



Linda Mwananchi Movement:
The brand that could reshape Ruto's path to 2027

The Office of the Registrar of Political Parties yesterday began the formal gazettement process to rename The Equitable Party as the Linda Mwananchi Movement, a procedural step that carries consequences far larger than a change of name **Page 8**



Kenya's fuel price crisis: How long can ordinary families survive the rising cost of living?

Kenya is confronting another painful economic reality. Effective 15 October 2026, the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority raised the maximum retail prices of petrol, diesel & kerosene **Page 12**

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The Mt. Kenya Times Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **"Baba never traded principles for political expediency," Governor Orengo**

Raila memorial exposes opposition cracks

The first anniversary memorial of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Bondo yesterday became an unscheduled but unmistakable referendum on the soul of Kenyan opposition politics, as leaders who once stood together beneath the same banner publicly staked out irreconcilable positions on whether to embrace President William Ruto or resist him.

What was billed as a commemoration of one of Kenya's most consequential political figures became instead a platform for airing a rupture that has been widening for months. On one side stood the ODM establishment, now firmly embedded in Ruto's broad-tent government and speaking the language of collaboration and national unity. On the other stood the Linda Mwananchi faction, invoking Raila's legacy to argue that opposition without spine is not opposition at all. The tension between these two visions was palpable, and in the year before a general election, it is far more than an internal party dispute.

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Leaders, family and friends during the first anniversary memorial of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Bondo yesterday





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ODM and Linda Mwananchi clash at Raila's Bondo memorial

BY David Kimani

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Bondo yesterday became the unlikely arena for Kenya's sharpest current political rivalry, as the first anniversary memorial of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga exposed the deepening rift between ODM and the Linda Mwananchi faction in front of the crowds gathered to honour him. ODM Deputy Party Leader Simba Arati warned members against abandoning the party for what he described as externally funded interests, while Energy Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi went further, pledging that President William Ruto would sweep Siaya County in 2027. "ODM is firmly established in President William Ruto's government," Wandayi declared. "Those who dream of removing Ruto from power are daydreaming."

Siaya Governor James Orengo offered a direct counter. "Baba never traded principles for political expediency," he said, warning against arrangements designed to silence the opposition and undermine democratic accountability. Embakasi East MP Babu Owino echoed that position, arguing that Raila's true lesson was the courage to defend justice rather than accumulate titles. Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, declaring his presidential ambitions openly, pledged to put citizens first and accused unnamed colleagues on the same platform of relying on intimidation rather than persuasion. Raila united these factions in life. His memorial confirmed that, in his absence, they are pulling in opposite directions — with an election thirteen months away.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Winnie Odinga, East African Legislative Assembly MP and daughter of the late former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, yesterday declared her intention to contest the Nairobi Senate seat in the 2027 general election, saying the opportunity created by incumbent Edwin Sifuna's pursuit of higher office was too clear to ignore. Speaking at her father's first death anniversary, Winnie said she would not be going into the race alone, pledging to bring young people into leadership across all electoral positions. She invoked her father's vision of a Kenya where birth, surname and community do not determine opportunity, expressing anguish at a generation that studied, worked, voted and waited — only to find their lives had not moved forward.



Transport operators and motorist groups yesterday warned of immediate cost increases and threatened street protests following the government's latest fuel price adjustments, with the Matatu Owners Association announcing a 10 per cent fare increase and the Motorists Association of Kenya demanding an independent audit of the entire petroleum pricing system. The Matatu Owners Association accused the government of breaking agreements reached in previous negotiations, saying Cabinet Secretary for Transport had stopped returning their calls. The Motorists Association questioned why kerosene rose KSh 28.49 per litre against petrol's KSh 12.93 despite recording the lowest increase in landed costs, and demanded Parliament, the Auditor-General and the Competition Authority scrutinise the government-to-government procurement arrangement. A similar fuel hike triggered street protests in May.



Ida Odinga yesterday told Kenyans gathered in Siaya County to honour her late husband Raila Odinga's first death anniversary that his defining quality was the capacity to forgive those who opposed him most fiercely — and that his legacy belongs to no individual seeking to exploit it for personal gain. "Baba held his conviction fiercely yet he sat across the table from those opposing him. If you think somebody is your enemy, it should not stop you from loving them again," she said. She warned youth against letting passion become violence, and cautioned that voices would rise in Raila's name out of convenience rather than conviction. Speaking with quiet grief, she described still leaving the door open at home some evenings, half-expecting his footsteps. Raila died in India on 15 October 2025 and is buried at Kang'o ka Jaramogi in Bondo.



Wiper Democratic Movement leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday marked the first anniversary of Raila Odinga's death in Bondo with a public pledge to complete what he described as the journey they began together — a third liberation he termed Ukombozi, aimed at freeing Kenyans from punitive taxation, the high cost of living, injustice and the erosion of constitutional order. Reflecting on more than 15 years of political partnership, Musyoka said the dream they shared of a more equitable Kenya had not died with Raila but had grown more urgent. "We shall finish this journey, in your memory and in your honour," he wrote. His statement framed the 2027 election not as a routine political contest but as the culmination of a liberation struggle, signalling that Musyoka intends to run on the unfinished agenda he and Raila built together.



Raila Odinga Junior yesterday welcomed Embakasi East MP Babu Owino, Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and Siaya Governor James Orengo to Kang'o ka Jaramogi in Bondo for the first anniversary of his father's death, thanking them publicly for making the journey to the family home. The attendance of the three leaders, all prominent figures in the Linda Mwananchi Movement, was notable given the political tensions that have surfaced within the broader ODM family over the direction of opposition politics ahead of the 2027 general election. Raila Junior's warm and open acknowledgement of their presence, extending a welcome to all who wished to attend, carried a quiet but deliberate signal that the family home remains open ground, above and beyond the factional disputes now reshaping the movement his father built.



Kenyan households grew financially weaker in the second quarter of 2026, with income growth slowing sharply, inflation accelerating and more than half of Gen Z consumers reporting they could no longer meet their financial obligations, according to TransUnion Kenya's latest Consumer Pulse report. Only 30 per cent of households reported an income increase during the quarter, a 12 per cent drop compared with the same period last year, as inflation climbed from 4.4 per cent to 6.4 per cent driven by fuel costs, transport prices and global energy pressures. Reduced salaries, job losses and business closures were the leading causes of income decline. Consumer optimism fell five percentage points to 78 per cent, with Gen Z recording the steepest deterioration. In response, 53 per cent of consumers planned to cut discretionary spending and 48 per cent intended to defer major purchases.

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Oburu marks birthday and brother's death from Nairobi Hospital bed

On a day that joins birth and loss in a single date, the ODM leader offered a rare personal window into grief, gratitude and an unbreakable bond

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyaintimes

ODM party leader Oburu Oginga yesterday marked his birthday at Nairobi Hospital surrounded by family and political allies, on the same date that his younger brother, former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, died one year ago.

The coincidence of dates gave the occasion a weight that no birthday ordinarily carries. Oburu acknowledged it directly in a message posted on his X account, describing the day as a sacred intersection of life and eternity. "Marking another year of my own birth on this very day brings a bittersweet reflection, knowing it is also the date my beloved younger brother, Baba Raila Amolo Odinga, departed to be with the Lord," he wrote.

His words carried the quiet authority of a man processing something that defies ordinary language. "To have been born on this day and for you to have departed on this same date is a divine testament to the invisible thread that binds our souls. Physical separation cannot touch a brotherhood written in the heavens," he said, adding that the bond between them transcended death entirely.

The message also served an unspoken but necessary purpose. Oburu's prolonged absence from public engagements had triggered speculation about his condition,



Orange Democratic Movement party leader Oburu Oginga marked his birthday yesterday

including unverified reports on social media that he had died. ODM officials and his aides moved quickly to correct the record, confirming he was alive and receiving medical attention at Nairobi Hospital, though declining to disclose the precise nature of his illness. Reports had earlier emerged that he had travelled to the United Kingdom for medical examinations before returning for continued treatment.

The birthday gathering at the hospital, organised as a surprise, drew family members, hospital staff and ODM representatives, among them party trustee Elder Joshua Kawino. Oburu expressed gratitude with characteristic warmth, thanking his spouses, Dr Ann Oburu and Mama Judith Oburu, for their care, commending Nairobi Hospital's staff for their professionalism and acknowledging

the team at Pawaa Centre for coordinating the occasion. "Your love and presence have made this solemn yet special day truly comforting," he said.

Beyond the personal, the moment carries political significance that the party cannot afford to set aside. Oburu assumed leadership of ODM following Raila's death, inheriting an organisation at a crossroads — navigating internal disagreements over its relationship with President William Ruto's administration, the emergence of the Linda Mwananchi Movement as an increasingly organised rival formation, and the approaching pressure of the 2027 general election. His health is therefore not simply a family concern. It is a question with direct implications for the stability and direction of one of Kenya's most consequential political

institutions.

ODM faces those questions without the singular figure who shaped it for decades. Raila's ability to hold competing factions together, to negotiate from a position of strength with any administration and to inspire loyalty across ethnic and regional lines was personal, not institutional. It cannot be transferred by succession alone.

Oburu is a different kind of leader — more reflective, less combative, carrying the weight of age and illness alongside the weight of expectation. Whether that combination is what ODM needs in the months ahead remains an open question.

For now, he is recovering. And on a day that belonged equally to birth and to grief, he chose to speak about love.

Natembeya and Orengo demand answers over security withdrawal



Trans Nzoia Governor George Natembeya

BY Janet Wangaru

@themkenyaintimes

Trans Nzoia Governor George Natembeya and Siaya Governor James Orengo yesterday demanded a formal explanation from the Inspector General of Police after their security details were withdrawn, with Natembeya describing the move as a repeat pattern that demands legal accountability.

Addressing a press conference, Natembeya said officers attached to his detail had been directed to report immediately to their stations or headquarters — the second such withdrawal he has experienced. "I call upon the Inspector-General of the National Police Service to provide a formal explanation of the reasons for this decision and to clarify whether the applicable security procedures have been followed," he said, citing a High Court ruling of 3 June 2025 that found withdrawing security without prior written notice violated Article 47 of the Constitution.

Orengo was characteristically blunt. "Today, the government withdrew my security for the nth time. I remain unbowed," he said, signing off with his signature defiance: "WANTAM."

Both governors are prominent voices in the Linda Mwananchi Movement, and the withdrawals arrive against a charged political backdrop. Natembeya is locked in a standoff with President William Ruto over the planned launch of the Masinde Muliro Market and Trans Nzoia's new county headquarters — projects the governor insists were built entirely with county funds, without a single shilling from the national government.

"Come and open it," Natembeya said of the KSh 500 million county assembly complex. "However, when you leave, I will remove the plate bearing your name and replace it with mine."

When security becomes a political instrument, defiance becomes the only dignified response.

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Politics In a country where political branding has historically been built around ethnic arithmetic and regional strongholds, the Linda Mwananchi name attempts something different

Linda Mwananchi Movement: The brand that could reshape Ruto's path to 2027

A viral party name, a youth-focused senator and a formal gazettement process have handed Kenya's fractured opposition its most potent political weapon in years

BY James Mwangi

@themkenyatimes

The Office of the Registrar of Political Parties yesterday began the formal gazettement process to rename The Equitable Party as the Linda Mwananchi Movement, a procedural step that carries consequences far larger than a change of name on an official register.

The Registrar of Political Parties, John Lorionokou, confirmed in a letter dated 13 October 2026 that his office had reviewed documents submitted by the party on 8 October and had commenced the gazettement process under Section 20(1)(d) of the Political Parties Act. The submitted documents included a resolution by the party's National Executive Committee approving the name change, statutory Form PP.10, a signed attendance list from the NEC meeting and evidence that the proposed change had been published in the Daily Nation on 10 October and on the party's official website. The Registrar directed the party to submit details of any public representations received after the mandatory 14-day publication period expires, and to demonstrate how those representations have been addressed, in line with Section 20(4) of the Act.

The formalities are straightforward. The politics are not.

The Linda Mwananchi Movement is associated with Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, Embakasi East MP Babu Owino and Siaya Governor James



Edwin Sifuna with Mama Ida Odinga

Orengo, among other leaders who have broken from ODM's accommodation with President William Ruto's administration. The name itself — which translates directly as “protect the citizen” — is not a coincidence. It is a political calculation of considerable sophistication, designed to resonate immediately with the constituencies that feel most acutely the weight of Kenya's cost-of-living crisis: the urban working poor, the unemployed graduate, the market trader absorbing fuel price increases and the matatu passenger facing higher fares every time EPRA revises the pump price upward.

