace and manage conflicts.

In addition, we have carried out several meetings in the entire region, including four meetings in Mt. Elgon and Cheptais areas that were most affected by the conflict.

MERA coordinated training of 300



By **CHEM PETER**

divisional leaders in Kopsiro and Cheptais who were

challenged to establish peacenetworks of elders and youths through regular meetings and respect of culture.

Mt. Elgon and Cheptais districts through their leaders have been in the forefront in supporting peace initiatives. This support has made the work of non-state peace workers in the area alot easier.

Through our efforts, an exchange visit was organized for various peace workers. The participants that included elders, politicians, provincial administrators, cultural leaders, women leaders

and youth leaders travelled to Northern Uganda to learn more about peace building.

The widow of the late leader of Saboot Land Defence Force (SLDF), Salome Matwekei, was among the entourage.

Asked about her feelings about the trip she said: "Am happy to be chosen to be among the team that visited Northern Uganda which have really opened my eyes. I was in the dark but now I have gained enough knowledge and skills that am going to use to persuade our people to forget guns and use their hands, panga and hoe for farming."

Mrs Matwekei runs a peace initiative called Chebanaan Widows Group, which is made up of women whose husbands were killed during the war in Mt. Elgon.

It is instructive to note that the en-

tire Mt. Elgon and Cheptais districts are now peaceful, despite rumors that the former militia group memebtrs are regrouping to reignite the war.

The tasks ahead for the project are to to welcome back into the community the former SLDF fighters who are being released from jail, help them to settle down through training and counselling and give them access to credit so that they can start legitimate income generating enterprises.

Late last year, over two hundred former militia members were released from jail we need to intergrate them into the efforts to keep the peace in the volatile region and to educat them on the effects of small arms as we ap-

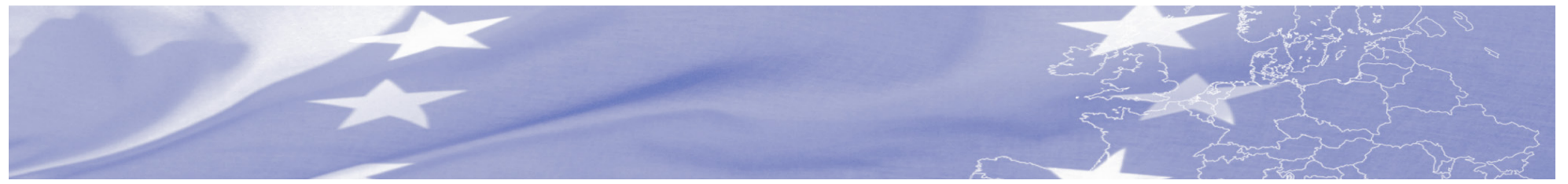
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Our work in Mt. Elgon area

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proach new year 2011.

This daunting task that will require concerted efforts of all peace actors in the region, including the government, NGOs, elders, CBOs and FBOs. In our view, such efforts would only be more effective if and only if they are concentrated in rural areas whose residents are still less informed on peacebuilding issues.

Even so, given the sensitivity of the matter and volatility of the region it would be foolhardy for unscrupulous peacebuilders to create artificial tension through propaganda to justify need for funding.

As we plan for 2011, we would urge that more trainings and peacebuilding activities be focused in Kopsiro and Cheptais areas where most persons affected by conflict live. These are also the areas where IDPs are still waiting for resettlement.

Although the government has released the names of the IDPs in these areas to be settled (list can be accessed in Kopsiro DO's office or DC's office), we would like to urge the the process of resettling the people be speeded up before the start of the long rains. Planned activities for Western province:



Wananchi at the scene of crime where a person was killed in Mt. Elgon.

- Working Group finish work by 20/01/2011.
- Western Province Conference to be held on 04/02/2011 (over 150-190 people to attend).
- Exchange visit to Either Nyanza or Rift Valley provinces to familiarize with best practices on peacebuilding to be conducted between March and June 2011.

Last but not least, we wish to thank all those who have assisted the peace process in Mt. Elgon and Cheptais districts and who continues to support the affected communities in various ways.

Mr. Chem is the Partnership for Peace Project Coordinator –Western Province. He works with Mt. Elgon Resident association (MERA).

Reflecting on our peace journey

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One of the greatest achievements of the initiative has been the networking and coalition building facets which have considerably built an outfit that draws attention and set the agenda in the provinces in which the initiative operates.

The clout the initiative commands has meant that individual CSOs are able to draw some benefit on their own as they contribute to the common goal. Some of the nascent organizations have been able to secure funding as a result of being focal points in the initiative and upon our recommendation.

The vastness of the area under coverage especially in Rift Valley was an initial challenge to the project team but the partnerships and networks created have eased the logistical nightmares overtime.

We laud our partners and an associate who have had to put in extra effort from time to time to make it happen for all of us! It has turned out into a rewarding experience!

The initiative has put together a team of regional resource persons who have been expertly trained to backstop the CSOs in terms of conflict intervention and to sustain the initiative beyond the funding period.

The rationale is that we need to find local solutions to local problems and external effort should only be sought for purposes of strengthening local efforts and not imposing external thinking and solutions. Peace can only be nurtured from the sanctum of communities and be grounded in indigenous thinking and approaches.

In the process of managing conflict and inter-community relations, communication plays an important role.

As we end the year, we put our sights on developing a robust communication strategy that will help us manage knowledge sharing and information filtering to eliminate negative propaganda and rumour mills that fuel tensions from time to time.

It is our hope that the new year brings bountiful peace tidings and we augment our work in the region.

Ms Murutu is the Co-manager of the Partnership for Peace Project



Youths on the war path during the post-election violence.



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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

Understanding the youth in new dawn

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morally compelled to speak. The famous Kenyan cliché "the youth are the leaders of tomorrow" exemplifies this position.

Socially, Kenyans regard the youth as trouble makers. This explains the use of all the bad and undesirable epithets normally associated with the youth, suchlike uncompromising, drug addicts, intolerant, intransigent, inexperienced and naive.

It therefore becomes notoriously difficult to find a hard and fast answer to the question, who is a youth? A lot of people would be quick to claim that they are youth in response to this question. It is therefore imperative to pose; when does one cease to be a youth?

In my view one ceases to be a youth when one comes to the bitter realization that one can no longer do certain things because one is no longer a youth.

Needless to say, the youth are famous for their interesting temperament and unpredictability. This is the only segment of society that can claim some considerable degree of homogeneity.

Sometimes the youth exhibit an uncompromising stance on matters of principle. This has led to what is generally known as the generation gap. It is the youth who are hardest hit by severe conditions of unemployment, diseases, crime, low



The youth attending a conference at KICC recently. Photo/File

literacy levels etc.

And because they are said to constitute 65% of the Kenyan population they have the highest stake in all national affairs both today and tomorrow.

The role of the youth in society

In the traditional set-up it is the elders who governed. Politics was too serious an affair that could not be left for 'children'. The youth were expected to dutifully obey the elders who provided leadership. For the youth, leadership was outrightly out of question. This was the do-

main of the old generation.

The youth were basically supposed to play the role of entertainers and they were supposed to organise dances and songs in praise of the community's heroes, (mainly older members of the community).

Through these songs, however, the youth unknowingly of course, sometimes acted as the conscience of the community. The songs offered a very powerful instrument for praising real heroes and chastising wrong doers.

The youth also had the duty of protecting the community from its

enemies. They were called upon to provide security in times of war.

Owing to the fact that the youth are more energetic, this puts them in the best situation to contribute to the economic welfare of the community.

This is especially so in the traditional economy whose mainstay is agriculture. The youth therefore tilled the land and grazed cattle.

Today politics still remains an old generation's purview. The youth are considered aliens in the political domain. Their attempts to take part meaningfully in politics is frowned upon by the society.

It is for this group that all political decisions are made. Unfortunately the youth are never consulted since the old generation think that they know best what is good for the youth.

The main role of the youth therefore in modern politics is to be dutiful and obedient to the older generation and by extension the government of the day.

Theirs is a role of foot men/foot women, who implement plans without getting involved in the decision-making and policy formulation.

Their prominent role during and after the struggle for pluralism and multi-party democracy in Kenya's best downplayed by the sycophancy and warlordism that still exists in their portrayal by the media.

Yes - the youth have a significant role to play in reforming the country. But to do so they must organize themselves as a distinct constituency.

The youth must seize present opportunities and drive the momentum - a new constitutional order, devolution, restructuring of institutions of governance, etc

To do this well, youth must continuously conduct context analysis and engage in regular dialogue amongst themselves & with reform minded actors, not only in local area of operation but nationally and globally.

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By KAVYU-KURA

ADVOCATES in Mwingi town have raised a red flag over legal quacks operating in the town and protested to the local Senior Resident Magistrate Hezron Nyaberi.

In a letter dated November 10, 2010 and signed by five advocates, it was claimed that legal quacks and unqualified legal practitioners were on the prowl in Mwingi and fleeced unsuspecting members of the public with impunity.

The letter in our possession has been signed by lawyer Christopher Nzili, Kinywa Mwaniki, Mulinga Mbaluka, Musyoka Wambua and Ngala Mulonzya. They are asking the magistrate to also reign in on some court clerks who are accomplices in the scam.

".....quacks and unqualified persons have set up offices within the town and are working in cahoots with court clerks to tap and fleece clients with whom they share the proceeds," said the letter in part.

The Advocates note that they had an obligation to protect members of the public against exploitations by unqualified people posing as law experts and more so when colluding with court clerks as if they were business partners in robbing the public.

"...It has been noted with concern that your registry has become a booming business counter rather than service counter contrary to the litigation charter displayed at the (court) registry; all this behind your back," the letter went on to say.

Noting that they had no problem with litigants seeking assistance from the court, the lawyers said it becomes a big issue when such assistance extends to drafting, filing service and actual preparation of court processes. They added that such

Legal quacks invade Mwingi —Advocates



Lawyer Christopher Kyania Nzili who signed the two letters

Photo/Kavyu-Kura

a thing meant that the clerks had descended the arena of the legal practice.

They pointed out that they were concerned that ordinary citizens who were not lawyers were allowed to file documents at the registrar on behalf of unrepresented litigants.

The advocates thus conclude; "However, the earlier this issue is addressed, the better for the legal practice in your jurisdic-

tion Sir."

As we went to press, we gathered that Mr. Nyaberi had summoned Advocates to a meeting where he assured them that he would take action against any court clerks who may be culpable in the alleged scam.

"It is true that the magistrate called us to a meeting where we laid bare our complain after which he promised to move with speed and reign in on any craft

court clerks to ensure that dispensing of justice was smooth," lawyer Kinywa Mwaniki told The Link.

He further added that the Advocates fraternity in Mwingi town was also toying with the idea of enlisting the support of the police in raiding backstreet premises from where the quacks operate from and shut them down to save the public further fleecing.

At the same time we also learnt that the lawyers on November 16, also penned a similar letter to Mwingi District Land registrar complaining that some officers were colluding with quacks to direct the public to phony law firms run by laymen.

"Our attention has been drawn to land sale transactions which are being executed by your office. All transactions are being executed by clerks, other than advocates of the high court as required by law," said the letter.

They pointed out that, the law was clear that only advocates should sign land transfers and sale agreements but not their clerks or other fellows posing as advocates.

The lawyers asked the Mwingi land registrar to take appropriate action. "Be advised accordingly that we shall henceforth not sit down and watch your office continue to perpetuate such illegalities," said the advocates in conclusion.

EU funds projects in Eastern

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE European Union has donated Kshs200 million for improvement of water supply, hygiene and sanitation facilities in Matungulu and Masinga Districts.

The project will benefit 180,000 residents in the semi arid Districts of Eastern Province.

"The project targets mainly people with limited access to clean water and basic sanitation facilities in the two districts," said Kihu Irimu of Plan International through which the money has been channeled.

Irimu said over 18,000 households will benefit from latrines to help improve on hygiene, while 45 percent of the residents will access safe drinking water on completion of the project.

He said the project comes as a big relief for children and women who have had to walk for long distances in search of water.

"Many children drop out of school in the two districts due to water and health related problems and the project comes in handy to alleviate their woes," Irimu said.

The implementation period has been spread out to the next four years, and Plan International will work closely with the Ministry of Water and Sustainable Agriculture Community Development Program to guarantee prolific results.

Kisii MPs accused of graft

By BOB OMBATI

OVER 300 youths from Kisii County are up in arms against their MPs for allegedly diverting the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to personal use.

Led by Bernard Mwasi, the youths claimed that a lot of the funds went into benefitting the henchmen and cronies of their legislators with some of the projects posted in the website being non-existent and only serving as conduits to siphon the CDF kitty.

In a press statement, the youth representatives accused MPs of frustrating their efforts to initiate and support community based projects which would be beneficial to the electorate.

"As the youth, we intend to engage in mass action to push for the removal of leaders we feel are only advancing their personal agenda and were insensitive to the plight of the Abagusii community," read part of the statement.

The youngsters vowed to invoke clauses on integrity and ethics to block politicians and officers who plundered public resources from contesting for elective posts.

They challenged fellow youths to venture into income generating activities to be self-reliant and discard the culture of handouts which had impoverished and reduced them to mere voting machines in every electioneering year.

Ford People party youth leader, Steve Arika who accompanied them said that some leaders were not keen on empowering youths economically, fearing that once they were stable, they will unseat them from power.

Mudavadi orders audit of council assets

By BEKADZO TONDO

LOCAL Government minister Musalia Mudavadi has directed local authorities to compile a list of all their assets by June this year.

The Minister says that the move is meant to forestall any attempts to loot council properties, majority of which will either be wound up or merged with existing ones to pave way for county governments.

Mudavadi warns that the government will deal firmly with chief officers or civic leaders who loot assets in their respective councils.

