

ECDE AT A GLANCE



The overhaul is **comprehensive**. Each of the newly established ECDE centres now boasts classrooms for **PP1** and **PP2**, an office for the tutor, an ablution block for both children and teachers and a modern play park equipped with swings and sand pits



Governor Kimani Wamatangi modernised **134 ECDE** centres in the **2023**-**2024** financial year. **120** centres to be **modernised** in the **2024**-2025

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Transformation of

>>>continued from page 1

Under the visionary leadership of Governor Kimani Wamatangi, all ECDE centres in the county are undergoing significant reconstruction, evolving from single makeshift classrooms to modern educational facilities that rival private academies.

The overhaul is comprehensive. Each of the newly established ECDE centres now boasts classrooms for PP1 and PP2, an office for the tutor, an ablution block for both children and teachers and a modern play park equipped with swings and sand pits. This infrastructural transformation spans all 60 wards in the county, laying a solid educational foundation for the young minds of Kiambu.

Research consistently underscores the importance of early childhood education, revealing that a positive first impression of school significantly influences a child's lifelong attitude towards learning. Recognising this, the Governor prioritised the modernisation of ECDE centres immediately after his election, aiming to ensure that the youngest learners begin their educational journey in an environment that is both nurturing and stimulating.

The results have been immediate and impressive. There is palpable ex-

citement among children as they revel in their new surroundings. The modernised facilities have not only improved the physical environment but have also instilled a sense of pride and enthusiasm among children, teachers and parents alike.

The Chief officer in charge of ECDE and Culture Dr. Mercy Njagi says the new look ECDE is part of the transformation programme established by Governor Wamatangi.

"We have witnessed robust infrastructural development done by Governor Wamatangi to enhance the new outlook. In the 2023/2024 Financial Year, we have seen each ward benefit from two ECDE centres but some wards have benefitted from three due to their vastness and population," said Dr. Njagi.

She said the essence of the spruc-



Waguthu ECDE centre in Muchatha Ward, Kiambaa Sub-County.

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Barracks ECDE centre in Kamenu Ward in Thika Sub-County.



Kiambu nursery schools

ing up of the ECDE centres was to provide the learners with a conducive learning environment and prepare them for the educational journey ahead.

"We have a comprehensive feeding programme which has enhanced numbers in the ECDE centres. For Example at Lower Kihara ECDE, the numbers have grown from 78 to 159 due to the good learning environment we have provided," said Dr. Njagi.

She said that the department is looking forward to employing new ECDE teachers in the new financial year to take care of the swelling numbers.

Governor Wamatangi's commitment extends beyond brick-andmortar improvements. He has also implemented a comprehensive feeding program to keep children in school and enhance their learning experience. Every morning, the children receive a bowl of nutritious uji, complemented by eggs three days a week and a packet of milk. This initiative has significantly boosted attendance, with the number of learners increasing from 32,000 to over 38,000.

Governor Wamatangi said he was proud of what the County Government had managed to achieve in the education sector during the short period he has been in office.

"When we sought the vote of the Kiambu people, one of the strong pillars in my manifesto was to ensure 100 percent transition into learning at ECDE level. That is why we embarked on the modernisation of all the 524 ECDE centres across our county and I am happy that we are firmly on course," said the Governor. He said as part of his administra-

"We have a

comprehensive feeding programme which has enhanced numbers in the ECDE centres. For Example at Lower Kihara ECDE, the numbers have grown from 78 to 159 due to the good learning environment we have provided," said Dr. Njagi. tion's commitment to improving education in Kiambu County, the County has a 360 degrees transformation programme targeting the sector. He said his vision was to uplift the ECDE centres to rival those in development nations like in Finland and Germany.

"We are constructing new model ECDE centres and renovating existing ones to provide modern facilities akin to those found in private kindergartens. Currently, the Department of Education, Gender, Culture and Social Services is working on 180 ECDE centres, with about 130 centres in various stages of implementation. Our goal is to modernise all 524 ECDE centres by 2026," said Governor Wamatangi.

Governor Wamatangi's ambitious plan aims to modernise all 526 ECDE centres in Kiambu by 2026. Already, 150 centres have undergone this major overhaul. The project has garnered widespread acclaim and has become a benchmark for other counties. Former Kiambu Township MP Jude Njomo has praised the initiative, calling it a game-changer for early childhood education.

"If there is one thing that makes me proud is the decision by Governor Wamatangi to transform the ECDE sector in Kiambu. He is doing a perfect job and it is being felt at the grassroots, let us support this great initiative," said Njomo recently.



Mairi ECDE centre in Githobokoni Ward in Gatundu North Sub-County





Manguu ECDE centre in Kiuu Ward (Githurai) in Ruiru Sub-County.





Construction of markets across Kiambu on track

By NJERI KARU

n a move to boost the economic foundation of small-scale traders, the Kiambu County government has embarked on the construc-tion of five new modern markets.

This initiative is part of the county's broader strategy to support the bottom-up economic model, which focuses on empowering individuals at the base of the economic pyramid.

Elected on a platform of inclusive growth, Governor Kimani Wamatangi has prioritised the creation of conducive environments for 'mama mbogas' to sell their wares. The markets under construction include Lussigeti, Dagoretti, Kinoo, Kagwe and Kimbo Matangini.

With an estimated budget exceeding Kshs 250 million, each market is projected to cost between Kshs 40 million and Kshs 50 million.

Construction of these markets is expected to be completed within six months. During this period, the county government has provided temporary alternative locations for traders to continue their businesses uninterrupted. The move has been met with excitement from the traders, who anticipate that the new facilities will greatly enhance their retail operations.

Governor Wamatangi says the construction of the markets was to fulfil his campaign pledge of ensuring that small-scale traders have decent facilities to conduct their business.

"These markets will provide our traders with modern, hygienic and secure environments. It is about giving our traders the dignity and support they deserve to maximise their profits," he

stated

The governor also highlighted the partnership between the county and national governments in improving market facilities.

"Apart from the markets funded solely by the county, we have also partnered with the national government to construct additional markets across Kiambu. I extend my gratitude to President William Ruto for his support in these projects, some of which are nearing completion," he added.