In a country where political branding has historically been built around ethnic arithmetic and regional strongholds, the Linda Mwananchi name attempts something different. It makes an appeal that is transactional in the most direct sense — not “vote for us because of who we are” but “vote for us because of what we will do for you.” Whether the movement can sustain that promise through the machinery of an actual campaign is a separate question. But the name alone has demonstrated an organic reach that money cannot easily manufacture.

For President Ruto, the gazettement of Linda Mwananchi as a formal political entity represents a more serious challenge than the various opposition movements that have preceded it, precisely because of what Sifuna brings to it. The Nairobi senator has cultivated a political persona that operates across boundaries that most Kenyan politicians cannot cross. He is combative enough for the streets, articulate enough for the universities, irreverent enough for social media and disciplined enough, when it matters, for parliamentary procedure. That combination is rare, and in the compressed digital landscape of Kenya's under-35 population — which constitutes the majority of registered voters — it is genuinely

dangerous to an incumbent.

Ruto's 2027 challenge is already more complicated than his 2022 victory suggested it would be. The hustler narrative that carried him to State House was built on a promise of economic transformation for ordinary Kenyans. Three years into his administration, fuel prices have risen sharply, the cost of living remains punishing and youth unemployment continues at levels that the government's own economic data struggles to flatter. The Linda Mwananchi name lands directly on that gap between promise and delivery, and Sifuna has shown a consistent willingness to press that wound in language that young Kenyans understand and share.

The movement's appeal to youth is not simply rhetorical. Owino, who has built one of Kenya's most energetic grassroots political networks in Embakasi East, brings organisational infrastructure. Orengo brings constitutional credibility and the respect of civil society. Sifuna brings the digital presence and the youth following. Together, they represent a coalition that is less dependent on ethnic mobilisation than most Kenyan opposition formations and more reliant on issue-based persuasion — which is either their greatest strength or their greatest vulnerability, depending on

how the 2027 campaign develops.

The formal registration process matters because it transforms what has been a movement into an institution. A registered party can field candidates, access public financing of political parties, open bank accounts, establish county structures and build the administrative machinery that converts popular sentiment into actual votes. The 14-day public representation period required by the Political Parties Act is largely procedural, but its conclusion will mark a significant moment: the point at which Linda Mwananchi ceases to be a slogan and becomes a legal political actor.

Ruto's camp has not publicly responded to the gazettement with alarm. The public posture from ODM's embedded leadership — exemplified most recently by Energy Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi's extraordinary claim at Raila Odinga's Bondo memorial that the President would secure 100 per cent of Siaya County's votes in 2027 — is one of confidence bordering on dismissiveness. But confidence in Kenyan politics has a habit of curdling when the campaign season begins in earnest and the ground shifts beneath the projections of those who assumed the electorate would behave as it always had.

The more perceptive reading of the Linda Mwananchi registration is that it forces Ruto to fight a 2027 election on at least two fronts simultaneously: the traditional contest over ethnic bloc consolidation and regional deals, and a newer, less predictable contest over economic narrative and youth mobilisation. The second front is the one his administration is least equipped to win on current form.

A party name that spreads like wildfire on social media does not win elections by itself. Structures, candidates, financing and ground organisation are what convert momentum into parliamentary seats and presidential votes. Linda Mwananchi has the name. The next fourteen months will determine whether it can build everything else in time.

Kenya's 2027 election just got a new and unpredictable variable. William Ruto's team would be wise to take it seriously.



President William Ruto

Memorial Raila died having spent much of his final years in a political accommodation with the very administration his supporters had long opposed

Kenya's opposition fractures at Raila's graveside

The first anniversary of Raila Odinga's death exposed a movement torn between principle and power, with 2027 already casting its long shadow over Bondo

BY David Kimani

@themkenyaintimes

The first anniversary memorial of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Bondo yesterday became an unscheduled but unmistakable referendum on the soul of Kenyan opposition politics, as leaders who once stood together beneath the same banner publicly staked out irreconcilable positions on whether to embrace President William Ruto or resist him.

What was billed as a commemoration of one of Kenya's most consequential political figures became instead a platform for airing a rupture that has been widening for months. On one side stood the ODM establishment, now firmly embedded in Ruto's broad-tent government and speaking the language of collaboration and national unity. On the other stood the Linda Mwananchi faction, invoking Raila's legacy to argue that opposition without spine is not opposition at all. The tension between these two visions was palpable, and in the year before a general election, it is far more than an internal party dispute.

Raila died having spent much of his final years in a political accommodation with the very administration his supporters had long opposed. Whether that accommodation represented pragmatic statesmanship or an abandonment of his movement's foundational purpose remains, even now, a question his lieutenants cannot agree on. The anniversary did not resolve that question. It sharpened it.

ODM Deputy Party Leader Simba Arati set the tone early, urging members to hold firm and not to be seduced away from what he called Baba's home. His warning was pointed. "Let us not abandon Baba's home. Anyone who wants to leave, do not leave. But if you have been bought by a sponsor, then take the money and leave with that sponsor," he said. The reference to external financiers, without naming names, signalled the depth of suspicion now running through the party's internal relationships. It also suggested that the departures Arati fears are not merely



Leaders, family and friends during the first anniversary memorial of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Bondo yesterday

possible but imminent.

Energy Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi went further, dispensing entirely with the language of opposition and speaking instead as a man whose political home is now firmly inside the government tent. His declaration was striking in its directness: "ODM is firmly established in President William Ruto's government. Those who dream of being able to remove Ruto from power are daydreaming. Ruto will get 100 per cent of the votes in this county." Siaya County, Raila's ancestral heartland and one of the most reliably opposition-voting regions in the country, delivering unanimously for an incumbent president would represent a political transformation without modern precedent in Kenya. Whether Wandayi genuinely believes this or was performing loyalty for an audience in Nairobi is a question only 2027 will answer.

The contrast with Siaya Governor James Orenge could not have been more deliberate or more stark. Orenge, a lawyer and long-standing constitutionalist who has spent decades defending democratic space in Kenya's courts and parliament, chose Raila's memorial to make the clear-

est statement yet of the Linda Mwananchi movement's founding argument. "Baba never traded principles for political expediency, and we must firmly reject any arrangements designed to silence the opposition, blur accountability, and compromise our hard-won democratic gains," he said. The phrase "silence the opposition" is not a casual construction. It is a direct characterisation of what Orenge and his allies believe ODM's accommodation with Ruto has achieved — and it carries with it an implicit accusation that those cheering for Ruto in Bondo are complicit in that silencing.

Embakasi East Member of Parliament Babu Owino, now among the more prominent faces of the Mwananchi Party, reached for the same legacy but drew a different lesson from it. "Baba taught us one thing: that leadership is not about power. Leadership is not about titles. It is not about the names that we have, but leadership is about the courage to defend justice and service delivery," he said. The emphasis on courage was not incidental. In the context of a party that critics say has chosen comfort over accountability, the invocation of courage reads as a

rebuttal, softened just enough by the reverence of the occasion.

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, who has made no secret of his presidential ambitions, used the occasion to speak simultaneously to the crowd in Bondo and to the wider national constituency he is beginning to cultivate. His promise was personal and pointed: "Even as we move forward to seek the Presidency, I want you to know that I will not forget you. I will also never forget what Baba taught us: that we must put the lives of our citizens first whenever we make decisions." In a single sentence, Sifuna

positioned himself as the legitimate heir to Raila's political tradition while signalling that the presidency is now an explicit goal rather than a distant aspiration.

He also took what amounted to a public swing at unnamed colleagues on the same platform. "Baba taught us that politics is about persuasion; politics is not about forcing people. You must engage people calmly and patiently. We have heard some of the leaders here whose work is to intimidate people. Their work is to force people," he said. The accusation of intimidation, delivered in Bondo, at a memorial, with the targets sitting nearby, was a reminder that Kenyan politics rarely observes the normal conventions of occasion.

With fourteen months until the August 2027 general election, the stakes of this internal fracture are considerable. The opposition's ability to mount a credible challenge to Ruto depends in large part on whether it can consolidate around a candidate and a message before the campaign season properly begins. A movement divided between those pledging Ruto a hundred per cent in Siaya and those vowing to restore genuine accountability cannot easily perform either function.

Raila spent his political life holding contradictions together through sheer force of personality and strategic ambiguity. The men and women gathered in Bondo yesterday are discovering, a year after his passing, just how much of their own cohesion depended on his presence to sustain it.



Award For Mutuku, the platform's integrated approach was precisely its appeal. "I liked being able to see my physical activity, nutrition and financial wellbeing in one place," she said

Kenyan lecturer wins 15-day Asian trip after topping Old Mutual wellbeing challenge

Wangari Mutuku beat 835 rivals not through luck but through consistent, measurable improvement in how she lives

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

When Wangari Mutuku downloaded the Old Mutual Thrive app, she was not chasing a prize. She wanted to keep better track of her health. Three weeks later, the 29-year-old lecturer had outperformed 835 other participants in a national wellbeing challenge and earned herself a fully sponsored 15-day trip across Thailand, Singapore, Bali and Malaysia.

Her win, announced in Nairobi yesterday, was the result of recording the greatest measurable improvement in overall wellbeing during the Old Mutual Thrive Your Way to Asia challenge, which ran from 1 to 23 August 2026. There was no lottery, no panel selection and no social media vote. The winner was determined purely by data — specifically, by who improved most across physical activity, sleep consistency, sedentary time and financial wellbeing engagement during the chal-

lenge period.

That distinction matters. In a country where competition prizes frequently go to the well-connected or the fortunate, Mutuku's win was earned through discipline and intentionality, one step and one decision at a time.

The challenge attracted 836 participants and was built around the Old Mutual Thrive platform, a digital wellbeing tool that allows users to monitor physical activity, nutrition and financial health in a single application, with smartwatch



Wangari Mutuku

connectivity for seamless tracking. Participants were encouraged to engage with the platform's Financial Wellbeing Assessment and Money Personality Quiz alongside their physical wellness targets — reflecting Old Mutual's positioning of health and financial security as interconnected rather than separate concerns. For Mutuku, the platform's integrated approach was precisely its appeal. "I liked being able to see my physical activity, nutrition and financial wellbeing in one place," she said. "Connecting my smartwatch made tracking my progress easier. The challenge made me more conscious of what I eat and how it affects my physical health. I've also started swimming alongside running."

Her enthusiasm for the coming trip is palpable. "I'm excited to explore new places and experience running and exercising in different climates," she added — a line that says something about the kind of person who wins a challenge like this. She is not planning to rest on arrival. She is planning to keep moving.

Janet Waiyaki, Head of Thrive and Ecosystem at Old Mutual, said Mutuku's achievement illustrated what the programme is designed to produce. "What excites us most is not the destination itself, but what it took to get there. Wangari made consistent, intentional improvements to her daily habits and wellbeing, and her achievement demonstrates what is

possible when people commit to positive change."

Waiyaki added that the challenge was built on a deliberate combination of behavioural science, technology and meaningful incentives — an acknowledgement that lasting habit change requires more than good intentions. It requires structures that make healthy choices easier to sustain and visible enough to motivate continued effort.

The travel prize itself is comprehensive. Mutuku's package covers return flights, accommodation, airport transfers, visa facilitation and full itinerary coordination across all four Asian destinations — a reward that, in both financial and experiential terms, reflects the seriousness of what she achieved.

The challenge was organised in partnership with Wavu Travels, for whom this marks the third international travel award facilitated through the collaboration with Old Mutual Thrive in 2026. Winnie Muthoga, Director of Wavu Travels, described travel as a fitting vehicle for recognising personal achievement. "Travel creates memories, broadens perspectives and inspires new possibilities. Through our partnership with Old Mutual Thrive, we are connecting the excitement of discovering new destinations with the personal achievement of improving one's wellbeing. We are delighted to celebrate Wangari's success and be part of a journey that recognises commitment, discipline and

growth."