"Let me make it clear that councils have about two years to operate before being replaced with the county governments and the government will be monitoring their activities to make sure that councils do not lose assets during the transition," he adds

Mr Mudavadi says his office has put in place mechanisms to safeguard council's assets and will not hesitate to enlist the Kenya Anti Corruption Commission (KACC) to follow up all those who might involve themselves in one way or the other to steal council properties.

The directive came as the minister was commissioning a strategic development plan for Mtwapa town under Kilifi county council.

Most civic bodies could lose assets to their employees who are gearing up for an exit once the new constitution becomes fully operational.

Sources within the councils reveal that some chief officers, mayors and chairmen are planning to secretly dispose off council assets as their future remains uncertain in the new dispensation.

Assets being targeted for immedi-

ate disposal include land, buildings, and motor vehicles among other public properties.

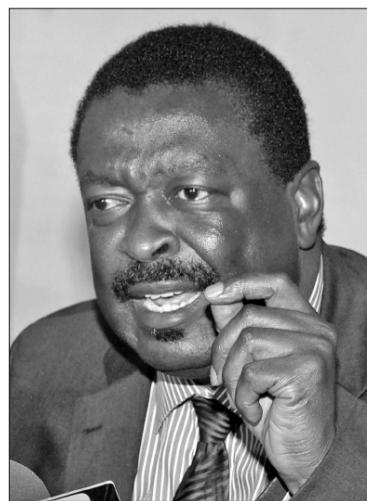
The new constitution is emphatic that the local authorities will be replaced with the county governments.

In the new structure, the number of wards will be reduced and some councils will be merged to form viable units.

Experts who have been helping the council staff and civic leaders understand the new constitution have been emphatic that the county governments will take totally different structures from the existing set up.

For instance, the counties will be headed by governors who are directly elected by voters within the respective counties.

They further say the committees charged with the responsibility of developing the new structures may de-



Mr. Mudavadi

mand that all employees reapply for their jobs afresh.

Groups accuse IIBRC of bias

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

AS debate on the work of the Andrew Ligale led Independent Interim Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC) rages on, civil society organizations in Bungoma County have also joined the fray.

The Western Kenya Human rights Watch executive Director Mr. Job Bwonya in a signed press statement accuses the Ligale team of bias.

Mr. Bwonya alleges that the Ligale team hatched a conspiracy to deliberately over represent certain areas at the expense of others in western province in terms of parliamentary seats. He argues that Bungoma county, which according to the 2009 census has a population of 1, 630, 934 million people was under-represented.

The rights lobby group director wonders why Bungoma County was allocated nine (9) parliamentary seats when other counties with almost similar population as that of Bungoma were allocated more seats. He for instance points out that Kiambu County has 1,623,282 million people with twelve parliamentary seats, Kakamega County has 1, 660,651 million people with twelve (12) parliamentary seats and Nakuru County has 1,603, 325 million people with eleven (11) parliamentary seats.

Mr. Bwonya says that in western province the IIBRC evaded facts and ignored reality while creating new constituencies. "It was not fair for the IIBRC to leave Kanduyi constituency with a population of 229,790 people untouched but instead split Mumias with 212, 818 people, Nambale with 205,982 people and Emuhaya with 185, 069 people," adds Bwonya.

Consequently Mr. Bwonya questions the Criteria or the population quota used by the IIBRC to split Emuhaya constituency arguing that according to section 89 (6) (b) of the new constitution the area does not qualify to be split.

The rights director also questions the rationale the IIBRC used to create two more constituencies in urban Langata constituency with 355, 188 people and one constituency in rural Saboti constituency with 3 87, 766 people.

Shitanda unveils Nyeri town projects

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

HOUSING Minister Soita Shitanda has unveiled a Kshs 262 million project in Nyeri town which is meant to benefit locals.

The Minister who was accompanied by his assistant Margaret Wanjiru, PS Mr Tirop Sigei and Special Programmes Minister Esther Murugi, first commissioned the Kshs 34. 8 million street lighting project within the town.

Shitanda also laid a foundation for the construction of Kamukunji Traders Market which will ensure that about 500 traders sell their wares in an ultra modern market.

Both projects, which cost Kshs 262 million, have been done by the Housing ministry through the Kenya Slums Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) in conjunction with Nyeri Municipal Council.

The high light masts started being operational recently while the market will be completed by March this year.

It was all smiles as the traders who have been selling their wares in hot sun or in the mud whenever it rains witnessed the function which will benefit them.

"I shall ensure that all the 465



FROM RIGHT: Special Programmes Minister Hon. Esther Murugi, Housing Assistant Minister Margaret Wanjiru and Housing Minister Hon Soita Shitanda laying the foundation stone at Kamukunji traders market in Nyeri town recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

traders get their slots once the project is complete and we shall return here next year to ensure this while opening the market. I

also urge traders to form cooperatives societies in order to benefit," said assistant minister Mrs Margaret Wanjiru.

Murugi who hosted the ministers in her Nyeri Town constituency said the 35 slots which will be left out should be given to vulnerable groups like disabled and orphans.

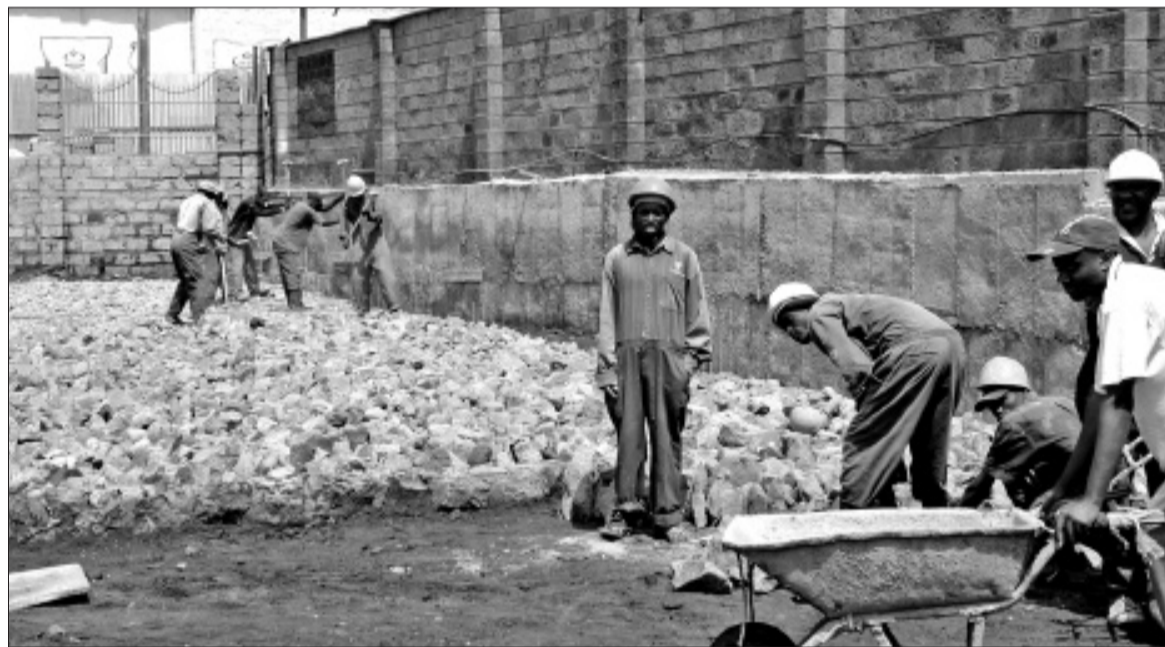
Shitanda lauded the Magnet Ventures Company which is putting up street lighting project for doing commendable job and on time.

"I shall ensure that we get additional funds so that slums in Nyeri town also benefit from the upgrading programme," added the minister.

Nyeri mayor also called upon the Ministry to assist in the construction of ablution blocks at Witemere slums and surveying of colonial villages like Gatitu, Ki-amwathi and Gitathi-ini.

The mayor also want Kabiruni bypass to be tarmacked and stair cases built at Witemere slums through the same (Kensup) programme.

Councilors present lauded the project saying it has been done in an orderly manner.



Workers building Kamukunji Traders Market. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Webuye power project in controversy

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

THE hydro-electric power station project in Webuye has run into controversy. At the heart of contention is a dispute over the ownership of the project which is likely to further delay the implementation process.

The council on the one hand is supporting a new concessionaire who has pledged to invest Kshs2billion in the project which is expected to generate 10megawatts of power on completion.

Que energy, a consultancy firm in hydro electric power, has already conducted a feasibility assessment study on the project with the full support of the council. Daniel Theuri, the technical director of the company recently took local leaders at the site, and explained how they intend to construct the power station at the upper side of the river.

However, another group allied to the area MP Alfred Sambu is backing the Kenya AA Electric Crane Company

Limited and has accused their rivals of trying to sabotage the implementation of the project they initiated.

Mr. Lincoln Barasa the personal assistant to the MP told the group before acting DC, Michael Talamu that they cannot be allowed to proceed with the feasibility study, as they were not recognized by the MP. "Who are they? And who sent them?" he questioned them while at the falls.

Que energy is a consortium of local people, the municipal council and collapsing Pan African Paper mills.

They say that they target to provide cheap electricity to the paper mill urging that the high consumption of power plus the increasing electricity bills was one of the major causes to its poor performance.

This development has taken leaders allied to the Kenya AA Electric Crane Company Limited by surprise.

In August last year, the area MP wrote to the commissioner of lands indicating the willingness by the Kenya

AA Electric Crane Company Limited to develop the power station. "I re-confirm that the investor is interested in being allocated part of LR1662 Ndivisi/ Mihuu totaling 30 acres", wrote the MP in a letter dated 19/8/2010.

The MP's letter was meant to reinforce a similar request by the Webuye municipal council in July which was addressed to the Minister for Lands notifying him about the same private investor who had shown interest in developing the power station. "The council overwhelmingly supports the project which is viable and has potential to spur development in the area," the Town Clerk wrote to the minister.

But in a dramatic twist, the Mayor Mr. John Ngome quickly changed tact and instructed Que energy to move with speed and complete the feasibility study. "We have no problem collaborating with anyone bringing development, so long as we are involved in the process", said Ngome. The mayor complained that the

firm being fronted by the MP, has never consulted them about the project and the council is not in the picture of what exactly they want to do.

However the letter by the town clerk Richard Kodindo dated 11 July 2010, informed the minister that the council had advised the firm to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) test, and make formal application for the land.

The land in question was reserved for the East African Power Company in 1968 for the development of a power station. The council on its part has decided to lease it to private developers because it has been left undeveloped for a long period. The Kenya AA Electric Crane Company Limited, the Chinese firm interested in the project first sought the approval of the council in August this year.

In a letter dated August 19,2010, signed by Wang Songoi and copied to Bungoma East District Commissioner

John Litunda and Webuye MP Alfred Sambu, the firm declared its interest and willingness to develop and construct a small hydro-electric power station along River Nzoia.

According to the letter, the project also entailed the development of a dam to be used in horticulture, livestock and fish farming. Environmental Solutions Africa, the firm which carried out the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) test, recommended that the council allocates 15 acres of land for the project.

In September, the mayor strongly opposed the allocation of land to the firm arguing that the council did not have available land or an alternative site for such a big project.

"I am not aware of any resolve to allocate 15 acres of land to a private developer within the municipality", he told journalists then. On his part, Sambu has been holding meetings with selected leaders from the constituency about the hydro-power project.

He has been telling residents that the investor is willing to pump Kshs.800million towards the project, to generate 30megawatts of power.

Kisii Aids fund idle

By BOB OMBATI

COMMUNITY Based Organizations (CBOs) in Nyaribari Chache constituency, in Kisii County have been asked to apply for funds earmarked for the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Area District Development Officer (DDO) Job Otiwa says that substantial amounts of money were lying idle in the banks awaiting disbursements to credible organizations.

The DDO says that organizations involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS should take advantage of the available funds to intensify their campaigns in the fight against the pandemic.

Otiwa however warns that groups that misuse the funds risk being black-listed and denied future funding, saying that the government will continuously monitor and evaluate their activities with a view to ensuring that the funds are properly utilised.

The officer notes some groups have not realized any meaningful impact on the ground despite regular and massive funding and challenges the beneficiaries to report corrupt CBO managers to help recover any stolen funds.

He told a public meeting at Kiogoro grounds during the World Aids Day that more partners like CARE Kenya had chipped in to complement the government's efforts in fighting the disease at the villages. "You should be open and collaborate with the partners to help reduce stigma which has hampered the fight against the scourge" said Otiwa.

Some Non Governmental Organizations, noted the officer focused on nutrition while others dwelt on prevention, treatment and home based care.

He challenged groups involved in fighting the pandemic to diversify their activities and avoid duplication to help support the infected and affected families cope with the disease.

Area District Medical Officer of Health (DMHO) Dr. Chsipus Nyongesa said the HIV/AIDS prevalence among women had dropped from 8 percent in 2003 to 5.1 percent in 2010 while that of men rose from 4 percent to 4.3 percent.

Nyongesa revealed that the number of discordant couples was increasing, stressing that for every three couples tested, one was discordant.

He said men who prefer having their wives tested to ascertain their status were doing a disservice to themselves since cases of discordant couples was on the rise and therefore only individual testing can help curb the spreading of the scourge. He said 60 percent of women knew their HIV/AIDS status and delivered in health facilities while 40 percent delivered at home, increasing chances of mother to child transmission.

Poverty Eradication Commission (PEC) coordinator Edward Mogusu decried new infections among couples and young people, saying it was a threat to the economy and the attainment of vision 2030.

Area District Commissioner Benjamin Njoroge deplored the widespread consumption of illicit brew and abuse of drugs by youths, noting that this had led to irresponsible sexual behavior and increased the spread of HIV/AIDS scourge.

Parents, advised the DC should inculcate good morals in their children and support them acquire professional skills to aid them eke a living.

He challenged bar operators near learning institutions to relocate their businesses 300 metres away and operate between 5 p.m and 11 p.m to comply with the newly enacted Alcoholic Drinks Control Act 2010.

