



Laikipia

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Solar Power to Light Up Laikipia's Dark Streets

By Gertrude Evelyn Wambui

Laikipia is betting big on solar power to save resources, lengthen business hours for local traders and to firm up security in its urban centres.

The county is investing Kshs 46 million in off grid solar power to light up the streets of its towns which are more economical than electricity from the national grid.

Due to its position at the Equator Laikipia has massive opportunity for quality solar energy all the year round. There have been little, if any, efforts from the government and the private sector in the past to invest in the renewable energy sector.

However the shift by the county government is coinciding with another investment by a private firm which is setting up a 40-megawatt solar power station in Rumuruti. The shift by Laikipia is expected to save the county government millions of shilling that it has been paying in form of electricity bills.

For instance, the cost of installing a single high-mast flood light alone averages Kshs 3.5 million.

On average it takes a bill of Kshs10,000 per month to power a single high-mast flood light. Considering that the county has installed a total of 32 high-mast flood lights across the county, the maintenance cost becomes unsustainable.

This coupled with the susceptibility to frequent damages makes this mode of lighting untenable. The county government will gradually to phase out this expensive electricity from the national grid and direct the saved resources to other projects.

The solar power street lighting project, whose roll out started in July, will see the delivery 216 street lights poles across all the 15 wards of Laikipia County by mid-August, 2020. Residents have welcomed the idea of having a sustainable to light up the streets. He are

some of the comments captured from the Facebook:

"Asante sana county government of Laikipia under Governor Ndiritu Muriithi," Anthony Karwero.

"Congratulations, Excellent Job," Njau Kahura.

"Kudos Mheshimiwa," Alex Wangai

"What about Castle City?" John Gitari.

"Wekeeni watu stima," Ben Ben.

Each ward will receive 12 poles except Umande, Igwamiti and Marmanet ward which will receive 24 each. A pole is fitted with a panel and a light to operate independently to improve efficiency.

This innovative venture is expected to dramatically lower the cost of lighting up the streets.

This approach will enhance longer business hours for traders as well as improve security of the Laikipia's urban centres as a key step in realizing a 24-hour economy.



Nanyuki's Mitumba market at night



Left: Nanyuki's Mitumba Market. Right: Shika Adabu area of Nanyuki's Muthaiga Estate



Multi-Agency Effort to Fight Counterfeits



The Anti-Counterfeit Agency chairperson Ms Flora Mutahi

By John Muriithi

BThe Anti-Counterfeit Agency is seeking closer collaboration with various agencies at the county level to reverse the impact of illicit goods on the national economy.

The anti-counterfeit body held a multiagency meeting in Nanyuki on 22 July, 2020 that sought to renew efforts to fight the illegal trade practice, which is threatening to derail manufacturing, one of the pillars of country's Big Four Agenda.

The meeting brought together officials from the County Government of Laikipia, the county security and enforcement apparatus, Kenya Revenue Authority, the local chamber of commerce, private sector, among other stakeholders.

ACA is banking on the synergy of the multiagency team to seal the gaps that dealers in contraband have exploited to flood the market with counterfeits.

A recent study indicated that trade in counterfeit goods accounts for more than the country's manufacturing sector, severely affecting the economy and Vision 2030 goals.

The report reveals the country incurs more than Kshs 0.5 trillion in revenue loss annually as a result of counterfeits. This is a big blow to genuine businesses and economic development as more jobs are lost due to unhealthy competition.

Speaking at the forum, the Anti-Counterfeit Agency chairperson Ms Flora Mutahi expressed her resolve to eradicate counterfeit products in the country, saying counterfeits outnumber genuine products in the market today.

"We conducted a national baseline study and have found that the level of counterfeiting is actually larger than the manufacturing sector in this country," she said.

All stakeholders, Ms Mutahi added, have a role to play to safeguard genuine trade to save the economy.

The adverse effects of illegal goods are diseases, fires due to sub-standard cables and loss of jobs from closure of genuine markets due to unhealthy competition.

The multi-agency team drawn from among others; Nema, Nacada, Kra, Kebs and National Police is determined to clear Laikipia from the illicit trade. The collaboration has seen counterfeit goods worth Ksh. 18 billion destroyed.

The county stands at position 15 on availability of uncustomed products in the country.

Fibre Connectivity to Facilitate Telemedicine, Improve Services at NTRH

Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital is now connected to the National Optic Fibre Backbone Infrastructure (NOFBI).

The Kshs. 11-million optic-fibre project comes with great benefits of streamlined services in the hospital to reduce the long queues that have been witnessed because of slow internet connections. This also translates to quick patients' attendance.

Networking has already begun in the older buildings while the newly-constructed ones will have wireless internet.

