



Academic Inbreeding in Kenyan Universities: A Crisis Of Intellectual Stagnation
 Kenya's higher education system confronts a paradox of expansion without transformation. While university enrollment surged from 118,239 students in 2010 to over 520,000 by 2022, completion rates tell a darker story. Data from the CUE reveals that approximately 35% of undergraduate students fail to graduate within the prescribed timeframe, with master's programs experiencing even more alarming attrition rates approaching 50% in public universities. Page 18

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News >> Ruto, Mt Kenya and the Mathematics Of Legitimacy

P. 12. Political power is most secure when it does not need to announce itself. The moment authority must be carefully staged, choreographed, and protected by layers of administration and security, it often signals not strength, but unease.

ODM Splits

The death of Raila Amollo Odinga in late 2025 marked the end of an era in Kenyan politics. For nearly four decades, Raila had been the gravitational center of the opposition, the voice of defiance, and the architect of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). His passing left a vacuum that has now erupted into a fierce succession battle, pitting family members, youthful reformists, and seasoned veterans against one another in a struggle that could redefine the party's future.



Raila Odinga Jr in public engagements in Nairobi's Kibra constituency

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Government Brings Services Closer To Residents At Kirinyaga Citizen Engagement Forum

By: Wilfred Muchire
 @themtkenyatimes

Some Of The Moments As Captured In Pictures

Members of the Mount Kenya region and Diaspora senior government officers caucus; Jamii Imara Mashinani, joined Secretary to the Cabinet, Ms Mercy Wanjau, at a Citizen Engagement Forum held at Kianwe Primary School in Kirinyaga West Sub-County on Saturday.

The two-day event, organized under the theme “Celebrating Growth, Honouring Impact” by The Mercy Wanjau Foundation, aimed to bring essential government services closer to the people. Residents benefited from a free medical camp, Social Health Authority (SHA) registration, drug and substance abuse awareness sessions and information on other government programmes designed to enhance community wellbeing and service delivery at the grassroots level.

The initiative also included a thanksgiving service held yesterday, which emphasized collective responsibility, service and nation-building.

The forum was attended by several Cabinet Secretaries, Deputy Head of Public Service Amos Gathecha, Principal Secretaries, alongside other national and county leaders.

Officials engaged directly with residents, highlighting key government projects aligned with the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) in Kirinyaga and across the country. Members of the caucus that is moderated by PS for Public Health and Professional Standards Ms Mary Muthoni also urged the youth to avoid drugs and substance abuse, noting that they are the foundation and future of the nation.

The event underscored the government’s commitment to decentralizing services, promoting civic participation and strengthening community development through consistent leadership and visionary planning.

This forum demonstrated how citizen engagement can combine development initiatives with empowerment, leaving residents better informed and equipped to access government programmes.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times

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NEWS IN BRIEF



DCP Party Leader Rigathi Gachagua hosted a three-day retreat at the Coast for like-minded legislators, aiming to review the past year and plan for the year ahead, including preparations for the 10th August 2027 general elections. Addressing the gathering, Gachagua emphasized the importance of strategic planning, noting that “failing to plan is planning to fail.” The party’s organizing secretary, Senator Mithika, was tasked with guiding members through key plans for the year. Among the participants were Senators John Methu, Ole Seki, John Kinyua, Kamau Murango, Karungo Thang’wa and Joe Nyutu; MPs Kamau Munyoro, Gakuya James, Wanjiku Muhia, Gitonga Mukunji, Amos Mwago, Geoffrey Wandeto, Jayne Kihara, Onesmus Ngogoyo, John Kaguchia, Kamande Mwafrika, and Wakili Muriu; Woman Representative Gacheri Maina; Nyeri County Assembly Speaker Gichuhi Mwangi; and MCA David Mathenge. The retreat provided a platform for coordination and strategizing ahead of the elections.



Veteran trade unionist Francis Atwoli has been re-elected unopposed as Secretary-General of the Kenya Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (KPAWU) for another five-year term, reaffirming his strong influence within Kenya’s labour movement. During the union’s meeting, members also unanimously endorsed him to contest for the position of Secretary-General of the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (Kenya) (COTU-K). Atwoli, one of Kenya’s longest-serving and most vocal union leaders, is widely known for championing workers’ rights, fair wages, and improved labour conditions, particularly in the agricultural and plantation sectors. His re-election reflects continued confidence in his leadership and experience in advancing unionism both nationally and regionally.



EBC Director of Legal Services Chrispine Owiye, presided over the administration of the Oath of Secrecy of the Ballot to gazetted Returning Officers and staff after a joint National Planning meeting in Naivasha. The officers will oversee the 26 February 2026 by-elections for Isiolo South Constituency and the County Assembly wards of West Kabras (Malava Constituency), Evurore and Muminji (Mbeere Constituency). Campaigns run from candidate registration on 22 January 2026 and end on 23 February 2026. Political parties and candidates must submit agents’ names 14 days before polling for processing and training.



Kenyatta National Hospital marked a major milestone on Saturday by successfully performing its first Rezūm Water Vapor Therapy for prostate enlargement, becoming the first public hospital in Kenya to offer the procedure. The minimally invasive treatment for benign prostatic hyperplasia was carried out on a 55-year-old patient and completed in about 20 minutes under sedation as a day-care procedure. Rezūm uses sterile water vapor to reduce excess prostate tissue, improving urine flow while preserving sexual function and avoiding general anesthesia or permanent implants. Led by senior urologist Dr. D. K. Kimani and a multidisciplinary team, the achievement expands access to advanced urological care in the public health system and underscores KNH’s commitment to innovation, equity, and improved patient outcomes.

Othaya MP Wambugu Wainaina (left) and Nyeri County Senator Wahome Wamatinga yesterday joined faithful at AIPCA Kage-re Church in Mahiga ward for a Sunday service. While addressing the congregation after the service, the duo urged the locals to continue supporting the government to benefit more. Later, the MP proceeded to ACK Irindi Church in Karima ward for a fundraising drive towards the construction of a church hall. Addressing congregants, the legislator highlighted key development gains in Othaya under President Ruto’s administration, including improved road infrastructure, expanded access to clean water, support to farmers, and increased funding for education and health services through national government programmes and NG-CDF. He said the initiatives were already improving livelihoods and service delivery in the constituency.



Scientists, policy-makers, and agriculture experts from across the region gathered in Nairobi to celebrate and honour Dr Suresh Lingadahalli Mahabaleshwara, a leading maize pathologist. He was recognised for his transformative contributions to Kenya’s maize research



and plant health systems over the past decade. Dr. Suresh, who has served with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in Africa, has spent the last 11 years supporting Kenya and several countries across Sub-Saharan Africa in combating Maize Lethal Necrosis (MLN), a devastating disease that once threatened to cripple maize production in the region. Speaking during his farewell meeting over the weekend, held both physically and virtually, scientists from Kenya and beyond praised Dr. Suresh for his selfless service to science and for playing a central role in containing, managing, and bringing MLN under control.



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KTDA Appoints Francis Miano Acting Group CEO As Wilson Muthaura Retires

By: WMW
 @themtkenyentimes

The Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) has appointed Eng. Francis Miano as the Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, effective last Friday, in a move aimed at ensuring continuity and stability at the farmer-owned tea giant.

The appointment was announced by KTDA Holdings Chairman Chege Kirundi, following the exit of Mr Wilson Muthaura, who has proceeded on terminal leave after serving the organisation in various senior capacities.

The Board thanked Muthaura for his dedication and contribution to KTDA and wished him well in his future endeavours.

Eng. Miano is a registered professional engineer and a corporate member of the Institution of Engineers of Kenya (IEK).

He brings to the role more than 30 years of professional experience, much of it within KTDA, where he currently heads the Group Technical Services Division.

His extensive background in factory operations, engineering and project management positions him as a steady hand at a time when the tea sector is navigating both opportunities and challenges.

In his new role, Eng. Miano will oversee the strategic and operational leadership of KTDA, which manages the commercial interests of over 600,000 smallholder tea farmers across the country.

KTDA plays a central role in Kenya's tea industry, which is one of the country's leading foreign exchange earners.

Through its network of more than



Eng. Francis Miano



Wilson Muthaura.



Chege Kirundi.

60 tea factory companies, KTDA provides services ranging from tea processing, marketing, engineering, power generation, and financial services, to farmer support programmes.

The agency also manages key subsidiaries involved in tea marketing, logistics, insurance, power generation and manufacturing, making it one of the most integrated agribusiness organisations in the region.

In recent years, KTDA has been focusing on value addition, energy self-sufficiency through renewable power projects, improved farmer earnings, and governance reforms, amid growing scrutiny from regulators and stakeholders over management and operational efficiency in the

tea sector.

The appointment of Eng. Miano is expected to reinforce KTDA's technical and operational focus, particularly as the organisation continues to modernise factories, manage energy costs and respond to global market dynamics affecting tea prices.

The Board said it is confident that Eng. Miano's deep institutional knowledge and long-standing experience will ensure seamless leadership during the transition period as KTDA continues to safeguard farmer interests and strengthen its position in the global tea market.

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Ruto Rallies UDA Leaders In Nyeri, Calls For Unity And Broad-Based Politics Ahead Of 2027

By: PCS
 @themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- President William Ruto said that under the broad-based government, Kenyans are working together to ensure that no one is left behind. He noted that national unity addresses one of the biggest challenges Kenya has faced over the years—fair and equitable sharing of the country’s resources.
- The President explained that development is not a zero-sum game, stressing that one group does not have to lose for another to gain, as win-win outcomes are achievable.
- “For a long time, the bigger challenge in Kenya has been sharing the small cake we have. We now have a strategy to bake a bigger cake for everybody to share,” he said.
- President Ruto was speaking on Saturday at Sagana State Lodge in Nyeri County when he hosted more than 17,000 UDA grassroots leaders from the county.

The United Democratic Alliance (UDA) party is nurturing friendship and collaboration with other political parties to form a strong and inclusive political outfit ahead of the 2027 General Election.

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President Ruto was speaking on Saturday at Sagana State Lodge in Nyeri County when he hosted more than 17,000 UDA grassroots leaders from the county.

The leaders, who are polling centre officials, were elected during the party’s grassroots elections held last week.

The meeting was attended by Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga, Embu Governor Cecily Mbarire, and Members of Parliament led by National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung’wa.

The President emphasised that Kenya requires bold and visionary leadership, political collaboration, and unity of purpose to transform the country into a first-world economy. He added that strong national political parties are essential to carry the nation’s development agenda beyond one election cycle or an individual leader.

“A political party is the most important instrument in making sure that we have continuity that ensures we consolidate the transformation of the nation,” he said.