Security officers, said the DC will mount regular patrols to ensure that the alcohol Bill was enforced, saying those who flouted it risked being jailed or fined heavily.

Shock grips Nyeri village

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

RESIDENTS of Githoithiro village in Nyeri Town constituency are a shell shocked by news that a family has locked their son in the house for almost twenty years.

Forty-one-year old James Maina Wahome alias Jimmy has been locked in a one roomed house since 1993 owing to his disability.

His mother Ann Wangui, 74, says her action was driven by stigma associated with disability in the community and therefore she was forced to lock his son in the room to avoid being sidelined by neighbours, relatives and friends.

But what is shocking is the fact that even his father 76-year-old Mr Wahome Kiogora, brothers and sisters have been unable to access him as their mother would not allow them.

Maina, who is the third born in a family of five, was born on November 15, 1969 at Pumwani Maternity Hospital in Nairobi. His condition is blamed on complications experienced by the mother during delivery which left him mentally handicapped.

His mother sought help from several hospitals but she could not find a solution for his disability.

In 1993, the family relocated from Nairobi to Githoithiro village in Gatiu area where they have been living.

However Maina has been confined like a prisoner and his skin colour has since changed. He suffers from malnutrition for lack of food

and rarely gets balanced diet.

"I have only seen him once for the many years I have been in this village. I only hear there is a man inside this home. His mother is very cruel and rarely welcomes any visitor in that house. We only watch her from far," said a 39 year old man who did not wish to be named.

Wangui does not allow the neighbours to visit the home, not even her daughter-in-law's next homestead for fear that the truth about his son's malnourished status will be exposed.

But his elder brother Mr Michael Wanjohi is bitter since he says that his brother rarely gets anything to eat. "My younger brother usually gets food once in two days mainly because my mother wants to avoid removing waste from his tattered beddings," he says.

Wahome who is a lecturer in one of the public institutions however says that their other siblings live far away from home therefore they are unable to monitor his failing condition.

But Wangui defends herself from the allegations, saying that his body has been getting weaker and weaker as time goes by.

"My son was very healthy, but now his condition has deteriorated maybe because he is diabetic. I was also a very strong woman, but my

health is no longer the same due to age and ill health." She said. She adds that she has tried to look for a house help to no avail and most of the time she is in hospital as she is diabetic.

She, however, maintains that Maina is her responsibility and she cannot allow any, not even his brothers, to attend to him.

Maina's father Kiogora who has since separated from his wife and now stays in a wooden house outside her wife's house says that he has lost hope in his son and is only waiting for his death. "It is a miracle that Jimmy has lived this long. We didn't expect him to live this long due to the suffering he has undergone.

He has lived in a deplorable and pathetic condition. Lack of food and water is his problem," said 76-year old father. The area Social Services workers said that the family has never reported the matter to them as they could have ensured proper care.

The family says that they reported the matter to the area chief few years ago who visited the home and talked with Maina's mother who promised that she will take care of him.



Mr. James Maina Wahome, 41, and mother Mrs Ann Wangui, 74, at their Githoithiro village in Nyeri Town constituency. Inset: Mr. Maina looks around the room where he has been locked since 1993. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Bungoma county forms shadow assembly

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

A SHADOW assembly of Bungoma County has been elected, as residents gear up for the proposed devolved system.

The county assembly, under the auspices of Christian Partners Development Agency (CPDA), was elected after a two day workshop in Bungoma town which brought together 16 representatives from the six constituencies in the county.

The assembly is going to act as the

focal point for civic education to create awareness of the new constitution and devolved government.

Mr. Zeth Makokha from Bumula was elected governor and James Shabatai from Mt. Elgon, his deputy.

The meeting came up with several issues they regarded as pertinent to the development of the County.

Key among the issues was poor leadership from politicians and lack of economic empowerment to steer the County to development.

They were of the view that lead-

ers of the county be elected based on merit and vision but not necessarily wealth as a measure of good leadership. They resolved to go out and urge the youth to contest for the leadership positions on offer as a way of shifting power balance and focusing more on issues of development rather than ethnicity.

Others elected were Melap Lusweti who will represent women, Bernard Barasa (disability) and Solomon Kiterie (youth). Constituency representatives were: Kimilili: Luka

Laikipia elites lay plans for County

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE Laikipia County will depend on revenue from the ranches to generate income for its vast population.

A meeting convened by professionals and leaders from Laikipia to explore ways through which the proposed county can be developed said the county is endowed with vast resources that if properly utilized will help transform the area.

They said that Laikipia is ranked among leading tourist attraction sites in the country with an average of about 6,000 elephants and only comes second after to Amboseli National Park which hosts the largest number of jumbos in the country.

The population of black rhinos stands at 630 with a similar population of gray zebras.

A former Laikipia County Council chairman Jackson Machomba, said that ranching was the major economic activity in the region, with 75 percent of land being under wildlife conservation.

Machomba however lamented that ranchers have denied the county revenue generated from their facilities, majority of which had turned into leading tourist attractions sites.

He said that previous attempts to compel ranchers to pay levies to the council were thwarted after some civic leaders connived with the ranchers to defeat the move.

"Civic leaders were used to deprive the area of the revenue generated from the ranches after ranchers managed to convince them to oppose the move," he said during the meeting dubbed "the county we want". Dr Michael Mugo, of Egerton University urged the residents to engage in value addition and tap on the huge potential that exists in tourist attraction sites in the county.

"We must learn how to milk the elephants and rhinos among other wild game found in these ranches," he said. Mugo said it is sad that despite occupying huge tracts of land, ranchers in the area were secretly hosting tourists in their facilities in order to evade taxes.

Mr. Laban Kunem, a University of Nairobi student said that things are likely to change since the County will introduce new tax regime that will focus on areas that were previously left out in the current arrangement.

Mr Apollo Machira, a lecturer at Egerton University urged residents to elect a governor who will be able to crack the whip on errant ranchers.

"The ranchers invite tourists to the facilities privately and deliberately fail to keep records that can help us audit their activities in order to decide how much tax they are supposed to pay," he said.

Lunani and Rosemary Nanjala; Sirisia: Geoffrey Mukhwana and Florence Makokha; Bumula: Boniface Wanyama and Bibiana Wekesa; Webyue: Luke Wanjala and Regina Muanji; Kanduyi: George Masibo and Cllr. Saumu Fulumena and Mt. Elgon: Jane Chebet and Maurice Kimutai.

The assembly is to meet early next year to draw up a series of activities geared towards helping the residents understand better the constitution and elect the right people to the county assembly when elections are called.

Nyahururu workers to down tools

By MORRIS GITHENYA

NYAHURURU municipal council employees are up in arms against delays in the payment of their salaries.

The employees who have not been paid since October last year are now threatening to down their tools to push the council to clear their outstanding dues.

The demand by employees come against a backdrop of revelations that the council's current expenditure outstrips its revenue base by Kshs4 million and hence the delay in salary payments.

The council's treasurer Paul Ng'ethe recently told a full council meeting that they were able to collect Kshs34, 032,829 in revenue between July and November last year but spent Kshs37, 845,236 which was way above their capacity.

Lately, the inability by the council to meet its obligations has been blamed on relentless squabbles between civic leaders, chief officers and employees.

A month ago a group of councilors unsuccessful attempted to oust the Mayor Mr Peter Thiari through a vote of no confidence.

The mayor however managed to pull a clever stance and dismissed their actions as illegal.

The employees believe that chief officers seem to have taken advantage of the infighting between civic leaders to siphon funds from the local authority and then blame the scenario on poor revenue.

A report tabled by the treasurer during the full council meeting revealed that the council general rate fund account that normally holds the biggest amount of money has only Kshs200,000 while the housing fund account where money is put after tenants pay rent does not even have a single cent.

But the mayor downplayed the report and blamed the scenario on the government's failure to cushion the local authorities especially after the approval of salary increments for workers.

Mwingi police accused of graft

By KAVYU-KURA

PUBLIC transporters plying the Mwingi-Kyuso-Usueni road are in a dilemma due to the bad state of the road and demands for bribes by police.

The dilapidated state of the road that traverses Mwingi, Kyuso and Tseikuru Districts is so bad that most operators have pulled their vehicles out of the route due to perpetual breakdowns.

Transporters who spoke to The Link on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal by police said the latter have taken advantage of the sorry state of the road to demand a flat rate amount of bribe on daily basis.

"Since for obvious reasons our vehicles cannot be in the best of shape due to the bad road, police are collecting bribes of Kshs300 on a daily basis from every 14 seater-matatu plying the route and Kshs 1,000 for a bus," said one operator who added that the bribe for a mini-bus is pegged at Kshs500.

He said even as the transporters go to great pains to make their vehicles remain roadworthy, the high daily mandatory bribe paid to police officers was unbearable burden.

Other operators who randomly talked to The link said that police officers stationed along the route every morning have literally turned the traffic checks to toll stations to collect money.

Most of them said that the officers who use private cars mostly the latest low fuel consuming Probox models, chase after the passenger vehicles and stop them to collect the stipulated bribes without due regard whether or not the vehicles or crew have violated any traffic rules.

The Link writer has on a number of occasions witnessed police officers openly taking bribes from the PSV crew who usually stop their vehicles and walk to the policemen's car to offer the mandatory bribe.

The hot spots where money changes hands are the area around Kwa-Mulei, Ikuuni or at Ithumbi next to the primary school gate. The biggest worry is that as the bribe is paid at this unofficial toll points little regard is given to the roadworthiness of the vehicles involved.

A transporter and a prominent Merchant in Mwingi told The Link recently that usually the operators who suspect that their vehicles are nothing but junks not to be on the road pay hefty bribes than the fixed daily charge.

"Once one feels that his vehicle is not roadworthy, is it not better for him



ACCIDENT: A car belonging to the EABL General Manager Mr. Mumbi Muiruri that rolled on the bad road a few kilometres from Kyuso town recently. The EABL boss and driver escaped with slight injuries.

Photo/Kavyu-Kura

to pay high bribe say of up to Sh. 1000 to the police instead of being taken to court where he would be fined up to Kshs20,000," the transporter posed to journalists.

As this loophole is exploited by the police to milk bribes from the Public transporters, the latter also take advantage to break all manner traffic rules in a bid to make up for what they pay the police.

The prevailing scenario puts the life of the travelers on the line as they end up being packed like sardines in the vehicles whose deplorable conditions are obvious.

When newsmen raised this issue with the Mwingi Officer Commanding Police Division (OCPD) Kenneth Kimani, he said he was not aware of the corruption cartel within his brigade. He promised to investigate to establish whether the police officers were involved in the PSV extortion ring.

Speaking in his office, Kimani said it was important for the PSV operators to launch a formal complaint with him so that he could take the necessary punitive action. He however promised to institute investigations and take action.

Even as the OCPD promises to deal with the issue of the corrupt policemen, the PSV transporters are hoping that the much heralded tarmacking of the of the Mwingi-Kyuso-Tseikuru-

Usueni road would kick off soon to save them the high cost of maintaining their vehicles.

Recently while presiding over a funds raiser at Waita secondary school, the VP Kalonzo Musyoka who is the local MP pledged that works on the road would start early last month.

He said a Memorandum of under-

standing had already been signed between the government of Kenya and a Chinese Company for the latter to commence the tarmacking works on the road by early December.

By the time we went to press the contractor had not moved to site while no word was forthcoming on when the Chinese Company would move in.

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Educate Kisiis on new law —Mogire

By BOB OMBATI

EVEN after the promulgation of the new constitution five months ago, majority of Kisii residents are still unaware of its content and its impact on their lives.

Civic education which could have helped to demystify the document is lacking with majority of Civil Society Organizations in the area mainly focusing on the HIV/AIDS without any reference to the new constitution.

Mr. Geoffrey Mogire who is the chairman of the Centre for Community Dialogue (CCD) agrees that majority of the residents are ignorant of the new constitution and roots for a thorough

civic education to help them understand and participate in its implementation.

Mr. Mogire says that specific groups are more concerned with areas that touch on their lives, leaving out the bigger picture of the document which has immense benefits on their lives generally.

He at the same time says CSOs lack capacity to fully interpret the document saying that only lawyers and human rights activists are better placed to discharge the mandate effectively.

He says that chiefs who could have been used to educate the masses during public barazas are also disadvantaged in the task.

Mr. Joseph Mosoti who is a

project officer with New horizons Non Governmental Organization (NGO) admits that majority of Kenyans are not acquainted with the new document and mainly peg their knowledge on falsehoods perpetrated during the referendum campaigns.

"That is not enough. We want the government and donors to fund local CBOs to enable them mount serious civic education to sensitize people ahead of the 2012 general elections," says Mosoti

He says it would be difficult for Kenyans to participate fully in the implementation of the new law owing to their ignorance, adding that some Kenyans still cling to the old constitution.

Kilifi water woos to end soon

By BEKADZO TONDO

WATER supply in Kilifi town and its environs is set for improvement.

This follows construction of a new water tank and rehabilitation of four reservoirs at an estimated cost of about Kshs23 million. The improved water supply is set to end the frequent water shortages which had become synonymous with Kilifi town.

According to the Managing Director of Kilifi Mariakani Water sewerage company (KIMAWASCO) Engineer Mwamuye Makupe, about Kshs19.2million sourced from Coast Water Service Bard was spent in the construction of the tank at Mabirikani in Kilifi whose capacity stands at 1500 cubic meters.

Engineer Makupe further said KIMAWASCO has embarked on the rehabilitation of four other water tank reservoirs which were built in 1967 with a minute capacity of 100 cubic meters.

The engineer said the dilapidated tanks are being rehabilitated with funds donated by Bahari Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

Speaking at the site recently, KIMAWASCO Technical and operation manager, Engineer Samuel Kombe said the construction of the new tank and rehabilitation of the four other water reservoirs will improve water supply in the area.

Engineer Kombe said water shortage facing Kilifi town had been caused by the bad shape of water reservoirs which were unable to store water for use in times of shortages that mainly resulted from technical problems at the main Baricho water point in Lango Baya.