The collective statistics from the challenge offer a striking picture of what 836 people committed to self-improvement can produce when given the right tools and motivation. Participants logged 70.7 million steps between them — approximately 53,000 kilometres, or roughly 1.3 times the circumference of the earth. They recorded 4,919 hours of exercise. Some 514 participants achieved 10,000 or more steps on at least one day, while 45 per cent averaged at least 150 minutes of exercise per week. Half of all participants averaged seven to nine hours of sleep per night — a figure that public health professionals would consider a meaningful outcome in its own right.

Old Mutual Thrive now counts more than 270,000 registered users in Kenya, a number that reflects growing appetite among Kenyans for digital tools that connect physical wellness with financial awareness. The platform continues to expand its challenge offerings, positioning itself as a space where behavioural change is not just encouraged but measured, rewarded and celebrated.

For Mutuku, the journey to Asia is the visible reward. The habits she built to get there are the ones that will outlast the trip.

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Jobs “You prepare like your entire life depends on those 20 minutes on Zoom,” he says. “Because in many ways, it does.”

Degrees in hand, jobs out of reach

For many Kenyan graduates, years of study and family sacrifice culminate in a degree, but securing employment remains a challenge.

BY Oduor Rosequillet Nabwire

@themkenyaintimes

A degree is supposed to open doors, yet for Brian Omondi, years after graduating, the career he hoped to build remains out of reach.

At 6:30 a.m. in Roysambu, Nairobi, he prepares for his first job interview in seven months. His laptop is ready, and his internet connection is stable.

“You prepare like your entire life depends on those 20 minutes on Zoom,” he says. “Because in many ways, it does.”

Brian graduated in November 2023 with a Bachelor of Commerce in Finance, attaining Second Class Honours, Upper Division. Nearly three years later, he is still searching for his first formal job. He estimates that he has submitted more than 400 applications through recruitment platforms, corporate email and in person at workplaces across Nairobi’s Industrial Area.

“Out of hundreds of applications, I have received only four automated rejection letters,” he says. “The rest just disappeared into dead silence.”

For Wanjiku ‘Shiku’ Njuguna, a 24-year-old graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication, the struggle has taken a different form. Although she has found work, her job as a temporary supermarket cashier in Westlands is unrelated to her communications background. She also takes on unpaid digital management assignments to maintain her portfolio.

“I spend my days scanning groceries and my nights writing social media strategies for small startups for free,” she says. “The search costs you everything: cybercafé prints,

bus fare for interviews that lead nowhere, internet bundles, and your peace of mind.”

Behind graduates like Brian and Shiku are families whose sacrifices were driven by the hope that a university education would lead to employment and, eventually, the ability to support the household. When those expectations go unmet, the strain extends beyond the graduate to the parents who invested in their future.

Grace Wanjiku, also known as Mama Kevin, is a 52-year-old small-scale farmer from Nakuru who sold part of her family’s land to help pay for her son’s university education.

“When a child goes to university, the whole village expects them to uplift the family,” Grace says. “When they return home without a job after graduation, people start whispering. As a parent, you feel heartbroken because you took out SACCO loans, and now you see your educated child struggling emotionally.”

For Brian, the emotional toll of unemployment has gradually changed his relationship with his parents.

“In the beginning, my parents called every week asking if I’d heard back from companies,” he says. “Now, the calls are quiet. They ask if I’ve eaten, not where I am working. You feel like a financial burden after they sacrificed so much. Your self-esteem erodes, and life feels paused while everyone around you moves on.”

Those family expectations are colliding with a labour market where most new jobs are created outside the modern sector.

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics’ Economic Survey 2025 reported that Kenya created 782,300 jobs

in 2024, of which 703,700 were in the informal sector and 78,600 in the modern sector. While these figures cover job creation across the economy rather than graduate employment specifically, they provide context for the challenges facing graduates seeking formal employment that draws on their training.

Dr Jacob Omolo, a senior lecturer in applied economics at Kenyatta University whose research focuses on labour and employment dynamics, attributes the challenge to a mismatch between graduates’ skills and the jobs the economy creates.

For Wanjiku ‘Shiku’ Njuguna, a 24-year-old graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication, the struggle has taken a different form. Although she has found work, her job as a temporary supermarket cashier in Westlands is unrelated to her communications background. She also takes on unpaid digital management assignments to maintain her portfolio.

“I spend my days scanning groceries and my nights writing social media strategies for small startups for free,” she says. “The search costs you everything: cybercafé prints, bus fare for interviews that lead nowhere, internet bundles, and your peace of mind.”



“We are facing a fundamental economic mismatch,” says Dr Omolo. “The issue is not that our youth are lazy; it is an economy growing without creating sufficient wage-earning roles with high absorptive capacity. As a result, degree holders are pushed into casual labor or micro enterprises completely outside their areas of training.”

Even when vacancies arise, recruitment requirements can create another hurdle. Some positions advertised as entry level require prior work experience, potentially disadvantaging graduates who have had few opportunities to acquire it.

Perminus Wainaina, chief executive officer and lead human resources consultant at Corporate Staffing Services in Nairobi, says employers assess how well candidates can translate academic knowledge into practical performance.

“When we evaluate entry-level applicants, we often see strong theoretical knowledge but a gap in practical execution, such as proficiency in industry tools, data software, or professional soft skills,” Wainaina explains. “Employers demand some years of experience even for junior roles because tight budgets prevent them from spending six months training a fresh graduate from scratch. They want plug-and-play staff.”

Internships can help graduates develop practical skills, but gaining experience does not necessarily secure a permanent job.

Peter Nchogu, a communication and public relations

graduate in Cohort 8 of the Public Service Internship Programme (PSIP), is approaching the end of his placement with that uncertainty in mind. Posted to a government ministry in Nairobi, he has gained experience in stakeholder management, institutional file tracking and daily media monitoring.

“I learned real stakeholder handling, institutional file tracking, and daily media monitoring. You quickly realize that in government communication, accuracy, speed, and discretion matter just as much as creativity,” Peter says.

With three months remaining before his placement ends, he is already considering what comes next.

“The biggest challenge is the lack of a clear absorption path. Once your 12 months end, you exit to make room for the next cohort, regardless of how dedicated you were. You leave with strong skills

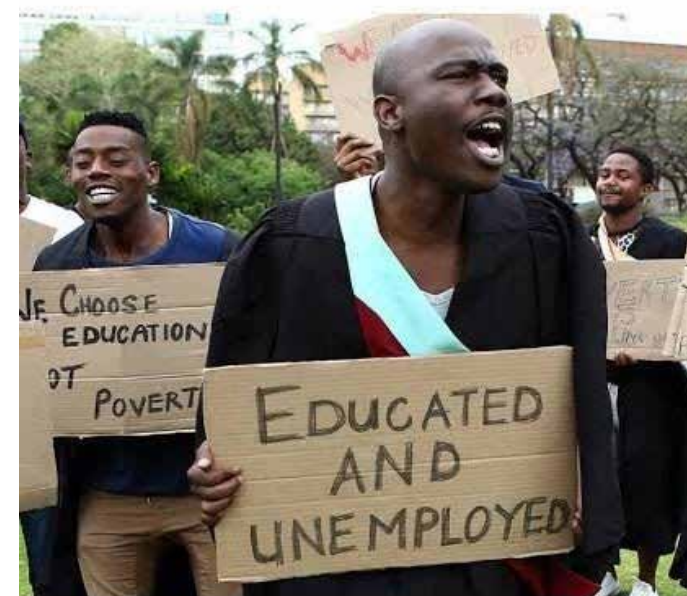
and networks, but you step right back into a hyper-competitive job market as soon as the stipend stops,” he says.

Peter’s experience points to the value of stronger university partnerships with employers and structured, paid internships that give graduates practical experience and a clearer route into the workforce.

For Brian, the wait continues beyond the interview room. His latest interview ends after 25 minutes. The panel thanks him and promises to communicate within two weeks.

He closes his laptop and returns to the notebook where he records his applications and interview outcomes.

“You cannot afford to give up,” Brian says. “My degree isn’t just a paper; it represents four years of hard work and my family’s sacrifices. I am qualified, I am capable, and I am ready. I just need one door to open.”



Fuel Fuel is not merely a commodity purchased by motorists. It is a foundational input into almost every productive activity in the economy

Kenya's fuel price crisis: How long can ordinary families survive the rising cost of living?

Every time international markets shudder, it is the Kenyan household with the thinnest margins that absorbs the hardest blow

BY Collins Kibet

@themkenyatiimes

Every time international markets shudder, it is the Kenyan household with the thinnest margins that absorbs the hardest blow

By Collins Kibet

Kenya is confronting another painful economic reality. Effective 15 October 2026, the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority raised the maximum retail prices of petrol, diesel and kerosene for the period ending 14 November. In Nairobi, a litre of super petrol now costs KSh 226.96, diesel KSh 227.76 and kerosene KSh 219.87 — increases of KSh 12.93, KSh 9.90 and KSh 28.49 respectively. These figures arrive at a moment when millions of households are already stretched across food, rent, transport, school fees and electricity bills. They are not abstract statistics on a regulatory schedule. They are another test of how much ordinary Kenyans can absorb before something gives.

The immediate explanation lies partly beyond Kenya's borders. EPRA attributes the increases to higher import costs, with the landed price of petrol rising 11.81 per cent between August and September 2026, diesel by 11.32 per cent and kerosene by 9.41 per cent. Ongoing conflict in the Middle East has added pressure to international petroleum markets and disrupted supply chains. Because Kenya imports all its refined petroleum requirements, it remains acutely exposed to

external price shocks. That context is real and relevant. But acknowledging global pressures cannot be allowed to end the domestic conversation. The more important question is whether Kenya has developed sufficient economic safeguards to prevent international crises from repeatedly becoming household emergencies for families with no financial cushion to speak of.

Fuel is not merely a commodity purchased by motorists. It is a foundational input into almost every productive activity in the economy. When diesel rises, transport operators face higher operating costs, manufacturers pay more to move goods, farmers spend more on machinery and distribution, and traders confront rising expenses throughout their supply chains. Businesses rarely absorb every additional cost indefinitely. Many transfer the burden to consumers through higher prices. A family that owns no vehicle still suffers when the cost of delivering vegetables, maize flour, cooking oil and other necessities increases. The fuel crisis therefore extends far beyond the petrol station, reaching markets, farms, workplaces and kitchen tables across the country.

For low-income families, the consequences are particularly severe. Essential expenditure already consumes most of what they earn. A salaried worker may now spend more on daily transport to the office. A casual labourer could find that higher commuting costs eat direct-

ly into money set aside for food. Parents may be forced to cut household purchases, delay medical appointments or reconsider school-related expenses. In rural communities, where transport connects families to markets, hospitals and schools, rising fuel costs make basic services simultaneously more expensive and less accessible. When income stays flat but the cost of survival rises, families are quietly pushed into a lower standard of living without any formal reduction in their wages — and without any formal acknowledgement that this has happened to them.

Kerosene demands particular attention because its increase dwarfs those of petrol and diesel. A jump of KSh 28.49 per litre places immediate pressure on households that depend on it for cooking or lighting — households that typically cannot afford reliable electricity or cleaner cooking alternatives. For these families, this is not a matter of adjusting discretionary spending. It concerns the affordability of daily necessities. A responsible energy policy must recognise that fuel price increases do not land equally. Those with higher incomes may absorb the additional cost with some discomfort. Poorer households often have no alternatives and no savings to buffer them against sudden economic shocks.

The government and energy regulators face a genuinely difficult balancing act. Kenya must maintain reliable fuel supplies, meet legitimate importation costs and give

suppliers a workable regulatory framework within which to operate. EPRA's maximum-price mechanism provides a measure of consumer protection by capping what petrol stations may charge. But price regulation alone cannot eliminate the underlying cost of imported petroleum. What the government must do, and has consistently failed to do with sufficient clarity, is explain in plain terms what relief measures exist, how they are financed and whether they reach the people who need them most. Fiscal support must be transparent, targeted and sustainable — not presented as a structural solution to a problem that keeps returning.

Taxation must remain part of the conversation. The October pricing schedule incorporates an eight per cent value-added tax on petroleum products. Taxation funds public services and infrastructure, and that function matters. But policymakers must continuously assess how the combined burden of taxes, levies and import costs affects households and businesses operating at the margins. Any proposal to reduce fuel taxes must be weighed honestly against its effect on public finances. Any decision to retain them must be accompanied by a credible account of how the revenue serves the public interest. Kenyans deserve a tax framework that raises necessary revenue without systematically undermining employment, enterprise and household wel-

fare at the same time.

