

# Muia and Mumbua crowned Thange cross country champions



**Katui Muia (RIGHT) with John Maweu during Kenya Pipeline Company Thange cross country at Maikuu grounds in Kibwezi East constituency. Photo by Rachael Kilonzo**

By Rachael Kilonzo-Machakos

**K**atui Muia and Eunice Mumbua posted easy wins during the inaugural Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC) Thange Cross Country recently held at Maikuu primary school grounds in Kibwezi East Constituency, Makueni.

Muia, who hail from Makueni, won after clocking 30:28:83 in the 10 kilometer Senior men's category ahead of John Maweu who took the second position in a time of 30:31:00.

Maweu lead from the beginning before Muia surged ahead of him as Stephene Mwendwa took the third position in 30:42:85.

In the women category, Kenya Prison Service Officer, Ms. Eunice Mumbua from Makueni emerged triumphant in the 8 km race clocking 26:01:70 ahead of Sharon Muriuki of

Machakos who finished in 26:15:34. Florence Nduku came third clocking 26:17:99

Meanwhile Meshack Munguti clocked 22:54:44 to win the 8 km men's race, while Bernard Musau came second in 26:56:03. Jackson Muema finished third.

Mumbua who has shone in numerous other local and international marathons led the pack from the start to finish.

"I am glad to have won the race despite the harsh weather which was quite favorable for me. I participated in the marathon to motivate upcoming athletes." Said Mumbua.

In November 2016, Muia won the Makueni County half Marathon after winning a similar race in Kitui County earlier during the year.

"One of the tactics I employed in winning this marathon was using my

competitor as a pace setter. My next plan is to train and prepare for the national cross country to be held in Machakos County." Muia told the Eastern Star sport at the finish line.

KPC Managing Director Joe Sang pointed that the company aims to empower locals both socially and economically through the use of elite athletes as role models by creating a platform of interaction during the race.

"Our Corporate Social Responsibility policy focuses on sports and youth empowerment programs that have the potential to transform lives" said Sang.

Athletics Kenya Vice President, Paul Mutwii who also graced the marathon thanked KPC for sponsoring the first event of its kind in the region and urged counties to invest in coaching budding athletics.

"There is a lot of sporting talent in this region and what needs to be done to tap the potential is training the upcoming athletes possibly with the help of the county administration." Said Mutwii

The marathon was part of the countrywide sports activities being organized by KPC



**Katui Muia wins 10 kilometer race clocking 30:28:83 Kenya Pipeline Company Thange cross country at Maikuu grounds in Kibwezi East constituency. Photo by Rachael Kilonzo**

**A memorable reunion**



(...Story Pg 5 & 6)

# THE EASTERN STAR

Shedding the light of development

ISSUE NO. 250 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017 - KSH. 30

## Stop shunning AIDS victims, Ukambani residents told



**Ant-Aids crusaders together with members of the public take part in a procession along the streets of Tala Town, Machakos County on December 1st in commemoration of the World Aids Day. Photo by Samuel Maina**

By Justus Keesi/Samuel Maina & Roselyn Kavoo

### Also Inside...

- ❖ **Makueni wives embrace modern contraception methods.**
- ❖ **Man charged with having an unnatural act with a beast.**
- ❖ **Green hope as drought-resistant tree nurseries are launched in ASAL areas.**

**R**esidents of Ukambani region have been asked to stop stigmatizing victims of HIV/Aids as one way of fighting the spread of the feared scourge. Stigma associated with the scourge was blamed for complicating access to treatment as well as the disclosure of condition by

victims, thus fuelling further spread of the virus and eruption of new infections. This message rang out across the three Counties of Machakos, Makueni and Kitui Counties as celebrations to mark the World Aids Day on December 1st 2016 were observed.

Continued Pg 3 & 5

*Editorial...*

**Let's unite in fighting the HIV scourge**

On December 1, this year's World Aids Day was celebrated across the globe.

The three counties served by the Eastern Star held their celebrations separately where several issues pertaining to HIV/Aids were ventilated.

Among some of the key matters that emerged during the fete, is the grim reality of the existence of HIV/Aids among some of the residents. It was further revealed that despite the scourge having been with humanity for almost five decades, stigma towards the affected and infected was still rampant.

Also, addressed was the rapid spread of HIV/Aids among the youth, as well as ways to minimize, if not stop, this worrying trend. It emerged that the commonest way through which these youthful infections are fueled is indulgence in unprotected sex!

While this is not a new revelation, it raises questions on the effectiveness of the HIV/Aids campaigns.

The truth is that this reality must raise concern among all parents –and indeed among all members of the society - given that the youth is the future of the nation.

This is even more worrying when looked against the background of the current long holidays coupled with the festive seasons.

It is during such festive occasions that the youth risk falling prey to temptations to try to indulge in promiscuity, among other wayward behaviors such as drug abuse all which may lead to infection with the killer virus.

It therefore behooves all parents to ensure that during the festive seasons they do everything within their powers to protect their children from this possibility.

Finally, as we come to the close of 2016, Eastern Star takes this opportunity to wish our readers and advertisers a blessed and prosperous 2017. Thank you all for your support.

**Hundreds of security officers trained on disaster preparedness**



*Mr Ben Berkson , a security expert with Fire Mission for Africa explains a point during a one week workshop for fire fighters at the Machakos Social Hall. Photo by RachaelKilonzo*

**By Rachael Kilonzo- Machakos**

A total of 240 security officers from Machakos country recently underwent one-week fire training on disaster preparedness.