As a result, President Ruto called on Kenyans to rise above retrogressive politics rooted in hatred, tribalism, and division, noting that national development cannot be achieved through violence or exclusion.

“Leadership, politics and development are achieved through humility, patience, hard work, and unity,” he said.

The President pledged to continue using his office positively to bring Kenyans together, adding that the government is proud of its develop-



President William Ruto addressing thousands of UDA grassroots leaders from Nyeri County last Saturday.

ment track record over the past three years. He said the administration has stabilised the economy, reformed agriculture, healthcare, and education sectors, and created millions of jobs.

Looking ahead, President Ruto said the government is rolling out ambitious development programmes across the country. He cited plans to construct 30,000 kilometres of roads, including 2,500 kilometres of dual carriageways, and to expand the Standard Gauge Railway from Naivasha to Kisumu and onward to the Uganda border.

He also announced plans to modernise Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to meet growing demand in Kenya and across the region, alongside the development of the Bomas International Convention Centre and the Talanta Stadium, which are key infrastructure projects currently under construction.

On party matters, President Ruto, who is also the UDA party leader, said he will hold meetings with grassroots leaders in every county. He urged party officials to manage UDA affairs effectively at the grassroots and to popularise the party and its agenda.

He added that UDA is set to conduct ward, constituency, county, and national elections to further strengthen the party. The President noted that UDA has established itself as a formidable political outfit, revealing that 580,000 polling centre officials have been elected nationally and that 2.4 million members participated in last week’s grassroots elections alone.

Focusing on development in Nyeri County, President Ruto said the government has allocated KSh4 billion for road construction in the county. He noted that Mau Mau roads were at 20 per cent completion when he

took office in 2022 but have now progressed to between 60 and 70 per cent and are on course for completion later this year.

He further stated that KSh21 billion has been allocated to Nyeri County for affordable housing, markets, and hostels, KSh1.4 billion for expanded electricity connectivity, and an additional KSh4 billion for road construction.

“No project will stall in Nyeri County under my watch,” the President assured.

Mr Ichung’wa said the Mt Kenya region identifies with UDA because it is a national political party committed to bringing all Kenyans together. Governor Mbarire commended women leaders within UDA for seeking leadership positions, noting that women accounted for 36.5 per cent of elected officials in the grassroots elections.



Some of the MPs who attended the Sagana meeting on Saturday. Photos/Courtesy

Fire In ODM's Paradise: Succession Battles Ignite After Raila's Death

By: avid Kimani
@themkenyatimes

The death of Raila Amolo Odinga in late 2025 marked the end of an era in Kenyan politics. For nearly four decades, Raila had been the gravitational center of the opposition, the voice of defiance, and the architect of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). His passing left a vacuum that has now erupted into a fierce succession battle, pitting family members, youthful reformists, and seasoned veterans against one another in a struggle that could redefine the party's future.

In Nairobi's Kibra constituency, Raila's children Winnie Odinga and Raila Odinga Jr made their most forceful political intervention yet. Addressing a rally at Kamukunji grounds, Winnie declared that ODM was not for sale, nor could it be hijacked by opportunists seeking to exploit the mourning period. Her words carried the weight of her father's legacy, but also the urgency of a new generation determined to protect the party's identity. "You cannot copy and paste Baba," she said, invoking Raila's towering presence. Her brother echoed the sentiment, insisting that ODM must remain a platform for free expression rather than a cage for sycophancy. Their remarks were not casual. They openly aligned themselves with the youthful faction led by Secretary-General Edwin Sifuna and Embakasi East MP Babu Owino, signaling a generational shift. By invoking their mother Ida Odinga's blessings, the siblings sought to anchor their legitimacy within the family's broader political heritage.

Even as the Odinga siblings rallied supporters in Nairobi, ODM's internal fractures were laid bare in Kakamega County. Two rival factions held parallel meetings—one in Butere led by Governor Fernandes Barasa, another in Kakamega town linked to CS Wycliffe Oparanya. Dr. Oburu Odinga, Raila's elder brother and interim party leader, was forced to shuttle between the gatherings, underscoring the depth of division. Governor Barasa's allies insisted he should join ODM's technical negotiation team, while Oparanya's camp dismissed the Butere meeting as a mere courtesy call. ODM Deputy Party Leader Simba Arati accused Oparanya of fueling discord instead of strengthening unity. The spectacle of dueling rallies revealed a party struggling to reconcile its grassroots with its elite leadership.

At the heart of ODM's turmoil lies the question of Raila's legacy. Lawyer Ahmednassir Abdullahi bluntly declared ODM "politically dead" without Raila, arguing that the par-



Winnie Odinga in public engagements in Nairobi's Kibra constituency

ty cannot be cloned. Yet others, including Dr. Oburu, insist that ODM can survive if it negotiates hard for power-sharing and maintains its structures. The siblings' intervention challenges this narrative. By backing youthful leaders, Winnie and Raila Jr are attempting to reframe ODM as a party of renewal rather than decline. Their rhetoric resonates with younger supporters who see ODM not as a relic of Raila's charisma but as a platform for generational change.

The battle lines are clear. On one side stand the veterans—Oburu Odinga, Gladys Wanga, Simba Arati—who emphasize negotiation, zoning of seats, and cautious engagement with President Ruto's UDA. On the other side are the youthful reformists—Sifuna, Babu Owino, and now Winnie—who reject compromise and demand ideological purity. This generational clash is not merely about personalities. It reflects deeper tensions over strategy. Should ODM pursue power-sharing deals to remain relevant, or should it double down on opposition politics to preserve its identity? The veterans argue pragmatism; the youth argue principle.

With Kenya's next general election looming in 2027, ODM's internal battles carry high stakes. The party must decide whether to contest Ruto's dominance head-on or negotiate for inclusion in government. Parallel rallies and public spats risk weakening ODM's bargaining power, leaving it vulnerable to fragmentation. International observers have noted the securitization of Uganda's elections as a cautionary tale. ODM's divisions could similarly erode democratic opposition in Kenya if

not resolved. The East African Community's emphasis on strong party structures underscores the urgency of unity.

ODM's future now hinges on whether it can reconcile its factions. Winnie Odinga's vow to take the matter to the National Delegates Conference suggests a looming showdown. If the NDC becomes a battleground between veterans and youth, the outcome could determine whether ODM survives as a coherent force or splinters into irrelevance. The symbolism of Raila's children stepping into the fray cannot be overstated. Their presence evokes continuity of bloodline, but their rhetoric signals rupture. They are not merely inheriting their father's mantle; they are reshaping it.

The Orange Democratic Movement stands at a perilous juncture. Raila Odinga's death has unleashed forces of renewal and rivalry, exposing fault lines that were long suppressed by his towering presence. The Odinga siblings' entry into the succession row has electrified youthful supporters but unsettled veterans. Parallel rallies in Kakamega dramatize the party's fragmentation. Whether ODM emerges stronger or weaker will depend on its ability to balance legacy with innovation, pragmatism with principle, and unity with diversity. For now, the fire in ODM's paradise burns brightly, consuming old certainties and illuminating new possibilities.

The story of ODM after Raila is not just about succession; it is about the survival of a political tradition that has shaped Kenya's democratic journey. Raila's legacy was built on defiance, sacrifice, and resilience. His children, allies, and rivals now

wrestle with how to carry that torch forward. Some see compromise as betrayal, others see it as necessity. The debates raging in Kibra and Kakamega are not isolated—they are the echoes of a larger struggle over Kenya's political soul.

ODM's battles are also a mirror of Kenya's generational politics. The youth, restless and impatient, demand space and recognition. The veterans, cautious and experienced, warn against reckless ambition. The clash is inevitable, but it need not be destructive. If ODM can harness both energy and wisdom, it may yet emerge as a stronger, more inclusive party. If it fails, it risks becoming a relic of Raila's charisma, remembered more for its past than its future.

The coming months will test ODM's resilience. Consultative forums, delegate conferences, and grassroots mobilization will determine whether the party can heal or fracture. Winnie Odinga's promise to tour the country and collect views from supporters is a bold step toward renewal. But renewal requires more than rhetoric; it requires structures, discipline, and vision. Raila's absence has left ODM vulnerable, but it has also created an opportunity for reinvention.

Kenya's political landscape is watching closely. ODM has long been the heartbeat of opposition politics. Its fate will shape not only the 2027 elections but also the broader trajectory of democracy in the country. The fire in ODM's paradise is both a crisis and a chance. Out of the ashes of Raila's passing, a new chapter may yet be written.

Worth Noting:

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Mudavadi In Paris To Bolster Kenya–France Ties Ahead Of Historic Africa-France Summit

By: WMW
@themkenyaintimes

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi is in Paris, France, on an official visit aimed at deepening Kenya–France relations and fine-tuning preparations for the Africa-France Summit set to be held in Nairobi in May.

He arrived in the European country yesterday.

Kenya and France enjoy long-standing bilateral relations that have evolved from traditional aid-driven engagement into strategic partnerships grounded in trade, education, peace and security, health, climate action, and technological innovation.

The visit comes at a pivotal moment as Kenya prepares to make history as the first non-Francophone African country to host the Africa-France Summit since the forum's inception in 1973.

During the visit, Mudavadi is scheduled to hold high-level talks with Mr Jean-Noël Barrot, France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

The discussions will focus on ensuring that the Nairobi summit delivers tangible outcomes for Africa and France while reinforcing Kenya's diplomatic standing on the continent. The two leaders will also hold a bilateral meeting to advance broader cooperation between the two countries.

Speaking on the significance of the summit, Dr Mudavadi said hosting the France-Africa Summit in Nairobi underscores Kenya's growing stature as a diplomatic and environmental leader in Africa, describing it as the culmination of sustained efforts by the government under President William Ruto to position Kenya as a continental hub for dialogue, innovation and sustainable development.

As part of the visit, the Prime Cabinet Secretary will also sign an agreement with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), further strengthening development cooperation between

Nairobi and Paris. In addition, he will engage leading French business entities, including Medef, Airbus, Thales, In Groupe, Winwin Afrique, and CFAO, in talks expected to explore new investment and trade opportunities.

In keeping with tradition, Dr Mudavadi will meet staff at the Kenyan Embassy in Paris and hold an interaction with Kenyans working at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), reinforcing the government's commitment to its diaspora and multilateral engagement.

The Paris visit is seen as a critical diplomatic step as Kenya positions itself at the center of Africa–Europe engagement ahead of the landmark summit.