He further said the site holding the water tanks will be fenced off and steel gate installed for security purposes.

Engineer Kombe explained that the company was incurring huge losses in repairs as vandalism of water facilities was still prevalent in the area.

The engineer said the ongoing construction and rehabilitation of existing water tanks was geared towards ensuring that the water supply is reliable even when the normal flow is affected.

Mwingi police enlists service of cyclists

By KAVYU-KURA

MONTHS after the police accused some Boda Boda motorcyclists in Mwingi of complicity in crime they have surprisingly turned round to enlist them in the war against the vice.

Recently the police sought to incorporate the 250-strong team of Boda boda riders in Mwingi town in the war against crime.

Mwingi Officer Commanding Police Station (OCS) Jonathan Wafula summoned the Boda Boda operators to a thirty minutes meeting and asked them to help make life enjoyable and crime free for Mwingi residents.

Curiously, the enlisting of the Boda Boda men comes nearly seven months after the police in May last year accused some of them of being accomplices to criminals who were at the time constantly terrorizing the town and its environs.

At the time, CID officers even raided the home of a Boda Boda operator in Mwingi town where they believed a gun and property stolen by gangsters were being hidden. The dozen detectives who were under the command of the Mwingi CID boss Leonard Namatsi and the OCS ransacked the one roomed house that was jam packed with goods but never recovered the firearm. They took away property believed to be stolen.

As things were unfolding, the police consequently ordered the motor cyclist not to operate past 10 o'clock in the night unless they were attending to emergencies.

The action was taken as complaints by robbery victims showed that most robbers in most cases made off on Boda Boda motorcycle taxis.

Then, Mwingi Officer Commanding Police Division (OCPD) Kenneth Kimani confirmed that the decision was arrived at, following a meeting with the Boda Boda operators. He said it was made clear that those who will flout the 10 pm rule would be arrested.

He said that during the meet-



Boda boda operators gather outside the Mwingi police station where they received tips on how to help fight crime from the Mwingi OCS, Jonathan Wafula. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

ing, the Boda Boda operators were also asked to provide their bio-data to the police so that they could be closely monitored so as to weed out those with criminal inclinations.

The directive came at the wake of the arrest of two Boda boda motorcyclist following a robbery and fatal injury of a hardware dealer Kavuvu Mulwa at Nuu trading centre in Mwingi East district. The two motor-cyclists were suspected to be members of the gang that attacked the trader and their motor-bikes were also impounded as police investigations got underway.

Earlier another motor cyclist had been remanded in custody at the Mwingi GK prisons after he appeared before a Mwingi court and pleaded not guilty to a charge of robbery with violence.

And, robbers who days before raided the Mwingi Target Supermarket, were said to have fled on

Boba Bodas after shooting dead a night guard.

In his recent meeting, OCS Wafula said in order for the police to have ease in pre-empting crime, "the no operating beyond the 10 p.m. rule" was still in force. He cautioned that anyone flouting that rule would be arrested.

"If you think you have clients who are likely to arrive in Mwingi town past 10 p.m., then you must alert the police early enough to avoid arrest," he cautioned them during the meeting held outside the police station.

The OCS further urged the Boda Boda men to report to the police any suspicious looking people seeking their services as they could be criminals. He said that is the only way police would be able to take appropriate action.

He said since the local Boda Boda operators knew one another, it was prudent for them to report to the police other people

who could join them under the guise of doing Boda boda business while they harboured criminal motives.

The OCS cautioned the motorcyclist against transporting unfamiliar people, telling them that they could avoid running into trouble by deliberately overcharging such characters. He said such clients could be criminals who could even rob the operators of their motorbikes.

"Do not carry strangers in the night before they properly identify themselves. You should also ensure that one of your colleagues trails you whenever you carry suspicious characters so that he could help you in case of trouble," said Wafula.

He at the same time urged the operators to adhere to the traffic code by maintaining their motor bikes in serviceable condition and wearing reflecting jackets whenever riding in the night.

Bungoma to allocate more funds for development



A section of Bungoma town.

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

BUNGOMA county council plans to allocate Kshs.111 million on various development projects in the next financial year.

A Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) meeting at the county hall, resolved to allocate most of the funds to projects that support education, health and roads.

Most of the projects picked by the stakeholders favoured schools, construction of rural access roads or health facilities in the wards.

There was confusion in the meeting when the chairman, Julius Bakasa directed that two stakeholders from each ward consult with their respective civic leaders in order to pri-

oritize projects for implementation. However the level of suspicion amongst them became apparent and some civic leaders had to disappear from the venue to evade any form of consultation.

This left stakeholders dump founded as they could only make alterations in the presence of the councilor. The clerk to the council Mr. Martin Sikolia had to intervene.

Bakasa at the same time reminded stakeholders that the projects they had identified for funding would be implemented during the 2011/2012 financial year as projects selected for funding during 2010/2011 financial year were still pending.

He explained that due to delays

in the disbursement of the money, all projects slated for implementation during this financial year have been suspended until such a time when funds are received.

The chairman also clarified that councilors role in the implementation was largely to act as watchdog, but do not handle funds allocated to the projects.

The council with 41 wards has a total expenditure of Kshs.182million against the revenue of Kshs254million.

Most of the expenditure covers salaries and wages, allowances for councilors, operations and maintenance, but funds for debt resolutions and capital projects have not been factored in the budget.

Bunyala rice farmers reap bumper harvest

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

PADDY rice farmers at the 534 acre Bunyala irrigation scheme are set to reap a record bumper harvest of rice.

Conservative estimates by Farm Manager Joel Tanui predict that each acre will produce at least 25 bags of 75kg each. But seasoned farmers like Ouma Magogo put the harvest between 30 to 35 bags of Basmati Rice per acre.

"Harvesting has begun and marketing of the produce is being undertaken by the farmers cooperative society," the Farm Manager said, adding that orders have already been received from private millers and individuals from as far as Uganda and will be sold at Kshs.60 per kilogram.

The farmers on their part expressed confidence saying that since the posting of the new Farm Manager, the scheme has achieved a major facelift and cites the murraming and gravelling of the feeder roads as well as the drainage system and the clearing of canals which have been done.

The farm manager further said that the 1,100 farms in the out grower sector which are being done under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) have received funds that will be used to buy fuel for the machinery to drench the canals, open up feeder roads and also buy more acres in order to expand land under the rice scheme.

Tanui at the same time said that the farmers under the Economic Stimulus Project (ESP) will be provided with water as well as the farm inputs.

"After harvesting and selling their produce, farmers will be impressed upon to join groups and open an endowment and revolving fund that will empower them financially," he adds.

The manager at the same time assured rice farmers in the region that plans are underway by the National Resource Management Board to address the high cost of electricity incurred during the pumping of water to both the main scheme and the out grower sector.

He said that talks with the Kenya Seed Company and the National Irrigation Board (NIB) are at an advanced stage to help in the introduction of a crop rotation programme.

"The programme if implemented will see provision of maize seeds in the main scheme to boost farmers' economic well-being and at the same time add nutrients to the soil after the harvest," he said. He spoke as the World Vision launched a 20 acre pilot scheme at Magombe West Lugari Sub-location in Bunyala district.

The area programme manager Richard Atundi told The Link at his office recently that the project which commenced in June 2010 seeks to guarantee food security, alleviate poverty and offer an alternative source of income by promoting agricultural activities in the region.

Atundi at the same time said that the pilot project will help in reclaiming the swamp land to encourage residents of Magabira and Bubamba villages to become paddy farmers instead of whiling away their time in Lake Victoria where fish stocks have dwindled.

He said that the project has been funded to the tune of Kshs300,000 while BUSCODAT, a community based organisation which contributed an additional Kshs250,000 is to oversee the implementation of the project. Atundi further said that after harvesting, farmers will open an endowment and revolving fund account that will support the education of children from poor families and especially the girl-child up to the secondary level.

Committee cautions CDF team over graft

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Kenya Anti-Corruption Campaign Steering Committee (KACC-SC) wants transparency in the management of Nambale Constituency Development Fund (CDF) kitty.

The director of the National Anti-Corruption Campaign Steering Committee (NACCSC) Ambassador Dr Hukka Wario expressed concern over lack of transparency and accountability in the implementation process.

Wario was accompanied by officials from the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) and the Busia County Anti-Corruption Civilian Oversight Social Audit Committee for an impromptu monitoring and evaluation of projects funded by CDF.

The officials singled out shoddy work at Burumba primary school within Busia municipality which had received a total of Kshs2.1million for the construction of an administration block.

The monitoring and evaluation team visited St. Mathias Busia Secondary School where the Kshs2.2million allocated for the construction of a school library could not be accounted for.

The anti-corruption team instructed the Busia District Commissioner Mr Mwiandi Gitonga and the Public Works department to evaluate the project's Bill of Quantity [BQ] to establish the actual amount of money spent on the same.

"I am instructing the DC and the Public Works Department to evaluate project costs and forward the same to KACC for immediate action," said



The neatly painted dispensary sponsored by CDF in the middle of a bush. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo

ambassador Hukka, adding that the monitoring and evaluation team will move to other constituencies in Busia County to ensure funds are properly utilized.

At the same time, Burumba residents challenged the locational CDF committee to explain how Kshs2.1million allocated for the construction of Burumba dispensary was

spent.

The angry residents told The Link that funding for the project was approved in 2006 to assist them access medical services.

According to the data availed to The Link, the project received Kshs1million during the financial year 2006/2007. An additional Kshs.800,000 was disbursed dur-

ing the 2007/2008 financial year and another Kshs300,000 was channeled towards the project during the 2009/2010 financial year all totaling sh2.1million.

However, the dispensary is yet to become operational due to lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the locational development committee.

State to promote horticulture

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

THE government has initiated a program to promote horticulture in Central and Rift Valley provinces.

The Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion Unit (SHEPUP) is to be implemented by the ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with JICA.

The project seeks to enhance access to finances, grading, packing and processing capacity and better farm prices.

"In rare cases horticulture growers are organized as they act as individuals," said Stephen Kioko the deputy head of SHEPUP at the ministry. Mr. Kioko who spoke at Mabanga farmers training centre in Bungoma, during a sensitization workshop for selected Agricultural officers from Rift Valley, said farmers need to be in groups to exploit the potential in horticulture.

Under the project, the district agriculture officers from the 10 selected districts are to identify 100 farmers groups to benefit in the pilot phase of the project.

Mr. Kioko observed that small holder farmers are poorly organized, lack direct access to grading, packing and processing capacity.

He added that the farmers have to contend with low farm level prices and limited access to finances. "Further market information and transparency is often lacking forcing producers to depend heavily on middlemen who exploit them," Kioko added. However, the scenario is likely to change as the project will empower farmers by providing technical services. The groups are to be trained on improved production, market access for their produce and better management skills.

The official said that the implementing districts were picked in August, when all

DAOs were involved in the process of identifying the first beneficiaries.

Selection was based on potential of beneficiaries to implement the project, socio-economic level of the people, ability of DAOs in mobilizing farmers and resources for implementation. The project envisages group cohesiveness as the lifeline of its success. Under the Farm Business Linkage Stakeholders Forum (FABLIS), five farmers groups from each of the ten districts will undergo training. For extension services, an extension officer from the ministry of Agriculture will be attached to each group, to offer technical advice as well as monitor progress.

According to reports by the Horticultural Crops Development Authority Kenya supplies 35 percent of cut flowers to European Union, which is said to consume 50 percent of flowers in the world.

New fertilizer for acid soils launched

By JOEL JUMA

THE ALLIANCE for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) wants farmers in Western Kenya to use new fertilizer instead of lime when planting on acidic soils. A director at AGRA, Bashir Jama, said when farmers use the fertilizer, they will not need to apply lime in their farms. "When you tell farmers to buy lime and fertilizer separately, it becomes a problem. The new product is a combination of lime and fertilizer," added Dr. Jama. He noted that the fertilizer namely Minjingu, is produced in neighbouring Tanzania.

Speaking during a meeting with farmers in Kakamega North District, Jama added that farmers in Malava are producing half what their counterparts in Lugari are harvesting under the same acreage due to soil acidity. Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, lime companies and agro-dealers also attended the meeting.

Jama said AGRA plans to reach out to thousands of farmers in Kakamega North, one of the areas severely affected by acidity in Western. He noted that the problem affected farmers in large parts of Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. He added that acidity in the region is largely due to leaching because of abundant rains, continuous cultivation and misapplication of nitrogen fertilizers. He added that the solution lies in the application of calcium-rich lime along with complementary fertilizers and organic matter. He noted that lime is expensive largely due to transportation costs.

"High transportation costs have kept lime from reaching smallholder fields," added Jama. Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) indicated that it will partner with AGRA to promote the use of lime, saying farming should be turned into big business.

More MPs now want their CDF audited

By JOEL JUMA

THE number of MPs seeking to have their CDF kitties audited has shot up considerably.

Kangundo MP Johnston Muthama and Kilome MP Harun Mwau have joined the long list of legislators who have asked National Tax Payers Association (NTA) to audit their respective kitties to ascertain whether the funds are benefiting their constituents.

Mwau and Muthama join Assistant Minister Manyala Keya who requested NTA to audit his Lurambi constituency.

The team is to gather the views of the electorate on how the funds are distributed by management committees and whether there has been any impact on development

programmes. NTA national coordinator Kizito Wangalwa said Mwau has requested his organisation to go to the ground to evaluate the impact of the funds. "We are soon going to dispatch our team to Kilome," said Wangalwa. Wangalwa explained that Muthama and Mwau have demanded that NTA moves to all parts of their constituencies to collect views from residents. Wangalwa noted that auditing of Lurambi projects has already been done as requested by Keya.

Keya said he wanted the projects audited to ascertain irregularities committed by the management team. "We must learn to be accountable. Why should we fear auditing yet we are serving the electorate?" asked Keya.