The workshop held at the Machakos Social Hall was a joint venture between a US Security firm, Africa Fire Mission, the Kenya National Fire Brigade, Mission of Hope International and the Machakos County government saw 23 counties and ten public /

private agencies represented. Speaking during the closing ceremony, Kenya National Fire Brigades Association (KNFIBA) national Chairman, Athman Bacha said the training covered leadership and governance, emergency medical care as well as community fire prevention.

“Our leaders from various agencies under KENFIBA have been taught how to manage station, identify problems, make presentations,

**Continued Pg 4**

**Editorial Team:**

Editor in-Chief: Justus Keesi  
Editor: Rachael Kilonzo

**Contributors:**

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| Samuel Maina     | Hope Musyoka  |
| John Kung'u      | John Kyalo    |
| Roselyne Kavoo   | Joseph Kamolo |
| Patrick Nyakundi | Mercy Mueni   |
| Charles Musembi  |               |



**SAUTI SACCO SOCIETY**

**HEAD OFFICE - SAUTI HOUSE**  
Tel: 020 2108693, 020 6651118  
Kapiti Road, South B Nairobi, P.O. Box 30042 - 00100 Nairobi  
Email:sautisaccoltd@gmail.com

*~ Your Sacco of Choice ~*  
**Vision**

**“A leading national savings and credit service provider”**

With membership base drawn mainly from the Ministry of Information & Technology and Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and other members from across all other Government Ministries, Sauti provides the best opportunity for the media fraternity.

**SAUTI OFFERS THE FOLLOWING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  <b>DEPOSIT SAVINGS</b><br><i>Gives members an opportunity to save for the future at 7% of basic salary</i>  |  <b>SUPER NORMAL LOAN</b><br><i>An enhanced version of the normal loan. Members can borrow up to four times their saving and pay in 48 Month</i>           |
|  <b>EDUCATION SAVINGS</b><br><i>It is designed to help members do Short term saving for planned educational needs. Savings are available on call.</i>                    |  <b>EDUCATION LOAN</b><br><i>Its is designed to assist members pay school fees. Its repayable in 12 months</i>   |
|  <b>MEDICARE SAVINGS</b><br><i>It is designed to help members do Short term saving for Medical needs that may arise Savings are available on call.</i>                  |  <b>INSTANT LOAN</b><br><i>Its is designed to assist members meet urgent financial obligations without documentary evidence. Payable in 12 months</i>     |
|  <b>DEVELOPMENT LOAN (NORMAL LOAN)</b><br><i>Also referred to as a normal loan, it is designed to address the development needs of members. Repayable in 36 months</i> |  <b>EMERGENCY LOAN</b><br><i>Its is designed to assist members meet urgent financial obligation. It is unlimited but with documentary evidence</i>       |
|   |  <b>ANGAZA LOAN</b><br><i>(Elephant in pocket) Short term loan for small but urgent financial needs. Available same day &amp; repayable in 6 months.</i> |

**Branches**  
**Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology Offices and in KBC Offices**

*Nairobi, Garissa, Mombasa, Kisii, Meru, Eldoret, Kitale, Voi, Nakuru, Kericho, Machakos, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kwale, Embu, Nyeri Maralal, Lodwar*





JAMHURI DAY FETE



Machakos County Commissioner Matilda Sakwa addresses the public during this year's Jamhuri Day fete held at the Machakos stadium. Photo by Samuel Maina



Machakos Women Representative Dr. Susan Musyoka addresses the public during the 53rd Jamhuri day celebrations held at the Kenyatta Stadium in Machakos town. She has announced her intention to defend her seat on Wiper Party ticket in the 2017 elections. Photo by Samuel Maina



Katulu dancers entertain the crowd during this year's Jamhuri day celebrations at the Kenyatta stadium in Machakos. Photo by Samuel Maina



Part of the crowd that turned up for the Jamhuri day celebrations at the Kenyatta stadium in Machakos. Conspicuously absent were County government officials and Members of the County Assembly. (Photo by KNA)



Dancers entertain the crowd during this year's Jamhuri day celebrations at the Kenyatta stadium in Machakos. Photo by Samuel Maina

Stop shunning AIDS victims



Children from HOREC welfare home perform an acrobatic stunt during the event. (Photo by Samuel Maina)

Continued from pg 1

During the celebrations, it also emerged that the dreaded scourge was spreading rapidly in the area, particularly among the youths aged between 14 and 29 years.

On stigma, the Kitui County Health and Sanitation Minister, Ruth Koki Mwanzia asked the residents to stop stigmatizing victims of the scourge. She called on them to instead extend compassion and care towards those affected and/or infected.

"We should be ready to help them in whatever way we can, including giving them counselling," she added while addressing hundreds of residents at Yumbisye Secondary School, Kitui County.

And in Makindu grounds, Makueni County, the area TB and HIV/ Aids coordinator Dr. Pius Mutuku explained why stigma was an obstacle in the fight against HIV/Aids.

"Many people shy away from seeking medical services due to the stigma attached to HIV and they end up infecting others. As a society we should not discriminate anyone," he said.

However the strongest message against stigma was voiced at Tala Salvation Army Church in Machakos County where an anti-Aids crusader moved the crowd gathered to celebrate the day, as he narrated how he had

been subjected to untold suffering due to his HIV status.

Daniel Kamau, a member of Sauti Skika, a community based organization dealing with HIV/Aids prevention, said it was inhuman for anyone to be shunned by society due to his or her health status.