Other markets being constructed in conjunction with the National Government include Soko Mjinga, Ting'ang'a, Gitwe, Ngewa, Kiandutu, Gatukuyu, Kiandutu, Gikuni, Ndenderu and Witeithie

The CECM, Trade, Tourism, Industries and Enterprise Development Mr Wilfred Mwenda noted the innovative designs of the new markets were designed by the County Government.

The new markets are based on a modern design developed by the county government. This design has received such positive feedback that it has been adopted by the Ministry of Housing," Mwenda said.

He emphasised that the new design focuses on functionality, safety and aesthetic appeal, aiming to set a new standard for market infrastructure in the country.

Traders in Kiambu are optimistic about the new developments. **Jane Wanjiku, a vegeta-ble seller in Dagoretti, shared her excitement: 'We have been trading in difficult conditions for years. The new market will not only give us a bet-



Commissioned the construction of Kagwe market in Nyanduma ward.

ter place to sell our goods but also attract more customers. This is a game-changer for us.'

Mwenda said as Kiambu County continues to invest in modernising its market infrastructure, the initiative is expected to create a ripple effect of economic benefits, not just for the traders but

for the broader Kiambu people.

"The enhanced markets will likely draw more shoppers, increase sales and contribute to the overall economic growth of the county," said the CECM.





Commissioned the construction of Kimbo-Matangi-Ini Junction Market in Theta Ward in Juja Sub County. Commissioned the construction of Kimoo Market in Kinoo Ward, Kikuyu Sub-County.

Wamatangi Care' welcome relief for vulnerable families in Kiambu

By GEORGE NJUNGE

'ith his hands clasped, Harun Mbugua sits outside his family's house, reflecting on his last moments with his mother. She was the pillar of the family and her loss has been devastating for everyone around him.

Mbugua, a resident of Gatitu Sub-location in Gatundu South, recently lost his mother, Mary Khasiaba Njoroge. She had been suffering from a severe ailment and was admitted to Nazareth Hospital, where the medical bills quickly escalated to over Ksh 150,000-an amount the family could not afford.

However, thanks to her membership in "Kiambu Afya," popularly known as "Wamatangi Care," an affordable healthcare plan introduced by Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi, the burden was lessened. The entire hospital bill was cleared by the medical scheme.

Tragically, Mbugua's mother did not survive, but the family was spared the additional financial burden of funeral expenses thanks to the Last Respect Cover, which provided Ksh 100,000 for the burial

"It was a double blessing in a time of sorrow. We could mourn our mother without the added stress of financial worries." Mbugua shares

He said that although the family was still mourning, it would have been a double tragedy if they had lost their mother and didn't have the funds to clear the bill, given their humble background.

"As a family, we are grateful to Gover-nor Wamatangi for this important medical scheme which is assisting vulnerable families in Kiambu. Can you imagine the kind of burden we would be dealing with if we did not get the assistance?" said Mbugua.

Elizabeth Wanjiku is another beneficiary of the medical scheme with her own story to tell. Cuddling her newborn son outside her modest home in Kamunyu village in Gatundu North, Wanjiku could not hide her tears of joy as she narrated her experience.

Just months ago, the prospect of safely delivering her baby seemed an insurmountable challenge due to her financial constraints. However, thanks to "Wamatangi Care," her worries were eased

Tears rolled down her cheeks as she expressed gratitude to the Governor for this grand program that allowed her to deliver free of charge at Gatundu Level 5 Hospital. During an interview, Wanjiku recounted how she went to Gatundu Hospital and walked out free after delivery, thanks to the medical scheme that



Harun Mbugua From kiganjo ward, io ward, Gatundu south. A beneficiary of the universal health care

card

took care of her bill.

"I don't know what I would have done without Wamatangi Care. I didn't have to pay a single coin. They took care of everything," Wanjiku said, her voice filled with gratitude

Enrolled in the program, Wanjiku's premiums were covered, allowing her to benefit from comprehensive maternal care at no personal cost. Her story is just one of many that highlight how this revolutionary program has transformed the lives of Kiambu's residents.

"I want to encourage Kiambu residents to enrol in this scheme, which is assisting people in villages. I do not know what would have happened to me if I did not have this cover," remarked Wanjiku.

Another heart rending story is that of Kamau wa Kimani of Kangoya village in Ndumberi Ward. He told us that when he heard Governor Wamatangi announcing that residents should register for Wamatangi Care, he thought it was the usual political gimmick.

"I reluctantly enrolled in the scheme and was pleasantly surprised when I got a text message that I had been enrolled. After that, I kept calm knowing that the healthcare of my family was taken care of," said Kimani

He later got involved in a road accident that left him bedridden for days. "I had an accident during my daily errands.

I was treated in a hospital in Ngong in Kajiado County without paying a single coin, with Wamatangi Care covering Ksh 130,000 for my hospitalization. I was operated on and stayed in the hospital for four days," said Kimani.

The success stories of Wamatangi Care echo throughout Kiambu, with residents praising Governor Wamatangi's visionary leadership. The program aligns with President William Ruto's Bottom-up Transformation Agenda (BETA) that emphasises accessible healthcare for all. By partnering with the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), the county has enrolled 100,000 households,

mbugua From wam-wangi Ward. abenefi ciary of the universal health care

benefiting over 500,000 individuals.

Kiambu County Executive Committee Member in charge of Health, Dr. Elias Maina, says the idea of creating a cover to take care of the vulnerable was conceptualised by Governor Wamatangi after his election.

"Kiambu Afya is a program that was rolled out by Governor Wamatangi when he realized that most people in Kiambu have been suffering because they could not access quality healthcare. The majority of the people at the bottom of the pyramid have no form of insurance cover. He decided to help those who cannot afford healthcare and came up with the brilliant idea of having Kiambu Afya or Wamatangi Care," said Dr. Maina.

Governor Wamatangi says he takes pride in the fact that this scheme is working. He noted that resources that were being pilfered before have come in handy in paying the premiums for residents under the care.

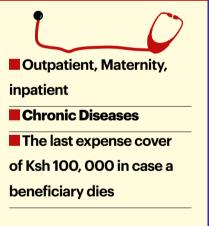
"I have data from across the county showing that this scheme is assisting people. We are going to ensure that we sustain this program for the benefit of those who cannot pay for healthcare," said the Governor.