Musalia Mudavadi



Ruto's Youth Agenda And Diplomacy Elevating Kenya Globally, Says Mudavadi

By: OPCS

@themkenyaintimes

Worth Noting:

- Speaking at the Tinderet Barngatuny Mountain Run in Nandi County on Saturday, Mudavadi said the President had deliberately invested in young people through education, sports, and targeted empowerment programmes, while at the same time strengthening Kenya's standing internationally through strategic diplomacy.
- He noted that initiatives such as the NYOTA programme and the promotion of sporting events had helped unlock opportunities for thousands of youths across the country. According to Mudavadi, education remains at the centre of the government's long-term plan, with investments running into nearly one trillion shillings over the last three years.
- "The huge investment in education is a deliberate plan by the government to ensure our young people have a strong foundation for the future," he said.



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, Head of Public Service Felix Koskei and other leaders in Tinderet on Saturday.

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi has hailed President William Ruto for his strong focus on youth empowerment and sound international diplomacy, saying the two pillars are positioning Kenya for a prosperous and respected future on the global stage.

Speaking at the Tinderet Barngatuny Mountain Run in Nandi County on Saturday, Mudavadi said the President had deliberately invested in young people through education, sports, and targeted empowerment programmes, while at the same time strengthening Kenya's standing internationally through strategic diplomacy.

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is a deliberate plan by the government to ensure our young people have a strong foundation for the future," he said.

Mudavadi added that the government had also made sports a key area of focus, recognising its potential to create jobs, nurture talent, and market Kenya globally. He cited ongoing and planned infrastructure projects, including the near completion of Talanta Stadium, the revamping of Nyayo and Kasarani stadiums, and upgrades to regional facilities such as Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Kapsabet and Bukhungu Stadium in Kakamega.

"In athletics alone, Kenya continues to market itself better than any paid advertisement. We must diversify into other sporting disciplines so that every talent is harnessed," he said.

The Prime Cabinet Secretary urged young people to remain disciplined and hardworking, cautioning them to maintain respectable profiles on social media. He warned that careless online conduct had already cost some youths opportunities, includ-

ing visas and employment.

"Your social media footprint matters. Avoid posting content just to please the masses because when consequences come, the pain is individual," he said.

On foreign policy, Mudavadi said President Ruto's diplomacy had significantly raised Kenya's profile internationally. He pointed to recent global developments, including visa-related decisions by foreign countries, as evidence of Kenya's favourable standing.

"Kenya today enjoys respect and admirable stature on the international stage. These are deliberate efforts by the President, and his diplomacy is paying off," he said.

Mudavadi noted that President Ruto currently holds or has recently held key continental and regional leadership roles, including chairmanships within the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the African Union, as well as spearheading AU institutional reforms.

"These positions signal the respect

Africa and the world have for President Ruto," he said, urging Kenyans to support him in delivering on his development agenda.

He also used the occasion to call for national unity, dismissing tribal politics as backward and dangerous to the country's progress. Mudavadi encouraged youths to acquire national identity cards and register as voters, saying broad participation would strengthen democracy and stability.

The event was attended by several leaders, including Head of Public Service Felix Koskei, Nandi Governor Stephen Sang, MP Julius Melly, Athletics Kenya President Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Jackson Tuwei, Tourism PS John Oloituaa, and Kenya Tourism Board CEO June Chepkemei, among others.

Ruto, Mt Kenya and the Mathematics Of Legitimacy



By: Gitile Naituli
@themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- President William Ruto's current mobilisation strategy increasingly mirrors the Uhuru Kenyatta, Azimio playbook of 2022, particularly during the Building Bridges Initiative era that was ultimately struck down by the courts. Then, as now, political dominance was projected through administratively managed crowds: attendance organised by state officials, transport facilitated through public resources, venues tightly securitised, and symbolism carefully curated to convey inevitability. The message was power. The subtext was anxiety.
- In political science terms, this represents a shift from popular mobilisation to elite-managed legitimacy. Samuel Huntington warned that when political systems lose the capacity to absorb and reflect genuine public participation, incumbents often fall back on organisation and coercive presence to simulate consent.

Political power is most secure when it does not need to announce itself. The moment authority must be carefully staged, choreographed, and protected by layers of administration and security, it often signals not strength, but unease. History, political theory, and Kenya's own electoral record all suggest that when leaders substitute organic consent with managed spectacle, they are confronting a deeper legitimacy problem.

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In political science terms, this represents a shift from popular mobilisation to elite-managed legitimacy. Samuel Huntington warned that when political systems lose the capacity to absorb and reflect genuine public participation, incumbents often fall back on organisation and coercive presence to simulate consent. The state becomes a mobiliser, not of enthusiasm, but of compliance. Chiefs, police officers, and bureaucratic networks cease to be neutral administrators and begin to function as instruments of political theatre. The boundary between party and state blurs, eroding both institutional credibility and democratic trust.

This moment is especially striking because it contrasts sharply with the strategy that carried Ruto to State House in 2022. His rise was built on retail politics: unscripted market engagements, roadside conversations, and a populist rhetoric that framed politics as a struggle between the excluded and the entrenched. The "hustler" narrative worked precisely because it felt intimate and unpolished. It required no choreographed applause. It thrived on grievance, aspiration, and the perception of authenticity.

Today, the growing reliance on controlled rallies suggests what Huntington would call a legitimacy deficit.

Leaders confident in their bond with citizens do not need to manage affection; they trust people to show up voluntarily. Managed crowds may look impressive on television, but they are hollow performances, orderly, loud,



President William Ruto in a hearty conversation with Mr Githinji Wairagu who was the Othaya constituency Presidential agent during the 2022 General Elections. Photo/Courtesy.

and ultimately unconvincing. They project authority without emotional investment, presence without persuasion.

Nowhere are the implications of this shift more consequential than in the Mt Kenya region. Kenyan elections, as scholars like Donald Horowitz and Crawford Young have long argued, are structured around ethno-regional vote blocs. Coalition politics matters, but bloc arithmetic matters more.

In 2022, Mt Kenya delivered over four million votes to Ruto, nearly 47 per cent of his total tally. That support was not incidental; it was decisive.

Kenyan electoral history is unequivocal. From Mwai Kibaki's victories in 2002 and 2007 to Uhuru Kenyatta's wins in 2013 and 2017, no presidential candidate has successfully absorbed a major defection from Mt Kenya without constructing an equally large and disciplined counter-coalition elsewhere. Such coalitions are difficult, time-consuming, and politically costly to assemble.

It is within this context that the impeachment and political isolation of former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua takes on profound significance. Political theorist Juan Linz warned that elite defections often precede regime vulnerability, particularly in systems where power rests on coalition balance rather than deep ideological or institutional loyalty.

Gachagua is not a peripheral figure. He possesses mobilisation capacity, ethnic brokerage networks, and a populist communication style attuned to a region historically sensitive to exclusion and political gatekeeping.

His increasingly vocal critique of governance failures and perceived marginalisation speaks directly to a sense of betrayal among sections of Mt Kenya's political base. This dynamic reflects what Antonio Gramsci described as a crisis of hegemony, a moment when the governed begin to withdraw not just political support, but moral consent. The issue is no longer about policy disagreements alone; it becomes about whether the existing political arrangement still feels fair, reciprocal, and respectful.

If President Ruto were to lose even half of his Mt Kenya support, approximately two million votes, the arithmetic of Kenyan presidential politics becomes brutally unforgiving. No amount of managed rallies, securitised spectacles, or administrative mobilisation elsewhere can easily compensate for such a loss. Mt Kenya's cohesion and high turnout discipline magnify the impact of any defection. A shift of that scale would almost certainly render Ruto a one-term president.

Kenya's political history offers a consistent lesson: elections are not won by spectacle. They are won by

bloc loyalty, elite cohesion, and the durability of the social contract between leaders and their core constituencies. When that contract frays, power begins to rely on choreography. And when politics becomes performance rather than persuasion, the ballot eventually exposes the illusion.

In the end, legitimacy cannot be ferried in buses, enforced by uniforms, or manufactured through protocol. It must be earned, renewed, and sustained through genuine connection with the people. Managed crowds may momentarily project strength, but only consent secures power.

Prof. Gitile Naituli is a former commissioner with National Cohesion and Integration Commission

Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda Receive AFCON 2027 Flag

By: Suleiman Mbatiah
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- Speaking after the ceremony, Sports Principal Secretary Elijah Mwangi said the region was ready to deliver a successful tournament, citing progress in infrastructure, coordination and hosting capacity.
- “Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda are grateful to receive the flag today from CAF. That means immediately we shall be hosting AFCON come the year 2027,” Mwangi said.
- He said the three countries had drawn valuable lessons from the African Nations Championship (CHAN), which Kenya and Uganda staged jointly, and were confident of meeting Confederation of African Football (CAF) standards.
- Mwangi added that the region had the facilities and experience required, pointing to stadium upgrades, accommodation and the preparedness of national teams.



Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda have officially begun preparations for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations after receiving the hosting flag at the close of the AFCON 2025 final in Rabat, Morocco.

The handover in Rabat marked the start of the final planning phase for the first-ever AFCON to be jointly staged by three countries under the Pamoja bid.

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pointing to stadium upgrades, accommodation and the preparedness of national teams.

Political goodwill, he said, would be critical to the tournament’s success.

“The President is really supporting us. Our country’s Executive Presidents, they are supporting us. We shall make it,” Mwangi said.

The hosting decision has, however, attracted criticism from some quarters, with concerns raised over infrastructure and travel logistics across the three countries.

CAF President Patrice Motsepe has strongly defended the award of AFCON 2027 to East Africa, dismissing claims that Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are not ready to host the continent’s premier football tournament.

His remarks came after Senegalese journalist and football analyst Mamadou Gaye questioned the region’s capacity, warning that staging the competition across three countries could “downgrade” African football.

Gaye cited concerns that limited road networks could force fans and teams into journeys lasting up to two days between venues, potentially disrupting the tournament and diminishing

its prestige compared to Morocco’s 2025 edition.

Motsepe rejected the criticism, saying CAF’s responsibility was to grow football across the continent, not only in countries with advanced infrastructure.

“I have a duty to develop football all over Africa – I can’t have football only in those countries with the best infrastructure,” Motsepe said.

AFCON 2027 is expected to be staged across multiple cities in the three countries, with major investments planned in stadiums, transport networks and hospitality facilities.

CAF awarded the hosting rights to the Pamoja bid in September 2023, banking on regional cooperation, existing infrastructure and the potential to grow football in East Africa.

The tournament will feature 24 national teams and is projected to attract thousands of fans, officials and media from across Africa and beyond.

AFCON 2027 will be the 36th edition of the continental championship and is scheduled for August 2027. It will be the first AFCON hosted by three nations and the first to be staged in the CECAFA region in nearly five

decades, since Ethiopia hosted the tournament in 1976.

The edition will also form part of AFCON’s 70th anniversary celebrations and will be the last to be held in an odd-numbered year. CAF announced in December 2025 that the competition will shift to a four-year cycle starting in 2028.