More fundamentally, Kenya must stop repeatedly reacting to fuel price increases and begin building genuine long-term energy resilience. Investment in dependable public transport, efficient rail freight, renewable electricity, affordable clean cooking alternatives and energy-efficient industries can progressively reduce dependence on petroleum. Agricultural production and food distribution systems must also become more efficient, so that higher transport costs do not translate mechanically into disproportionate price increases for consumers. These structural changes require sustained planning, credible financing and effective implementation. They cannot reverse the latest increase overnight. But they can substantially reduce the vulnerability of households and businesses to the next international disruption — and the one after that.

The government must also take the cost-of-living conversation seriously as a question of economic opportunity, not merely energy management. Stable fuel prices alone will not resolve Kenya's underlying difficulties if wages remain inadequate, youth unemployment persists and small businesses cannot access affordable credit. Economic progress should be measured not only through national growth figures or infrastructure announcements, but through the ability of ordinary citizens to afford food,

secure housing, educate their children and set something aside for emergencies. A government cannot credibly celebrate economic transformation while a growing number of its people are quietly choosing between one essential need and another.

How long can Kenyan families keep absorbing higher costs without corresponding improvements in income? How many small businesses can sustain operations as transport and distribution expenses climb? How long should citizens wait for an economic environment where diligence carries a reasonable prospect of financial security?

These questions demand more than political assurances. They require practical answers, measurable commitments and accountability that extends beyond press statements. The real test of Kenya's economic leadership is not whether it can explain why fuel has become expensive. It is whether it can protect its people, build a more resilient economy and ensure that the burden of every international shock does not fall, as it persistently does, on those least equipped to carry it.



Degrees For too long, vocational training has carried an undeserved stigma in Kenya — treated as the consolation prize for those who did not make it to universi

Beyond university degrees: Why Kenyan youth must embrace practical skills

A certificate opens doors, but it is skill, creativity and adaptability that determine what happens once you walk through them

BY Victorine Nekesa
@themtkenyentimes

Every year, thousands of Kenyan families pour their savings into school fees, uniforms and examination preparation, driven by a deeply held conviction that education is

the surest path to a better life. That conviction is not wrong. But it is incomplete — and the gap between a university degree and a sustainable livelihood is widening in ways that Kenya can no longer afford to ignore. The question is no longer whether young people should

pursue education. They should. The question is what kind of education, and whether academic qualifications alone are sufficient preparation for a world that increasingly rewards what you can do over what you have studied. Kenya's employment land-



scape has shifted dramatically. Graduate unemployment is not a new phenomenon, but its scale is now impossible to dismiss. Universities continue producing thousands of graduates annually into a job market that cannot absorb them at the pace required. Meanwhile, genuine gaps exist in the economy — in construction, technology, creative production, digital services and skilled trades — that go unfilled because the training pipeline has not kept pace with demand.

On 15 October 2026, the government renewed its call for young people to embrace Technical and Vocational Education and Training, framing practical skills as central to self-reliance and economic growth. The initiative seeks to connect youth with accessible training and certification pathways. It is a step in the right direction, but the cultural shift it requires runs deeper than any government programme alone can achieve.

For too long, vocational training has carried an undeserved stigma in Kenya — treated as the consolation prize for those who did not make it to university. That perception is both inaccurate and costly. A trained electrician, a skilled graphic designer, a competent mechanic or a professional hairdresser with business acumen can build a livelihood that rivals and often exceeds what a degree alone delivers. Professionalism, discipline and continuous learning are what separate a struggling technician from a thriving one — not the institution where they trained.

The creative and digital in-

dustries deserve particular attention. Young people who can write compelling content, design visual media, edit video, photograph events or manage social media platforms are sitting on genuine income-generating potential. With reliable internet access and the right tools, these skills can reach clients well beyond the immediate community. A freelance designer in Nakuru can serve a client in Nairobi, Mombasa or abroad. Geography is no longer the constraint it once was.

Practical skills and academic education are not in competition. They work best together. A communication student who supplements their journalism training with photography, video production and digital content creation is not diluting their degree — they are multiplying its value. Universities and colleges must recognise this and respond accordingly, strengthening practical training, expanding internship partnerships and creating structured opportunities for students to build real portfolios before graduation. A transcript tells an employer what a graduate studied. A portfolio shows what they can actually deliver.

The private sector and community organisations also carry responsibility here. Vocational training must be affordable, geographically accessible and aligned with what employers genuinely need. Young people who have acquired skills informally — through apprenticeships, self-teaching or community learning — deserve clear pathways to formal certi-

cation. Their competence should not be invisible simply because it was gained outside a classroom.

Individual attitude matters equally. Acquiring a skill is the beginning, not the destination. Financial literacy, customer service, communication and basic business planning are the difference between a talented individual and a sustainable enterprise. Young Kenyans who combine a marketable skill with the ability to manage money, retain clients and plan for growth are not just employable — they are capable of employing others. None of this removes the need for broader structural change. Training alone cannot solve youth unemployment. Kenya needs a business environment that supports emerging entrepreneurs, expands access to affordable financing and removes bureaucratic barriers that prevent small enterprises from scaling. Individual effort and structural support must move together.

The goal was never simply to produce graduates. It was always to prepare young people who can identify problems, build solutions and contribute meaningfully to national development. A degree remains a valuable foundation. But practical ability, creative thinking and the willingness to adapt are what determine whether that foundation becomes something lasting.

For Kenya's young generation, the future belongs not to those who waited for opportunity, but to those who built it.



The only true love



By Janet Ansasira
Your love still pursues.
No guarantee, only hope,
Every scripture is seated on love.
Your love, unsearchable.
I understand now.
We said, We will sin again, and again, and again.
You said, My love goes beyond that.
We said, We will turn our backs.
You said, Return to Me. There is better.
I will not let you die in sin.
You knew everything.
You knew we would wander,
that we would go with the one who does not love
us
and choose 'that' over You.
That did not stop You.
Some said, We will not follow the design.
We will not reproduce.
You said, I will wait.
They said, We will end it.
You said, I will still love you.
It hurt You. I cannot imagine.....
The heartbreak, of the love unreturned
By the very ones You loved.
A love, a life surrendered, in pain
for the blood that bought us
You loved us with your all.

Some gave their own children to Baal.
You said, My love goes further than this.
Your descendants, I will still save.
The Seven thousand that never bowed.
That was never a threat.
It was love, kept in reserve
for a people You made.
Some willingly opened doors to evil spirits
You said, No. I will wait.
My design will not fail.
What kind of love
waits for one who still chases unrighteousness?
What kind of love waits for a child,
sinful from birth,
and hopes they will see the truth?
What kind of love forgives the parents
and saves the child?
What ingredients did You use?
Patient. Kind. Enduring.
A love that sees the sin and waits anyway,
with every reason to give up but still hopes
anyway.
You gave us free will, I know
But I choose to give mine back to you daily.
Choose for me.
Take control of my life.
You can have all of it, Jesus.
I love You because You loved me first.
Even if everyone else fails,
I will still love You.
Help me love like you. I want that love!
And when I finally see You,
I will have only one question:
Why did You love me?
Nothing can separate us from that kind of love,
the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus.



If my pencil could talk



If my pencil could talk, it would tell my childhood
story.
It would remember the day I first held it.
It would remember when I first learned to draw.

I drew small houses, trees, flowers, and the sun.
My first drawings were simple, but they made me
happy.
My pencil stayed with me as I learned and grew.
It kept my little memories safe on every page.
It would whisper, "I remember the child you were."

D.Dhanyasri
Grade 8
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The right place to bloom



Effort matters, each step we take,
Each dream we nurture, each chance we make,
But even the seed, with the strength to grow,
Needs the right soil for its roots to flow.

The sun has its hour, the flowers their spring,
Each heart its season, each soul its wing, Not
every garden can nourish each seed,
Nor every hand understand its need.

Pour not your waters on barren ground,
Where echoes of effort return without sound
Place your passion where purpose is sown,
Where your worth is cherished, your efforts
known.

For labour misplaced may wither in vain,
Like precious rain on a desert plain,
Yet the smallest seed, in the right place cast,
Can rise into splendour, rooted to last.

So strive with wisdom, let discernment lead,
Choose the right soil for each precious seed
For effort is power, but placement is art,
The right place makes bloom what grows in the
heart.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator,Writer,Motivator

The magic within the pages



Some pages in books transform our views,
Change the paths we choose,
Heal the emotions deep within,
And plant our thoughts with roots that cling.
They change our perspective on life,
Bring joy like flowers into our hearts,
And let happiness flow through every vein.
An angel waves its wand of magic
As we journey through the pages;
Empty minds fill with knowledge,
And we learn to fly without wings,
Rising beyond the clouds
To touch the endless sky.

Viji. T.
Cw writer,
Teacher
Namakkal
Tamilnadu
India

Connected without attachment



When I was in my teens,
I was attached to everything on earth,
To people, places, things and dreams,
I gave them all their precious worth.

As years rolled by, life taught me
A lesson I was slow to see,
Nothing I own, no one I love,
Can leave this world along with me.

The earth will spin, the sun will rise,
The world will move beneath the skies.
The people I love will carry on,
Even when I am here no more.

So now I love, but don't possess,
I am connected but not attached.
I laugh, I love, I care, I share,
But I no longer cling or despair.

M.Raddhika
Freelance content writer
Sivakasi Tamil Nadu India

Politics The National Muslim Leaders Forum, convened under SUPKEM and attended by scholars and community leaders drawn from all 47 counties

Muslim leaders back Ruto, launch policy unit after Nairobi forum

SUPKEM delegates from all 47 counties endorse structured engagement with government and establish a permanent liaison directorate

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyentimes

The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims yesterday concluded a landmark national forum in Nairobi, issuing a communiqué that signals a decisive shift in how the country’s Muslim leadership intends to engage with the state — moving from historical grievance and adversarial posturing toward structured institutional partnership with both the executive and legislature.

The National Muslim Leaders Forum, convened under SUPKEM and attended by scholars and community leaders drawn from all 47 counties, heard addresses from senior government officials and ended with the launch of a new permanent policy unit designed to embed Muslim



SUPKEM National Chairman Al-Hajji Hassan Ole Naado

institutional interests within the machinery of national governance.

In a communiqué signed by SUPKEM National Chairman Al-Hajji Hassan Ole Naado, delegates acknowledged what they described as deliberate and high-level engagement from the state. President William Ruto’s address was delivered by Cabinet Secretary

Aden Duale, while Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi was represented by Professor AbdulRazak Shaukat, who spoke on systemic collaboration between Muslim institutions and government. Hassan Omar, Secretary General of the UDA Party and an East Africa Legislative Assembly MP, and Eldas MP Adan Keynan both addressed the forum, emphasising the integration of Muslim leadership into national socio-economic structures.

The forum’s most substantive intellectual contribution came from David Ndi, chairperson of the President’s Council of Economic Advisors, who presented a structural analysis of post-colonial African governance — specifically the enduring tension between political consolidation and economic development as competing first priorities. Delegates said his framework

provided critical context for situating the Muslim community’s developmental agenda within the broader national trajectory.

Charles Hinga Mwaura, Principal Secretary, outlined the government’s Affordable Housing Programme, walking delegates through the mechanics of community participation and home-ownership pathways. Representatives from the Social Health Authority, the Vision 2030 Delivery Secretariat, and the National Authority on the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse also addressed the forum, briefing delegates on their respective mandates and outreach programmes.

The centrepiece resolution of the gathering was the formal launch of the Ummatic Policy Liaison Directorate, a permanent administrative unit lodged within SUPKEM’s Strategic Networking Pillar. The directorate will maintain standing interfaces with government line ministries, the Vision 2030 Delivery Secretariat, and the National Treasury. It will audit policy compliance, produce data-driven briefs for Muslim legislators and civil servants, and manage relationships with international bilateral donors willing to fund community development programmes. Unlike reactive crisis management structures, the directorate is designed for continuous, technical engagement with the state.

The communiqué also resolved to build institutional capacity among Muslim professionals and youth, and to establish community-led mechanisms that align the Muslim community’s developmental priorities with national economic frameworks. The delegates declared that the responsibility for safeguarding Muslim interests could no longer be left solely to external actors, and that the community must anchor its own voice within Kenya’s governance and economic architecture.