Kamau challenged the government to do more in fighting stigma, saying it was an unacceptable practice in this century.

"Stigma for those living with HIV should not be a subject in 2016. Both the government and the public should come out and openly speak out against this vice and help end this menace," he told the gathering.

Available statistics indicate that Machakos has over 27,000 adults and 4,000 children living with the scourge, while Makueni has over 25,000 and over 3000 children. Equally, in Kitui there are more than 21,000 adults and 2700 children.

And on new infections, fears were expressed that the scourge was worsening among the youthful members of the society.

Kitui County Health and Sanitation Minister, Ruth Koki Mwanzia, appealed to area youths to avoid behaviours that could expose

them to HIV/ Aids.

"I ask the youth to take measures that can protect them from this scourge such as avoiding indulging in casual sex," she told the youths.

She called on parents to talk to their children and explain to them about the reality of HIV/ Aids and how to avoid contracting it.

Similar message was given by the wife to area Governor Mrs. Edith Malombe who regretted that the county was getting about 1,500 new infections every year.

Dr. Mutuku also noted that young people aged between 15-24 years were at a greater risk of new infections and disclosed that the Makueni County Government in conjunction with the National Aids Control Council (NACC) have rolled out a programme dubbed 'Maisha League' aimed at fighting the spread of HIV/AIDs among the youth.

"The Maisha league aims at creating youth friendly programmes that will help us reach out to the youth and encourage them to protect themselves against HIV infection," said the medic. He also disclosed that the county was facing challenges in the fight against new infections especially among sexual workers and HIV pregnant mothers. The medic also disclosed that the county was facing challenges

Continued Pg 5

# Hundreds of security officers trained on disaster preparedness

Continued from pg2

conflict resolution, staff handling as well as propose solutions to issues emanating from daily duties” said Bacha.

He noted that firefighting is about preventing fires from occurrences and minimizing natural disasters.

“The participants have been taught on fire prevention in homes, safe usage of candles and lamps, causes of fire and what to do in case of a fire”, added Bacha.

Bacha assured the beneficiaries that the association had discussed with the national government on the implementation of the Health and Risk Insurance Cover recently issued by the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, and Housing and Urban Development.

The Chairman further urged the participants to utilize the knowledge and skills they had acquired in their respective communities.

Speaking during the training, area County Director for Emergency and Rescue Services, Dr. David Mwangela said the aim of the workshop was to ensure that the attendees learn how to tackle emergencies such as fires among other objectives.

“The theme for this training is ‘How ready are you?’. We also want the participants to inculcate these skills to other members of the society. Our people ought to know more on disaster preparedness than they now do”, he said.

Mwangela lauded the sponsors of the event adding that the course will go a long way in benefiting the county which is currently facing an acute shortage of trained fire fighters.



*The Machakos County Director for Emergency and Fire Services Dr David Mwangela. Photo by Rachael Kilonzo*

He said despite the county having 15 modern fire engines and four substations, there are only 30 officers against a backdrop of 120 officers. “We expect to fill the gaps currently existing in the county and be able to train others in the community on disaster preparedness and able to take over these services. Currently we have 15 fire engines and three fire stations at Mavoko, Matungulu and Kangundo which we need to staff with at least 120 fire fighters.” he added.

Addressing the press after the training, Africa Fire Mission Executive Director, Chief David Moore expressed confidence that through the training, a national disaster and fire response strategy will be developed.

KENFIBA was formed in 2002 to empower fire fighters all over the country push for the purchase of more fire engines.

Among those in attendance included

police officers and other officers from private security firms.

The first training was held at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi with the next one scheduled for Kiambu County on November 3, 2017.

Fire Mission for Africa was on their second tour of the continent after visiting Zambia recently.



*Africa Fire Mission Executive Director Chief David Moore(center ), KENFIBA Secretary General Francis Omoliech(in black suit) pose for a group photo with the trainees and other Government office. Photo by Rachael Kilonzo*

## Over sh.6 million spent in promoting literacy

Continued from pg 11

“We want our learners to improve in their communications skills and through reading of story books. This will also help them learn about language and other characters,” said the education official.

In view of this, she noted that it was paramount for learners to have reading clubs in their schools in a bid to improve their reading culture.

Some of the primary schools that benefitted include Kambi Mawe, Machinery, Kalulini and Kitungu among others where the teachers have been trained by the county government on library skills.

Speaking at the same event, Shina Foundation Director Nazi Kivutha Kibwana disclosed that Story Moja donated 6,000 story books to boost the initiative of establishing libraries in all primary schools in the county.

Mrs. Kibwana noted that Moran and East African Educational Publishers donated 347 books worth sh. 193,890 and 194 books worth sh. 78,135 respectively.

While announcing that her vision was to establish a library in all the primary schools in the county, she appealed to residents to give back to the society by donating a book each to the schools.

“I embrace those who have story books at home to donate to neighboring schools. If each person in Makeni gives one book that will translate to a million books that will assist our learners develop reading culture in schools,” said Mrs. Kivutha.

At the same time, she challenged parents to assist their children to develop a reading habit that will keep them busy and avoid bad company hence promoting their command of the English language.

She emphasized the need to have library lessons in the primary schools in an effort to build the student’s confidence and communication skills.

“There is need for teachers to introduce library lessons in schools to teach the pupils the importance of reading and also start reading clubs to promote the reading culture in the county,” said the Governor’s wife.