Governor Wamatangi explained that the healthcare plan goes beyond basic coverage, as it includes treatment for chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes, ensuring that even the most vulnerable populations receive the care they need.

The inclusion of the Last Expense Cover has further assisted our people and underlines the program's comprehensive approach to healthcare. It offers critical support to families during their most challenging times," said the Governor. ~Adapted from The Standard issue of

June 22,2024

SERVICES OFFERED:



Kiambu benefits from multiple development partners initiatives

By ENOCK MAROA

ast year, a delegation from the Council of Governors (COG) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) visited Governor Dr. Kimani Wamatangi at Kiambu County headquarters. They introduced a five-year digital land governance program, funded by the FAO and the European Union (EU), in partnership with the Ministry of Lands, the National Land Commission (NLC) and the Judiciary.

This initiative aims to transform land governance, improve food and nutrition security and promote sustainable development. Kiambu County, part of Cluster Number Six with Nairobi, Narok and Kajiado, was identified as a key player due to its strategic location and dynamic agricultural sector.

The FAO organised comprehensive training sessions for County Executive Committee Members (CÉCM) and Directors of Lands and Physical Planning from the participating counties. The primary goal was to introduce county officials to the partnership's intricacies and establish effective working relationships. Training covered the program's goals, technological tools and stakeholder roles, ensuring officials could implement the program effectively.

Governor Kimani Wamatangi endorsed the partnership, emphasising its importance for food security, local economies, and sustainable agricultural practices in Kiambu County.

"This partnership with the FAO ensures food security, bolsters local economies and promotes sustainable agricultural practices. Together, we can create a resilient and thriving future for our communities," he declared.

FAO recognised the potential of GIS technology to improve land resource management and partnered with Kiambu County to establish a state-of-the-art GIS lab. This lab will collect, analyse, and utilise spatial data for informed land use, urban planning and environmental conservation decisions.

Active community involvement was essential for effective land governance. FAO and the county organised County Spatial Plans (CSP) meetings to present the draft CSP for public participation. These forums allowed residents to engage with policymakers, express concerns, and contribute ideas on land use and development.

. Attendees included farmers, business owners, local leaders, professional bodies, parastatals, religious organisations, government organisations and ordinary citizens. They discussed urban development, infrastructure projects and conservation efforts, ensuring the county's development strategies aligned with residents' needs and aspirations.

FAO also assisted in organising land clinics across Kiambu County to address specific land-related issues. Legal experts, land surveyors and county officials offered advice, resolved disputes and assisted with land registration processes. These clinics helped residents clarify land titles, resolve inheritance disputes and learn about proper land documentation and transaction procedures

During a public participation forum in Ndeiya Karai, Ag. Director of Land Survey, Mr. Isaac Kinuthia, emphasised the importance of the land clinic initiative. He urged residents to engage with officials present to address their needs effectively.

"This is a free land clinic to assist you right at your doorstep. Take it seriously and voice all your grievances and issues to be resolved here," he said.



A joint Committee leading the transformation of Thika Town into Thika Industrial Smart City hosts a productive breakfast meeting with Thika Stakeholders.

Thika's long journey to a city firmly on course

By ENOCK MAROA

he plan to elevate Thika Town to Thika Industrial Smart City is progressing well. The recently appointed ad hoc and county technical committees have started working on a clear roadmap to achieve this transformation.

Last week, the committees met and agreed on a strategy to meet the requirements of the Urban Areas and Cities Act. They have begun collecting comprehensive data to prepare for Thika's upgrade.

Thanks to Governor Kimani Wamatangi, Thika, once regarded as the industrial hub of Kenya, is set to reclaim its lost glory by becoming a city.

The team confirmed that Thika meets the population requirement of 250,000 residents, with a population of 279,429 according to the 2019 National Census.

Thika's infrastructure, including the Thika Superhighway, Thika-Ga-

rissa Road and a railway line, supports local industries. Led by Vice-chair Planner T.G. Ndorongo, the team visited key areas such as Thika Industrial Zone, educational institutions, public parks, the administrative zone, and more to gather insights on existing facilities.

Some of the notable places visited by the team include; Thika Industrial Zone, Thika learning institutions, Thika urban public parks, Thika Administrative Zone, Thika-Machakos boundary, Fourteen Falls, Ngoliba and Kilimabongo satellite towns, Gatuanyaga, Munyu and Githima areas, Kang'oki dumpsite where they witnessed the upcoming recycling industries, informal settlements in thika, sports facilities such as Thika stadium, Thika-Ruiru boundary, Safaricom Foundation and Mary hill school amongst others.

The team pushing the Smart City agenda paid a courtesy call to the



Overall, the Thika Industrial Smart City Initiative aims to drive economic development, create jobs, promote innovation, and improve the quality of life for Kiambu County residents. office of the County Executive Committee Member in charge of Lands, Housing, Physical Planning, Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Ms Salome Wainaina. The meeting was a moment to update the CECM on the significant progress they had made towards transforming Thika.

During the meeting, Ms Wainaina praised the Committee's efforts, saying, "I am impressed with your work; what you have achieved in this period is remarkable. Keep pressing on, and together we will achieve our goal of transforming Thika Town into Thika Industrial Smart City."

The town's rapid growth, marked by numerous developments and expanding educational institutions, underscores its readiness for this upgrade. The Kang'oki dumpsite, the largest in Kiambu County, sorts waste for easier disposal. The primary goal of this initiative is to collect and analyse data on the municipality as required by the Urban Areas and Cities Act amended in 2019. This data will provide valuable insights for shaping the strategic report and guiding the development of the Thika Industrial Smart City.

"Elevating our town to city status is not just a title change; it's a significant step towards greater economic development, improved infrastructure and enhanced quality of life for all our residents," said Mr. Martin Kangiri, the acting Chief Officer.

Overall, the Thika Industrial Smart City Initiative aims to drive economic development, create jobs, promote innovation, and improve the quality of life for Kiambu County residents. Governor Wamatangi's administration is lobbying to elevate Thika to city status, benefiting Kiambu County and surrounding regions.