Qualifying matches will begin in March 2026 with a preliminary round involving the lowest-ranked teams. Group-stage qualifiers will follow in September, October and November 2026.

Organizers say AFCON 2027 presents East Africa with an opportunity to showcase its football, culture and capacity to host a major continental event, while setting a new benchmark for joint tournaments on the continent.

14 POEMS

If You Don't Believe In Yourself, No One Will



Who am I!

If we know the answer for this
We are the real heroes.

An elephant doesn't know it's power
Necessity makes everyone very powerful.

If we believe in ourselves we can achieve!
Anything in the world we can receive.

If we don't believe in ourselves,
No one believes us.

If We realise our potential,
We will achieve and be vital.

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA.B N
M.Sc.,M.A.,M.A., B.Ed., PGD G&C, CELT.,
BT Asst
GMHSCHOOL,
TIRUR.
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.

Pongal Festival



A Great time of celebration
Related with heritage
Celebrated with infinite fun irrespective of
age
Enjoying, playing without any expectation

Expressing the gratitude
Towards nature for the help rendered
Overcoming things that were hindered
Gathered together with good attitude

New Raw rice with the sweetest jaggery
Welcome home new chances with
gratefulness
Turmeric and Sugarcane, sweetness
Creating happy soulful memory

Thanking the animals for their help
Decorating and playing with them
To be a delightful day with them
Sometimes twisted, turned into yelp

The hardwork rendered gives the treasure
To have a healthy and wealthy life
Plants we grow and reap the benefits of
country life
Fresh air with limitless pleasure

N. SIVASANKARI
TEACHER IN ENGLISH
MADURAI

My Mother Tongue



My Mother Tongue

So many days and years have passed,
So many khans and sultans, too.
Yet your worth remains steadfast,
Like that famed Turkic tongue we knew.
The heirs of great Navoi
Enriched your soul once more anew.
The poets of the Uzbek land

Polished your form with passion true.
In this great task, they played their part—
Avloniys and Muhammads bright.
They gave their love, their beating hearts,
In songs and poems they did write.
And thus your fame began to rise,
Echoing wide across the world.
Again your power touched the skies,
With friends, your flag of pride unfurled.

I am Nozima Abdivali Aliqulova, born on
February 14, 2006. After graduating
from school, I enrolled at Shahrizabz State
Pedagogical Institute.
Writing poetry has been my passion since
childhood, and the poem I am sharing with
you today is one of my original works.

Get Together



Get Together
Bouquet a collection of flowers by florist
Many trees form forest
Rain is the collision of clouds
Students together in class feel proud
Colleagues meet for business promotion
Old students as healthy recreation
Alphabets gather widening literacy level
So does relations without rival
Celebrate feast for eyes & tongue
Coordinating mind for peace;keeping young.
G.Sarala.
Creative writers
Chennai
Tamil Nadu India

A Proud Literary Milestone: Akshika Aggarwal's Visit To The World Book Fair, New Delhi



The World Book Fair, New Delhi, held from 10 January to 18 January 2026, became a landmark event in the life of author Akshika Aggarwal—a writer whose journey is rooted in resilience, imagination, and an unshakeable love for literature. Her visit to the fair marked a moment of personal and professional triumph, as her sixth book, *Enter the World of Fantasy*, was proudly displayed among national and international publications.

Akshika Aggarwal is known for her emotionally rich storytelling and her ability to weave hope, fantasy, and realism into powerful narratives. Despite facing physical challenges in life, she never allowed limitations to restrict her dreams. Writing became her strength, her voice, and her path to self-expression. Over the years, she

has emerged as an inspiring author whose works reflect inner courage, sensitivity, and a deep understanding of human emotions.

Seeing her book showcased at one of India's most prestigious literary platforms was an overwhelming and proud moment for Akshika. As she walked through the bustling halls of Pragati Maidan, surrounded by readers, publishers, and fellow writers, the journey from her first written words to her sixth published book felt deeply rewarding. The fair stood as proof that dedication and belief can turn dreams into reality.

Enter the World of Fantasy reflects Akshika's imaginative spirit and her desire to transport readers into worlds where hope, courage, and creativity reign supreme. The positive response and curiosity from readers at the fair further strengthened her resolve to continue writing meaningful stories.

For Akshika Aggarwal, the World Book Fair 2026 was not merely an exhibition—it was a celebration of her literary journey, her growth as an author, and her unwavering commitment to storytelling. This proud moment will remain etched in her life as a symbol of achievement and a stepping stone toward an even brighter literary future.

Prayer For A Better Tomorrow



May the universe guide us through the night

And fill our hearts with love and light.

Grant us wisdom, strength, and peace of
mind,
And help us create a better world, in every
kind.

May compassion flow, like a river's stream

And unite us all, in a bond of dream.
Let go of hate, and fill us with love,
A better tomorrow, sent from above.

May all beings be happy, free, and kind,
May the world be filled, with peace divine.
Om Shanti, peace be

SRIPRIYA R
BT ENGLISH GHSS KOLAPAKKAM
KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT TAMILNADU INDIA

DO YOU WANT TO GET PUBLISHED?

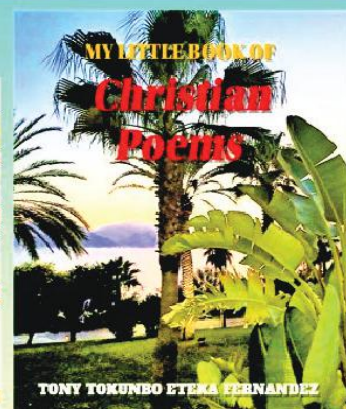
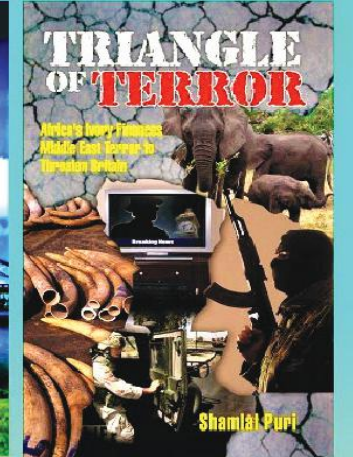
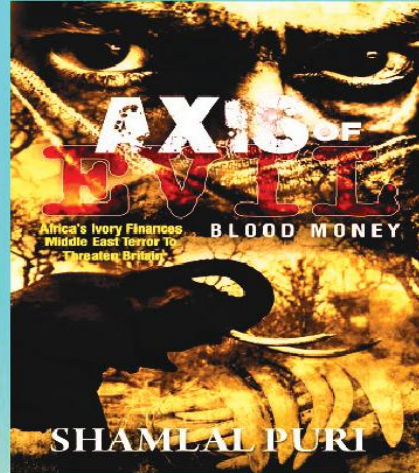
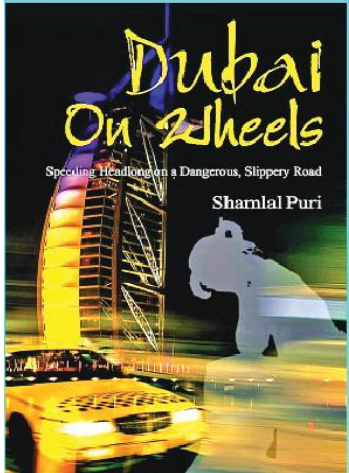
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POLITICS

Free Education Has Given Mandera Hope – Water Security Must Sustain It



By: Ali Bashir Adow
(Alibash)
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- In many parts of the country, this moment is accompanied by the usual tension over school fees. In Mandera, that burden has been removed. Public secondary education is free for every child.
- That decision has changed the social landscape of the county.
- Mandera is a pastoralist region where life revolves around livestock. Cattle, camels, goats and sheep are more than property; they are savings accounts, livelihoods and cultural identity. But years of relentless drought have shattered that way of life.
- Rainfall has become erratic, pasture scarce and water sources unreliable. Animals have died in large numbers, wiping out wealth built over generations.

A new school term has opened in Kenya, and in Mandera County something quietly historic is taking place.

Grade 10 learners are reporting to senior secondary schools as the first cohort shaped entirely by the Competency-Based Education system.

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Rainfall has become erratic, pasture scarce and water sources unreliable. Animals have died in large numbers, wiping out wealth built over generations.

As herds disappeared, household incomes collapsed. Families struggled to put food on the table, and education quickly became a luxury.

Even modest school fees turned into impossible demands. Parents faced painful choices: buy food or keep children in school, sell the last remaining goat or withdraw a daughter from class.

Too often, girls were the first to lose out.

This was the harsh reality Mandera confronted in 2022.

During that election year, Governor Mohamed Adan Khalif made a pledge that sounded ambitious, even unrealistic: free secondary education for all students in public schools. Many doubted it could work. The county was in the grip of drought, humanitarian needs were high, and public resources were limited.

Yet the promise was kept.

Three years on, the programme is still running. More than 20,000 learners now attend secondary school in Mandera without paying fees. At the beginning of each term, children report to class with confidence instead of fear.

Parents no longer dread the humiliation of having a child sent home for arrears. Girls, who once bore the heaviest cost of poverty, now have a



fairer chance to complete their education.

In a region too often associated with marginalisation, this is a powerful achievement. Mandera has become the only county in the former North Eastern region to implement free secondary education comprehensively and sustain it.

Education has effectively become a form of social protection – a buffer shielding young people from the economic shocks that regularly batter their families.

For that, the county leadership deserves recognition.

But celebration should not breed complacency.

Beyond the classrooms lies a deeper, unresolved crisis. Water.

Drought in Mandera is not only a problem of inadequate rainfall; it is a problem of fragile water systems. Without dependable water infrastructure, livestock perish, rangelands degrade and livelihoods collapse. No amount of goodwill can replace boreholes that dry up or water pans that are never built.

Too often, responses remain tem-

porary: emergency water trucking, short-lived borehole projects and seasonal relief programmes. These interventions keep communities alive, but they do not break the cycle of vulnerability. Every failed rainy season pushes families back to the starting line.

This is the central contradiction facing Mandera today. The county has shown remarkable commitment to protecting education, yet the foundation of its economy – water security – remains precarious.

The result is an uneasy balance. Children are in school, but many return to homes struggling to survive. Households continue to lose livestock, sink deeper into poverty and depend on aid.

Acknowledging this does not diminish the success of free education. Rather, it highlights the next frontier of leadership.

Governor Khalif's administration has already proven that bold policy choices are possible, even in difficult circumstances. Just as free secondary education was prioritised and funded, water security must now receive the

same urgency.