This realization will see the facility benefit with such services as telemedicine, access to government health records and facilitate the referral system in the country.

Medical practitioners will have the advantage of making better decisions on a patient a result of access to information system in the country.

"We are now moving from old ways of keeping patients files to storing them digitally. The hospital is going full digital," commented NTRH CEO, Dr. Timothy Panga. Connectivity will also be done in the upcoming KMTC facility within the hospital compound.



A modern ultrasound machine at NTRH

Laikipia Businesses Ready for Economic Stimulus Loans

Businesses in Laikipia County have turned out in large numbers to take up loans from Laikipia county and KCB Kshs. 2 billion economic stimulus plan.

Many businesses have submitted their requests applying for the loans which are meant to help boost the economy after being hard-hit by Covid-19 effects.

From next week, the applicants will start receiving their loans which will be paid at a reduced interest of 7% and the county government will pay for them the remaining 5%.

The fund was launched by the county government in collaboration with the bank a month ago and has seen many people open up accounts with the bank in readiness for the roll out of the reserve.

Two hundred business development officers are being trained to help SMEs in the absorption of the money in a viable manner. They are also to keep track of the progress of the entities that shall receive the loans.

The Kshs. 2 billion economic stimulus plan is set to benefit 5,000 businesses in the county. Other businesses will also benefit from such a plan as more banks continue expressing their interest to



Training of Business Development Officers who will facilitate utilization of Kshs 2.3 billion under the economic stimulus package

partner with the county. The move by the Laikipia to engage local banks to help SMEs acquire loans at a reduced interest rate has set pace for other counties to do the same. Six more counties

are working with KCB in a similar economic stimulus plan.

Planning Beyond the Lisha Jamii Initiative



Vulnerable families waiting for food rations under the 'Lisha Jamii' Initiative in Laikipia. The government has put in place plans for self-reliance in food

The County Government of Laikipia has put in place long term strategies to attain food security for the vulnerable households beyond the Lisha Jamii Initiative.

The decision, coming at a time Lisha Jamii has reached over 25,000 families, is meant to create sustainable means of livelihoods for thousands of families whose are faced with the threat of food security after the collapse of the economy.

Part of the recommended interventions include issuing of seeds, seedlings, fertilizer and other farming inputs for the agriculturally viable areas

to boost self-reliance through the Department of Agriculture.

To reach the people living in the informal settlements, the government is considering adoption of innovative farming practices like farming in containers and sacks to boost food security in the areas.

The government is also facilitating quicker opening up of markets while at the same time ensuring all health protocols are observed in order to support economic recovery.

The initiatives will extend to support to hor-

tical and other farms labor intensive enterprises to enable them to quickly take back the laborers who were laid off due to effects of COVID -19.

The initiatives are expected to support the strategies to open up the economy through funding and business development support. This will ensure that a majority of SMEs survive and therefore most sources of livelihood for the livelihoods are restored and therefore no need for the food programme.

202 Health Workers Join Laikipia County Public Service



Staff at NTRH's Renal Unit

Two-hundred-and-two health workers have joined the Laikipia County Public Service in the last two months as the government strengthens its capacity to fight Covid-19 pandemic.

These include One (1) anaesthetist, four (4) clinical anaesthetists, 105 nurses, 15 Lab technicians, 15 public health officers, 12 pharmacy technologists, 15 clinical officers and 12 medical officers.

In total the county now has 109 doctors in its service, with 25 of these in school. They are distributed as follows: Lamuria two, Doldol

three, Kimanjo two, Rumuruti four, Ndindika three, Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital 22 and Nyahururu County Referral Hospital 18.

NTRH has the following specialists: two family doctors, an orthopedic, a physician, a surgeon, an obstetrician and a psychiatrist. Nyahururu County Referral Hospital has the following specialists: an anesthetist, a surgeon, a physician, a pediatrician and an internal medicine specialist. The newly recruited staff are critical in the fight against the surging cases of Covid-19 patients.

Before lockdown was lifted on 6th July, 2020, the county had only 3 confirmed cases of covid-19 but on 23rd July 2020, barely three weeks away, the number had risen to 37.

“It is notable that there has been laxity by members of public to follow the laid down guidelines and public health measures which is attributed to the rising cases of Covid-19 in Laikipia county,” Dr. Lenai Kamario, CECM Health said.

The densely populated areas in the major towns such as Majengo and Manguu in Nanyuki and Nyahururu respectively are being fumigated to curb the spread.

Additionally, six ventilators at Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital (NTRH) have been installed, and other four expected to be installed soon.

Five more ventilators will be installed at the ICU facility in Nyahururu Teaching and Referral Hospital.

Laikipia has prepared three quarantine and isolation centres with a target bed capacity of 424.

The department of Health has made efforts in preparing communities for home based care of Covid-19 patients.