Ole Naado, in signing the communiqué, framed the shift in unambiguous terms: having witnessed concrete government commitments, the Muslim community would reciprocate in equal measure — meeting what the communiqué described as a stretched hand of friendship with its own.

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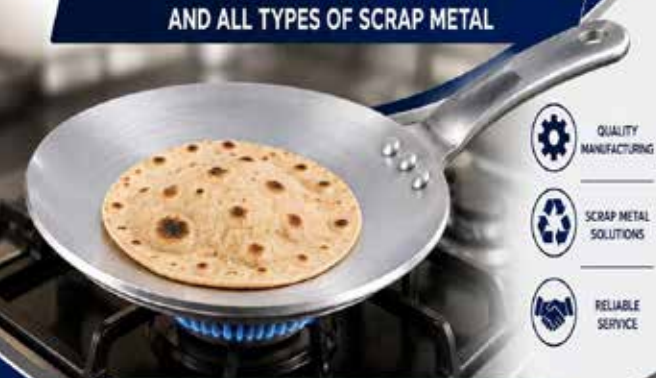
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Women farmers These challenges threaten not only women's livelihoods but also the resilience of communities that depend on agriculture for food and income

Women farmers at risk of being left behind as global food crisis deepens, report warns

BY Elizabeth Angira

@themkenyaintimes

Women farmers in low-income countries risk falling further behind men as climate change, rising agricultural input costs and disruptions to global food systems threaten their livelihoods, a new report warns.

The report, *Advancing Equality, Transforming Futures: A Path to Resilient and Productive Food, Land and Water Systems in 2050*, calls on governments, donors, researchers and development partners to address gender inequalities and ensure women have equal opportunities to benefit from changes in agriculture.

Released by the CGIAR GENDER Accelerator, the report highlights how overlapping crises, including rising fuel and fertiliser costs, extreme weather events and trade disruptions, are placing additional pressure on farmers, with women often bearing a disproportionate share of the burden.

Women play a central role in food production, household food security and the management of natural resources. However, many continue to face barriers to land ownership, access to finance, agricultural training, modern technologies and markets.

These challenges threaten not only women's livelihoods but also the resilience of communities that depend on agriculture for food and income.

Yet, some farmers are finding practical ways to respond to these challenges by investing in irrigation, renewable energy and the preservation of agricultural produce.

In Kenya, vegetable farmer Joyce Kwamboka is among those working to maintain production despite unpredictable weather patterns and the challenges associated with growing perishable crops.

Kwamboka grows nutrient-rich indigenous vegetables, including spider flower,



Joyce Kwamboka on her garden where she has planted indigenous vegetables | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

commonly known as saga; black nightshade, known as managu; amaranthus, or emboga; pumpkin; African spinach, commonly known as enderema; and cowpeas.

These vegetables provide important nutrients for households while offering farmers an opportunity to earn income from local markets. However, their production and marketing can be affected by changing weather conditions, pests and the short period within which fresh vegetables must be sold or consumed.

Kwamboka says she occasionally incurs losses from pests, which she manages by applying ash as a natural deterrent. Hailstones also pose a challenge because they can damage her crops.

Unpredictable weather patterns have further affected her ability to supply vegetables to the market consistently.

To address the challenge, she invested in irrigation pumps to ensure she could continue producing vegetables even when rainfall was unreliable.

"Since I have solar, I can pump water and irrigate my vegetables," she says.

Her experience illustrates how access to appropriate technology and renewable energy can help farmers adapt to changing weather conditions and maintain a more reliable supply of food.

However, producing vegetables consistently is only part

of the challenge. For farmers and traders dealing in perishable produce, the ability to preserve what they harvest can determine whether they make a profit or suffer losses.

Solar Energy Offers a Solution to Post-Harvest Losses

For many vegetable farmers, harvesting a good crop does not always translate into good earnings. When markets are oversupplied or customers are unavailable, fresh vegetables can spoil before they are sold.

Without adequate storage and preservation facilities, farmers and traders may be forced to sell their produce at low prices to avoid losing it altogether.

One farmer decided to invest in preservation and packaging to extend the shelf life of vegetable produce, reduce wastage and explore wider markets.

"I knew I had to find ways to reduce my post-harvest losses and value addition was the way to go," the farmer says.

The investment was intended to reduce wastage while creating opportunities to reach more customers within the county, across Kenya and potentially in international markets.

In 2019, the farmer installed a solar power system incorporating a solar-powered drier to support the value-addition process.

"I installed a solar power system, incorporating a solar-powered drier, in 2019 to power my value addition processes," the farmer explains.

Beyond drying and packaging vegetables, the solar system has helped reduce energy costs associated with poultry and dairy farming activities.

The experience demonstrates how renewable energy can serve several purposes on a farm, supporting food preservation while helping farmers manage operating costs.

Value addition also offers an opportunity to move beyond selling vegetables only in their fresh form. Proper drying, packaging and storage can help extend shelf life, reduce waste and make products easier to transport to customers farther away.

For small-scale farmers,

however, the benefits depend on access to affordable equipment, suitable packaging, reliable markets and the skills needed to preserve produce safely.

Vegetable Vendors Seek Better Returns

The benefits of preserving vegetables are also being felt by traders who have traditionally depended on selling fresh produce before it spoils.

Lydia Nyaboke, a vegetable vendor, recalls how fear of losing her stock forced her to sell vegetables at very low prices.

When produce remained unsold, she risked losing the money she had invested in buying it. This left her with limited bargaining power and reduced the profits she could

take home.

However, since installing a solar system, Nyaboke has been able to preserve and package her produce without worrying as much about how quickly she must sell it.

"I am now happy because I can make a good profit," she says.

Nyaboke is encouraging other vegetable vendors to consider value addition as a way of reducing wastage and improving their income.

Her experience highlights an important part of the food system that is often overlooked: the people who sell fresh produce also need affordable preservation technologies and reliable access to markets.

When vegetables can be preserved for longer, vendors may have more flexibility in deciding when and where to sell them. This can reduce the pressure to accept very low prices simply because produce is about to spoil.

Nevertheless, solar drying and other preservation methods require appropriate equip-




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Women farmers These challenges threaten not only women’s livelihoods but also the resilience of communities that depend on agriculture for food and income

Women farmers at risk of being left behind as global food crisis deepens, report warns

Contd from page 16

ment, hygienic handling and proper storage to maintain food safety and quality.

Climate Change Puts Additional Pressure on Women

The experiences of farmers and vegetable traders reflect some of the wider challenges highlighted in the CGIAR GENDER Accelerator report. Climate change is emerging as a major threat to agricultural productivity, particularly for rural households that depend on rainfall for farming. Changing rainfall patterns, prolonged dry spells, extreme weather and declining water availability can affect crop yields, increase production costs and threaten household food supplies.

The report warns that climate change could increase the amount of time women spend collecting water by 30 per cent as water becomes less available. This burden can leave women with less time for farming, income-generating activities, training and other opportunities that could improve their livelihoods. Women may also face additional challenges arising from unequal access to land, credit, agricultural extension services and modern equipment. These barriers can make it harder for them to invest in irrigation systems, renewable energy and post-harvest technologies.

Addressing these inequalities requires more than encouraging individual farmers to adopt new practices. It also requires supportive policies, affordable financing, appropriate infrastructure and agricultural programmes that recognise the different needs of women and men.

Women may also face additional challenges arising from unequal access to land, credit, agricultural extension services and modern equipment. These barriers can make it harder for them to invest in irrigation systems, renewable energy and post-harvest technologies.

Addressing these inequalities requires more than encouraging individual farmers to adopt new practices. It also requires supportive policies, affordable financing, appropriate infrastructure and agricultural programmes that recognise the different needs of women and men.

Closing the Gender Gap in Agriculture

The report argues that improving women’s access to



Jenepher Wanjala poses with the Sunflower solar irrigation pump outside of Kitale, Kenya, while the farm owner, Carol Sikuku, looks on from the background. | Photo: Jeffery M Walcott / IWMI

agricultural resources requires broader institutional and social changes rather than isolated interventions. It calls for legal and institutional reforms, safer working environments, improved infrastructure, social protection and better agricultural data.

It also recommends combining technical training with measures that challenge social norms that leave women responsible for a disproportionate share of unpaid care work.

Such responsibilities can limit the time women have available for farming, participation in farmer organisations, training and engagement in markets.

The report further identifies opportunities for rural women to move into higher-quality jobs beyond primary production, including food processing, retail and logistics as food systems evolve towards 2050.

However, this transition is

unlikely to benefit everyone equally without deliberate efforts to improve women’s access to skills, decent work and economic opportunities.

For farmers such as Kwamboka and traders such as Nyaboke, support for irrigation, renewable energy and value addition could help strengthen livelihoods while reducing some of the risks associated with weather uncertainty and perishable produce.



Lydia Nyaboke vegetable vendor displays her vegetables at Daraja Mbili market | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

Digital Technology Offers Opportunities, but Access Remains Unequal

Digital technologies are increasingly being used to provide farmers with weather forecasts, climate information, agricultural advice and market updates.

However, women risk missing out on these benefits because of persistent inequalities in access to digital devices, internet connectivity, skills and relevant information.

The report cites research indicating that women in Kenya are up to 25 per cent less likely than men to access digital climate advisory services because of structural gender barriers.

This gap matters as farmers increasingly need timely information to make decisions about planting, irrigation, pest management and harvesting in changing weather conditions.

Access to reliable digital information could help women farmers plan their activities, anticipate weather-related risks and make better-informed decisions about when to plant or take produce to market.

The report urges technology developers to involve women in designing emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence applications, before scaling them up.

It also recommends complementary training and support to ensure women can use these technologies effectively.

For these interventions to make a difference, women farmers must be treated not simply as recipients of agricultural information but as active participants in developing and shaping the technologies they use.

Investing in Women Is Key to Resilient Food Systems

CGIAR Executive Managing Director Ismahane Elouafi said decisions made in the coming years would determine whether food, land and

water systems become more equitable and resilient or deepen existing inequalities.

“We cannot feed our future without including women in our food systems,” Elouafi said, describing the report as a guide to achieving that goal by 2050.

Nicoline de Haan, Director of the CGIAR GENDER Accelerator, said meaningful progress would require structural changes rather than isolated interventions.

She emphasised that women should be recognised not only as agricultural workers but also as leaders and decision-makers in food, land and water systems.

The report was released on the International Day of Rural Women, in recognition of the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

As countries work towards more productive and climate-resilient food systems by 2050, the report calls for coordinated action by governments, donors, development organisations, researchers and private companies.

The experiences of farmers and vegetable traders show that practical solutions, including solar-powered irrigation and produce preservation, can help address some of the challenges affecting agricultural livelihoods.

But scaling up these approaches will require more than individual investment. Women farmers need affordable financing, access to appropriate technologies, agricultural training, reliable markets and a stronger voice in decisions affecting their work.

Ensuring that women can access these opportunities will be critical to building food systems that are productive, inclusive and resilient to future shocks.

The report’s central message is clear: the transformation of global food systems cannot be complete if women continue to face unequal access to the resources, technologies and opportunities they need to thrive.

State This is no abstract market failure. It is a living architecture of advantage. Consider the sugar sector, that long-suffering theatre of national aspiration and fiscal haemorrhage

How Kenya's state-owned giants feast on preferential privilege while competition starves



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

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In the financial year ending June 2024, the Kenyan taxpayer poured the equivalent of six to seven percent of the nation's entire GDP some 1.199 trillion shillings into underperforming state-owned enterprises. That is not investment. That is transfusion. And the patient remains anaemic. Over two hundred of these entities, one of the largest such portfolios among emerging economies, continue to operate across energy, agriculture, transport and beyond, insulated by debt write-offs, soft financing, procurement preferences and regulatory forbearance that private firms can only dream of. Kenya ranks third-worst globally for market distortions induced by public ownership trailing only Mexico and Türkiye. The average labour productivity of these SOEs sits 72 percent lower than that of comparable firms with minority state stakes. The diagnosis is clinical: preferential treatment has become the disease that masquerades as public purpose.