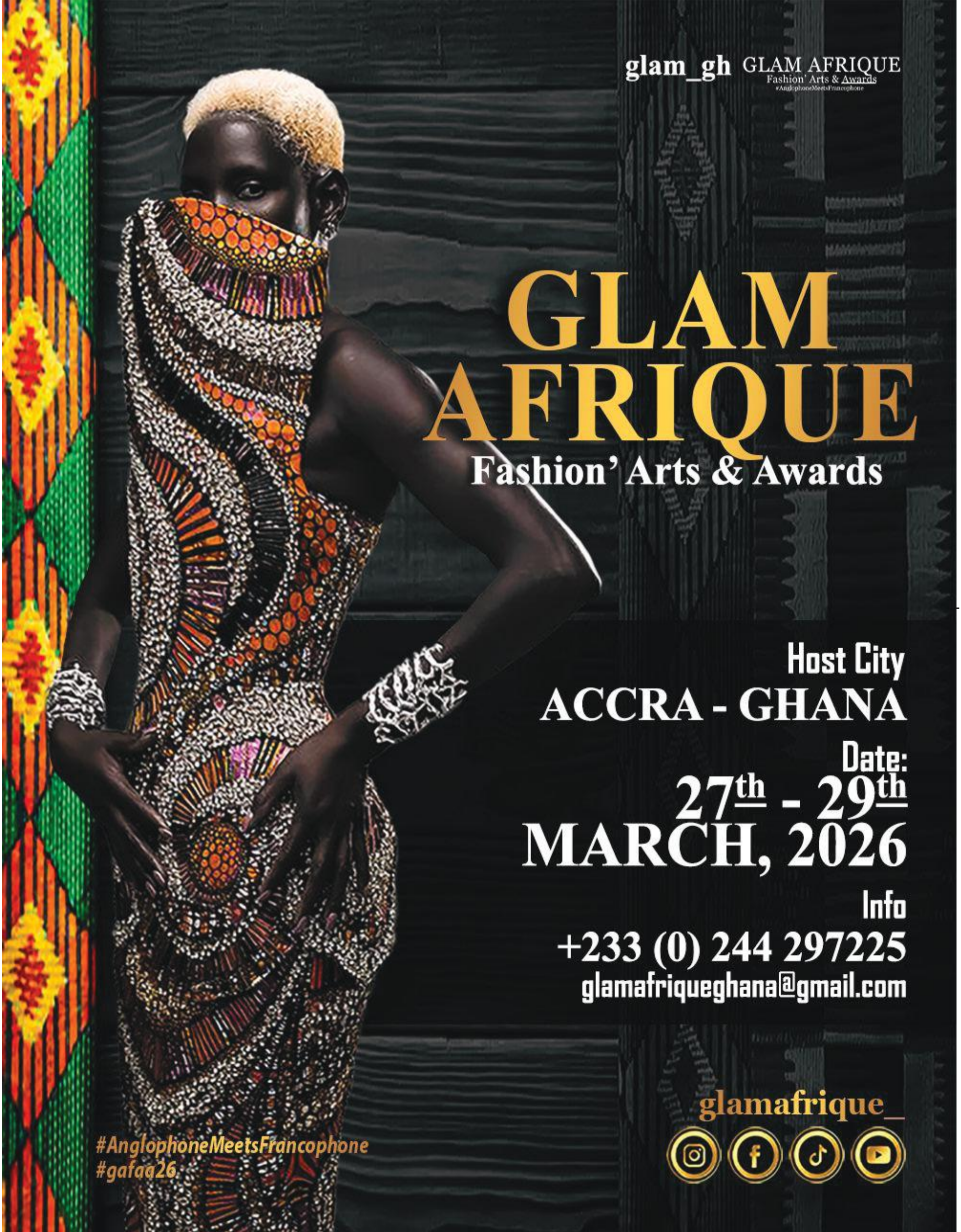
Long-term investment in sustainable boreholes, modern water reticulation systems, rangeland rehabilitation and climate-resilient planning is no longer optional. It is essential for survival.

Education safeguards the future. Water sustains the present.

Mandera has offered Kenya an inspiring lesson in what visionary leadership can achieve. The challenge ahead is to ensure that the children walking confidently into free classrooms today return to households that are equally secure tomorrow.

Because protecting education in the midst of drought is courageous. But without reliable water, even the best policies will struggle to endure.

The writer is a lawyer and policy analyst.



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Academic Inbreeding In Kenyan Universities: A Crisis Of Intellectual Stagnation



By: Odhiambo Jerameel Kevins Owuor
@themkenyatimes

Kenya's higher education system confronts a paradox of expansion without transformation. While university enrollment surged from 118,239 students in 2010 to over 520,000 by 2022, completion rates tell a darker story. Data from the Commission for University Education (CUE) reveals that approximately 35% of undergraduate students fail to graduate within the prescribed timeframe, with master's programs experiencing even more alarming attrition rates approaching 50% in public universities.

At institutions like the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, and Moi University, what should constitute a two-year master's degree frequently extends to six, eight, or even ten years not due to academic rigor, but systemic dysfunction. This article advances a controversial yet empirically grounded thesis: academic inbreeding the practice of universities hiring their own graduates as faculty without intermediate external experience constitutes the principal pathology suffocating Kenyan higher education, producing what I term "academic mongolism," a condition of intellectual stagnation characterized by pedagogical sterility, methodological ossification, and the perpetuation of mediocrity across generations.

Academic inbreeding, defined as the recruitment of faculty members who obtained their terminal degrees from the same institution where they subsequently teach, creates closed intellectual ecosystems that breed conformity rather than innovation. In Kenya's public universities, this practice has metastasized into institutional culture. A lecturer completes their undergraduate degree at University X, proceeds to a master's at University X, obtains a PhD from University X, and immediately secures employment at University X often in the same department where they were students mere months earlier. This individual then teaches using identical lecture notes they received as students, employs the same pedagogical methods that trained them, perpetuates the same curricular frameworks, and reproduces the same intellectual limitations of their mentors. The result is not education but intellectual photocopying, each generation a slightly degraded copy of the previous one, accumulating errors and losing resolution with each iteration. When examined through the lens of organizational learning theory, such systems cannot generate new knowledge because they lack the external inputs necessary for creative recombination.

Put differently just on the above mentioned issue, Odhiambo Owuor argues as follows: "Academic in-



breeding, or what some term "academic mongolism," refers to the entrenched practice where individuals complete their undergraduate, post-graduate, and doctoral studies at the same institution, only to return immediately as lecturers, perpetuating identical curricula, teaching methods, and outdated notes. This cycle fosters intellectual homogeneity, stifling innovation and critical thinking. In Kenyan public universities, this phenomenon is rampant, leading to a herd mentality that prioritizes loyalty over merit, as evidenced by the treatment of "outsiders" who bring fresh perspectives but face barriers to advancement. Boldly stated, this inbreeding is not merely a hiring quirk but a structural pathology that accelerates the "death" of universities by breeding complacency and resisting global academic evolution."

The contrast with leading global universities proves instructive and damning. German universities, particularly institutions within the Max Planck Society and leading technical universities like TU Munich and RWTH Aachen, operate under explicit or implicit policies prohibiting direct faculty appointments of their own doctoral graduates. The principle, rooted in the Humboldtian ideal of academic freedom and intellectual diversity, mandates that scholars disperse after earning their degrees, spending substantial time often a decade at other institutions before potential reappointment.

This "Wanderjahre" (journeyman years) requirement ensures that faculty members return, if they return at all, equipped with comparative perspectives, exposed to alternative methodological traditions, and ca-

pable of critical evaluation of their home institution's practices. Similarly, elite American universities like Harvard, Stanford, and MIT maintain strong norms against academic inbreeding, with data showing that less than 10% of faculty at top-tier American research universities earned their terminal degrees from the same institution. The University of California system explicitly discourages such appointments in many departments. These institutions recognize what Kenyan universities have forgotten: intellectual vitality requires cross-pollination, and excellence demands exposure to diverse scholarly traditions.

The South African experience offers a particularly relevant comparison. Following post-apartheid reforms, universities like the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and the University of the Witwatersrand implemented deliberate policies to internationalize their faculty and reduce academic inbreeding, recognizing that apartheid-era isolation had produced intellectual stagnation. Through targeted recruitment of scholars from diverse institutional backgrounds, these universities transformed themselves into continental leaders in research output and pedagogical innovation. Between 2000 and 2020, South Africa's contribution to global scientific publications increased by 127%, while Kenya's grew by only 43% despite comparable population sizes. The correlation between faculty diversity and research productivity cannot be dismissed as coincidental.

In Kenya, academic inbreeding produces specific pathologies that extend beyond mere intellectual stagnation. The "inbred" faculty member

becomes a gatekeeper rather than a facilitator, viewing the university as personal territory rather than a public institution. These individuals, whom I characterize as "academic mongoloids" using the term metaphorically to denote intellectual retardation rather than biological condition exhibit predictable behaviors: they extend program completion times artificially, often requiring eight to ten years for master's degrees that international standards suggest should take two years. They "lose" examination scripts with disturbing regularity, forcing students into supplicant positions where they must "simp" (to use contemporary vernacular) for audience with lecturers simply to retrieve grades for examinations they demonstrably completed. Documentation from student grievance committees at Kenyan public universities reveals hundreds of cases annually where examination results disappear into administrative black holes, only to resurface after students engage in degrading lobbying, sometimes including sexual favors the notorious "sex-for-marks" phenomenon that thrives in environments where power asymmetries remain unchecked.

The intellectual consequences prove equally devastating. Academic mongoloids perpetuate methodological obsolescence, teaching research methods they learned fifteen years prior without updating for contemporary developments in their fields. A lecturer trained in quantitative methods

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Academic Inbreeding In Kenyan Universities: A Crisis Of Intellectual Stagnation

Contd from page 18

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during the 1990s continues teaching SPSS version 12 when the discipline has moved to R programming, machine learning applications, and big data analytics. A literature professor recycles interpretive frameworks from their own student days, never engaging with digital humanities, postcolonial theory's latest iterations, or comparative global literary studies. The curriculum fossilizes because those teaching it have never been exposed to alternatives. When external examiners from international universities review Kenyan graduate theses, their reports frequently note methodological poverty, limited engagement with current literature, and analytical frameworks decades out of date all predictable outcomes when faculty have never experienced alternative scholarly environments.

The gatekeeping extends to faculty recruitment itself, creating a self-perpetuating oligarchy. External candidates scholars who earned degrees from diverse institutions, perhaps internationally trained, bringing fresh methodological approaches face systematic discrimination. Despite superior qualifications, these "outsiders" encounter promotion barriers, exclusion from key committees, and administrative obstacles that the inbred majority never experiences. The logic mirrors tribalism: the university becomes the possession of those who have always been there, and outsiders threaten established hierarchies. Data from the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) indicates that at Kenya's largest public universities, over 60% of senior faculty (associate professors and full professors) earned all their degrees from the institution where they currently teach a statistic that would scandalize any serious research university globally. This herd mentality, this intellectual tribalism, transforms universities from sites of knowledge production into sites of knowledge preservation at best, and knowledge destruction at worst.