## Man charged with having an unnatural act with a cow

By Samuel Maina/  
Mercy Mueni- Machakos

In a bizarre turn of events, two men were recently separately arraigned before Machakos courts to answer to charges of having an unnatural act with cows. The two Thomas Mutinda Ndiku and Charles Kyalo Wambua appeared in different courts where the former pleaded guilty to his shameful act.

Ndiku who pleaded guilty before Machakos Resident Magistrate Irene Kahuiya, is alleged to have committed the offence on November 22, 2016 at Utithini village, Mbiuni location in Mwala Sub-County within Machakos County.

However, Magistrate Kahuiya ordered him remanded in custody until the mentioning of the case on December 8.

In Wambua’s case, the complainant Urbanas Musembi from Muniiki village told Senior Resident Magistrate Lester Simiyu of how while in his house on the night of August 30 2014 he heard his cow mooing strangely in the shed.

Musembi said he found this disturbing since the animal had never made such a noise especially during the night before.

He therefore went out to investigate only to come across a man in the shed who on seeing him tried to make a hasty dash from the scene.

Musembi however managed to corner him.

The court further heard that the culprit turned out to be one Charles Kyalo Wambua, who was Musembi’s neighbor.

Wambua is said to have then begged for mercy from the complainant, pleading with him not to beat him up.

As luck would have it, the neighbours’ commotion attracted other neighbors as well as the area Assistant Chief who rushed to scene.

Wambua was finally arrested and handed over to the police.

The magistrate remanded him in custody to await the ruling of a new date for the hearing of the case.



*A Kitui family on the way to bury their loved one in Kiomo- Kyethani ward was recently forced to carry the coffin containing his remains for over five kilometers after the road became impassable due to the heavy rains pounding the area. It is a taboo in the Kamba culture to rest a body on the way and the family had to endure the painstaking task of carrying the casket for the final journey non-stop. Photo by Kiamah Wamutitu.*

# Makueni wives embrace modern contraception methods-study

By Roselyne Kavoo-Makueni

Statistics have revealed that 65 percent of married women aged upto 49 years in Makueni County are currently using modern methods of family planning compared to the national average of 53 percent.

In the recently released Kenya Health and Demographic Survey (2014) injectable were the most preferred method of family planning among the married women, with public health facilities being the main source of modern contraception.

According to the study 80 percent of married women in the county use at least method of family planning to delay or stop childbearing.

On maternal healthcare, only 53 percent of pregnant women give birth in health facilities compared to the national's average of 61 percent.

Addressing the press during the Africa

Statistics Day, Makueni County Statistics officer Scholastica Kingi said the numbers on maternal health were very low and underscored the need for stakeholders to educate women on the importance of delivering in hospitals to prevent maternal and infant mortality.

"The numbers are discouraging and we have enough health facilities where women can deliver with the help of a skilled health provider," she said.

On nutrition, 25 percent of children under the age of five years have stunted growth compared to the nation's average of 26 percent.

Ms. Kingi attributed the high rate of stunted growth to poor nutrition and failure by lactating mothers to exclusively breastfeed their children for the first six months.

"Most mothers do not follow the instructions given by health providers to

exclusively breastfeed their children for six months hence the stunted growth," she said.

On HIV/AIDs related knowledge, 77 percent of married women in the county had knowledge prevention of HIV/AIDs but only 52 percent were tested and given results in the last 12 months.

Similarly, 92 percent of married men in the county between the ages of 15 to 49 had knowledge of HIV/AIDs prevention but despite the knowledge only 40 percent were tested and given results in the past 12 months.

Speaking at the same event Makueni Deputy County Commissioner Karugu Wangombe urged the Kenya Bureau of Statistics to sensitize the members of public about the importance of statistics and usage of their data to boost the economy through investments.

## Makueni Assembly leaders fault county universal healthcare

By Roselyne Kavoo-Makueni

Makueni Speaker Stephen Ngelu and a section of local MCAs have accused the executive of reneging on its promise to provide free universal healthcare to all residents.

Speaking to the Eastern Star recently at the County Assembly premises, Ngelu who was flanked by Majority leader and Kilili MCA Francis Mutuku, Bensilin Mathuku (Kikumbulyu North), Cosmas Nzilili (Ivingoni) and Martin Unduwake (Nthange) accused the County Government of illegally charging patients Sh.500 yet the Universal Healthcare programme rolled out in October was intended to be free.

"It is illegal for the government to pretend to be offering free healthcare

yet there are hidden charges. The programme was meant to be free and we call on residents not to pay anything," said Ngelu.

The speaker also faulted the county government for implementing the universal healthcare without tabling to the County Assembly regulations on how the programme will be carried out. "The health executive has not yet brought to us a policy for the programme which is supposed to have been passed by the assembly before being rolled out," he said.

The leaders threatened to mobilize residents to boycott the programme besides seeking legal redress.

"Nobody should pay any money when they visit health facilities. They should

be treated for free. If charged they should go to court because what we passed as an assembly is free healthcare," said MCA Masila who also doubles as the Health Committee chair.

However when contacted Health Executive, Dr. Andrew Mulwa refuted the claims and accused the MCAs of politicizing the programme.

He said the programme was implemented with the approval of the County Assembly and that the Sh.500 was a registration fee payable only once per year.

In August this year the County Government launched a free Universal Healthcare programme for all residents.

# Stop shunning AIDS victims

Continued from pg 3

in the fight against new infections especially among sexual workers and HIV pregnant mothers.

Dr. Mutuku added that sexual workers were at a high risk of spreading HIV in the county with the HIV prevalence among the group estimated at 14 per cent compared to the county's 5.6 per cent.