THKA INDUSTRIAL F. **KA INDUSTRIAL** MART CITY

Making Kiambu Great Again

Pictorial



Assents to Kiambu County Budget Plan 2024-2025.



Groundbreaking of the new Kiambu County Municipal Building at Red Nova in Kiambu Town .



Graduation Ceremony at the Kiambu Fire and Rescue Training Centre for Firefighters and emergency personnel .



Inspection of the ongoing construction of Lusigetti Market in Nachu Ward, Kikuyu Sub-County.



Impromptu Visit to Lusigetti Level Four Hospital in Nachu Ward, Kikuyu Sub-County.



Ongoing works at Kiawaroga Level Three Hospital in Limuru East, Limuru Sub-county.

Pictorial



Assents to Kiambu County Budget Plan 2024-2025 .



Commissioning construction of Kwambira Buspark in Limuru Sub-County.

Makongeni Bus Park in Kamenu Ward in Thika is now operational.







Impromptu Visit to Lusigetti Level Four Hospital in Nachu Ward, Kikuyu Sub-County .



Distribution of Improved Kienyeji Chicks to farmers .



Official Commissioning of a Water Project at Gathanje in Githunguri Township Ward.

Wamatangi's austerity measures

By OUR REPORTER

recent Facebook post by renowned business and development consultant Ephraim Njega about the changes taking place in Kiambu County captures the transformative leadership of Governor Kimani Wamatangi.

Njega, also an economic analyst, narrated how the cost of constructing roads has significantly decreased thanks to the austerity measures implemented by Governor Wamatangi.

This new model of using the county's own equipment, comprising excavators, graders, roller compactors, trucks, and water bowsers deployed in the 12 sub-counties and the county workforce, has drastically reduced costs.

Construction material is sourced from quarries on county-owned land at zero cost, while local youth are engaged in the construction work.

A three-kilometre road project that would have cost Kshs 6 million now costs Kshs 400,000, a 93 percent cost reduction.

"This is something the national government could adopt. The close to KSh 130 billion to be collected under the Road Maintenance Levy is probably enough to build new roads and maintain existing ones. We just need to end corruption and inefficiencies," Njenga said.

Njega's story has become a buzz in social circles, highlighting the Governor's stance in saving public resources.

Since his election, Governor Wamatangi has embraced numerous austerity measures defining his tenure. He has taken extraordinary steps to protect public resources, ensuring that the people of Kiambu get value for their money.

Data from the county indicates that so far, they have worked on over 1,000 kilometres of road across the county, with the Chief Officer in Charge of Roads, Edmound Njihia, saying that in the new financial year, the county will do 1 200 kilometers of road through the same framework.

In addition to reducing the cost of constructing roads by eliminating private contractors in the rehabilitation of rural access roads, the governor has cut down on unnecessary travels, both locally and internationally.

He has ensured that county employees are taking only necessary trips.

Instead, he established a dome tent outside his office where employees hold meetings and retreats, saving the county from incurring extra expenses. The tent, nicknamed "Vasha," refers to the resort town of Naivasha, where many counties hold meetings.

Upon assuming control of Kiambu County as the fourth county chief, Wamatangi, known for his firm stance on prudent resource management, faced criticism from some county authorities and elected leaders.

This criticism arose when he prohibited local and foreign seminars and benchmarking visits. The Governor argued that such trips, which are common in regional governments, misuse public resources.

In his view, these resources should



There was a time I suggested that we need to create a publicly owned road construction company as a way of curbing corruption in this critical sector. Many of these Chinese firms doing road construction in Kenya are state-owned corporations in China.

Recently it was reported in the media that Kiambu County has significantly reduced the cost of constructing roads by using its own equipment and workers. Instead of issuing contracts to private road construction companies, the roadworks are done by the county government.

A 3km road project that would previously cost KSh 6 million is now costing KSh 400,000. That is a 93% reduction in cost. It is alleged that previously KSh 900 million had been spent on contracts but only KSh 175 million was for genuine work. The rest was shared by contractors and county officials.

The cost of corruption and bad governance is immense. The County plans to be doing 1,000 km of roads per year. Under the current arrangement, this would cost KSh 133 million as opposed to KSh 2 billion under the ol arrangement. Imagine the impact

can even tarmac those rural acc doing grading and gravelling



"This is something the national government could adopt. The close to KSh 130 billion to be collected under the Road Maintenance Levy is probably enough to build new roads and maintain existing ones. We just need to end corruption and inefficiencies," Njenga said.

be directed towards development and service improvement, and the time officers spend on these trips could be better utilised in managing county affairs.

Wamatangi issued an order to all county officers, including himself, mandating the organisation of workshops and seminars that had previously been hastily arranged as sponsored events in expensive hotels and are now to be held in a tent as part of austerity measures.

The Governor also conducts meetings with the management team and other guests at the tent, having even hosted President William Ruto during one of his visits to Kiambu Town in August of last year.

"Officers used to spend up to

ed to create a my say away of Many of these in Kenya are up of these in Kenya are up of these in Kenya are up of the say are done by the was shared by ut only KSh 900 ut only KSh

Kshs10 million on per diem and other expenses when they flew to Mombasa and Naivasha for a week to prepare a Ksh. 10 million project. Officers and their aides would travel to Naivasha thrice a month, twice in Kisumu and Mombasa, for workshops, some of which were unnecessary. Officers would not even travel, yet they would still sign for the per diem," the Governor explained.

He added: "Sometimes, they even organised one or two trips abroad for benchmarking. Ultimately, the county would spend about a billion shillings on travel alone. That is why Kiambu was unable to carry out serious development. But that has stopped, which is why we have received such a rating from CoB."

It was no surprise when the Auditor General revealed that, among all 47 governors in Kenya, only Governor Wamatangi has not travelled outside the country since his election.

While other governors have spent in excess of Kshs 20 million on domestic and foreign travel, Wamatangi's international travel expenditure remains at zero.

The report covering the first nine months of the 2023/2024 year reveals that the Kiambu County Executive only spent Sh883,037, with Wamatangi and his staff members taking no trips abroad.

The report says Ksh. 789,372 was used to sponsor the team for the International Karate Championship games in Berlin, Germany, while Ksh. 93,665 was used to support a team from the Transport Department that visited Tanzania and Rwanda to study bus operation policy and management in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area.