This is no abstract market failure. It is a living architecture of advantage. Consider the sugar sector, that long-suffering theatre of national aspiration and fiscal haemorrhage. State-owned mills command roughly 15 percent of the market yet remain chronic loss-makers. In 2023 the government wrote off 117 billion shillings in their debts on top of a 62-billion-shilling erasure in 2020. Grants followed: 150 million to Mumias farmers, 166 million non-reimbursable to Muhoroni. Private millers, operating without such oxygen, must compete against entities that can run losses indefinitely, pay suppliers more, and still survive. The result is not merely inefficiency; it is the systematic crowding-out of more productive capital. Doubling SOE market share correlates, across economies, with 5–30 percent less



firm entry and 30 percent higher concentration. Kenya's sugar fields are merely the most visible scar.

History supplies the deeper pathology. Post-independence Kenya inherited and expanded a developmentalist faith in the state as entrepreneur. The 1960s and 1970s saw nationalization and the creation of parastatals as instruments of Africanization and industrialization. Under Moi the portfolio metastasized into patronage networks; under subsequent administrations the rhetoric of reform never quite matched the reality of soft budgets. The State Corporations Act and its successors provided the legal scaffolding, while procurement rules and sectoral regulators quietly tilted the table. What began as nation-building calcified into a protected caste of commercial entities that answer neither to the discipline of the market nor, fully, to the scrutiny of the citizen. The irony is bitter: the same republic that celebrates private enterprise in its Vision documents simultaneously subsidises its most inefficient competitors with public blood.

The distortions cascade. In energy, Kenya Power and KenGen benefit from policy protections that blunt genuine competitive pressure, contributing to elevated electricity costs

that tax every factory and household. In aviation, Kenya Airways has become the archetypal serial recipient of rescue: the latest cabinet approval of roughly 45 billion shillings in new shareholder financing, layered atop the conversion of 122 billion in existing government loans, is merely the newest chapter in a decade-long saga of taxpayer underwriting. Commercial SOEs as a group recorded aggregate net losses even as private firms in the same spaces fight for survival without such cushions. The private competitor is forced to price for profit while the state entity prices for political convenience. Suppliers may temporarily rejoice at higher offers; customers may briefly enjoy lower tariffs; the long-term cost is a thinner private sector, fewer jobs of quality, and a fiscal hole that future generations must fill.

Private law is not powerless, yet it has been largely sidelined. Competition law applies, in principle, to state-owned entities. The Competition Authority of Kenya possesses the statutory tools to investigate abuse of dominance, restrictive practices and the competitive effects of state support. In practice, enforcement against the state's own commercial arms remains tentative. Preferential treatment whether through be-

low-market financing, debt forgiveness, or regulatory exemptions rarely faces rigorous private challenge. Contractors and competitors who suffer exclusion or margin squeeze confront the practical asymmetry of litigating against an opponent that can draw on the consolidated fund. The result is a chilling of private initiative: why invest in efficient capacity when the state can always outbid you with other people's money?

The intellectual failure is as grave as the fiscal one. Competitive neutrality is not an ideological luxury; it is the precondition for productivity growth. When SOEs can survive without matching private efficiency, the entire economy's resource allocation is warped. Capital that could fund new factories, logistics networks or digital services is instead recycled into the soft-budget continuum of the parastatal. The correlation is not mysterious: jurisdictions that impose hard budget constraints and genuine competitive neutrality on their state entities tend to record higher private investment rates and faster formal-sector job creation. Kenya's continued tolerance of the opposite pattern is a choice, not a fate.

The remedy requires categorical action from multiple actors. Parliament

must legislate a hard competitive neutrality principle into the heart of the SOE framework requiring transparent costing of public service obligations, full commercial pricing of residual activities, and the phase-out of soft financing. The National Treasury must cease the annual transfusion and publish, in real time, the full fiscal cost of every bailout, write-off and guarantee. The Competition Authority must treat state preferential treatment as a core enforcement priority, opening market studies into sugar, energy and transport with the same vigour applied to private cartels, and recommending structural remedies where necessary. Sector regulators must dismantle the residual protections that allow SOEs to act as both player and referee. The judiciary, when private litigants finally bring challenges under competition or administrative law, must refuse to grant the state commercial arm any presumptive deference. Private associations and chambers of commerce must abandon polite lobbying and litigate strategically, documenting the concrete harm of distorted competition. Citizens must demand that every shilling diverted to keep inefficient giants afloat be weighed against classrooms not built, roads not maintained, and hospitals under-equipped.

There is no romanticism in this diagnosis. State ownership can serve legitimate public purposes where genuine market failures exist. But the current portfolio is not a carefully calibrated instrument of public good; it is a sprawling empire of privilege that distorts prices, crowds out private capital, and transfers risk from poorly governed entities onto the shoulders of ordinary Kenyans. The preferential treatment is not neutral policy. It is a quiet transfer of wealth from the productive and the patient to the protected and the persistent. Until the iron curtain of privilege is lifted, Kenya's markets will remain half-free, its private sector half-starved, and its developmental ambitions half-realised. The data are no longer ambiguous. The history is no longer obscure. The only remaining question is whether those charged with stewardship will continue to feed the sacred inefficiencies or finally starve them of the preferential oxygen that keeps them breathing at the expense of the republic.

The writer is a social commentator

Exams Examination malpractice corrodes that assumption quietly and persistently. It does not announce itself. It works in the shadows

Cheating our children: The quiet crisis threatening Kenya’s KCSE

When exam malpractice goes unchecked, it is the honest student who pays the heaviest price

BY Ashford Kimani
@themkenyentimes

When exam malpractice goes unchecked, it is the honest student who pays the heaviest price

By Ashford Kimani
The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education is more than a piece of paper. For the student who spent years bent over textbooks, skipping sleep before revision, and sitting nervously through paper after paper, it represents something deeply personal — proof that the effort was worth it. For parents, it is the fulfilment of a dream often built on real sacrifice. For universities, colleges and employers, it is a tool for making consequential decisions about people’s futures.

All of that rests on one fragile but essential assumption: that the grades on that certificate actually mean something. Examination malpractice corrodes that assumption quietly and persistently. It does not announce itself. It works in the shadows — through leaked papers, impersonation, collusion, prohibited materials smuggled into examination rooms, and, most troublingly, through the involvement of the very people entrusted to protect the process. When a teacher facilitates cheating, when an invigilator looks away, when a school administrator suppresses what they know, the integrity of the entire system takes a blow that honest candidates did not deserve and cannot escape. The injustice at the heart of this problem is straightforward. A student who studied diligently, attended every lesson, completed every assignment and walked into the examination room prepared deserves to have that effort reflected in their result. When another candidate obtains a higher grade through



dishonest means, the honest student’s achievement is not just overshadowed — it is devalued. The playing field, already uneven in a country of stark educational inequality, becomes even more skewed. What makes this particularly damaging is the message it sends to young people. If students come to believe that connections, access to leaked materials or improper assistance matter more than genuine ability, the motivation to study becomes harder to sustain. That perception — once it takes root — is extraordinarily difficult to uproot. Malpractice takes many forms. Unauthorised access to examination materials remains the most headline-grabbing, but impersonation and collusion are equally corrosive. Each compromises the reliability of results in ways that ripple well beyond the examination room. Universities making admissions decisions and employers assessing candidates rely on the assumption that a grade reflects competence. Where that assumption cannot be safely made, the qualification loses its utility — and with it, its credibility. The Kenya National Examinations Council carries the primary institutional respon-

sibility for securing the examination process, from the printing and distribution of papers to the conduct of invigilation and the handling of results. That responsibility demands not only robust security procedures but also swift, transparent and impartial investigation whenever allegations arise. Rumours of leaks — even unsubstantiated ones — can erode public confidence before any finding is made. How KNEC communicates in those moments matters enormously. Schools, too, have a responsibility that goes beyond examination day. Principals and teachers who chase impressive results at the expense of genuine learning are not serving their students — they are setting them up for a qualification that may not hold up when it counts. Internal accountability must be real, not performative. Where misconduct is established, appropriate consequences must follow, whether disciplinary or legal. Yet fairness demands equal care in the other direction. Not every candidate linked to an irregularity is guilty. Not every disputed result is fraudulent. Investigations must be evidence-led and impartial. Students at schools where

irregularities are suspected should not be punished simply by association. The process must protect the innocent as firmly as it pursues the culpable.

Prevention, in the long run, is the more durable solution. Teaching examination ethics should be treated as seriously as teaching examination technique. Schools should support students who struggle academically rather than abandon them to the temptation of shortcuts. Parents have a role too — encouraging honest effort rather than applying pressure for exceptional grades by any means necessary. There is also a broader cultural shift required. A school should not be judged solely by the percentage of its students who score straight As. Teaching quality, learner development, ethical leadership and students’ capacity to apply what they have learned are equally legitimate measures of a school’s success. The obsession with grade

performance, divorced from genuine learning, creates exactly the conditions in which malpractice flourishes. A KCSE certificate should mean something. It should mean that its holder studied, learned, was tested fairly and passed on merit. That is what gives the qualification its value — not the official stamp, not the grade printed on it, but the integrity of the process that produced it. Kenya has thousands of students who earn that certificate honestly every year. They deserve a system that protects what they have worked for. Anything less is a failure not just of examination administration, but of the basic promise that education makes to young people. When integrity becomes as important as performance, the KCSE certificate can continue to serve as a trusted measure of achievement and a credible foundation for Kenya’s educational and professional future. *Ashford Kimani is a teacher of English and Literature and writes on education and youth affairs*

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Health There is a second mechanism at work. Psychologists describe the burden of unresolved thought as cognitive load.

The power of speaking out in mental health

Science confirms what the heart already knows: silence does not protect us — it imprisons us



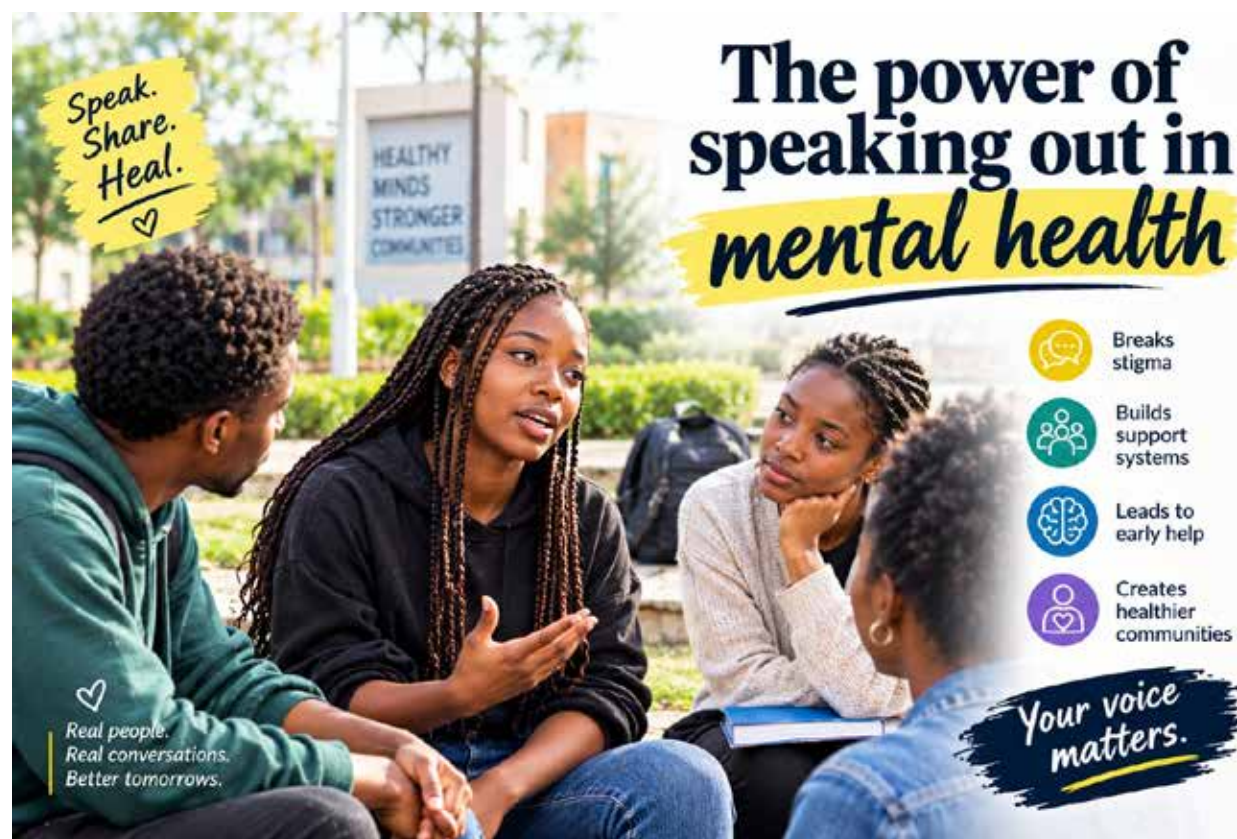
By: Wanjohi P. Mugambi
@themkenytimes

For generations, quietness has been mistaken for strength. We were taught to swallow pain, smile through distress and carry heavy emotional loads without a word of complaint. Struggle was to be endured privately, never disclosed. To speak about what hurt you was weakness. To carry it silently was dignity. That belief has cost countless people dearly, and it continues to cost them today.