Keya, who is Gender and Children Af-

fairs assistant minister, said that he will use the report to reshuffle the management team. Wangalwa who was speaking in Butula constituency faulted a section of MPs from Western province for refusing to be audited. NTA Communication's Coordinator Davis Adieno and Western Regional Coordinator Daniel Naburi said requests for auditing have been made in Butere, Emuhaya, Sabatia and Malava.

"People want the reports for Butere and Malava to evaluate the capabilities of Cabinet Ministers Soita Shitanda and Wycliffe Oparanya in the management of funds before they can receive a go ahead in their plans to contest for the Governor's slot in Kakamega County," said Naburi.

Mwingi North CDF gives bursary

By KAVYU-KURA

THE Mwingi North CDF disbursed bursaries worth Kshs1.98 to 575 needy students from the area during the 2009/10 financial year.

Majority of the beneficiaries came from the 22 administrative locations in Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka's constituency with the selection being done by the locational bursary allocation committees headed by respective chiefs.

According to records availed to The Link, each location was allocated Kshs90,000 to disburse to needy students in secondary schools, tertiary institutions and universities especially orphans during the year under review.

The list of beneficiaries showed that students in secondary schools were awarded between Kshs2,000 and Kshs 5,000 while those in tertiary colleges and the University were awarded bursaries ranging between Sh. 3,000 and 5,000.

However, out of the 575 beneficiaries, only a paltry 14 were either in tertiary colleges or pursuing university education meaning the bulk of the money went to Secondary school students.

Only two of the university applicants were considered for bursary allocation in Kanthungu location and studying at the Kenyatta University while the other hails from Kyanika and is a student at the Kimathi University.

When we inquired from the CDF Committee treasurer Angeline Mbula why only a negligible number of College and University students qualified for bursaries, she said the omission was to be blamed on the location bursary allocation committees.

"For some strange reason, the



Angeline Mbula, the Mwingi North CDF kitty treasurer. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

location committees do not find College and Varsity students as liable for the bursaries, although our instructions are that all deserving students even those in the universities should be awarded the bursaries," said Mbula.

She said the CDF committee had noted the deliberate attempt by the location bursary committees to deny deserving College and Varsity students bursaries and thus, "We have agreed to set aside some funds at the CDF office to allocate bursaries to College and university students only."

She said beginning this fiscal year (2010/11), University and college students will have to apply for bursaries directly to the CDF office using a special form and those who merit will receive at least Kshs. 10,000 bursary allocation each.

Mbula said the arrangement would ensure that all deserving University and middle level College students are attended to while the location bursary committees will have a lesser duty of shifting through applications from secondary school students only.

She however disclosed that although the location bursary committees were under strict instructions to consider other categories of applicants only after they had awarded bursaries to all orphan applicants, there were cases where the committees acted to the contrary.

"However whenever we get complaints that an orphan had been denied bursary in favour of a more able student, we usually overturn such a decision and consequently award the bursary to the rightful student," she pointed.

Magarini CDF on the spot

By BEKADZO TONDO

A COMMUNITY social audit committee in Adu location of Magarini District has raised queries over how Kshs2.5 million allocated for the construction of a borehole in the area by Magarini Constituency Development Fund was spent.

The committee headed by Mr Mathias Gona said that it was unfortunate that after such huge allocation there was nothing to show on the ground.

The committee chairman Mr Wilson Maitha however told residents that he was forced by area CDF officials to sign two blank cheques for the project without being told what the money was for.

"Some CDF officials came to my house on two different nights and ordered me to sign blank cheques but they did not explain how much money they wanted to withdraw and for what purpose," said Mr Maitha.

Angered by the admission, the community demanded Magarini CDF officials appear before them and table a comprehensive report about the project. At one point, the Director of Integrated Participatory Development (IPD) Mr Raphael Ngoma demanded to know how the treasurer for the CDF committee was among officials elected in the project implementation committee.

The audit which is part of a series of similar exercises to be conducted by the residents seeks to make sure that transparency is upheld during the implementation of projects initiated in the ward with funds donated from different agencies including the government.

According to Gona, a lot of money channeled to the area through devolved funding was being diverted for personal use as there were no mechanisms to monitor the implementation process.

Parents urged to care for their children

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Kenya National Association of parents (KNAP) Kakamega central chairman Mr. Daniel Oyalo is urging parents not to abandon their parental responsibility.

Mr. Oyalo says that it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children not only receive quality education but also requisite materials including uniform, while in school.

Speaking at Bright Star Academy Navakholo in Kakamega County during the institution's graduation Mr. Oyalo at the same time decried low academic standards in public primary schools in the area.

He urged education stakeholders in the area to cooperate and work as a team in order to achieve high level of academic standard.

Mr. Oyalo argued that children in private primary schools are also entitled to all rights enshrined in the country's new constitutional.

The parents' association chairman consequently challenged the government to ensure that pupils in private schools are not discriminated against when it comes to Free Primary Education (FPE) programme.

gramme.

He argued further that being in a private school does not mean that one should be deprived of his/her basic rights as a Kenyan child.

Mr. Oyalo opined that the purpose of the 2009 census was among other issues to establish the number of pupils in school to enable the government to plan and cater for their tuition.

Under article 53 (1) (6) of the new constitution, every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education.

Since the year 2003 the government has been paying for each primary pupil in public schools a total of Kshs1020 per year under FPE programme.

Pupils in private primary schools have however, all along been excluded from the FPE programme.

Following the recognition of the child's right to access free and compulsory basic education by the new constitution, it remains to be seen whether private primary schools will be included in the EFP programme.

Mr. Oyalo was accompanied by the Navakholo division KNAP secretary, Mr. Kennedy Ngao at the

colourful ceremony.

The KNAP district chairman at the same time decried the low number of students applying for bursaries in Navakholo division.

He attributed the scenario to lack of information and as a result challenged teachers and the provincial administration to ensure that information about bursary is spread in every village.

However, given its normally meagre allocation, bursary has never had impact in retaining students in school.

Beneficiaries across Western province usually receive between Kshs. 2,000/= and Kshs. 5,000/= per year.

The amount is not even enough to keep a student in school for one term.

Speaking during the ceremony the director of the school Mr. Rodgers Nato reminded parents who have not yet obtained birth certificates for their standard 7 pupils to do so immediately.

"The issue of birth certificate is a National requirement which every pupil registering to sit for the Kenya certificate of primary education (KCPE) must meet," Nato said.

Kaya shrines get major boost

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

A LEADING UN agency has set aside Kshs.10.8 billion for the conservation of Mijikenda traditional scared shrines (Kayas) and other heritage sites in the coastal regional.

The Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Dr. Irina Bokova, says the funds will be spent on revival, promotion and conservation of traditional forest along the coast line that are used as worshipping sites by local Mijikienda communities.

Dr. Bokova, who spoke during a visit to Kaya Mudzimuvya, in Kilifi County, which is being used as an ecotourism site, said UNESCO's support for conservation and preservation of Kayas was the first of its kind in Kenya and Africa.

The UNESCO boss says her organization held all heritage and cultural sites in high esteem as they are the key to history of diverse indigenous communities.

Dr. Bokova, who was accompanied by the Director-General of the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), Dr. Idle Farah, an Assistant Minister for Heritage, Mr. William Ombui and Kenya's Permanent Representative to UNICCO, Ms. Mary Khimulu, says

the agency had also engaged the Kenya Government in constant dialogue to work out modalities to stop the logging and deforestation of traditional worshipping places in province.

"UNICCO will go out of its way to preserve all heritage sites in the country for posterity and we are constantly engaging the government to map out strategies of eradicating destructive activities in these areas," said Dr. Bokova.

The UNICCO official deplored the destruction of sand dunes at the Lamu archipelago by developers who were encroaching on the only fresh water sources for the islanders.

He said the UN agency was also mapping out modalities on how to ensure the status of Lamu as a world heritage site was not destroyed by human encroachment. She said UNICCO would also ensure construction of the proposed Lamu port does not negatively affect the status of the archipelago as a world heritage site.

The NMK boss hailed the partnership between multi-national organisations and NMK which, he said, had produced positive results for rural communities. Farah said through the partnerships, rural communities established income generating projects in their localities.

Report hails water wells

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

A KEY water source that is steadily growing in importance among rural communities has been largely unappreciated, a research published recently indicates.

A report by the International Institute for Environment and Development's (IIED) shows hundreds of millions of urban people rely on water taken directly from wells.

The poor cannot afford piped water from rivers and reservoirs, the report adds, and the trend might mean the water was being used unsustainably. The trend also means groundwater has even greater potential to supply poor communities than was previously estimated.

The study estimates that almost a third of urban households in sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia depend on groundwater from wells. And the share is considerably higher among poorer households.

The report has warned that policymakers, donors and others have neglected poor communities' dependence on wells, and has urged action to ensure people can use groundwater in safe and sustainable way.

"The policy trend is to promote the use of piped water but as our research shows, large proportions of urban populations are not served and must supply themselves with groundwater from wells," says co-author Dr. Jenny Gronwall.

"Unfortunately most official sta-



Many urban people as well as cattle rely on water taken directly from wells.

tistics, including those that measure progress towards the UN Millennium Development Goal on water, fail to acknowledge the value of different kinds of wells," the report says.

Dr. Gronwall adds: "It is critical that the neglect of the resource ends as research suggests climate change will make groundwater increase in importance in large parts of the world, not least in the urban areas of developing nations.

One problem is that the UN Millennium Development goal system defines wells as being 'improved' or 'unimproved' when the terms do not reflect real differences in importance of wells. The definition is likely to condemn vital sources of water.

One of the reasons that groundwater gets neglected is an assumption that it is of poor quality or likely to be contaminated, especially if a well is located close to a latrine.

"It is a misconception that sanitation facilities near wells will automatically cause disease and that such wells deserve to be shut down," says co-author, Dr. Martin Mulenga. "In reality, transmission routes for harmful microbes are much more complex."

The researchers say a greater availability of well-water can be better for people's health as it promotes hygiene, and not all water used must be of potable standard.

"Household treatment and good hygiene practices such as hand-washing may still need to be promoted to reduce health risks," says Dr. Mulenga. "Governments and donor agencies should take steps to enable poor communities to use groundwater in a safe and sustainable way, rather than discouraging their use of this resource."

The researchers call for better monitoring of urban groundwater resources to be included more often in plans and policies for integrated resource management. Measures to improve recharge of aquifers and to protect both groundwater and wells from pollution are urgent.

While privatization and regional water scarcities grab the limelight, this study shows a large share of the world's poorest urban dwellers actually depend on local wells," says Dr. Gordon McGranahan, head of IIED's Human Settlements Group.

"Far more needs to be done to support the efforts of local households and communities, and to make water supplies from wells more reliable and safe," he said.

"This will be a challenge for water sector organisations more accustomed to working through large utilities and regional water resource authorities."

The research that includes extended case-studies of Bangalore, India and Lusaka, Zambia indicates supply from wells can be a cheaper alternative to piped water in situations where infrastructure for house connections may be unfeasible or too costly.

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Government has signed a loan agreement worth Kshs.3.6 billion with World Bank for support to the Kenya Coastal Development Project and Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Sustainable Land Management.

The loan deal increases the World Bank support to Kenya to a total commitment of Kshs.185 billion, making the World Bank a leading multi-lateral financial institution.

Speaking during the signing ceremony of the two projects agreement, Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, said the economy will be boosted through investment as it has a positive impact towards the development agenda.

"The economic growth has been rising after the post election violence of 2007, from 1.7 per cent in 2008 to 4.1 per cent in 2009 and is projected to grow at above five percent this year," said Uhuru in a speech read by assistant minister Dr. Oburu Odinga.

World Bank funds coast development

He said the project would help reduce the poverty rate.

The minister said the agricultural productivity project will facilitate producers at Cherangani, Kinale-Kikuyu and Taita-Taveta catchment areas.

He said the Coastal Development Project targets to achieve economic empowerment of the poor, create employment and wealth aimed at improving the living standards of coastal residents through use of resources.

"Funds available must be utilized for the intended purpose by the implementing ministries and other agencies concerned," said the minister.

The minister says the project will be implemented by the ministries of Fisheries and Agriculture respectively.

World Bank Kenya Country Director, Mr. Johannes Zutt, said the signing of the two agreements demonstrates the bank's continuing com-

mitment to supporting development priorities of the government by investing in key pillars of economic growth.

Mr. Zutt says the World Bank's investments with the Government and other development partners have the potential to accelerate growth, equity and poverty reduction if there will be faster implementation of the projects.

"We remain committed to deepening our dialogue with the Govern-

ment and other stakeholders on how to increase transparency and develop effectiveness of the project funded by the government and development partners in order to increase tangible benefits and expectations of the country," said Mr. Zutt.

Kenya Coastal Development Project has been allocated Kshs.2.8 billion while Kshs.800 million given to the agricultural productivity and

sustainable land management project.

The official said the Coastal project will gain an extra Kshs400 million from global Environmental Facility (GEF).

Mr. Uhuru urged Permanent Secretaries of implementing ministries to undertake necessary steps towards timely execution of the projects so as to achieve the national development goals.

Kenya to launch carbon trading platform

By PETER MUTUKU

KENYA is set to launch a climate exchange platform to facilitate the trading of carbon credits and help tackle climate change.

The market will be the first of its kind in Africa, and is meant to enable all African countries to sell their carbon credits. The exchange is expected to be open for business by the middle of this year.

Treasury PS Joseph Kinyua said the carbon trading will be transacted at a climate bourse. Mr Kinyua said that the facility will enable Kenyans to sell their carbon credits and earn returns from their investments in conscious carbon reduction efforts.

"We have started a process of establishing a carbon emission trading scheme in Nai-

robi which will serve to pioneer the carbon market in Africa," said Kinyua.

The facility is being developed by the Ministry of Finance in partnership with Bea International, a carbon credit consulting company. Many international companies, including JP Moragn Climate Care, Co2 Balance and Carbon Africa have also shown great interest in the NCE project.