"Expenditure on foreign travel amounted to Kshs 65.87 million and comprised Kshs. 65.17 million by the County Assembly and Kshs 0.70 million by the County Executive," the CoB report says in part.

The governor said: "As a governor if I make a foreign trip, I am entitled to a per diem allowance of about Ksh. 1.2 million. If I were to make a trip every two months, I would have pocketed about Sh12 million by now. But I chose not to because Ksh. 12 million can build and equip three ECDE centres for our children or pay fees for 2400 students at a rate of Sh5,000 each. That is why I suspended all trips, not just for myself but for all county executive wing officials."

This, Wamatangi said, has enabled him to consolidate funds for development.

For construction of 134 new ECDE centres comprising PP1 and PP2

classrooms, teachers' offices, toilets for pupils and teachers, five level four hospitals, 16 level Three hospitals, a medical cover for 100, 000 households dubbed "Wamatangi Care" to new bus parks, and markets, Wamatangi says his austerity measures are yielding fruits.

Further, he has increased bursary allocation from Ksh 100 million per year to Ksh 500 million, where each beneficiary Ksh 5 000 and above, a feeding program where 38 000 ECDe centers get uji, boiled eggs, and a packet of milk, and distributed kienyeji chicks, maize seeds, and fertilizer to over 500, 000 farmers.

Further, while the governor says he does not interfere with the county's procurement processes, he has made it his business to verify the costs placed on the bills of quantities to ensure that the costs placed on projects by the Directorate of Public Works are not exaggerated.

Further, he demanded that the tendering process be free and fair, which would help make the projects' costs competitive. For projects that would have previously cost the taxpayer Sh50 million, today, the county implements even better projects at less than 50 percent of the cost, the governor said.

Kiambu tops the region in Own Source Revenue with Sh4.6 billion collection

By OUR REPORTER

he Kiambu County Government has achieved a remarkable milestone by raising approximately Sh4.6 billion in ownsource revenue for the 2023/2024 financial year.

This is the highest amount collected since the start of devolution in 2013.

Under Governor Kimani Wamatangi's administration, this Sh4.575 billion places Kiambu among the top-performing counties in local revenue mobilisation, marking a 25 percent increase from the Sh3.6 billion collected in the 2022/2023 financial year. The governor now aims to raise Sh7.9 billion in the current financial year to support his Sh23

billion annual budget.

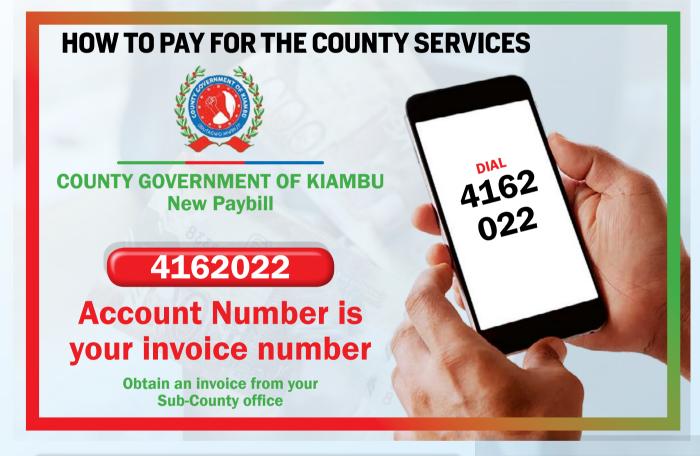
Governor Wamatangi noted that the impressive collection was achieved despite numerous challenges, including a prolonged doctors' strike, floods in the last quarter of the fiscal year, and a significant Internet outage caused by massive fiber cuts at sea.

Since taking office in August 2022, Governor Wamatangi has overseen a consistent upward trend in revenue collection, increasing the county's annual revenue by Sh1.5 billion over the past two years without raising existing fees and levies.

Data from County Treasury and Controller of Budget indicate that in the 2021/ 2022 and 2022/2023 fiscal years, the county collected Sh3.1 billion and Sh3.6 billion, respectively. In the justended financial year, Sh4.575 billion was collected. CoB boss Margret Nyakang'o, in her 'County Budget Implementation Report Review' covering the first nine months of 2023–2024, placed Kiambu at position three nationally with a collection of Sh3.35 billion after Nairobi and Narok counties, which had Sh9.43 billion and Sh3.34 billion, respectively, in the same period.

The report rated Kiambu as the top in Mt Kenya region. Murang'a followed with a collection of Sh716 million in the nine months. Meru generated Sh671 million, while Nyeri collected Sh492 million, marking an increase of 12 percent in the nine months.

Embu County netted Sh507.14 million, Kirinyaga (Sh472.81 million), and Tharaka Nithi County



generated Sh274.03 million. Nyandarua was rated the lowest in the region, with its collection decreasing by 4.2 percent. However, the amounts went up in the last three months of the financial year.

Ms Nyakang'o attributed the increase in OSR in Kiambu County to the regional government's waivers on land rates, and the mobilization of revenue collection at the sub-county level.

The County Department of Finance statistics for the full year show that Sh818.52 million and Sh809.52 million were collected from physical planning and land rates, respectively, while Sh1.2 billion was collected from hospitals and NHIF rebates.

Other streams that performed well are revenues from Business permits and vehicle parking charges, which collected Sh410.9 million and Sh349.9 million, respectively. Sh247 million was collected from the services offered by the public health department.

"All these were achieved without an increase, even a single penny on the existing levies and fees. We just decided to run an accountable government where even collected coin must go to the right place, and that is why we have been increasing our revenue. And it's not just about collection, we are spending it prudently to ands the people are to get its value," Mr Wamatangi said.

In its bid to boost revenue, the county has been banking on a new enterprise resource system (ERP), a holistic system covering the management of services and finances in all sectors, such as hospital management, building approvals, business permits, and other revenue charges. The county has also been exploring more revenue streams.

Further, Mr Wamatangi has also established the Kiambu County Revenue Authority, a corporation of the County Government with a mandate to oversee, manage, and undertake the responsibility of revenue collection.

The body, chaired by career finance expert Mr Mburu Kang'ethe, aims to ensure "effectiveness and efficiency in revenue administration" and promote transparency in revenue collection.