Yet the human mind was never built for permanent containment. It was built for expression. When emotion finds no outlet, it does not disappear — it transforms, and almost always into something heavier, darker and harder to shift than the original feeling ever was.

Speaking out about mental health is widely misunderstood as complaining, oversharing or seeking attention. It is none of those things. It is a precise and powerful act of psychological regulation, one backed by decades of neuroscientific research. When you name what you feel, you do something remarkable to your own brain. Neuroscientists call this affect labelling. The act of putting a feeling into words moves the experience from the raw, reactive regions of the brain into the thinking, reasoning regions. Activity in the amygdala — the brain's alarm system, responsible for fear and threat response — decreases measurably. Activity in the prefrontal cortex, which governs calm judgment and deliberate thought, increases. Language literally quiets the alarm. This is why telling someone how you truly feel brings genuine relief even when the problem itself remains entirely unchanged. The brain feels safer because the emotion now has a name, a boundary and a witness.

There is a second mechanism at work. Psychologists describe the burden of unresolved thought as



cognitive load. Every unspoken worry, every unexpressed fear, occupies active mental space — like dozens of applications running simultaneously on a device that is slowing under the strain. Speaking externalises the thought. Once voiced, the mind no longer has to rehearse it alone to keep it from being lost. It is now held by another person, by the room, by the act of expression itself. That release is why so many people report sleeping properly for the first time in months after a single honest conversation. The mind, finally unburdened of some of what it was silently managing, can rest.

From a psychodynamic perspective, much of our distress originates in internal conflict. Part of us wants to be honest; another part wants to be accepted. Part of us wants to rest; another part insists we must keep performing. When we do not speak, that conflict remains internal and hardens into anxiety, guilt or corrosive self-blame. Speaking interrupts the internal fight. It allows you to hear your own thoughts from outside your head. Often we do not know what we truly think until we hear ourselves say it. A feeling that seemed formless and overwhelming

inside suddenly becomes identifiable when spoken aloud. You hear yourself and realise: this is what has been hurting me. That clarity alone is a form of healing.

Human beings are also wired, at a biological level, for connection. Our nervous systems are co-regulated, meaning we calm down in the presence of safe others. Polyvagal theory, developed by neuroscientist Stephen Porges, demonstrates that when we are with someone who listens with calm presence and genuine attentiveness, our own nervous system shifts from fight-or-flight into a state of rest and connection. Speaking to a safe person can slow your heart rate, ease your breathing and restore a sense of being grounded. This is not merely emotional comfort — it is physiological regulation. Your body receives the message: I am not alone. I am safe. That message, received deeply enough and often enough, begins to change how you move through the world.

One of the most persistent barriers to speaking out is the fear of becoming a burden. Psychology is unambiguous on this point. Research rooted in self-determination theory identifies relatedness — the need to

feel seen, understood and genuinely connected — as one of three core human psychological needs. When you speak authentically about your inner experience, you fulfil that need for yourself and, in most cases, for the person listening too. Most people do not feel burdened when someone trusts them enough to be honest. They feel honoured. That exchange, far from weakening relationships, tends to deepen them in ways that surface conversation never reaches.

Silence, sustained over time, produces another consequence that is less visible but equally damaging. When we keep pain secret for long enough, we begin to internalise the stigma surrounding it. We start to believe that because we are struggling, something is fundamentally wrong with who we are. Psychologists call this internalised stigma, and it breeds shame. Shame thrives in secrecy. It whispers: if people really knew you, they would leave. Speaking out directly confronts that lie. When you speak and someone stays — when they listen without flinching, without withdrawing — shame loses its authority. You learn, perhaps for the first time, that your worth is not reduced by your struggle. That single

experience of being accepted while being vulnerable can quietly undo years of silent self-judgment.

Speaking out also reshapes identity. Narrative psychology holds that we do not experience life as a neutral sequence of events — we live it as a story we tell ourselves about those events. When your story is always silent, you become in your own mind someone who is alone, forgotten or beyond help. When you speak, you edit the narrative. You introduce agency. You become someone who faced pain and chose to reach out. That shift — from passive sufferer to active participant in one's own healing — is profoundly motivating.

The practice does not require grand disclosure. It can begin with small, honest sentences spoken to one trusted person. Today I feel overwhelmed. I am struggling to focus. I need some quiet. I need company. These micro-disclosures build what psychologists call emotional granularity — the capacity to distinguish between similar emotional states with precision. People with higher emotional granularity are demonstrably more resilient, because they can respond to exactly what they feel rather than reacting blindly to a vague and undifferentiated sense of distress.

Listening matters as much as speaking. Speaking out is only as healing as the quality of attention that receives it. A healing listener does not rush to advise, minimise or compare pain. They validate — not by agreeing with everything, but by acknowledging that the feeling makes sense given the experience. Psychologically, that validation is profoundly soothing. It tells the brain: your internal experience is real and it matters. That alone can reduce emotional intensity significantly.

Real strength is not the ability to hold everything in indefinitely. It is the wisdom to know when something needs to come out — and the courage to trust that you will be held when it does. Every person who chooses to speak makes it marginally safer for the next person to do the same. Every honest conversation chips away at a generational inheritance that said we must suffer alone.

Your voice matters — not because it is loud or perfectly articulate, but because it is yours. When you use it, healing becomes possible. Not instant, not linear — but possible. And possibility is where every recovery begins.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We lowered the flag, but never cut the chain

By Simon Juma

On 12 December 1963, Jomo Kenyatta watched the Union Jack descend at Uhuru Gardens as thousands wept with joy. They believed the coloniser had gone home. Sixty years on, walk through Nairobi, Kisumu or Kinshasa and a harder truth confronts you. The flag changed. The chain did not.

The heaviest chain is economic. The Democratic Republic of Congo holds over 70 per cent of the world's cobalt, powering every smartphone on earth. Congolese children dig it for two dollars a day while American and Belgian companies ship it abroad for processing. Congo is inside your phone. Your phone has given Congo nothing.

Kenya tells the same story. Mothers in Kericho pick tea shipped raw to London, repackaged as "English Breakfast Tea" and sold back to Kenyans at five times the price. Coffee



grown in Murang'a is priced in New York. We export raw materials and import finished poverty. That is not independence. It is economic colonialism with a cleaner uniform.

The political chain is equally stubborn. Across Africa, the newly sworn-in president's first foreign visit is rarely to Dar es Salaam. It is to Washington or London — because every leader privately understands where actual approval resides.

The most dangerous chain, however, binds the mind. We

were taught to see ourselves through the coloniser's eyes. Many never stopped.

Real independence will not arrive by lowering another flag. It will come when Africa processes its own resources, trades within itself and governs without foreign permission.

The coloniser left State House. He is still in our mines, our banks and our heads. The real Uhuru remains unfinished — and it is this generation's fight to complete it.

Faith on campus: Why students drift, and what keeps them rooted

By Kevin Olum

Campus is where faith gets tested for the first time without a safety net. No parent waking you on Sunday. No one watching. You decide — and that decision reveals whether what you carry is conviction or simply inherited habit.

Many drift. The reasons are predictable but worth naming honestly.

Faith without spirit becomes routine. Many Christian Unions run programmes but carry no presence. Services stretch long but leave students empty. This generation does not want to hear about God from a distance — they want to encounter Him. Without that, campus Christianity becomes another obligation to shed.

Faith without substance collapses under questioning. University interrogates everything — philosophy, science, relationships, money, mental



health. A faith built on "because my parents said so" cannot survive a determined lecturer or a season of personal crisis. Substance — deep grounding in scripture and honest engagement with hard questions — is what holds when emotions fail.

Faith without skill fails in practice. You can be spiritually sincere and still struggle to manage time, handle a painful breakup, balance HELB repayments with integrity, or lead

people effectively. Students drift not because they stopped loving God, but because nobody taught them how to live for Him in a practical campus world.

The ones who stay are rarely the most perfect. They are the ones who embrace all three: spirit, substance and skill — encounter, roots and execution working together.

That is what Jasiri is building. Not a campus programme. A generation.

Kenya's fuel crisis: Ordinary citizens bear the cost

By Sharon Mumo

Kenyans woke up this month to fuel prices that cut deeper than most had anticipated. The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority's latest review, effective 14 October to 15 November 2026, pushed super petrol in Nairobi from KSh 214.03 to KSh 226.96 per litre. Diesel rose to KSh 227.76, up KSh 9.90. Kerosene — the fuel of the poorest households — jumped KSh 28.49 to KSh 219.87. These are not abstract figures. They translate directly into higher matatu fares, costlier groceries and thinning margins for small traders already operating on the edge.

Fuel is the connective tissue of Kenya's economy. It moves produce from farm to market, powers industries and keeps public transport running. When its price rises sharply, the burden cascades downward — and it is invariably those with the



least who absorb the heaviest blow. University students stretching limited budgets, low-income workers dependent on matatus and small-scale farmers trucking goods to market all feel it first and feel it hardest.

The government has a responsibility to act beyond issuing price reviews. Transparent fuel pricing mechanisms, enforcement against profiteering and serious investment in public transport and renewable energy

are not optional conversations — they are overdue policy imperatives.

Individual adaptation helps at the margins. Carpooling, journey planning and efficient logistics can soften the immediate impact. But no amount of personal adjustment substitutes for structural solutions.

Kenya's fuel crisis is ultimately a governance test. Kenyans deserve affordable, stable energy — and a government willing to fight for it on their behalf.

Kenya's unemployment crisis: A problem we must all solve

By Sharon Mumo

Kenya is haemorrhaging talent. Across the country, qualified graduates knock on doors that open for a shrinking few, while the rest wait — and the consequences reach far beyond the job seeker.

Unemployment does not sit quietly. It pulls children out of school when fees cannot be paid. It drives young men and women toward crime in cities already straining under pressure. It hollows out communities and erodes the dignity of people who did everything right and still came up empty.

The instinct is to blame the government, and government does bear real responsibility. Punishing tax regimes strangle small businesses before they find their footing. Industrial policy has consistently failed to leverage Kenya's own raw materials to create manufacturing jobs at scale. These are



policy failures, and they demand policy solutions.

But the harder conversation is the one we avoid. Kenya cannot employ its way out of this crisis through government recruitment alone. The shift required is cultural — from a graduate population conditioned to seek jobs toward one equipped to create them. Identifying gaps in the market, building solutions and generating employment for others is not idealism. It is necessity.

That shift requires investment: business training, accessible financing and genuine institutional support for entrepreneurs, particularly the young.

When more Kenyans work, more Kenyans pay taxes, infrastructure improves and the cycle of poverty weakens. Unemployment is everyone's problem.

The solution must be everyone's project.

SPORTS
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Sports >> *The Argentine defender's outburst over recruitment laid bare the tensions simmering beneath Old Trafford's surface

Martínez apologises after United boardroom row



Lisandro Martínez

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

Lisandro Martínez yesterday issued a formal apology to Manchester United's leadership after his public criticism of the club's recruitment strategy triggered a significant internal dispute, following United's 2-0 defeat to Atlético Madrid in the UEFA Champions League.

The Argentine centre-back, nicknamed "The Butcher" for his combative style, directed his frustration at the club's hierarchy after Tuesday's loss, questioning publicly whether head coach Michael Carrick had been given adequate resources to assemble a squad capable of competing on European nights at the level United aspires to reach.

The defeat, which saw goals from Pablo Barrios and Ademola Lookman condemn the English side to a chastening result, appeared to be the breaking point for Martínez. His subsequent remarks cut to the core of a debate that has followed the club

for some time — whether those making recruitment decisions are equipping the manager to succeed.