"We have HIV pregnant women who deliver at home making it difficult to prevent mother to child transmission. Consequently an estimated 4,000 female and 350 male sexual workers along the Nairobi- Mombasa highway also pose a challenge to the fight against HIV," he added.

In Machakos, Dr Nthanga equally raised the red flag over rising HIV infections among those aged between 15-24 years saying that more need to

be done to tackle the challenge.

"We should invest in prevention and management of this scourge among youth as they are the hardest hit as far as new infection are concerned". He said

At the same time residents were encouraged to go for testing to confirm their HIV/Aids status. "We know there are many who do not know their status due to fear" noted Mrs. Malombe. She added that with knowledge of one's status she/he would be able to seek treatment and avoid indulging in behaviours that could worsen their situation or infect others.

Similarly those confirmed as affected were urged to start treatment immediately in the government-run health facilities where treatment for the condition is free.

Dr. Mutuku lauded those adhering to the ARV therapy saying their use had helped turn back the ravages from the scourge thus averting a total of 400,000 deaths.

He said proper early diagnosis and treatment of the disease is among strategies being employed by the county government and national government in attaining zero HIV infection in the near future.

Currently the Ukambani counties are as badly ravaged by HIV/Aids as many other counties across the country.

Available statistics indicate that Machakos has over 27,000 adults and 4,000 children living with the scourge, while Makueni has over 25,000 and over 3000 children. Equally, in Kitui there are more than 21,000 adults and 2700 children.

## A memorable reunion

By Samuel Maina/ Hope Musyoka/  
John Kyalo-Machakos

Joseph Nthiga Nyagah, popularly known as 'Joe' by many, was born and raised up in Mbeere district in what is now Embu County in the year 1948.

The son of the late Jeremiah Nyaga a longtime cabinet minister during the Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi's regimes, Nyaga studied at Northwestern-Kellogg school of Management where he studied MBA, Finance and Management from 1974 to 1977.

He was later to enroll at the University of Nairobi where he graduated with a BA (Hons) in Economics and Political Science.

When we first met him, the veteran politician had paid a visit to Mzee Jonathan Muange, a former driver to his late father, Jeremiah Nyaga, at his Muthumo home in Kalama, Machakos County last month.

It was a nostalgic moment for the two individuals to meet after so many years since the death of the senior Nyaga in April 2008.



Nyaga hands some gifts to the veteran driver who helped shape the life of the former cabinet minister. Photo by Samuel Maina

The overwhelming joy evident on the faces could not be missed by all and sundry in this memorable reunion.

Muange, despite his advanced age of 101 years was still resilient and walking erect, without the help of a walking stick.

Indeed, his recalling of past events with the Nyaga's was clear manifestation that old age had not eroded his sharp grasp of past episodes, as echoed by Mr Nyaga, himself a former minister in the

government.

"It is a great joy to be united with a longtime family friend who helped built the Nyaga's family," said Joe as he fondly hugged the centenarian at his home.

"I and my family really appreciate the noble work that Mzee did for us for the many years he worked for us. It is something that shall forever remain etched in our minds", he added.

Continued Pg 6

# A memorable reunion

Continued from pg5

Mzee Muange became Nyagah's driver in 1963 when the iconic politician straddled the former Embu district like a colossus. He eventually retired from the civil service in 1992 the same year his longtime boss hanged his boots from active politics. Joe pointed out that Mzee Muange had become more than a driver to the family. "He was a friend, a mentor, and an advisor", he quipped as he and visitors who accompanied him enjoyed a sumptuous meal provided by Mzee Muange's family.

Due to his warm heart towards every one he met, Muange had won over the tough Jeremiah Nyagah and his entire family. During the visit, Joe also presented his book, "The Mustard Seed" to his host.

The book is a biography of his father and Mzee Muange's relationship and how their cordial working relationship helped shape the politician's family.

In the book, Joe pays glowing tribute to the family chauffeur to whom he credited much of the family's achievements. He related many of his father's achievements to the pieces of advice Mzee Muange had offered his late father.

Mzee Muange had worked hand in hand with the late Nyagah all through.

His first assignment with the indefatigable career civil servant and politician was at the Ministry of Education, then Environment, Information and Broadcasting, Agriculture, Water and lastly Ministry of Health.

Joseph was later to marry a white lady who later left him after he joined politics. "After my first wife left, I decided to marry again. Moreover retired President Moi had advised me on the importance of marriage in the context of the African society," he explained during the visit.

In 1998, he became a cabinet minister, before serving as the CEO of the currently nose-diving Kenya Airways. The veteran politician also served at one time as the president of IATA and AFRAA and then represented Kenya as an ambassador to European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Joe expresses fears about entrenched tribalism in Kenya saying it's detrimental to the future of the country.

He is now calling for the public to shun this vice and instead embrace oneness for the sake of future generations and posterity.

"I humbly request that we keep our government and the Kenyan politics in prayers. Let's uphold unity and the spirit of teamwork and for the betterment of our country." He urged the family.

"If only things could go back to the olden days, Kenya would not be where it is right now" he lamented as he concluded his narration.

He is currently working at Harambee House as one of the President's Kenyatta's advisers on the Northern corridor project which is expected to run through Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Uganda.



*For your hair, and other beauty needs visit:*  
**Mary Lady Salon and Beauty Clinic**  
*Specialists in:*

- \*Braiding
- \*Perm
- \*Tonging
- \*Pedicure
- \*Weaving
- \*Manicure
- \*Facials
- \*Gel Polish
- \*Dreadlocks

*Located in Athi River town, near the Makadara bus stage, opposite the 24 hospital.*  
*Get Value for your money*  
**Call: 0720-995-284**

**Destiny Media**

*For quality:*

- Photography
- Video coverage.
- Video editing and
- Computer services.