The outfit, created following enactment of Kiambu County Revenue Authority Act of 2023, will also guide the collection, receipt, and remittance of revenue to the County Treasury in accordance with the Public Finance Management Act 2012.





Kiambu announces rate reductions, reverses land taxation policy



By BLESSY WAMBUI

he County Government has abolished the tax on freehold land and reduced land rates on other properties. Governor Kimani Wamatangi's administration is leading this effort through a proposal that has been sent to the County Assembly for further deliberation.

A bill to amend the Kiambu County Valuation and Rating Act 2016 has already been gazetted ready to be debated by the County assembly. This follows a memorandum by Governor Wamatangi to the Members of the County assembly to amending the Act to give proper guidance in property rating and charging. "Cognisant of the current harsh economic times the people of Ke-

nya and our citizenry in Kiambu are facing, my administration proposes to effect a people centred land rating regime," said the Governor in his memo. He proposes that the Kiambu

He proposes that the Kiambu County Finance Bill 2024 be amended to change the payable rate from 0.25 percent to 0.15 percent.

"Section 17 of the Principal Act should be amended to include all freehold properties used as a homestead or for domestic purpose or for subsistence farming be part of exempt properties," the Governor proposes.

This move to change the land taxation policy began with the 2016 Land Valuation Act, implemented during the previous regimes. Although this Act was primarily meant to streamline property tax collection, it unintentionally created complicated and disputed rating systems.

In an interview, the Leader of Majority at the County assembly Mr. Godfrey Mucheke confirmed that the assembly had received various recommendations to change this law. The Assembly, with the help of the executive, intends to make legislation that addresses the issues raised by residents of Kiambu, he says.

"The need to review the law and exempt freehold land from taxation has been necessitated by numerous consultations and recommendations from the public," stated Mucheke. He emphasised the importance of involving the public and other key stakeholders in this legislative process to ensure the new laws are fair and equitable.

Governor Wamatangi reiterated that his administration is committed to solving land tax issues by making the system equitable for all. Speaking at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Ngewa, Governor Wa-

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"Section 17 of the Principal Act should be amended to include all freehold properties used as a homestead or for domestic purpose or for subsistence farming be part of exempt properties,"

matangi assured residents that the proposed amendments aim to create a better tax regime that is more equitable and easier to manage.

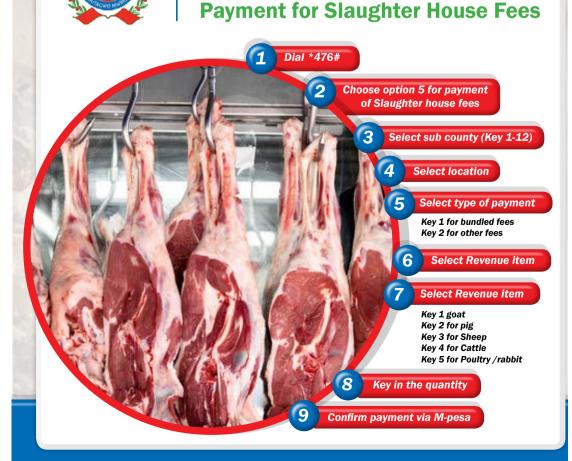
"We have also heard the cries of our people that it will be punitive and we have suggested to the County Assembly that they need to reconsider this and eliminate the land tax," the governor added.

Ngewa ward MCA Charles Kangethe has supported the proposed amendment, saying it will lessen the economic burden on residents. Additionally, the Law Society of Kenya has taken part in this discourse by instituting a case against excessive fines at the Thika Land and Environment Court. The decision to recall the taxation on freehold land was influenced by stakeholder pressure and the involvement of landowners themselves.

The finalisation of the proposed amendments is expected to be completed by the County Assembly. The changes will positively impact property taxation in Kiambu County.

By reversing its position on taxing freehold property and reducing taxes, the County Government of Kiambu has signalled a shift in local approaches to land taxation.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KIAMBU NEW USSD CODE



FEEDBACK FROM READERS

I write to commend Governor Kimani Wamatangi for the good work he is doing through her exceptional economic empowerment program in our county. His tireless efforts in providing certified seeds and fertilisers have been transformative, particularly for our hardworking farmers. Since the inception of this program, the county has witnessed a remarkable boost in food security. Farmers have consistently reported bumper harvests, an indication that the program is effective.

Another notable aspect of Governor Wamatangi's initiative is the support extended to avocado farmers through the distribution of high-quality seedlings. This move not only promises to diversify the county's agricultural output but also paves the way for increased income opportunities for our farmers, thereby enhancing their livelihoods.

The economic empowerment program has also served as a crucial platform for Governor Wamatangi to engage directly with the residents. His frequent interactions with the community have fostered a sense of unity and shared purpose, underscoring the importance of servant leadership. This hands-on approach has been a game-changer, providing valuable insights and fostering trust between the government and the people it serves.

Governor Wamatangi's exemplary leadership and dedication to the economic well-being of our county have set a high standard. His initiatives to improve agricultural productivity should inspire other governors to follow suit. His servant leadership is a model that should be emulated across the nation, as it clearly demonstrates the profound impact that committed and compassionate governance can have on the lives of ordinary citizens.

In acknowledging the significant strides made under Governor Wamatangi's administration, it is evident that her efforts are driving our county towards a more prosperous and food-secure future. We commend him for his commitment to economic empowerment and for being a true champion of the people.

Peterson Kamau, Kiawaroga, Limuru East



Githurai Kimwi Bodaboda Transport Cooperative Society receive a boost of their saving kitty of Ksh. 1 Milliona

Githurai Bodaboda group gets Ksh 1 million boost for their Sacco

By Njeri Karu

n a move to boost economic empowerment and self-reliance, Governor Dr. Kimani Wamatangi honoured his pledge of Ksh 1 million to the Githurai 45 Kimwi Bodaboda Transport Cooperative Society.

During a colourful ceremony attended by thousands of people, the Governor enhanced the Sacco's funds to support and empower the bodaboda operators in running sustainable enterprises and enabling them to engage in other incomegenerating projects.