Recently, the International Finance Corporation gave Kshs8 billion for the climate change projects. Some forecasts warn that Africa will be badly affected by Climate change, even though most of the greenhouse gases which cause it are produced in the West and Asia. One Carbon Credit is equal to one tonne of carbon dioxide or in some markets, carbon dioxide equivalent gases.



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Shocking statistics on fish eating

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

A COMMON assumption is that communities who live near large water bodies like Lake Victoria eat considerably much more fish than the rest of their compatriots.

Indeed it used to be usual for somebody travelling to Nyanza to be asked to bring back with them fish.

But this assumption has become a myth! The annual per capita fish consumption in Kenya today stands at nine kilogrammes all the way from two kilogrammes in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet Nyanza province does not consume any significantly more fish than, say, Nairobi residents.

Reason? It all boils down to cost and availability and the dynamics that drive the fishing industry. Where positive changes have occurred, it is due to intervention by the government to expand fish availability through fish ponds.

Lake Victoria is the largest fresh water lake in the world with a surface area of 69,000 square kilometers. It is shared between Tanzania (49 per cent), Uganda (45 per cent) and Kenya (6 per cent). The lake dominates Kenya's fishing industry, accounting for 94 per cent with approximate annual catch of about 194,000 tonnes. The remaining three per cent comes from marine fishing.

One of the most frustrating socio-economic realities today is that fish has become too expensive for the majority living near Lake Victoria.

In a paper from the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute by Mr. R. Omwenga, Richard Abila and Carolyne Lwenya, which focuses on the status and plight of the fishermen, part of this apparent

contradiction can be explained by the general poverty, vulnerability, ignorance, exploitation and weakness of fishermen.

In the production chain, things are skewed in favour of those who monopolise the processing and determine where it heads to.

Thus when Anne Adhiambo who runs an eatery along Dunga beach in Kisumu says the fishing industry has residents puzzled

and wondering why the commodity has now become too expensive for the majority, she is expressing exasperation experienced by many people. Fish mongers at Kisumu's Jubilee Market, Doreen Anyango said the business no longer pays because few people can afford the fish. And here is why – a big tilapia fish which less than three years ago used to go for Kshs.250 today costs Kshs.550 while a big Nile

perch sells for as much Kshs.1500. A two kilogramme tin of Omena goes for Kshs.180. These are not prices which many people can afford.

Yet the industry has the potential to contribute significantly to poverty reduction, nutritional needs and boost food security, support growth of the national economy through employment creation and foreign exchange earnings.



Youth urged to engage in other income generating business apart from depending on fishing alone.

United Nations warns of looming famine

By PETER MUTUKU

KENYA is set to face another difficult food security situation in 2011.

According to UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Aeneas Chuma, the country is also likely to witness disease outbreaks and further pockets of conflict in 2011.

Consequently, the government has teamed up with the UN to launch a Kshs4.2 billion Emergency Humanitarian Response Plan (EHRP).

The EHRP appeal will help address the plight of refugees from regional countries and vulnerable people in the country.

"The country faces both distinct and interdependent humanitarian phases that require appropriate responses to address emergency measures priorities and medium term plans. There is a fear of La Nina compromising the gains made," he said

Mr Chuma said the three year plan will ensure early recovery of populations affected by natural and man-made disasters, and

reduce the number of people in need across the country.

The EHRP will be characterized by long term humanitarian projects incorporating disaster risk reduction into 2012-2013.

Concern Worldwide Country Director Anne Mahony said climatic conditions and culture are to blame for the deteriorating conditions in the country.

"We are hoping this will encourage donors to deal with crises on a continuous basis to build on the year on year capacity," Mahony said.

She said continued humanitarian assistance is vital as Kenya deals with multiple challenges, including a growing population and deficient infrastructure.

"Chronic poverty also is not very far from our doorsteps as seen in urban slums in Nairobi and Mombasa," she said adding that recurrent drought and flooding have brought about a chronic poverty cycle in the arid areas.

According to ERHP, the escalation of fighting in Somalia, a weakened Central government

and the proliferation of armed groups will culminate with an increase in the refugee population in Dadaab refugee camp of between 60,000 and 100,000 in 2011.

"We are seeing that there is a need for continued humanitarian assistance in Kenya. We have seen in recent years that Kenya is in a deadly cocktail of climate change, population growth and a lack of infrastructure," she said.

Mahony said areas of focus should include the Arid and Semi Arid Lands where people have been living in abject poverty for many years.

"Every so often there is a drought which tips them over the edge into a dire humanitarian situation," Mahony said.

Then the rains come and they are either adequate for a period of time or they bring floods with them which wash away any infrastructure that may have been put in during the emergency period.

According to ERHP, Kenya has been struggling with repeat cholera outbreaks since 2006.

The reported cases have declined over the January to October period to 3,000 compared with 8,000 in 2009.

It states that conflict over water and pasture during the dry spell is also projected to continue in arid parts, with an estimated 10,000 people expected to be displaced due to resource based conflicts, fuelled by proliferation of small arms into the country from the neighbouring countries.

Special Programmes Assistant Minister Mohammed Ali Mohamud said the strategy would ensure that the plight of internally displaced persons and refugees is addressed.

Said Mohamud "We need to ensure early recovery of populations affected by natural and man-made disasters by use of specific disaster approaches."

He said an estimated 250,000 and 40,000 children younger than five respectively are affected by moderate and severe acute malnutrition nationally.

He called on all development partners to support the initiative.

Annan calls for calm over Ocampo Six

By MALACHI MOTANO

CHIEF Mediator Kofi Annan has expressed disappointment over the political cloud that now surrounds investigations and processes of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the country.

Dr Annan who was addressing journalists after closing the National Dialogue and Reconciliation Accord review meeting argued that the shift in focus would only worsen the situation during forthcoming General Elections. He said that Kenyans were quickly forgetting crimes that were committed during the post election violence and were now paying attention to the unfolding political scenarios.

"We are now questioning why attempts are being made to hold people to account or find justice for the victims. But shouldn't we be worried about them? Shouldn't we be worried about tomorrow's victims? If we don't speak for today's victims, what will we do about tomorrow's victims and who will speak for them?" he asked.

He further explained that the turn of events would also derail the country's reform agenda. Dr Annan added that politicians should stop politicising the ICC probe in an attempt to rally sympathy from their supporters. He observed that tribal politics was what landed Kenya into hot water in the first place.

"Some of the historical injustices would not have been repeated if action had been taken to fight impunity. Now Kenya has taken the step and hopefully we will see a different Kenya where such crimes will not be repeated; that we can have a peaceful election without worrying about casualties," he said.

He also defended the integrity of the ICC saying it is not concerned with local politics but with the crimes against humanity that were committed in Kenya in the wake of 2008. "As far as I know, the ICC has no interest in the Kenyan politics. It has no candidate in the elections. In fact the (2012) candidates have not declared their interests and I think we should not mix legal and political issues," argued Dr Annan.

Further, a scorecard of the Grand Coalition Government by an international research firm is also warning that the work of the International Criminal Court is receiving little or divided assistance from the government. The latest report by South Consulting research firm indicates that there is no common position among the main parties on the issue of the ICC intervention.

"Impunity is re-organising through mobilisation of ethnic constituencies for support against or in favour of the ICC intervention," says the report adding that: "There are senior leaders who would prefer to terminate or delay it."

"Significant also is that there is an absence of leadership and ownership of the ICC intervention as a means of ending impunity; there is no local political ownership of this issue given its potential to terminate political careers." The ICC is probing the deadly 2007/2008 post election violence that led to over 1,500 deaths and displacement of more than 600,000 other Kenyans.

Taveta irrigation scheme on course

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Challa-Tuhiri irrigation scheme in Taveta has been restored and farmers are upbeat they will get bumper yields.

The government has ploughed Kshs.4.7 million into the project under the food security enhancement programme.

For years, the maintenance of the scheme had turned farming activities into a nightmare. Each day, farmers had to contend with the laborious task of unclogging and ridding the canals of vegetation and siltation that hampered water flow.

The task would become even more distressing when some individuals resorted to selfishly divert the available water to their farms. Those unable to divert the commodity agonized on what to do on the diminishing water levels as agricultural activities ground to a halt.

Some farmers in the agriculturally-rich areas that lie below Mt. Kilimanjaro gave up farming in frustration, while others saw their yields shrink as water volumes dwindled. But the agony of many years is now over following the rehabilitation of the canal system that has improved water conveyance and distribution. The over 3,000 residents in the 600-hectare scheme, who for years suffered frequent obstruction in the canals, are a delighted lot.

The Kshs.4.7 million project was implemented by the Arid Land Resource Management Project II (ALRMP). "We are happy the canals have been rehabilitated and working again, thus restoring water flow to our farms unlike before when this was curtailed by frequent blockage of channels. "We used to spend too much time and energy unclogging the canals when we could have otherwise dedicated ourselves to more productive engagements," says Mzee Michael Jimmy.

"We suffered a lot before the intervention as large quantities of water went to waste through massive seepage. This will now be a thing of the past as water has started flowing directly into our farms following the improvement of canal structures which was long overdue," he added. Another farmer, Mr. Peter Muteti, who grows tomatoes, maize and other vegetables on his one-acre plot lauded the government for the intervention.

The Taveta District Irrigation Officer, Mr. Samson Musyimi, says 30 per cent of water that was lost through seepage will now be saved. "The project cannot afford to lose even a single drop and its rehabilitation is therefore a welcome relief to farmers. It will help in conserving and preserving water that is a key resource without which farming will collapse," says Mr. Musyimi.

The irrigation project chairman, Mr. Patrick Mrisha, says the improvement of the canals provides immense relief to farmers as they will spend less time in cleaning-up and concentrate on other economic activities. "The intervention involving the rehabilitation of the canal structures will go a long way towards the improvement of water distribution in the scheme and boost its capacity for crop production," says Mr. Mrisha.

A Ministry of Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands official who spearheaded the project, Mr. Parkolwa Mustafa, says the scheme would boost farming in the scheme.

"The project will boost agricultural productivity that previously performed dismally due to persistent loss of water through seepage along the earthen channels," says Mr. Mustafa. He spoke during the handing over ceremony of the project to members of the Challa community.

Questions over ban on charcoal burning



Charcoal being transported for sale in towns. Photo/File

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

IS CHARCOAL burning as an economic activity sustainable? This was the million dollar question when the government took a calculated risk and legalized charcoal burning.

Far from the all consuming fears that Kenya's paltry two per cent forest cover would be further decimated with the lift on ban, researchers are looking into ways of making charcoal burning viable through improved kiln for higher quality production.

Charcoal burning had been banned to conserve the environment and check environmental degradation but researchers show that with proper planning, the sector can help sustain the environment and improve the economic gains for the rural population.

The Kenya Forest Act 200t le-

galized charcoal production as a business venture so long as those involved plant their own trees for the product.

To realise and strengthen the quest to protect indigenous trees, the Community Forest Association has been mandated to oversee and mitigate activities which pose threat to such trees, including by animals. Consequently, the Kenya Forest Service and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (Kefri), have embarked on a mission to ensure that even as charcoal production goes on, it is sustainable and does not threaten forest cover.

The key to success of this dichotomy will be to ensure adequate charcoal production as an income generating venture and alternative source of energy.

Kefri is researching on a low cost and efficient charcoal production kiln that will ensure minimum

wood waste since research had shown the traditional charcoal burning method results in 75 per cent wastage of wood.

And the head of efficiency kiln charcoal production research unit, Mr. James Kimweme, has provided three simple mobile improved kilns that will enable producers to reap maximum harvest from their wood.

Mr. Kimweme, who was flanked by the Director of Maseno-based Kefri, Dr. James Maua, and KFS zonal manager for Bondo and Rarieda, Mr. James Omari, says the method ensures sustainability and environment conservation as producers will not harvest trees in the charcoal production.

KFS has introduced production of seeds and seedlings of two fast growing acacia species – acacia polyacantha also known as falcon claw, and acacia xanthophloea,

which can be harvested within one and a half years in most of the dry areas.

The introduction and planting of acacia trees has attracted intense interest among peasant farmers in Rarieda and Bondo who view the venture as having vast economic potential.

To the farmers the programme presents many benefits; by growing the acacia trees, they meet Government demand of 10 per cent forest cover in their farms, they can produce charcoal as an income generating venture from the trees and finally for goats the acacia trees are a delicacy.

Whereas the acacia trees have been growing wildly in the two districts, the introduction of the fast growing species is expected to attract wider scale plantation especially in the barren to cash in on the situation.

A number of farmers have embarked on full scale acacia trees production for sale to charcoal burners. Mr. John Ouma's farm at Apondo village in Central Uyoma of Rarieda district has been used to launch and demonstrate the use of modern and improved kilns for quality charcoal.

Mr. Ouma, who has planted acacia trees in his five acre farm, surprised those attending the launch that out of the first quarter of an acre where he harvested acacia polyacantha, he got over 220 bags of charcoal that earned him over Kshs.124,000.

He says he used to plant maize in his nine acre piece of land, but due to unfavourable weather conditions and invasion of trigger weeds, the maximum harvest in a year was three bags.

And the nine acres of maize and sorghum needed intensive labour of double ploughing, and weeding twice, but for the trees, he only needed to plough and plant and early weeding.

Among three kilns Kefri has launched, two could be used by women to produce charcoal since it accommodates tiny branches for home use while the bigger one gives from six to 30 bags depending on the amount of wood placed.

The National Environment Management Authority (Nema) is intensifying the war for the conservation of the environment through distribution of energy saving jikos.

State keen to settle all IDPs —VP

By PETER MUTUKU

THE government is committed to resettling Internally Displaced People (IDPs), spearheading national healing and reconciliation.

Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka says the Coalition government is committed to dealing with youth unemployment and ensuring regional balances and equity to achieve a united country free of tribalism to attain accelerated development.

He says the success of the reforms being undertaken by government will require honesty and commitment from all Kenyans,

adding that there was need to overcome the retrogressive culture of dishonesty in the country.