*Located at Muthui Building, between Moonlight Hotel and Bonus Mall, Kitui*  
**CALL- 0721 519931**

# Increase funding for newly chartered public universities.

Continued from pg 10

for anyone. But if you have a positive attitude, there will be people willing to give you a helping hand. By their support you will grow but by your good character you will flourish," he added.

Speaking during the same event, the university's acting Vice Chancellor, Prof Francis Mathooko noted that key among the institution's unique challenges is limited funding.

"Indeed data is available to show that Machakos University is the least funded public university with current funding standing at 24.5 percent, causing a short fall of Sh1.8 billion," he said.

He however exuded confidence that with the Chancellor's wise counsel, experience and networking, and the support from the University Council as well as the resources at their disposal, they hope to turn the challenges to opportunities.

Prof. Mathooko further called on the government to increase the university's recurrent capitation to enable it recruit more academic staff, adding that allocation of development grants will help develop the much needed infrastructure for teaching, training, research and student and staff welfare.

Machakos University was awarded a Charter along with seven other institutions by President Uhuru Kenyatta on October 7 this year at State house Nairobi.

The ceremony also witnessed Mr. Mworira installed as the university's Chancellor.

Machakos University was the first public university in the county to receive the Charter and the opportunity has provided a new frontier for the people of Lower Eastern to have accessible and affordable higher education at their door step.

A total of 566 graduands were awarded degrees, diplomas and certificates in various academic fields.

# Take full responsibility of children during the festive season, parents urged

By Joseph Kamolo-Machakos

Mwala sub-county Children Officer Kamau Kihihu has urged parents to take full responsibility of their children during the holiday season.

In an interview with the Eastern Star in his office recently, the official said teachers played their part when schools were in session adding that it was the turn of parents to take the responsibility now that the children are at home. "There are destructive tendencies out there and parents need to monitor the young ones' movements and interactions," he observed.

Mr. Kihihu noted that despite the milestones made in instilling good morals among the young generation, peers, media and technology remain threats to maintaining socially acceptable moral standards.

The children officer asked parents, siblings and church leaders to remain steadfast in mentoring the young people so as to be guaranteed a safer and sane future for all.

Drugs, alcohol, crime and radicalization threaten current young generation since they are easily accessible to this gullible group.

He advised the youngsters that the future belongs to those who avoid negative tendencies and peer groupings especially in urban areas.

The officer did not spare the youths either, warning that they are also targeted by sex maniacs and pedophiles that prey on the young.

He appealed to them to help their parents in by performing light duties when they break from playing, praying and studying in order to inculcate in themselves, a sense of responsibility and self-drive.

The children officer cautioned parents who send children to buy them cigarettes and other drugs to desist from the trend as it introduces the children to the habit of handling drugs and eventually turns them into consumers.

# Kyatha says County has spent over sh.6 million promoting literacy

By Veronicah Mutua-Makueni

Makueni County government through the Department of Education and ICT has spent over six million to purchase 30,000 books to establish 30 libraries in primary schools.

Speaking at Kambi Mawe Primary school recently, County Executive Committee member (ECC) for Education and ICT

Ruth Kyatha said that each school will get 1,000 story books to enhance reading culture in the institutions.

Ms. Kyatha said this during the official launch of the 30 libraries by Story Moja Patron Dr. Auma Obama and Governor Kivutha Kibwana at Kambi Mawe Primary school.

Continued Pg 13

# Increase funding for newly chartered public universities, Government asked



Machakos University Council Chairman, Dr. Charles Maranga confers the university Chancellor, Mr. James Mworia with an Honorary Degree during the University's 1st graduation. PHOTO/RACHAEL KILONZO

By Rachael Kilonzo-Machakos

The government has been asked to avail more funds and other requisite resources to newly-charted public universities to enable them meet their training expectations of the ever increasing numbers of students and staff. Speaking during the celebration of Charter and inaugural graduation of Machakos University recently, newly appointed Chancellor James Mworia acknowledged the infrastructural challenges faced by universities while executing their mandates. And in the spirit of public-private partnership, he urged the university, formerly known as the Machakos University College to

continue seeking ways of drawing private investors to develop facilities such as hostels. "In the same vein, other philanthropists are welcome to contribute generously to make Machakos University a better place to study and work in," said Mworia. The Chancellor pointed out that the success of universities depends entirely on the team-work and the collective effort of the entire university community. He noted that teaching and administrative staff is a critical pillar in the university's quest for excellence adding that the nature of education that is offered at Kenya's universities is the key to our

country's attainment of a middle-level economy status. Mworia said that the university will be keen to focus on science-oriented courses in order to meet the gap in innovation and development but noted that this should not be done at the expense the Arts and Social Sciences owing to the fact that a mechanical world cannot be holistic without a human face. He further urged the graduands to use the training skills they have acquired to tackle and transform the country and the world for the better. "The outside world is not a joyride. You should not expect it will be for you, for it has never been