The Sacco, started in March, has a membership of 500 riders drawn from Kiuu and Mwiki wards in Ruiru municipality. The association has 3,400 members, but only 500 have joined the Sacco. The group plans to establish a carwash and a spare parts outlet, catalysing their journey towards self-independence.

Addressing the public during the empowerment program, the Governor emphasised the importance of economic empowerment in fostering community resilience and self-sufficiency. He also lauded the riders for their noble idea of forming a savings and credit co-operative society.

"My administration believes in the bodaboda sector, whose main operators are the youth, and is ready to rewrite the narrative that the public has on them being known for all the wrong reasons, like being disorderly, rowdy, and not following traffic rules. By supporting them, I believe we will create a ripple effect that benefits the entire community and the country at large. Most riders lack entrepreneurial and saving skills, which affects their investment performance. Hence, starting or joining organized groups such as Saccos will help, especially in managing their daily income," the Governor said.

He praised the Sacco members for their intention to participate in the Affordable Housing program. "I note with gratitude that you

are committed to participating in the Affordable Housing program, where you will contribute towards : building homes and transition from renters to proud homeowners. This vision is truly inspiring for your group. Further, the idea of establishing a motorcycle spare parts shop to assist your members is both : innovative and laudable. The chairman informed me that the profits: generated from this venture will be reinvested in the Sacco, making it even stronger. With such financial stability, members will have access to affordable development loans, opening up endless opportunities. It is clear to me that you are destined for greater achievements," the Governor remarked.

He promised that his government would offer technical support to the Sacco as it seeks to grow and recruit more members.

"Our Department of Cooperatives is ready and willing to support you every step of the way. They will guide you through the necessary



"My administration believes in the bodaboda sector, whose main operators are the youth, and is ready to rewrite the narrative that the public has on them being known for all the wrong reasons, like being disorderly, rowdy, and not following traffic rules.

A boda boda shade at Kirigiti Township on Kiambu Sub-County. Governor Wamatangi installed 180 boda boda shades in the county during the 2023-2024 financial year.

How improved 'Kienyeji' chicks have transformed homes in Kiambu

By OUR REPORTER

s Lucy Wanjiru's journey speaks volumes about the transformative power of opportunity and perseverance.

Ms Wanjiru was once just another struggling resident of Riabai Ward in Kiambu Township Sub-County.

But her life took a dramatic turn when the Kiambu County Government announced a life-changing agricultural program aimed at empowering women through poultry farming.

Little did Ms Wanjiru know that her decision to attend a meeting led by Governor Kimani Wamatangi would change her life forever. The County Government of Kiambu had launched an agricultural program aimed at transforming the lives of farmers, especially women, by providing them with the means to start their own businesses.

With determination burning in her heart, Ms Wanjiru wasted no time seizing the opportunity. She attended the meeting where Mr Wamatangi personally distributed the chicks—an improved Kienyeji breed sourced from the governmentowned Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (Kalro).

When Ms Wanjiru heard about the free chicks being distributed by the county government, she accompanied fellow villagers to the public meeting. Her curiosity piqued, she made her way to the gathering, and after short speeches, her moment to savour arrived.

With words of encouragement, Mr Wamatangi handed her a carton of fluffy chicks. With hope gleaming in her eyes, Ms Wanjiru headed back home, clutching the precious cargo that would soon become the seeds of her success.

"I rarely attend public meetings, even if they are held outside my residence, but this time, I was determined to be part of the group receiving the chicks. Once I got my share, I walked home ready to start a new journey as a poultry farmer, and six months down the line, I am proud of my achievements," she says.

In the quiet corners of her modest homestead, she nurtured her feathered companions in a simply made chicken coop, watching with pride as they grew and multiplied.

Over the next six months, Ms Wanjiru put her best foot forward as she reared these precious gems.

With careful attention to detail and guidance provided by the County's agricultural extension officers, her brood of chickens flourished. What started as a small flock quickly multiplied, and Ms Wanjiru found herself harvesting eggs for her family and supplying eggs to others.

Ms Wanjiru's journey mirrors that of hundreds of women across Kiambu County who have embraced the agricultural program with gusto. Empowered by the gift of 10 chicks each, these women have turned their modest beginnings into thriving enterprises.

Through dedication and hard work, they have secured not only a steady source of income but also elevated their status within their communities.

It is the same story for Ms Florence Waithera, a resident of Ndumberi who is among the over 34,000 women in Kiambu County who have received close to 200,000 chicks donated by the county government to empower women at the bottom of the pyramid.

Ms Waithera says she has mixed the donated chicks with her local breed so that this superior breed from the government remains dominant.

"This particular breed is maturing fast and starting to lay eggs just after a few weeks. In just over six months, I have managed to have about 50 chickens from the original five that I received from the County Government," Ms Waithera said during an interview.

Ms Regina Wairimu of Kiambu Township Ward says that the improved Kienyeji breed they received from the County Government has matured fast without the challeng-



"This particular breed is maturing fast and starting to lay eggs just after a few weeks. In just over six months, I have managed to have about 50 chickens from the original five that I received from the County Government," Ms Waithera es of diseases or any hindrances.

"Unlike the previous breed that I reared, these chicks have adapted well even in the cold season when most of the chickens become susceptible to diseases," says Ms Wairimu.

The issuance of improved Kienyeji chicks is one of Governor Wamatangi's flagship programs that began in July 2023 to empower rural women as he supports President William Ruto's Bottom-Up economic philosophy.

The impact of this program extends beyond individual success stories. The County Government's foresight also led to the initiation of a school feeding program for Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) centres.

Recognising the nutritional value of eggs, the government decided to provide an egg daily to each learner. This presented a golden opportunity for the women entrepreneurs who had been rearing chickens.

When he launched the program, Mr Wamatangi explained that the project was fuelled by the desire to empower women to make them suppliers of eggs.

"Once we conceived the idea of introducing the feeding program for our nursery schools, I was surprised that there was a shortage of eggs. Eggs had to be sourced from neighbouring countries. We decided that we need to empower our women to become egg suppliers," says the Governor.

Now, these enterprising women in the program are gearing up to supply eggs to ECDE centres, ensuring a steady income stream and contributing to the well-being of loal children.

The County has approximately 36,000 ECDE children attending 534 public ECDE centres.