The bullying culture that accompanies academic inbreeding deserves particular attention. Academic mongoloids, insecure in their intellectual foundations and aware at some level of their methodological poverty, often compensate through authoritarianism. Students who ask challenging questions, propose alternative methodological approaches, or reference literature unknown to the supervisor face accusations of arrogance or stupidity. Failure rates in some graduate

programs approach 40% not because Kenyan students lack capacity (they excel when they study abroad), but because supervisors lacking diverse training cannot supervise beyond their narrow competencies. When students fail, the mongoloids attribute this to student stupidity rather than supervisory inadequacy, never questioning whether their own limited methodological repertoires might constitute the actual problem. This psychological projection, where the supervisor's limitations become the student's deficiencies, creates toxic learning environments that drive talented students to abandon graduate studies or seek opportunities abroad, contributing to brain drain.

The economic implications extend beyond individual careers to national development. Kenya's Vision 2030 and subsequent development blueprints identify higher education as critical for technological innovation, industrial advancement, and economic transformation. Yet universities characterized by academic inbreeding cannot fulfill this mandate. They produce graduates trained in obsolescent methods, unfamiliar with global best practices, and intellectually provincial. When multinational corporations, international NGOs, or research institutions seek Kenyan talent, they increasingly bypass local universities, preferring graduates from regional competitors in South Africa, Uganda (where Makerere has implemented some anti-inbreeding policies), or international institutions. The reputational damage proves difficult to quantify but undeniably significant. In the 2024 Times Higher Education rankings, not a single Kenyan university appeared in the global top 500, while South African universities claimed seven positions, a gap attributable partly to faculty quality differences rooted in recruitment practices.

Eight Practical Solutions for Breaking the Cycle

First, implement explicit anti-inbreeding policies at all public universities, modeled on German and American practices. No candidate who earned their terminal degree from an institution should be eligible for faculty appointment at that institution for at least seven years post-graduation. This mandatory exodus period forces intellectual cross-pollination and ensures returning faculty (if they return) bring comparative perspectives.

Second, establish a National Faculty Exchange Program, funded by the Commission for University Education, enabling Kenyan faculty to spend 1-2 years teaching and re-



searching at other universities both domestically and internationally. South Africa's National Research Foundation operates similar exchange programs that have demonstrably increased research collaboration and methodological diversity. Allocate Ksh 500 million annually to support such exchanges, with performance metrics tied to publication output and pedagogical innovation.

Third, mandate external examiners for all graduate programs, with these examiners drawn from institutions outside Kenya. External examination already exists nominally but requires strengthening external examiners should review not just final theses but also coursework design, examination practices, and program timelines. The University of Cape Town's model, where external examiners provide detailed reports that inform faculty promotion decisions, offers a template.

Fourth, create transparent digital systems for examination administration, eliminating the "missing marks" phenomenon. All examinations should be digitally recorded upon submission, with automated tracking systems that flag examinations not graded within 30 days. Students should access results through online portals without requiring lecturer intervention. The University of Nairobi's partial implementation of such systems shows promise but requires universal adoption across all public universities.

Fifth, implement competitive faculty recruitment emphasizing institutional diversity. Award points in hiring rubrics for candidates who have studied at multiple institutions, with highest points for candidates with international training. At least 60%

of new faculty hires should come from external institutions, reversing current ratios. The University of Pretoria implemented similar policies in 2015, and within five years increased its international research collaborations by 89%.

Sixth, establish strict timeline enforcement for graduate programs, with automatic institutional penalties when programs exceed standard durations. If a master's program averages more than 2.5 years completion time, the university faces budget cuts; if a PhD program exceeds 5 years average completion, the program loses accreditation. This creates institutional incentives to address supervisor incompetence and administrative dysfunction. Germany's universities face similar accountability metrics, contributing to their high completion rates.

Seventh, create independent ombudsman offices with power to investigate academic misconduct, including sexual harassment, arbitrary grading, and supervisor abuse. These offices, modeled on the University of Michigan's ombudsman system, should report directly to university councils, not academic senates, ensuring independence from faculty control. They should publish annual reports detailing complaint patterns, with anonymized case studies highlighting systemic problems.

Eighth, tie university funding to faculty diversity metrics and program completion rates. Universities demonstrating reduced academic inbreeding, improved completion rates, and increased faculty from diverse institutional backgrounds should receive funding premiums, while those perpetuating inbreeding face budget penalties. Performance-based fund-

ing, successfully implemented in South Africa's higher education system since 2003, provides a proven model for incentivizing institutional reform.

The death of Kenyan universities is not inevitable, but it requires acknowledging the pathology of academic inbreeding as a central culprit. The academic mongoloids who currently dominate faculty positions did not create this system maliciously; they are products of it, perpetuating familiar patterns because they have experienced nothing else. Breaking this cycle demands policy courage, willingness to implement reforms that will discomfort entrenched interests but ultimately resurrect institutions that have lapsed into intellectual comas.

The alternative is continued irrelevance: universities that grant degrees but do not educate, that employ faculty but do not produce knowledge, that consume public resources but contribute minimally to national development. Kenya's youth deserve better. The nation's development aspirations demand better. And the ideal of the university as a site of critical inquiry, intellectual freedom, and knowledge advancement requires nothing less than the complete dismantling of the inbreeding system that has brought these institutions to their current diminished state. The question is not whether reform is necessary, but whether Kenya's educational leadership possesses the political will to implement it before the patient expires entirely.

The writer is a lawyer

Young Tanzanian Entrepreneur Recycles Hair Into Fertilizer

By: Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- They discovered that hair is primarily made up of keratin, a nitrogen-rich protein. When broken down, keratin releases amino acids, which are vital nutrients for plant growth. The pair developed three potential innovations during their early experimentation.
- After finishing high school, Dennis took a gap year to study the scale of the problem and the opportunity. Across Tanzania and much of Africa, hair waste is often dumped in landfills, burned, or left to litter. In some communities, people bury hair due to long-standing cultural beliefs that it can be used for black magic. Collecting human hair at scale would require not only technology, but trust.
- Meanwhile, Dennis identified another pressing issue -- fertilizer dependency. Nearly 90 percent of fertilizers used in Tanzania are imported, mostly inorganic chemical products manufactured by multinational companies.

When David Dennis first noticed hair scattered in his high school barber shop, he had no idea that those discarded strands would one day place him at the forefront of a booming green innovation movement.

Today, the 27-year-old Tanzanian is the founder and chief executive officer of Cut-Off Recycle Limited, a waste management and agricultural support company that transforms human hair into organic fertilizers. What began as a simple observation has evolved into a patented innovation, a job-creating circular economy model, and a business now connected to global markets, particularly China. The idea behind Cut-Off Recycle was first sparked in 2017, when Dennis was still in high school. "I followed where the hair went. It was burned in the open air within the school compound," he recalled. The practice released thick smoke and harmful gases, leading to carbon emissions, air pollution, and environmental degradation, both wasteful and dangerous, Dennis noted. Alongside his classmate and now co-founder, Ojung'u Jackson, Dennis began researching the properties of human hair.

They discovered that hair is primarily made up of keratin, a nitrogen-rich protein. When broken down, keratin releases amino acids, which are vital nutrients for plant growth. The pair developed three potential innovations during their early experimentation. After finishing high school, Dennis took a gap year to study the scale of the problem and the opportunity. Across Tanzania and much of Africa, hair waste is often dumped in landfills, burned, or left to litter. In some communities, people bury hair due to long-standing cultural beliefs that it can be used for black magic. Collecting human hair at scale would require not only technology, but trust. Meanwhile, Dennis identified another pressing issue -- fertilizer dependency. Nearly 90 percent of fertilizers used in Tanzania are imported, mostly inorganic chemical products manufactured by multinational companies. Dennis saw an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. In 2020, Cut-Off Recycle Limited was officially founded in the Arusha region, focusing on the collection of human hair waste and the production of organic agricultural inputs.

The company not only patented a method for processing human hair into amino-acid-based liquid fertilizers, but also expanded into pro-



This photo taken with a cellphone shows David Dennis, founder and chief executive officer of Cut-Off Recycle Limited, holding organic fertilizer products in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Jan. 9, 2026. (Xinhua/Nurdin Pallangyo)

ducing a growing medium made from hair and other organic materials. Dennis also traveled over 600 km from his hometown, Arusha, to Dar es Salaam for a bachelor's degree in environmental science and management. His academic journey culminated in a dissertation on the decomposition of human hair, earning a distinction grade. To address cultural taboos around hair collection, Cut-Off Recycle implemented an incentive-based model, paying barber shops, waste collectors, and individuals for the hair they collect and deliver to company hubs. Over 350 people have already earned income through the hair collection initiative in Arusha alone. With a new collection hub in Dar es Salaam, the company seeks to create opportunities for more than 500 collectors. "Instead of asking for money at home, young people can collect hair waste from nearby barber shops and earn income," said Dennis. In Africa, where waste management systems remain underdeveloped, hair waste is rarely prioritized. Yet its impact is visible on streets and in drainage channels, Dennis said.

In 2024, Dennis traveled to China twice. His first visit came through a program supported by the Interna-

tional Trade Center (ITC) under the United Nations, which selected 100 African businesses to participate in a digital trade initiative. During the program, Dennis learned how even traditional industries can access global markets through digital platforms. Cut-Off Recycle became the first company in Tanzania to sell agricultural inputs in China, opening doors to international customers and partnerships. Dennis also attended the China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo in Changsha, the capital city of central China's Hunan Province, where he connected with Chinese manufacturers, including an agricultural input producer based in Shenzhen. Cut-Off Recycle now sources packaging materials and processing inputs from China at significantly lower costs, while also engaging in technology exchange. Dennis was also struck by the value Chinese entrepreneurs place on long-term relationships. "Friendship matters in China," he said. "When I returned for my second visit, the same partner picked me up at the airport. That trust has made collaboration much easier."

During his second trip, Dennis visited cities of Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Beijing, as well as technology

firms, including Baidu. "If a tech company can move into mobility, then an agricultural company can expand into multiple support solutions for farmers," he said. Despite its success, Cut-Off Recycle faces major challenges, particularly in scaling technology. Dennis and his team are now working with original equipment manufacturers, particularly those in China, to design custom machinery for sorting, shredding, and composting hair waste.