Continued Pg 11

# Green hope as drought-resistant tree nurseries are launched in ASAL areas

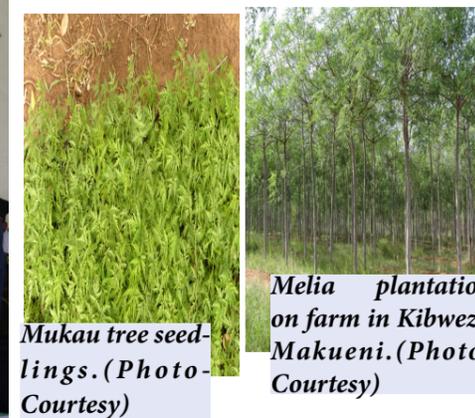


From left ; Kenya Forestry Research Institutes (KEFRI) representative, Dr. Bernard Kigomo, Ministry of Environment Conservation Secretary Mr. Gideon Gathara , Kitui Central Deputy County Commissioner Otieno Odidi and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) representative, Ms. Miharu Furkawa during the official commissioning of the mukau tree seed production and distribution unit in Kitui recently. Photo by John Kung'u

By John Kung'u-Kitui

The country's forest cover stands to increase if an ingenuity to produce and distribute seedlings of a drought-resistant indigenous tree to farmers in arid areas succeeds. The initiatives spearheaded by researchers in partnership with farmers, NGOs and public institutions was touted as potential boost to the country's dwindling green cover by environment PS Dr. Margaret Mwakima. In a speech read on her behalf by the Ministry's Conservation Secretary Mr. Gideon Gathara during the commissioning of a Melia Volkensii (mukau) tree seed processing and distribution unit in Kitui recently, the PS reiterated that the tree is a suitable option targeting the dry lands. She cited past interventions within the highlands utilizing exotic trees with the tree variety being lauded as unique for prioritizing the arid and semiarid lands. "In addition to tree breeding technology, training programmes for users and distributors of improved melia have been started under the project out of the realization that there is limited potential for forest expansion

in the arid areas", said Dr. Mwakima. Dr. Mwakima lauded the just launched book containing the guidelines on production and distribution of Melia seeds and seedlings in the drylands as a significant step in the dryland commercial forest development and a critical input to national achievement of 10 percent forest cover target. The improved Melia was developed under the project by Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) in partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Kenya Forestry Service (KFS) and Forest Tree Breeding Centre (FTBC) of Japan. Started in 2012 and dubbed 'Project on development of drought resistant tree species for adaptation to climate change in the drylands of Kenya,' the five year project was expected to end in 2017 but has gotten an extension approval of four more years. Under the project, 22 hectares of improved tree orchards have been established in Kitui and Kibwezi for seed production with progeny sites also established in Tharaka Nithi, Embu, Kitui Makueni and Taita Taveta counties.



Mukau tree seedlings. (Photo-Courtesy) Melia plantation on farm in Kibwezi, Makueni. (Photo-Courtesy)

# Students benefit from bursaries worth over sh. 6 million

By Charles Musembi /Patrick Nyakundi-Makueni

The national government through the Department of Children Services has disbursed 6.2 million to 495 secondary school students from humble backgrounds in Makueni County. Speaking to the Eastern star at his office recently, County Children Coordinator George Nthuka said that the money issued under the Residential Secondary School Bursaries for Orphans and Vulnerable Children programme is meant to ensure that children from poor backgrounds have access to education. "These bursaries are targeting vulnerable children especially orphans who come from poor backgrounds," he said. Nthuka said the cheques have already been delivered to the respective schools and retaliated the government's commitment to ensuring that vulnerable and orphaned children meet their basic needs. He called on parents to monitor their children during the holidays to avoid cases of child abuse. "We call on parents to be vigilant during these long holidays and take their parental responsibilities seriously," he said.

# Ex-soldier starts village-based disaster awareness project



Manasseh Mwaniki Mutua showing the Eastern Star a child he rescued at Beles Qoqani, Somali while serving with KDF. The child had been recruited by Al Shabaab militia to serve as a child soldier. PHOTO/SAMUEL MAINA

By Samuel Maina-Machakos

50 year-old Manasseh Mwaniki Mutua knows the pain of seeing lives cut short through indiscriminate tragedies. Having witnessed the horrors of the 1998 terrorist attack at the Ufundi Cooperative House in which 243 innocent Kenyans and 12 foreigners lost their lives, the former soldier says such episodes should never find us flat-footed again.

Yet Mutua's encounter with tragedies did not begin with the Ufundi terrorist bombing.

"I became interested in disaster management way back in 1987 after a bus owned by Riziki Bus Company killed all its 62 passengers after plunging into Thwake River in Machakos County" narrated Mutua.

"This was closely followed by yet another incident in 1989 in which 28 people perished in another grisly accident while I was working at the Moi Barracks in 1990" he narrates adding that among those who perished during the second crash was one of his colleagues.

According to the former army officer who resides in Kaviani, a village situated just a few kilometers from

Machakos town, the two incidents pained him sorely prompting him to venture into the mission of assisting those affected in similar tragedies.

"I came face to face with realities of disasters during the 1998 terrorist bombing. That incident became a turning point in my life, "reminiscences Mutua.

Unfortunately none of those he helped retrieve from the rubble lived to tell his story.

Among the 11 lifeless bodies he retrieved from the collapsed building was that of the wife of one of his colleague who worked at the Kahawa barracks.

Fortunately for Mutua, the Department of Defense had taken him for a practical course on search and rescue missions, lessons he says came handy during that incident.

But the courses were still too elementary, something which compelled him to request his bosses to allow him to go for advanced training. Luckily his persistence finally paid off in 1993 when the African Medical and Research Center (AMREF) awarded him a chance to pursue a diploma in

Disaster Management.