Each child is provided with three eggs per week as part of their nutritious diet, amounting to 108,000 eggs per week.

Over a term of 13 weeks, the County requires a staggering 1,404,000 eggs, which costs Sh18 per egg, including delivery expenses.

This equates to an income of Sh18,272,000 per term, benefiting the local farmers.

Governor Wamatangi said of the programme: "We are preparing these farmers to be our suppliers of eggs. Once the chicks have matured, laid eggs, and hatched, we expect the farmers not to have less than 40 chickens. These can lay up to 30 eggs per day and 140 per week. With the Sh18 that we are buying an egg, it means that they will be earning Sh3,780 per week. This is what we call economic empowerment."

According to the Chief Officer in charge of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Mr John Kuria, it is a winwin scenario that underscores the holistic approach of the County's empowerment initiative.

"This program is akin to killing two birds with one stone; we are empowering our women while making them suppliers of eggs to our ECDE centres, which are spread across the county," says Kuria.

He added: "Despite initial scepticism from critics, the tangible results speak volumes. Hundreds of women who have benefited from the program are living testimonials of its efficacy. The beneficiaries have started reaping the fruits of their labour."



Florence Waithera, a one month old kienyenji chicks benefifciary in Ndumberi Ward.



Regina Mwaura, a one month old kienyenji chicks benefifciary in Ndumberi Ward.



The trainees posing for a photo after graduating from the three-day, Sports Management and Leadership Workshop, that was held at the Ndumberi Youth Empowerment Center in Kiambu Sub-County.

Wamatangi empowers youth in sports management

By DUNCAN OJIJO

he Department of Youth Affairs and Sports recently held a successful threeday Sports Management and Leadership Workshop. The workshop, held at the Ndumberi Youth Empowerment Centre in Kiambu Sub-County, trained 120 young sports enthusiasts, giving them skills and knowledge to excel in the sports industry.

Opening the workshop, the CECM for Youth Affairs, Sports and Communication Ali Osman said it was aimed at empowering the youth and giving them the tools they need to succeed. Sports and youth empowerment have been key priorities in Governor Kimani Wamatangi's Government.

"The sports industry offers many opportunities and by providing these young people with the necessary expertise, we are helping them become future leaders in sports management," he said.

The workshop brought together participants keen on sports and eager to learn. Experts in sports management designed and delivered the curriculum, covering a wide range of topics essential for success in the field. Trainees learned about sports development and leadership, data analytics in sports performance, sports digital media and content management, legal aspects of sports management, and sports marketing and fandom.

"The workshop exceeded my expectations. The trainers were very knowledgeable and engaging and the topics covered were highly relevant to the current sports landscape. I now feel sports management, I'm excited to share what I learned with others in my community," said Alice Kimani, one of the participants.

At the end of the workshop, the 120 participants graduated with certificates in sports management and leadership from Ruiru Sports Academy School. This accreditation enhances their employability and career prospects in the sports industry.

Beyond individual empowerment, the workshop aimed to create a positive impact on Kiambu County's sports scene.



"The sports industry offers many opportunities and by providing these young people with the necessary expertise, we are helping them become future leaders in sports management," Ali Osman

will return to their communities and share the knowledge they acquired. This will create a ripple effect, with more skilled individuals contributing to the development of sports at the grassroots level," said Maryanne Kahuno, Chief Officer for Youth Affairs and Sports.

The County Sports Management and Leadership Workshop serves as a model for youth empowerment initiatives. By giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in the sports industry, the county is laying the foundation for a brighter future for both sports and its youth.



COUNTY SPORTS

Sports facilities get the much needed facelift



Ongoing construction of spectator stands at Thika Stadium in Thika Sub-County.

By DUNCAN OJIJO

he Department of Youth Affairs and Sports in Kiambu County is working on several projects to improve sports facilities. These projects will benefit the youth by giving them bet-

ter training grounds and competition venues. "Our goal is to empower our youth through sports by providing them with top-notch facilities. These improvements are meant to nurture talent and promote sportsmanship and healthy living," said Ali Osman, CECM for Youth Affairs, Sports and Communication.

One key project is the upgrade of Thigio Grounds in Ndeiya Ward. Ground leveling and fencing are almost done, preparing the way for a football pitch with an AstroTurf surface, an athletics track and a dais. This facility will meet various sports needs and enhance the area's sporting infrastructure.

Another important project is upgrading Githunguri Mau Mau Memorial Stadium. The fencing of the perimeter wall is nearly finished, and the next phase will include building spectator stands, volleyball and basketball courts, and stalls around the stadium. This upgrade will create a vibrant sports hub, attracting athletes and spectators, and generating revenue for the community.

"Having a proper playing ground will make a huge difference for us. Right now, we have to practice on uneven fields, which increases the risk of injuries. The new facility at Githunguri Stadium will allow us to train safely and improve our skills," said James Kamau, a young athlete from Githunguri Ward. Other ungrades are hannening

Other upgrades are happening at Kagwe Stadium in Nyanduma Ward and Kirangari Vocational Training Center grounds in Nyathuna Ward. In Kagwe, the focus is on planting and watering grass to create a well-maintained playing surface. At Kirangari, the contractor is finishing the leveling of the grounds, with the installation of an AstroTurf carpet planned soon.

The ongoing project at Thika Stadium is another positive development. Phase one, which involves completing the spectator stands, is currently 70% finished. This upgrade will significantly enhance the stadium's capacity and functionality.

tionality. Finally, the Department is also transforming Kanjeru Stadium in Gitaru Ward into a state-of-theart facility. The current focus is on leveling and compacting the field, providing a solid foundation for future development.

"These projects show the county government's commitment to investing in our youth's future. By providing quality sports facilities, we are giving them the tools they need to reach their full potential," said Maryanne Kahuno, Chief Officer for Youth Affairs and Sports.



Ongoing fencing of Githunguri Stadium by the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports.



Ongoing leveling and fencing of Thigio Grounds in Ndeiya Ward, Limuru Sub-County.



Leveling of Kanjeru Stadium in Kabete Sub-County by the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports.



Ongoing planting of grass at Kagwe Stadium in Nyanduma Ward, Lari Sub-County.

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