"Dishonesty is a behavioural condition that finds expression in persistent claims of high moral ground in order to placate unsuspecting public and earn undue recognition," he said.

The Vice President cautioned wananchi to be wary of forces out to champion corruption, ethnicity and authoritarianism whom he said were disguising themselves as dignified nationalists and democrats.

He warned that the reforms agenda could easily be derailed by

propaganda and manipulation.

Speaking during the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation conference, the VP said optimal balance between political and economic reforms is a precondition for success on both dimensions.

On democracy, Mr Musyoka said the most effective means of safeguarding democracy is the attainment of high level of social and economic development.

He said the government through Vision 2030 is implementing social, economic and political programmes meant to turn Kenya into middle income category of

countries within the next 20 years.

"It is essential that we intensify in every conceivable and practicable way our effort to open up new investments and expand existing concerns in all categories of entrepreneurship, be they large, medium or small enterprises so as to create jobs with higher incomes for both workers and entrepreneurs in agriculture, manufacturing and commerce," said the VP.

Mr Musyoka called on Kenyans to endeavour to protect and defend nationhood not through tolerance as often stated but through the cultivation of mutual love and understanding.

Refugees return from UG

By JOEL JUMA

ABOUT 300 Kenyans who sort refuge in the neighbouring Uganda after skirmishes that followed the disputed presidential polls have returned home.

The group was among the more than 1,700 families that fled to Uganda following the post-election violence and were welcomed at Malaba border by officials from the Kenyan Provincial Administration. Business at the busy border town came to a standstill as the refugees who comprised of men, women and children, some ailing arrived aboard three buses.

The refugees have been staying at the Kiriandongo refugee camp near Masindi in Eastern Uganda with most of the aid to them coming from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Uganda Government which had also provided them with parcels of land to do agricultural activities. "I am happy to be home after such a long time. However, I don't know where I am going to settle because my family and I went separate ways as each one of us fled for our dear lives," said Geoffrey Kimani, who hailed from Machewa in Trans-Nzoia District.

The refugees said they were worried over what lay ahead of them because majority of those who threw them out of their homes are roaming about freely and may still want them out of their midst.

"We want the Government to reassure us of our security because even while on our way back, some of us received information that we are not yet welcome in areas we used to stay," said Teresia Wairimu from Burnt Forest. Wairimu added that it was due to such fears that hundreds of other refugees had remained in Uganda until they are guaranteed of their safety by the Kenya Government upon their return.

"We want justice to be done in this country. Those people responsible for our present predicament must all be sent to the Hague for trial," she demanded.

The refugees said that the money that the Government has been giving out for resettlement is too little to enable someone to begin a new life and appealed to Special Programmes Minister Esther Murugi to increase the amount. "How can one settle down with a mere Kshs10,000. The money is not even enough to last us one week with our families," said a refugee who requested anonymity.

Sugar boss Busolo under attack

By JOEL JUMA

KENYA Sugar Board (KSB) chairman Saulo Busolo has come under scathing attack from Bungoma MPs over his alleged support to cane poachers.

Busolo was accused of colluding with poachers to buy cane from farmers contracted by Nzoia Sugar Company before selling the same to other private millers.

Speaking during a meeting that brought together leaders from Bungoma and Trans-Nzoia counties, Sirisia MP Moses Wetang'ula fired the first salvo by attacking Busolo for allegedly defending cane poachers.

"My brother Saul (Busolo), I am begging you to leave this business of cane poaching. It is neither helping the poor farmer, yourself or Nzoia Sugar Company, said Wetang'ula.

He added that it was wrong for the KSB chairman to defend cane poachers who were fleecing poor farmers by buying a tonne of cane at only Kshs3000 while selling the same quantity at Kshs15,000.

Wetang'ula announced that MPs from the region have resolved to deal firmly with the menace of cane poaching.

Assistant minister Alfred Khang'ati took the cue from Wetang'ula and warned Busolo that he risks becoming irrelevant in the local community



A Sugar plantation.

due to his alleged association with the poachers.

"We assisted you to go to Kenya Sugar Board as a director in order to help our farmers to improve their lives but you have turned around to fight the same people," said an angry Khang'ati.

He urged the government to help Nzoia end the trade that threatens its survival by establishing a 24-hour watch on poaching activities.

Busolo had said that he did not see anything wrong for farmers to sell their cane to anyone who can offer them a

much higher price as compared to what was being offered by Nzoia Sugar Company.

"We are in a liberalized world and sugar companies should desist from frustrating farmers who want to sell their cane to the highest bidder. Let the farmers have a free hand to choose for themselves," said Busolo.

He added that most sugar companies were underpaying farmers and welcomed "private cane traders" who he claimed had brought back cut-throat competition in the hitherto dying sugar sector.

NTA extends its mandate

By JOEL JUMA

THE National Tax Payers Association (NTA) has resolved to extend auditing of public funds to projects funded by the Government under the Economic Stimulus Projects (ESP).

The association said the battles over the usage of the public funds will shift from the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) to the ESP following complaints that some of the projects were being mismanaged.

"We have received pressure from the public to investigate the projects before more funds are released by the Government to finance them," said the NTA National coordinator Martin Nabisa.

Nabisa and the association's Communication's officer Davis Adieno explained that reports from various education offices indicate that many schools were not utilising the ESP funds effectively.

Each constituency was given Kshs30 million to establish a centre of excellence and an additional Kshs20 million to construct a health centre. Kshs5 million was disbursed for roads rehabilitation.

Some of the schools that may face investigations include Mwihi high school in Khwisero district where the funds were not well utilised.

Speaking at Kakamega's Muliro gardens, Western PC Samuel Kilele said NTA should not protect management committees that fail to utilise the devolved funds as per the Government guidelines.

Kilele said that the Government was out to promote transparency and accountability. He explained that the water sector was undergoing reforms adding that residents of the province should monitor the services being provided by the companies.

Kilele explained that Lake Victoria North Water Services Board need to act on complains raised by the residents over irregular supply of the commodity.

Residents complained during the release of the performance report at Muliro gardens that the board was issuing inflated bills.

The residents added that interruption of the supply was rampant adding that the board was not performing as per the service charters.

Row threatens Webuye project

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

WEBUYE Constituency Stimulus project management committee is at a loss over how to manage ongoing projects due to misunderstanding between the technical team and some members.

Members of the committee claim that government officials were sabotaging the implementation process.

They singled out the Webuye health centre and accused the MOH of denying them a chance to visit the site or meet the contractor to assess the level of work done.

The construction of the health centre, it was claimed was behind schedule, and yet they have no way to monitor payment modules and materials the contractor was using for construction.

Bungoma East acting District Commissioner, Michael Talam

who was chairing a meeting to evaluate the progress of ESP projects in the area demanded, to know why heads of departments in whose ministries projects are being undertaken have always boycotted meetings convened by project implementation committees.

But a head of the department present at the meeting accused the disgruntled elements of ignorance and using their positions to settle political scores.

The member who refused to be named for fear of political reprisals, claimed that most of the members want to advance the political agenda of the MP in total disregard of regulations that guide the implementation of the ESP programme.

He said that most projects under the stimulus program were unfairly confined in Ndivisi division and Webuye township sub-location which is not acceptable.

He cited Webuye health

centre which he says is located just a kilometer away from the Webuye district hospital, while rural areas lack effective health care facilities.

He blamed the public for not being vigilant and failing to pinpoint such injustices and leaving out the identification process to a few elements acting at the whims of certain individuals.

"The role of the Stimulus project management committee to identify appropriate locations of projects using guidelines was not followed," he said adding that as much as they are supposed to make recommendation for payments, they are not able to follow up because of witch hunting by political appointees.

The member revealed that under the program, primary and secondary schools were identified from Ndivisi but ongoing works at the Ndivisi secondary school which is supposed to serve as a centre of excellence

may not be according to specifications.

And projects such as purchasing of mobile digital laboratory are not being discussed, while tree planting has almost failed.

He gave the example of the construction of the fresh produce market and jua kali shades, as one of the mostly affected projects.

Due to inadequate consultations and involvement of stakeholders, the shades were initially supposed to be constructed at Misikhu market but due to lack of land, they were secretly relocated to Webuye municipality.

"The situation is so bad, that projects which were supposed to spur economic activity may end up being dormant because of political miscalculation of those in power, who are not looking at the viability and espoused benefits to the general public," the member observed.

Taita Loan defaulters put on notice

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Women Enterprise Fund has suspended the disbursement of loans in Taita district because of the high defaulting rate by the self-help groups.

The district Gender Officer, Ms. Faith Dama, said of the total Kshs.1.5 million which had been loaned to the group, only Kshs.175,000 had been recovered.

"We're now under strict instructions from the Funds chief executive not to issue any more loans until the district realizes a minimum of Kshs.500,000 in loan recoveries," said Ms. Dama.

A report by the District Gender and Social Services Department that administers the Fund indicates that only two of the 49 groups that borrowed loans had repaid the cash.

Ms. Dama says the groups may have been hurriedly formed to justify eligibility for financial assistance and could have disintegrated soon after receiving the loans.

"It appears the group members never pursued the proposed enterprises they had presented to qualify for the loans and instead they pocketed the cash which amounts to fraud. This is public money and should be paid back to sustain the Fund," she says.

Ms. Dama said it had been difficult to trace members of the groups because they went underground soon after receiving the money three years ago.

She said it was wrong for women in the area to abuse the credit facility, which was a revolving fund to benefit other women.

"By failing to repay the loans the groups are denying other deserving locals an opportunity to benefit from the fund which the government created to uplift the living standards of women in the country," said Ms. Dama.

She advised women to engage in viable income generating projects that will enable them repay the loans with ease.

Raila praises the youth

By PETER MUTUKU

PRIME Minister Raila Odinga has called on the country to appreciate positive energy, skills and knowledge of the youth and exploit them for socio economic development.

He acknowledged the numerical strength of the youth should be viewed as an asset and not a liability to the country.

"The national population census of 2009 shows that 71.8 percent of Kenya's population is below the 35 years. This should not be perceived as a disadvantage to Kenya or any other country in Africa where majority of the population are youth," said Odinga during an inaugural youth

PM called on the country to appreciate positive energy, skills and knowledge of the youth

round table meeting.

The youth round table initiative is a consultative forum to replicate the highly successful Private Sector Round Table which the Prime Minister has been holding with the business community where the government and the private sector explore and exploit partnerships for socio-economic development pursuant to the objectives of Vision 2030.

Vision 2030 is the government's socio-economic blueprint that seeks to transform Kenya into a middle income

and knowledge driven economy by 2030.

Like the private sector round table, the main objective of the youth round table is to explore and exploit areas of partnership between the government and young people. This would involve formulating policies and implementing action plans that result in the empowerment of the youth of Kenya.

This initiative is in tandem with recommendations of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Accord that brought an end to the post

election violence in 2008.

During the peace talks that ended the post election crisis, it was recommended that the government embarks on a long term programme to empower the youth economically through employment creation and availing income generating activities so that the youth of Kenya do not become easy targets of recruitment into gangs that cause political mayhem.

Addressing the forum, the Prime Minister said he understood the numerous challenges that Kenyan youth faced in the pursuit of their dreams and pledged government's commitment to assist in realizing them by ensuring that matters affecting the youth are mainstreamed in government policies and action plans.

"I admit that the environment is still largely tilted against you because of the sins of omission and commission in the past," the PM said.

He however pointed that these challenges were not unique to the youth of Kenya alone.

The PM placed the objectives of the forum into two categories first to formally establish and lay the foundation for structured engagement with the youth and secondly to discuss and suggest priority issues to be fast tracked. The issues were categorized as education and health, youth empowerment, leadership and governance and creative arts and sports.

He said that experience had proved countries that have made economic breakthroughs have always invested in their youth.



Youth artisans at work.

Photo/File

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

TO ignore the threat posed by child trafficking in Africa is to leave a gaping hole in the fabric of contemporary history.

Larry Matmaar, a leading child welfare officer, says the problem is so serious in Malindi it threatens the survival of society and that of an entire generation.

And the culprits are not just white foreigners: Kenyans have gradually turned into vicious and notorious traffickers after discovering its lucrative returns.

With the dangling of lucrative job offers or education for the poor, families easily fall prey to traffickers.

To check the dangerous tide, the backgrounds of "sponsors" must

Child trafficking rife in Malindi

be thoroughly checked. However, the indignity associated with poverty tends to cloud the better judgment of parents. So they end up "selling" their innocent children to monsters who subsequently subject the children to forced labour and prostitution.

Malindi is notorious for the number of incidents where parents withdraw daughters from school and marry them off.

The practice that flies in the face of the Children's Act, is compounded by parents who still view educating the girl child as a waste of time and resources. Statistics from a primary school in the district show that out

of 57 girls who were in class five in the year 2007, only nine sat for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE).

Some parents go to schools where their children are enrolled and on the pretext of seeking transfer, marry them off.

During a meeting attended by eight provincial directors for children services, the Malindi District Children's Officer, Mr. Eric Mugaisi, says it was shameful for parents to allow their children to suffer in exchange for cash or other favours.

A new group of people has emerged who, with donor funding, are

trafficking in children at the pretext of recruiting them for free education. "These people get funds from well wishers abroad and use the money to build children's homes where they keep the children until negotiations for trafficking them are complete," Mr. Mugaisi says.

This category of children come from rural areas and are transported to the coastal region where tracing them is considered difficult. In one such case, six children, four from Kisumu and two from Kakamega, were found in Watamu after a man who had ferried them deserted them after a potential buyer bolted.

The children who were all under 12 years were found loitering along Watamu town streets before being rescued and taken to Malindi Children's office.

The plight of the girl child is singularly tricky for they face humiliating sexual acts which they film and post in the internet.

The most recent wave of trafficking are associated with incidents where foreigners pose as sponsors to take them abroad for education.

Parents are now being advised to do background checks on the "sponsors".