Unfortunately, he was later forced to abandon his studies after failing to clear a shs 72,000 fee balance he owed the institution.

The following year he joined Disaster Kenya Consultancy College to finish the course but again was unable to continue with his studies after only two weeks in class due to lack of fees.

"Bogged down by family responsibilities and in view to the meager salary I earned meant all my money was spent the moment I received it. Eventually I was forced to end my studies twice as I could not be in a position to afford the cost," recalls the father of three.

However, unlike most of us who call it quits once we fail to achieve our dreams, Mutua's vision in ensuring Kenyans are sensitized on the importance of disaster preparedness was not in the least dented. And true to his word, upon leaving the military on compassionate leave late last year, he decided to put his heart into his long-held passion.

He decided to come up with a project that could enlighten members of the public on the need to have handy tips in the event of a disaster.

Today Mutua has not only managed to develop a Disaster Management Research manual but also founded the Niki Save the World from Disaster and Support Peace, a CBO meant to train members of the public on how to respond to fires, floods, collapsed buildings incidents which have become synonymous with our country.

And despite having only studied up to class seven, Mutua has amassed a wealth of materials which majority of the learned elite will never attain in their lifetime.

The bulk of resources he uses are materials which has been derived from old newspapers, discarded books and magazines that currently form part of his resource center.

"Most of the materials in my center are actually literature that people have discarded but contain information on past tragic disasters. To access them, I visit the various dump sites in Nairobi and other towns where I usually get my

Continued pg 9

Continued from pg 8



Mutua with his father who has remained supportive of the young man's demanding mission in seeking solutions to world's rising tragedies. PHOTO /SAMUEL MAINA

materials from street boys at a small fee," explained Mutua.

Today, the soft-spoken ex-serviceman has managed to preserve a total of 10,000 printed pages besides 20,000 newspaper cuttings all dealing with man-made and natural disasters.

In addition to this, are 3,000 books which he has purchased from street vendors and selected United Nations offices.

Among his priceless collections is a 1969 newspaper article giving a historical account of disasters in Kenya since independence.

So how does this knowledge help him? "One of the biggest challenges we have in Kenya as far as disaster response is concerned is that very few people take part in voluntary rescue services. We only come to realize the importance of such skills when tragedy strikes," laments Mutua.

For him, managing disasters goes beyond responding to disasters as a call of duty but launching investigations into their underlying causes.

And true to this belief, whenever he visits a scene of tragedy, Mutua usually doubles as rescuer and an 'investigator'. A half-drunk beer bottle in a driver's seat may give a clue as to the cause of a tragic road accident as would a charred tin lamp in a gutted down house.

Such finds not only help him with clues on what could have caused a particular incident but assist him in giving safety tips on how to avoid such incidents in

future.

"Kenyans need practical tips on how they can help mitigate against disasters in their homes, places of work and public places. My experience in the various scenes of accidents that I have visited has revealed the primary cause for such tragedies is human negligence which could have easily been avoided," remarks Mutua.

Nevertheless Mutua is still baffled at the little attention the subject on disaster management has received in the country. He laments that little has been done to that end despite Kenya having suffered a string of tragic incidents in the last few years especially with the recent terrorist attacks that have often left a trail of death in their wake. And to help address part of the problem, he has managed to pen a book, The Missing Weapon –A guide to urban Floods and Building Collapse, which is awaiting publication.

But like any other endeavor, his efforts and sacrifice has never been without incidences including sleeping in an army cell after rubbing his former bosses the wrong way.

"My work has seen me spend two days in incarceration after a local daily carried my story in one of its publications. I think some of my bosses did not like what I was doing and therefore decided to order my detention to silence me," claims Mutua terming the move most unfortunate as he was not out to demean his superiors in any way.

He is however grateful for the road he has trodden along despite the many odds and ends and emphasizes that his involvement in rescue missions is far from over.

And though he says he is yet to receive any support from the government Mutua is grateful since his efforts did receive international recognition during the tragic Pemba-Unguja ferry accident of September 2011.

During that single dark episode, he single-handedly kept in touch with Zanzibar authorities giving handy tips that eventually helped turn the tide of rescue operations in the incident which claimed 300 innocent lives.

"I learnt about the disaster on the internet and immediately got in touch with the Zanzibar officials who immediately linked me to the Malindi Police Station from where the rescue operation was being coordinated from. The initiative cost me shs 1,000 but I was able to share vital rescue tips with those on the ground that helped save several lives that would otherwise have been lost," he explained to me when I visited his home last week.

That single event not only gave him a reason to keep moving but also earned him a certificate of recognition from the Zanzibar Embassy.

The certificate still forms part of his many treasured souvenirs that dot his brick walled makeshift demonstration premises situated on the forested slopes of Kaviani.

And it is such nostalgic memories that keep him going with the believe that one day someone will embrace his dream and join efforts in making disaster preparedness a priority for every Kenyan irrespective of his social standing.

Supported by his aging but loving parents, Timothy Mutua and Rhoda Nthenya, this indefatigable former warrant officer believes his job is well cut out regardless of little or no recognition from within.

"Kenya has suffered untold losses through frequent tragedies and disasters due to the country's unpreparedness. To sit back and assume such disasters will never strike again imitating the proverbial ostrich that buried her head in the sand in full view of an imminent conflagration," concluded Mutua on a cautionary tone.

**"One of the biggest challenges we have in Kenya as far as disaster response is concerned is that very few people take part in voluntary rescue services. We only come to realize the importance of such skills when tragedy strikes," laments Mutua.**