The comments divided opinion sharply. Some supporters welcomed the defender's candour, arguing that someone needed to say what many felt. Others were less sympathetic, questioning whether airing internal grievances through the media served anyone well.

Former United captain Roy Keane was unsparing in his assessment, describing the situation at the club as a "circus". Wayne Rooney also reportedly weighed in, arguing that concerns of this nature belong in the boardroom, not the back pages.

With the controversy deepening, Martínez met Carrick, technical director Jason Wilcox and chief executive Omar Berrada at the club's Carrington training ground on Thursday to address the fallout directly.

The meeting produced results. Shortly afterwards, Martínez

posted a formal apology on Instagram, acknowledging that emotion had got the better of him in the immediate aftermath of the defeat.

"My passionate and intense nature, combined with the frustration of defeat, led me to express my feelings at an inappropriate time and place, for which I apologise," he said.

He added that his remarks had not helped foster the unity the club needs and reaffirmed his commitment to United's ambitions. The tone was markedly different from a statement he had issued on Wednesday, in which he attempted to contextualise his frustration without fully acknowledging that the manner of his intervention had been problematic.

The episode has reopened familiar questions about United's transfer strategy, the relationship between playing staff and the executive structure, and the mounting pressure on a club still searching for its footing in Eu-

rope's elite competition.

For Martínez personally, the priority now is straightforward — to let his performances do the talking. He remains a significant presence in United's defensive line when fit, and the club will need him focused and available in the weeks ahead.

Attention turns to Sunday's Premier League fixture against Leeds United, where a positive result would go some way towards steadying nerves and restoring a measure of calm to a dressing room that could do without further distraction.

The apology may have defused the immediate crisis, but the underlying questions — about squad depth, recruitment philosophy and United's readiness to compete at the highest level — have not gone away. For a club of United's stature, operating under relentless scrutiny, confidence is rebuilt not through statements but through results, delivered consistently, over time.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Former England manager Gareth Southgate says he does not see himself returning to club management in the Premier League.

Southgate rules out return to Premier League management



England manager Gareth Southgate applauds supporters after his team's World Cup exit

By: BBC

Former England manager Gareth Southgate says he does not see himself returning to club management in the Premier League.

The 56-year-old has been out of management since resigning as Three Lions boss after guiding them to the final of Euro 2024, where they lost to Spain.

Southgate, who also took England to the Euro 2020 final, has not managed at club level since a three-year spell with Middlesbrough from 2006.

When asked if he would consider a return to managing in the Premier League, he told

The Amol Rajan Connection podcast: "I don't see a scenario where I do that."

He added: "Towards the end of my time with England, I stopped enjoying, at the very least for a period, the wins keep you going. "By the end, I didn't even enjoy the wins for any longer than a couple of minutes. So, I've hardly watched football.

"I went to the FA Cup final to see my team, Crystal Palace, win their first trophy. I've not been to a football ground since. So my sort of desire to be involved in football has changed."

Since leaving the England role, Southgate has also spent time working in the media and ear-

lier this year he fronted a BBC documentary where he travelled across the UK to understand challenges facing young men and boys.

He has also spent time as a visiting lecturer at Harvard Business School in Boston.

"I've loved the last 18 months of my life," he added.

"I've had 37 years where my sense of self depended on did I win or lose on Saturday. And actually I've loved having different experiences. I've met politicians, I've met people in the media industry, I have learned about leadership in all sorts of areas, I've travelled around the world learning things.

"I've just enjoyed playing a different film in my life."

'No winners' in Manchester City charges

Last month, Manchester City were found guilty of the majority of charges relating to breaches of the Premier League's financial regulations between the 2009-10 and 2017-18 seasons.

An independent commission found that, during that time period, the club arranged "sham contracts" as well as "relying on sham agreements to artificially inflate the club's revenues and reduce its costs".

The club have denied any wrongdoing and submitted an appeal on 2 October.

"There'll be the tribal fans' response to punish Manchester City as much as we can, relegate them, fine them, do whatever you can," added Southgate.

"I've been in football boardrooms, I've been in meetings with Uefa, I've been in meetings with Fifa, I have been in all these spaces and I know how complicated all of this is.

"My underlying thought is none of this is good for football and there are no winners because if you're at the Premier League, for a very brief moment you might feel justified that all the flak you've had for this case taking so long, this is why it's taken so long and there's the verdict, and I'm sure there's an element of justification in that.

"Then there's this realisation of how do we deal with all of this because you know the possibility of all the different legal cases that emerge from this, how long this could still take, what's the right sort of punishment, how do you keep the whole game on track?

"That's unbelievably complex."

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From a single link to the entire chain: The working principle and secret of a mechanical device



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It is a device that demonstrates complex mechanical processes through a harmony of simple movements, where sometimes a single movement alone initiates the entire process. A single small ball in motion can trigger other mechanisms, topple a series of stacked columns, and set off the next action through strings and inclined planes. This requires an understanding of mechanical principles, the harmonious coordination of parts, and the creation of a solid structure, and through this sequence of processes, a principle with a complete scheme is created.

The mechanical chain device we created works on this very principle, meaning that a process initiated by the first movement continues through various mechanical transmissions, balls, columns, inclined planes, and control elements, ultimately is completed by the lighting of a special lamp. The sequence of movements to the final stage is continuous and uninterrupted.

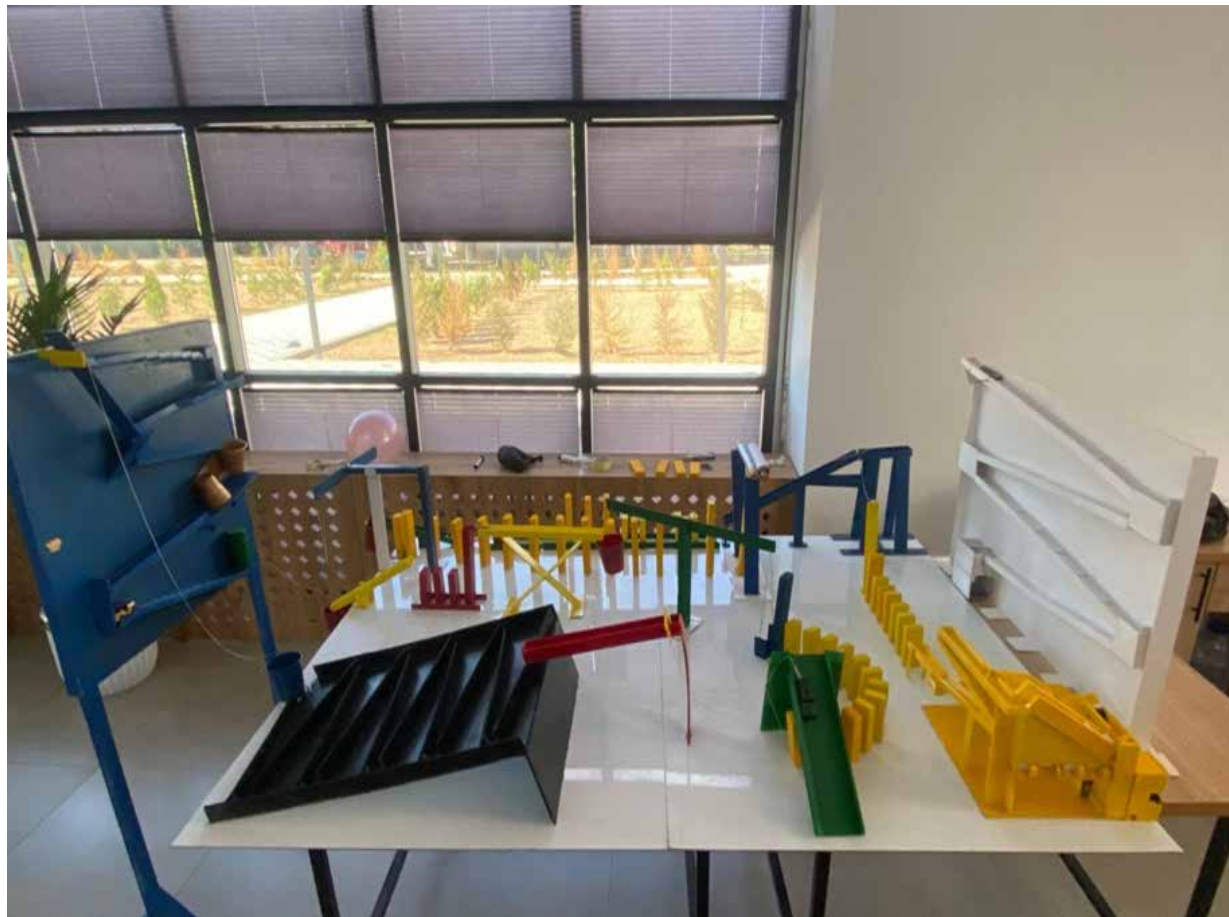
Below, we will examine the sequence and descriptions of the mechanical relay's operating principle:

How does the motion begin?

The device's initial operation begins with the electric motor. The resulting mechanical motion is transmitted through a belt drive and a crankshaft mechanism. As a result, the ball is set in motion and guided along the inclined chute.

When the ball reaches the control column, it activates a special mechanism and the gate opens. The ball moves along a curved trajectory and returns to the starting point. This process allows the next ball to pass through the control section.

In this way, the device's initial mechanical stage is completed. Here,



Operating principle of a mechanical chain device

the transmission of motion, the change of direction, and the coordinated operation of the mechanisms are of great importance.

One ball — many movements

One of the most interesting stages of the setup is when the ball hits the columns arranged in a row. The toppling of the first column affects the next one, creating a chain reaction. This process reminds many people of the game of dominoes.

As the dominoes fall in succession, a string attached to the last one is pulled, setting off mechanisms in another row. In the next stage, a special P-shaped column is activated, causing the waiting ball to drop into a container at the end of the chute.

The process then repeats: the ball rolling down the inclined ramp falls into a container, transmitting the motion to another column via a string. This column, in turn, pushes the next ball, sending it down another in-

clined ramp. The ball then strikes another set of columns, triggering the next stage of the mechanical chain.

Thus, each element in the device serves as part of the overall system. The movement of one mechanism acts as the initial impulse for the second.

Physics Laws in Action

The significance of this device is not only in the sequence of its actions, but also in the fact that several important laws of physics can be observed in action during its operation. In particular, the electric motor converts electrical energy into mechanical energy. The kinetic energy of the moving balls is transferred to other objects during collisions. The toppling of the pillars, in turn, is related to the application of force, momentum, torque, and the state of equilibrium of the objects.

Chutes determine the direction of the balls' motion, while ropes serve

to transmit force and motion between mechanisms. Some of the energy is lost due to friction, sound, and other factors. Thus, the device also demonstrates the transmission and conversion of energy in mechanical systems in a visual way.

These aspects are particularly important in studying physics, as seeing theoretical knowledge in the context of a practical mechanism helps in better understanding complex concepts.

The final stage is the result indicator light.

In the last stage of the mechanical chain, the final ball activates a special mechanism, reaching the "Completion Post." The ball's impact closes an electrical contact, and as a result, the "Completion Light" turns on.

The lighting of the lamp indicates that the entire process has been completed in the prescribed sequence.

This solution demonstrates the ability to convert mechanical motion into an electrical signal, while also allowing the entire process from start to finish to be monitored and the outcome confirmed by a clear indicator.

Research, Engineering, and a Creative Approach

This device we created is based on the idea of uniting mechanical elements into a single system, coordinating their movement, and concluding the process with a specific outcome. In its creation, the function of each component, its direction of movement, and its interaction with other parts are crucial.

Such devices can be a useful tool for understanding the principles of mechanics and automation, developing design skills, and connecting theoretical knowledge with practical application. Most importantly, the device is not limited to movement alone: it integrates numerous interconnected mechanical processes into a single chain. The result is that a seemingly simple combination of a ball, a column, a string, and inclined planes becomes a practical expression of the laws of physics.

This experiment demonstrates that one of the key achievements of engineering is to properly combine various elements and use their capabilities to create a unified system.

Conclusion: This device is a complex chain system that demonstrates the laws of kinematics and dynamics in practice, where the conversion of energy from one form to another and Newton's laws are clearly manifested.

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