Perils of learning under smoking guns

By MALACHI MOTANO

CATTLE rustling and gory battles between the neighboring Turkana and Pokot communities remain great challenges to education in this big marginalized province says Ignituous Omukaga, the head teacher of Nawoyaregae Primary school in Kaputir Location in Turkana south.

"The pupils cannot attend classes daily. Sometimes you may go to a classroom and find just a handful of them. This may go on for months. Again, school lasts just for four hours so that children make it home early because of insecurity," the headmaster continues.

Nawoyaregae is a school getting by with what it can, its mud-walled makeshift classrooms already crumbling. Nursery lessons are conducted under a tree, with the young learners, 30 in number, crowded into the available shade, peering at instructions drawn on the battered blackboard.

The Head teachers say, the school earlier had more than 350 pupils, but this has fallen to 125. The figure fluctuates, but the trend is steadily downwards. "The children are afraid. There are armed bandits hiding with stolen animals in the thickets behind the School. In response, the community has employed the services of a police reservist, who accompanies children to and from school.

Primary school net enrolment is just 26 percent in the Turkana South District where Kaputir is found, com-



Guarding cattle in northwestern Kenya: heightened competition for water and pasture has increased armed conflict.

pared to a national ratio 76 percent. Kenya's Free Primary Education programme has its work cut out here.

Armed Police Reservists are even forced to follow the children to play on the school's field. Reservist Salim Iro says, "I escort them every day. I cannot take chances, because when the bandits come, they attack all our people including the children."

Even though a 2007 presidential directive led to the recruitment of Kenya Police Reservists in bandit-hit areas, this has not addressed the security situation because of inadequate numbers.

Only one police reservist is deployed to each of the three schools in the region, which are about 10 kilometres apart. This says the area chief, Charles Lopuya, is insufficient to provide adequate protection. He wants about six reservists for Nawoyaregae.

Development organisations in the area say communities face a dilemma: insecurity keeps children away from school, but education is the key to solving such conflicts with traditional roots. "To address this, we need to achieve some level of education and use it to build peace in com-

munities. Providing opportunity for education to the young generation and helping them understand the role of peace in development is critical," said Nick Wasunna, World Vision Kenya's senior advisor.

Insecurity is not the only factor compromising education in Turkana. A gross shortage of teachers is a concern. For example, Nawoyaregae Primary School, with an enrolment of 350 or more school-aged children, has only three teachers.

"This is a great challenge, especially when we have more pupils coming back to school after fighting has subsided. The teachers get overloaded, and this is not good for the pupils," Omukaga, the school's head said. He said he would need about nine to be comfortable.

The situation is replicated in the neighbouring East Pokot District, where the majority of schools have just two or three teachers serving over 200 students, according to Mutuku Mwenga, the District Commissioner.

He noted that teachers had been shying away from being deployed in areas such as Turkana and Pokot, largely due to insecurity.

Even though the government has announced plans to deploy more teachers in these regions, enticing them with additional allowances, analysts contend that uneven progress on education will leave remote rural communities - who need it as much if not more than anyone - behind.



Joyce Emanukor, Oxfam's education officer in Turkana, is concerned by how the prevailing insecurity has affected enrolment in schools, particularly those on the Pokot border, forcing children to relocate to facilities in other areas.

"These facilities are overstretched. There are no additional books, classrooms and other learning material to care for the extra pupils; the quality of education is quite low," she said.

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

PLANS are underway to construct a modern and wider gauge railway.

The current one built in the 19th century by the British colonial government, links the port of Mombasa to the countries of the Great Lakes Region, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The project estimated to cost about Kshs350 billion, is set to ease and cheapen transport throughout the Eastern Africa region.

The new railway line will shorten the journey from Nairobi to Mombasa from the current 13 hours to just three hours. The new railway line will be able to accommodate fast double-decker passenger trains, the first to be introduced in the region.

More than a century after its construction, the railway line stretching from Mombasa to Mbarara in Uganda still operates, though less as a functional modern transport system than a curiosity to be enjoyed - or endured - by time-rich locals and tourists looking for some faded colonial charm.

Not long ago, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni described the existing railway line as something

that should belong to a museum. "The present railway line is totally obsolete," says Golicha Tatache, a manager at KRC. "If you are in a hurry to get somewhere in this country you should take a bus, not a train."

The Lunatic Express, as the first trains running on the Kenya-Uganda railway were mockingly referred to, pushed through malaria-infested swamps and what the British colonialists and railway builders saw as hostile tribal territory.

In what has been captured in films and literary works, the building of the railway line in the 1890s presented numerous engineering challenges.

The current 576-mile metre-gauge line began in 1896 and was finished five years later, some sterling pound 5 million and 1,200 bridges later. Hundreds of Kenyan and Indian labourers died during construction, mostly from disease. The man-eating lions of Tsavo accounted for 132 people, including a British policeman cragged off a carriage as he slept, according to the

Kenya Railway Museum.

Despite all the plans and hopes, change from the current obsolete chugging trains to the speedsters of the 21st century will not come easily or cheaply. Experts say that the country's varied landscape will present major engineering challenges, even with modern technology across the country.

The proposed high-capacity standard gauge line designed to reduce the journey time from Kisumu via Nairobi to Mombasa from 26 hours to a mere six hours will greatly boost business prospects across the Kenya and the entire Eastern African region.

The current cumbersome, expensive and often hazardous long distance transportation of goods by heavy trucks will be greatly reduced.

Initial plans indicate that the modern standard gauge railway line, which will stretch from Mombasa to Malaba on the Kenya/Uganda border, with a branch to Kisumu. According to the government's timetable, the Mombasa-Nairobi section of the line should be complete by 2013,

with the Nairobi-Malaba line and the Nairobi-Kisumu branch both being completed by 2016.

The Government and its partner states in the East African Community (EAC) have recognized the need

to build a new modern railway to conform to the need for speed. In the current 2010/2011 budget, the Government allocated Kshs.3 billion to initiate the revamping of the over 100-year-old railway system.



New railway line to be constructed soon.

State unveils youth dev

INTRODUCTION

THE government of Kenya has unveiled a Kshs7.79 billion Youth Employment Marshal Plan to provide a roadmap that will direct future employment strategies for the youth.

The Youth Employment Marshal Plan aims at creating more than 500,000 new employment opportunities for the Kenyan Youth annually. The plan entails the adoption of labour intensive techniques anchored in policies and action plans to empower the youth.

The action plans range from collaborative strategies through which the youth are engaged in gainful employment to mobilization of resources as well as promotion and support of vocational, technical and entrepreneurship training

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund is a key component of this marshal plan.

Objectives include:

- Establishment of a framework that ensures partnership amongst the various stakeholders
- Strategies for implementation to provide new, large scale employment for the youth
- Financial support to youth-owned enterprises
- Providing framework for exporting personnel in a legal and structured manner
- Facilitating resource mobilization and allocation for capacity and competency building of youth
- Creating employment by promoting and popularizing ICT as a medium of learning, trade, management and youth development
- Providing a logical framework for implementing the Marshal Plan to be used in monitoring and evaluation
- Providing employment opportunities for youth and empower them economically through sports and recreation.

Resource Mobilization

The plan is to be funded jointly by government ministries and the private sector.

In addition, 30 percent of the devolved funds from CDF, LATF, Fuel levy, Constituency Youth Enterprise scheme (C-

Yes), Constituency Sports Development fund, women fund, development partners are to be channeled towards youth employment initiatives.

Planned initiatives include:

(i) Tree for jobs

The initiative underscores the planting and nurturing of trees. It is to be implemented in liaison with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Ministry of Forest and Wildlife, Kenya Forest Services, Kenya Forest Network and other corporate bodies.

About 105,000 jobs are to be created annually at an average of 500 youths per constituency

Areas of intervention include government forests, water towers, river banks, highways and trust land.

The youth are to be trained on business and technical skills, assisted in the procurement of seedlings and mobilized to nurture the trees.

(ii) Review and expansion



Youth unemployment is a significant problem in Kenya. Statistics indicate that over three million youths in the country are out of work. Another 800,000 join this lot every year from educational institutions. And although the government has in the past employed strategies to fight joblessness, not much has been realized due to the myriad challenges experienced in the implementation of employment policies, strategies and programs. Consequently, the government has unveiled a massive youth development plan to help reverse the trends. In this issue our Staff Writer and Sub-editor FAITH MUIRURI (pictured) explores the details of the plan.

of skills acquisition- National Youth Service (NYS)

The program seeks to increase NYS annual intake from the current 10,000 to 15,000. Further new courses on leadership

and life skills are to be introduced to prepare those completing secondary education for national development.

At the moment the government is working out modalities to finance a comprehen-

sive modernization program for the NYS. The Chinese government has pledged to assist in the purchase of new equipment for training, farming and construction programs.

On completion of the project, NYS is expected to undertake large projects and absorb more young people on a permanent basis.

iii) Public works program

This is a direct employment program that focuses on the youth through the use of labour intensive technologies. Under the program, various ministries currently involved in roads, public works, ports, railways, housing, water and irrigation development and rural electrification have been earmarked to create employment opportunities for low skilled youth.

The initiative seeks to create an estimated 200,000 jobs annually.

Programs to be considered in this plan under the various sub sectors include:

- Construction of water pans and boreholes
- Rehabilitation of water and sewerage systems
- Construction and laying of pipelines
- Rehabilitation and extension of gazette water and sewerage schemes
- Construction of new irrigation schemes
- Rehabilitation of stalled small holder irrigation schemes
- Operation and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure
- Supply of farm inputs and marketing of farm produce
- Development of water resources
- Flood control measures
- Monitoring ground water
- Hydro geological and geophysical survey
- Water sample analysis



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT MARSHAL PLAN



Cover page of the Marshal Plan

Development marshal plan

- Monitoring water quality and river gauging stations
- Other projects earmarked for direct or indirect impact on youth employment include
- Construction and management of bus parks and markets
 - Garbage collection
 - Enforcing bylaws
 - Sub-contracting
 - Jua Kali sheds
 - Solid and liquid waste management
 - Environmental restoration
 - Urban and Highway beautification

(iv) Youth polytechnics

A number of youth polytechnics have been revived and equipped. About 510 trained instructors have been deployed to youth polytechnics throughout the country.

With support from stakeholders a new curriculum is in place and at the moment being taught in 40 youth polytechnics on a pilot basis.

Under the initiative, enrolment figures are expected to double from the current 75,000 to 150,000 and 300,000 by 2014.

Graduates are to benefit from relevant toolkits to enable them start businesses. The initiative is expected to create over 35,000 jobs annually.

(vi) Youth enterprise development fund

The revolving loan facility whose budgetary allocation has been increased from an initial Kshs1 billion to Kshs1.75 billion, is another way set to fight joblessness and expand support to the young business people.

The fund has benefitted over 100,000 youth, individually and in groups, engaged in small businesses.

Through the YEDF, many have become job creators rather than simply jobseekers. The fund basically seeks to encourage the youth to consider entrepreneurship as a career option.

(vii) Public procurement of goods and services

Annual government purchases total to Kshs 150 billion. Through affirmative action, the youth are to be empowered to supply 10 percent of the value of such goods and services amounting to Kshs15 billion. It is recommended that all government ministries buy at least 10 percent of their stores and services from youth owned business.

The Ministry through the



The Youth at work: More labour intensive jobs needed to employ more youths.

Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) intends to compile a directory of qualifying youth owned enterprises and issue them with identification certificates. Through this initiative, 100,000 jobs are set to be created per year.

Moreover, the Ministry of Youth Affairs is to push for the waiving of business permit charges of youth owned enterprises during the first three years of operation.

(vii) Labour export

The ministry of youth affairs is working with 27 foreign recruitment agencies to secure employment opportunities abroad for the youth

Over 2,000 youth have already been facilitated to secure employment abroad particularly in the Middle East.

Under the plan, beneficiaries are to be issued with documentations such as passports and certificates of good conduct as well as air tickets as part of relocation cost.

A memorandum on Youth Labour Export Framework has been approved by the cabinet. The fund is now working on a Sessional paper to provide legal framework for labour migration.

(viii) Industrial attachment and internships

The Ministry of Youth Affairs also plans to work with players in the public sector such as government ministries, local authorities, parastatals, district offices and the private sector through Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KMA), Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) to ensure that they provide attachments and internship programs to the youth.

(ix) Information communication technology

The government is fast tracking the installation of the national fibre optic cable infrastructure. The initiative aims at encouraging local and international investors in the ICT sector to establish call centres and business outsourcing enterprises throughout the country.

Through ICT an additional 100,000 are to be created over the next few years.

Over 1000 youth are to be trained in preparation for the establishment of digital villages.

(x) Entrepreneurship training

Emphasis is placed on mentoring, enterprise culture and acquisition of business skills, counseling, marketing and product design.

The training is to help address low levels of business management skills, unfavourable operating policy environment and lack of access to markets, technology and information.

(xi) Promotion of positive values, good character and Right attitude toward work

Regular campaigns focusing on dignity and work are to be undertaken to illustrate that hard work is key to uplifting the social economic status of the youth.

(xii) Agriculture

The program aims at enhancing youth potential in agriculture through training and capacity building on good crop husbandry, value addition, agricultural marketing, agri-business and the use of appropriate agricultural technology.

(xiii) Youth leadership training

Skills acquired through this

initiative are to enable the youth offer services to the government and corporate organizations at a fee.

(xiv) Sports and recreation

Under this plan, each constituency is to receive Kshs1 million to promote sporting activities.

(xv) Provision of simple life skills

The Ministry of Agriculture through the wide network of farmers training centers and the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology are to provide short courses for the youth. The skills acquired seek to enable the youth to participate in national development.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Ministry of Youth Affairs is to conduct regular surveys to determine the impact of the proposed programs. The plan comes at an opportune moment. Recommendations are premised on Vision 2030 and seek to empower young people to participate in economic development. The successful implementation of the plan will help in the realization of the set target of 500,000 new jobs annually.