A new branch of Cut-Off Recycle recently opened in Dar es Salaam, in partnership with Watende Investment Company Limited, a local company specializing in waste collection and management services. Looking ahead, Dennis envisions a network of hair collection hubs across major African cities and franchise-based fertilizer manufacturing units operating locally. He hopes to change how people think about waste. "My dream is for everyone to see hair not as waste, but as opportunity," he added.



Promoting A Culture Of Respect And Empathy

A disturbing viral video has reignited national debate on consent, respect, and the troubling persistence of victim-blaming in our society. In the footage, a man is seen exploiting a drunk woman and exposing her private parts. His actions are not only morally reprehensible but also criminal under Kenyan law. The Cybercrime Act explicitly prohibits the distribution of intimate content without consent, and accountability must be enforced.

Yet, what is equally alarming is the chorus of voices online shifting blame to the victim. Some have questioned her attire or behavior, as though these factors could ever justify exploitation. This narrative is dangerous and unacceptable. Clothing choices or social conduct do not absolve perpetrators of responsibility. The focus must remain squarely on the violation committed, not on the woman's decisions.

For young women especially, the message should be clear: dignity and self-respect are non-negotiable. Worth is not measured by appearance or fleeting behavior but by the choices one makes and the boundaries one demands.



Still, the burden of safety cannot rest solely on women. Society must collectively foster environments where respect is the norm and empathy is the standard.

We must normalize conversations about consent, boundaries, and accountability in our homes, schools, and social spaces. When victim-blaming surfaces, it must be challenged and redirected toward the true source of harm—

the perpetrator. As Kenyans, we have a duty to build a culture that uplifts, protects, and values every individual. Respect and empathy are not optional virtues; they are the foundation of a just society. We must do better.

By *Miriam Kamau, Laikipia University*

How Kenyans Have Fallen In Love With The Tree-Hugging Challenge

Across Kenya, a simple gesture has blossomed into a powerful movement: hugging a tree. What began as a playful social media trend has evolved into a nationwide symbol of environmental consciousness and civic responsibility. From Nairobi's urban parks to the rural landscapes of Laikipia and beyond, Kenyans are embracing the tree-hugging challenge to spotlight the urgent need to protect forests in the face of climate change, deforestation, and land degradation.

The challenge has captured imaginations across generations. Schools have incorporated it into environmental clubs, activists have used it to rally communities, and public leaders have joined in to demonstrate solidarity with conservation efforts. Images of Kenyans wrapping their arms around trees are flooding social platforms, but the impact extends far beyond digital spaces. The movement has inspired tangible action:



tree planting drives, grassroots conservation initiatives, and renewed respect for the natural heritage that sustains livelihoods and biodiversity.

At its core, the tree-hugging challenge is about connection. It reminds us that trees are not just silent witnesses to history but living pillars of life—providing shade, clean air, water regulation, and cultural symbolism. By choosing to embrace rather than exploit, Kenyans are sending a clear message: environmental protection is not merely a government directive but a

shared civic duty rooted in love for the land and responsibility to future generations.

This movement underscores a broader truth: small acts can ignite profound change. Hugging a tree may seem symbolic, but it represents a collective awakening to the urgency of conservation. Kenya's embrace of this challenge is a hopeful sign that empathy for nature can drive lasting transformation.

By *Melody Akinyi Ochieng, Laikipia University*

Kenya's Bold Leap In Transport Infrastructure

Kenya is poised to embark on one of its most ambitious infrastructure undertakings yet, with President William Ruto announcing that construction of a new international airport will begin in April or early May 2026. This project, estimated at Ksh264 billion, represents a decisive step toward easing the chronic congestion at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, which has long struggled to accommodate surging passenger and cargo traffic. Preliminary plans suggest Konza Technopolis as a potential site, though final decisions remain under review. The envisioned facility, with multiple runways, modern terminals, and expanded aircraft bays, is designed to elevate Kenya's standing among global aviation hubs and strengthen its role as a gateway to Africa.

Complementing this aviation milestone is the extension of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), scheduled to commence in February 2026. Stretching from Naivasha through Kisumu and Malaba into Uganda, the project aims to unlock regional



trade corridors, streamline cargo and passenger movement, and integrate East Africa's transport networks. Counties along the route stand to benefit from new economic opportunities, while Kenya consolidates its position as the region's logistics backbone.

Together, these initiatives underscore the government's commitment to modernising infrastructure and fostering sustainable growth. By tackling bottlenecks in both air and rail

transport, Kenya is laying the groundwork for enhanced connectivity, increased investment, and long-term development. The simultaneous launch of these projects signals not just progress, but vision—a determination to build a transport system capable of meeting the demands of a dynamic and interconnected region.

By *Barleen Nasumba, Laikipia University*

Uganda's 2026 Elections: A Test Of Democracy And Stability

Uganda now finds itself in the tense aftermath of its 2026 General Elections, held on January 15. With provisional results released by the Electoral Commission showing President Yoweri Museveni leading with roughly 73–76 percent of the vote, the country faces familiar questions about democratic transition and political accountability. Museveni, in power since 1986, campaigned on promises of stability and continuity, yet critics argue that his four decades in office have entrenched authoritarian tendencies and stifled genuine competition. His main challenger, Robert Kyagulanyi—popularly known as Bobi Wine—has alleged ballot stuffing and intimidation, claims that underscore the fraught nature of Uganda's electoral landscape.

The atmosphere has been further complicated by the government's decision to impose an internet and social media blackout two days before the polls, citing security concerns. This



move has hindered transparency, limiting real-time reporting from polling stations and raising alarm among civil society groups. Reports of Bobi Wine's house arrest on January 16 have only heightened tensions, with authorities framing it as a precaution while opposition supporters view it as suppression.

International observers, including a mission from the East African Community, are still compiling their assessments, but early statements from human rights organizations highlight concerns about the secu-

ritization of the process and the shrinking space for dissent. As final results are expected imminently, Uganda stands at a crossroads. The declaration will not only determine the presidency but also shape parliamentary dynamics, with the ruling NRM poised to maintain dominance. What remains uncertain is whether these elections will strengthen Uganda's democratic institutions or reinforce the status quo.

By *Magdaline Amusugut, Laikipia University*

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Sports >> *The Sunshine Development Tour – East Africa Swing moves into its decisive stage tomorrow as the Absa Invitational tees off at Karen Country Club from today to Wednesday

Battle Royale At Karen Country Club As Curtains Come Down On Sunshine Development Tour

The Sunshine Development Tour – East Africa Swing moves into its decisive stage tomorrow as the Absa Invitational tees off at Karen Country Club from today (January 19) to Wednesday (January 21), marking the final regular leg of the 2025/2026 season.

The Karen leg brings together a field of 113 players from across 11 countries in Africa and beyond.

The field includes 71 professionals including 3 female pros, 37 elite amateurs, and a Tour record of 8 juniors, reflecting the Tour's inclusive structure.

Kenya provides the largest contingent with 86 players, led by Order of Merit leader Njoroge Kibugu, who has been one of the most consistent performer this season.

He is joined by leading Kenyan professionals Dismas Indiza, John Lejirma, Greg Snow, CJ Wangai, David Wakhu, Samuel Njoroge and Mutahi Kibugu, all pushing for strong finishes as the season reaches its climax.

Uganda fields nine players, led by Willy Deus who arrives in Karen fresh from his victory at the Absa Invitational at Thika Greens, a result that significantly boosted his position on the Order of Merit.

He is joined by fellow Ugandans Otile Ronald, Phillip Kasozi, Gaita Rodell among others.

Rwanda, with five players, is led by Celestin Nsanuwera, currently second on the Order of Merit after a series of consistent performances throughout the season.

He remains firmly in contention for the overall Sunshine Development Tour title.

The international field also includes 5 players from Tanzania, three from Nigeria, three from Zimbabwe, and single representatives from Burundi, Ghana, Senegal, Malawi and India, further underlining the Tour's expanding regional and international reach.

The tournament also features a competitive women's field, led



Njoroge Kibugu in action during the Sunshine Development Tour.

by Sunshine Ladies Tour card holder Naom Wafula, alongside Joyce Wanjiru of Kiambu Golf Club, Kellie Gachaga, Margaret Njoki and Angel Eaton of Tanzania, competing within the mixed field.

Heading into the Karen leg, the Sunshine Development Tour Order of Merit remains tightly contested. Njoroge Kibugu leads the standings with 1,287 points from nine tournaments, narrowly ahead of Celestin Nsanuwera on 1,144 points.

Dismas Indiza sits third on 723 points, followed by John Lejirma in fourth with 576 points.

Greg Snow, CJ Wangai, David Wakhu and Samuel Njoroge Chege round out the leading group as valuable points remain on offer.

The Karen event follows a highly competitive leg at Thika Greens Golf Resort and carries added significance as players chase Sunshine Development Tour points, Official World Golf Ranking points, and places among the top 30 who will ad-

vance to the continental playoffs in South Africa.

The Absa Invitational Pro-Am, held on Friday at Thika Greens, provided a strong build up to the Karen showdown.

Siphra Nyongesa claimed overall honours with 46 points, while Munge Karoki topped the men's category on 43 points.

Rachel Ndei led the ladies' category with 40 points, and Michael Gatuhi won the guest category.

The professional team contest was won by Greg Snow's team, with teams led by Willy Deus and Samba Niang finishing second and third respectively.

The Karen leg effectively shapes the final standings ahead of the Sunshine Development Tour Africa Championship, where the top 30 players from the East Africa Swing will compete against the top 30 from South Africa's Big Easy Tour.

The Africa Championship will determine which players progress to the final Sunshine Tour Qualifying events, where full Sunshine Tour cards will be on

offer.

Speaking ahead of the tournament, Sunshine Development Tour East Africa Swing Tournament Director David Kihara said the stage is set for a competitive finish.

"We are heading into Karen with a very strong and diverse field and everything to play for. The regional representation shows how the Tour is growing, and the quality of golf this season has been excellent. Karen Country Club will test every part of a player's game, and we expect a very tight contest," Kihara said.

The Absa Invitational at Karen Country Club will offer a KSh 2 million prize purse, alongside Official World Golf Ranking points and Sunshine Development Tour Order of Merit points, which also count toward qualification for the 2026 Magical Kenya Open.

Capital Sport

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Sports >>> *For Sadio Mane, it all started in Bambali. It was in south-west Senegal that he began playing football on its red earth-lined streets and sandy pitches and where, aged 13

Will Final Be Mane's Last Afcon Dance With Senegal?

For Sadio Mane, it all started in Bambali. It was in south-west Senegal that he began playing football on its red earth-lined streets and sandy pitches and where, aged 13, he watched Liverpool's famous comeback against AC Milan in the Champions League final in 2005.