Citizens are urged to adhere to the simple guidelines provided by Ministry of Health such as regular hand washing, avoiding clouded places, wearing masks correctly, among others to prevent infection.

Laikipia VTCs Making Affordable Hospital Beds

The county government of Laikipia has engaged VTCs to make the for its hospitals.

Nyahuru, Nanyuki and Marmanet VTCs have combined efforts to produce high quality special hospital bed that would have otherwise cost the government much of the taxpayers' money had they been imported as was the case before.

The beds are produced at one point to ensure same quality and for close monitoring from various stakeholders.

“We saw it fit to bring the three VTCs in one place as the beds require close supervision and monitoring from the medical department to ascertain we produce quality, long-lasting and comfortable beds to be used in hospitals,” said Tabitha Mbiriri, CEC Education-the department under which VTCs fall.

Already, 70 beds have been dispersed to health facilities and are in use.

A total of 180 hospital beds are ready. The rest are expected to be complete before the set deadline of 22 July, 2020.

Upon hitting the 300-bed target, the VTCs will start making the same standards of beds for the neighboring coun-



Beds made by Laikipia VTCs delivered to NTRH

ties of Nyeri, Nyandarua, Isiolo and Meru which have shown interest after seeing the expertise and skills Laikipia VTCs have demonstrated.

How Laikipia Economic Stimulus Package Will Work

To facilitate access and utilisation of the Kshs. 2 billion from KCB and Kshs 300 million from Co-op Bank, we have embarked on training of our business development officers.

We started off with 33 officers who will in turn train other 200 officers.

Their main task will be guidance and hand-holding traders through the process to access the funds- the process, advising them on how to apply, the requirements and also making follow-ups until enterprises stand on their feet.

Many businesses in Laikipia have approached Nanyuki KCB branch and even opened bank accounts with KCB Bank in readiness for the loans.

Our target is 5,000 businesses in Laikipia, spread across the 15 wards. Roughly, we have over 20,000 registered businesses in Laikipia. Melting Kshs 2.3 billion into the economy will not only rejuvenate formal businesses,



H.E. John Mwaniki, Deputy Governor

but will trickle down to the smallest traders like *Mama Mbogas* and even to *jamaa wa mahindi choma* to formalise their businesses too.

The end game is to enable our Medium and Small Enterprises to stay afloat by providing them with capital, a subsidized loan that will be favourable and cognizant of the prevailing economic strains.

It will mean, people will have purchasing power.

For instance, a hardware operator has his business booming, he will need to repair his car, the mechanic will be ready for him. The hardware guy and the mechanic can now buy vegetables and fruits from the market or at *kibanda* next to their home.

With the loan, the farmer will expand. She will need an extra person on her farm. Another business person had his construction stuck. With the money available now, he will bring back his workers to complete the project. That worker can buy unga and sukari at their nearest shop.

If we utilize these funds this with utmost financial discipline, and we will ensure that, our businesses will stand and even thrive in the post-COVID-19 era.

We keep moving forward, but a step at a time.

Laikipia SMEs to Make Hospital Bedsheets



Ready beds made at Laikipia VTC s for delivery to Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital. Local SMEs have been contracted to make hospital bedsheets

The county government of Laikipia has involved some SMEs in manufacturing of bed sheets through the innovation program to cater for the increasing demand with the increase in Covid-19 patients in the region.

Uniform Centre Mt. Kenya and Clej Supplies Limited are the two business tasked to make 1,800 quality bed sheets fully labeled. The two have further engaged other eight tailors to ensure efficiency of the same.

According to Michael Nyamu who is

an entrepreneur from Uniform Centre Mt. Kenya, the county government has helped SMEs through the Laikipia County Innovation Programme, especially during the times when economy has been affected by the global pandemic.

“We were about to close down our businesses as 80% of our work involved school uniform but through the Innovation programme the county helped us adapt,” said Nyamu. He is one of the innovators who underwent tailoring training at Dekut to make PPEs. He is working with five tailors to produce his 900 bed sheets target.

Clej Supplies Limited and the three tailors are in their final stage packaging the sheets, ready for delivery in the hospitals.

Most of the beds for which the two SMEs are making bed sheets, have been made locally by VTCs, a total of 300 beds.

The Revamped Rumuruti Bus Park



The revamped Rumuruti bus park is lit with solar power boosting its security around it.

A Typical Day at NTRH



Dialysis session at NTRH's Renal Unit



The Intensive Care Unit at NTRH



Emergency Department



Dr Nancy Kaumbali in charge of NTRH pharmacy



Outpatients maintaining social distance



Services at NTRH's amenity clinic



Stimulating the Economy: Civil Works Programme at Maina Village



Trade and Industry CS Betty Maina