Since then he has gone on to lift both that prestigious trophy and the Premier League with the Reds, as well as claiming the Africa Cup of Nations title with the Teranga Lions.

Mane scored the winning penalty against Egypt in the final of the 2021 edition and described it as "the best day of my life and the best trophy of my life".

A stadium was named after him in the city of Sedhiou, just under four hours from his hometown, following that triumph as a recognition of his achievements.

The forward now has the chance to win a second Afcon title when Senegal face Morocco on Sunday in Rabat (19:00 GMT) – and potentially bow out from the tournament in a blaze of glory.

"We know how to play the final," Mane said after his second-half strike saw off Egypt in the last four.

"A final is meant to be won. I will be very happy to play my last Afcon final, to enjoy it and to make my country win."

Midfielder Pape Gueye says the squad aim to convince Mane, who he called "a legend of Senegal", to change his mind about this being his final Afcon and remain with the team for at least the 2027 edition in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

"We're going to try to keep him with us a bit longer, because he still has some great years to give," the 26-year-old Villarreal man told BBC Afrique.

"I heard what he said and we'll see what he decides to do. But we really want him to stay with us for many more years."

A humble and charitable man Mane, now 33 and plying his trade in Saudi Arabia with Al-Nassr, may have a glittering trophy cabinet but he has never forgotten his roots.

He won hearts with charitable acts in Bambali by pledging money to build a hospital and school, contributing to the construction of mosques and providing funds to aid the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

He also sent 300 Liverpool shirts to his hometown before the Anfield club's appearance in the 2018 Champions League final, which Real Madrid ultimately won 3-1.

"If Sadio comes here, he behaves very humbly, on a level with the people in Bambali," Fode Boucar Dahaba, the president of a regional league, told BBC Sport Africa on a visit to the village a few years ago.

"He doesn't want to stand out. The village gives all this love back to him."

Family members describe him as someone who is "working for everybody" and a "good Muslim".

That was evident during his time in England's top flight, when he helped clean the toilets at a mosque in Toxteth after one Liverpool victory.

"He wanted to remain discreet and wasn't doing it for publicity," said Abu Usamah Al-Tahabi, the imam at Al Rahma Mosque.

"He's not a person looking for fanfare. There's no arrogance."

Senegal centre-back Moussa Niakhate hailed Mane as "an incredible man" in the lead-up to the final.

"I won't have enough time to describe what Sadio represents for African football, and more particularly for the Senegalese people," he added.

Senegal 'expect' contributions from Mane

Mane has over 120 caps and is his country's record goalscorer with 53 goals.

He has so often been the hero on the pitch in recent years, and he intends to play at the World Cup later this year, where more great memories could be made.

He had an early penalty kick saved during the first half of the 2021 Afcon final but stepped up again to decide the shootout with Egypt in Yaounde.

A little over a month later he settled their 2022 Fifa World Cup play-off against the Pharaohs in the same way – after that match also went the distance – although he ultimately missed out on the tournament in Qatar through injury.

He has mainly been a creative force at this year's Afcon finals, but his 78th-minute strike against Egypt, who were once again on the receiving end of Mane's magic, proved enough to send the Teranga Lions through to the final.



Sadio Mane celebrates his goal against Egypt. PHOTO/TOTALENERGIES AFCON 2025

"That's what we expect from him," midfielder Idrissa Gana Gueye told the BBC World Service after his decisive intervention in Tangier on Wednesday.

"[He is] a big player and he needs to show it in big games. He showed it again."

"We want to offer him this trophy"

Mane may have a humble demeanour and does not captain Senegal, but when he speaks his teammates take note.

"In his pre-match speech [before playing Egypt] he motivated all of us," Pape Gueye said.

"He had the right words to make sure we went into the match fully focused."

"He has the experience of big matches, so he also knows how to calm us down. You can see it a lot in his gestures – he tells us to stay calm, even after we score or if we concede a goal."

Mane won the vast majority of his international caps under Aliou Cisse, who was in charge of the West Africans from 2015 to 2024, but current coach Pape Thiaw is

understandably keen for his talisman to remain part of the national set-up.

"I think he made his decision in the heat of the moment and the country does not agree, and I as coach of the national team do not agree at all," Thiaw said.

"We would like to keep him for as long as possible."

The host nation stand in the way of Senegal, but the squad have extra motivation to claim the title for Mane.

"We owe it to him to bring back that second star, which would surely make him one of the greatest players the continent has ever known," defender Niakhate said.

Pape Gueye added: "He brings so many things to this team."

"Today, all we can do is thank him. And if this really is his last Afcon, we want to offer him this trophy."

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Karubembe Junior: Writing To Inspire, Living To Heal

Worth Noting:

• Kelvin's journey is deeply rooted in resilience. He holds a degree in Economics and Statistics from Laikipia University, an academic foundation that sharpened his discipline and understanding of society. His professional career in banking has further shaped his values of responsibility, consistency, and service. Beyond the corporate space, he has remained committed to giving back to the community, especially to young people seeking direction and hope.

• His literary journey began in 2017, driven not by the pursuit of recognition, but by a desire to tell stories that reflect real life. His debut book, *Divided Heart*, is a love story that confronts painful realities within relationships.

From the quiet landscapes of Kathiranga village in Githongo, Central Imeni, Meru County, emerges a voice that continues to touch hearts across Kenya and beyond. Kelvin Mutwiri, widely known by his literary name Karubembe Junior, is a banker in one of East Africa's leading financial institutions, an accomplished author, a mentor, a community leader, and a passionate cancer awareness champion. At the center of all these roles is a clear and unwavering purpose: to inspire lives through storytelling and service.

Kelvin's journey is deeply rooted in resilience. He holds a degree in Economics and Statistics from Laikipia University, an academic foundation that sharpened his discipline and understanding of society. His professional career in banking has further shaped his values of responsibility, consistency, and service. Beyond the corporate space, he has remained committed to giving back to the community, especially to young people seeking direction and hope.

His literary journey began in 2017, driven not by the pursuit of recognition, but by a desire to tell stories that reflect real life. His debut book, *Divided Heart*, is a love story that confronts painful realities within relationships. Written against the backdrop of rising cases of suicide and gender-based violence in Kenya, the book challenges toxic love and emphasizes that true love must be mutual and nonviolent. The story resonated widely with readers and earned second place at the HLP Publishers Awards in 2019 for Best Simple Short Love Story, becoming his best-selling work.

His second book, *The Life I Have Lived*, is a deeply personal and autobiographical work. In it, Kelvin shares his struggles, hardships, and moments of uncertainty, choosing vulnerability as a tool for inspiration. He wrote the book with the hope that his difficult journey would encourage young people facing similar challenges to keep dreaming and pushing forward despite their circumstances.

His third book, *The Treasure of Breath*, was born out of profound personal loss. After losing his grandfather to prostate cancer, followed

by the passing of his grandmother and later his father, Kelvin turned grief into reflection and healing through writing. The book urges readers to appreciate life, relationships, and moments while they still can, reminding them that tomorrow is never guaranteed.

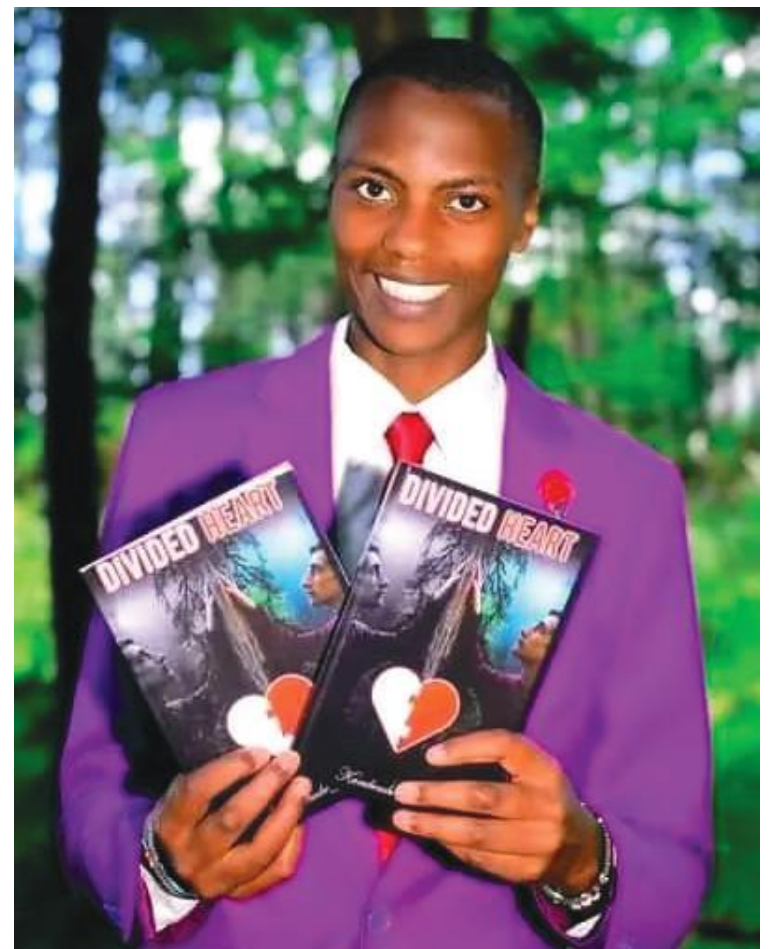
These losses also shaped his path as a cancer awareness champion. The death of his grandfather to prostate cancer ignited his commitment to educating communities about breast and prostate cancer, with a strong emphasis on early screening and awareness. Through his community based organization, We Choose You, Kelvin actively engages in sensitization programs and community conversations aimed at saving lives through knowledge.

Beyond writing and advocacy, Kelvin has demonstrated leadership in various spaces. While at Laikipia University, he served as the Secretary General of the Students' Union and later became the Youth Governor for Meru County under Youth Governors Kenya. These roles strengthened his passion for youth empowerment and community development. He continues to mentor young people in primary schools, high schools, churches, and universities, guided by his belief that small actions done with intention can create lasting impact.

Writing remains central to Kelvin's identity. He writes to inspire, to heal, and to remind people that their stories matter. To aspiring authors, he encourages honesty and courage, urging them to tell their stories because someone somewhere needs to read them, be inspired, change their path, or find hope again.

As he balances life as a banker, author, mentor, and cancer awareness advocate, Karubembe Junior continues to build a legacy anchored in purpose. In his own words, he believes that living each day with intention and passion is what shapes the legacy one leaves behind, built on love, service, and wisdom shared with the world.

*To purchase any of Karubembe Junior's books, **Divided Heart**, **The Life I Have Lived**, or **The Treasure of Breath**, contact 0741567811*



Kelvin Mutwiri

