PROJECT SUCCESS Stories

Strengthening Public Accountability and Responsiveness in Kenya (SPARKe) Program

Homa Bay County



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
Denmark in Kenya

Uraia
Kenya's National Civic Education Programme

Success Stories from the Accelerating the Promise of Leaving No One Behind through Social Accountability Project

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About IDF

Integrated Development Facility (IDF) is a community-based Non-Governmental Organization with Christian values registered in Kenya. The organization was founded in the year 1999 and formally registered as a non- governmental organization (NGO) the same year. IDF was founded to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS pandemic, deteriorating education standards and reduced economic opportunities among the people of Homa Bay.

We envision a healthy, just, and empowered society. Our Mission is to harmonise and consolidate local efforts through community empowerment in areas of health education, socio-economic and environmental concerns.

The organization has grown and expanded over the years and currently implements projects in several counties in Kenya. The organization has created and managed incredible partnerships that have transformed the lives of vulnerable communities across the country.

IDF has been implementing the "Accelerating the Promise of Leaving No One Behind through Social Accountability Project" in Homa Bay County under Uraia's Strengthening Public Accountability and Responsiveness in Kenya (SPARKe) Program since 2021.

Success Stories



From Obscurity to Excellence: How Service Charters Propelled Homa Bay County into the Top 10 of the CBTS



IDF Leads the Way in Tracking SDG Implementation Through Voluntary Local and National Reporting



Completion of Rachuonyo East Sub-County OPD and Maternity Block Transforming Healthcare in Rachuonyo East

From Obscurity to Excellence: How Service Charters Propelled Homa Bay County into the Top 10 of the CBTS



Photo of media coverage of the Service Charters Launch

In 2023, Homa Bay County found itself at position 44 out of 47 counties in the Kenya County Budget Transparency Survey (CBTS)—a disheartening ranking that reflected limited access to budget information and weak citizen engagement in public finance processes. The initiative to co-develop service charters for access to information and public participation contributed to the initialization of open governance in Homa Bay. It enhanced citizen engagement, responsiveness of county institutions, and transparency in public finance management -leading to legislative milestones and national recognition.

Role of Service Charters

The service charters simplified and communicated public rights to access information and participate in governance processes, enhancing citizen awareness and expectations. The county government adopted a more structured, transparent, and rights -based framework to citizen participation and information sharing, anchored in the newly signed Public Participation and Civic Participation Act, 2024, a law that establishes a framework for civic education and public participation within the county.

It also promotes responsible citizenship, civic engagement, and democratic values by involving citizens in decision-making processes related to county development and governance. The Act repeals and replaces the previous Homa Bay County Civic Education and Public Participation Act, 2019. Currently the County has formulated Access to Information Bill, 2024, that is currently subjected to Public Participation.



The Official Launch and Institutionalization of the Public Participation and Civic Education, Act 2024 by H.E Gov. Gladys Wanga

Development of Service Charters

Determined to change this trajectory, Integrated Development Facility (IDF) partnered with Homa Bay County Government to implement innovative Public Participation and Access to Information Charters. This was grounded in the principles of inclusivity, accessibility, and accountability, and was designed to ensure that citizens—especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities—had meaningful input in the county's planning and budgeting cycles.

Nationally, it is recognised as a best practice through Re-engaging Citizens in the Development and Service Delivery Agenda. The aim of the Charters is to involve citizens in project planning and decision-making processes to accelerate inclusive growth, addressing SDG targets. Public Participation spans the entire county and operates through a structured forum system, starting from Village Forums where all members elect representatives for Sub-Location Forums, which in turn elect representatives for higher-level forums until reaching the County Validation Forum.

Each forum has specific roles, such as project initiation, prioritization, negotiation, and approval. The overall objective is to ensure public participation at every level of decision-making. The problem addressed was the exclusion of citizens from decision-making processes, leading to a lack of ownership and safeguarding of county projects.

Implementation of Service Charters

Implementation involved dividing sub-locations into village clusters, identifying projects based on need, and involving various stakeholders, including the public, ward administrators, representatives, and technical experts. The Charters resulted in increased optimism among citizens, enhanced involvement in project implementation, and improved quality control.

Challenges included disputes over project distribution and addressing equality and equity concerns. Mitigation measures included ensuring an equal number of projects per location and prioritizing projects collectively. Key lessons learned included the importance of involving Ward and NG representatives for mobilization. The Charters 's sustainability is attributed to its cost-effectiveness and reliance on voluntary participation.

How the Service Charters Worked

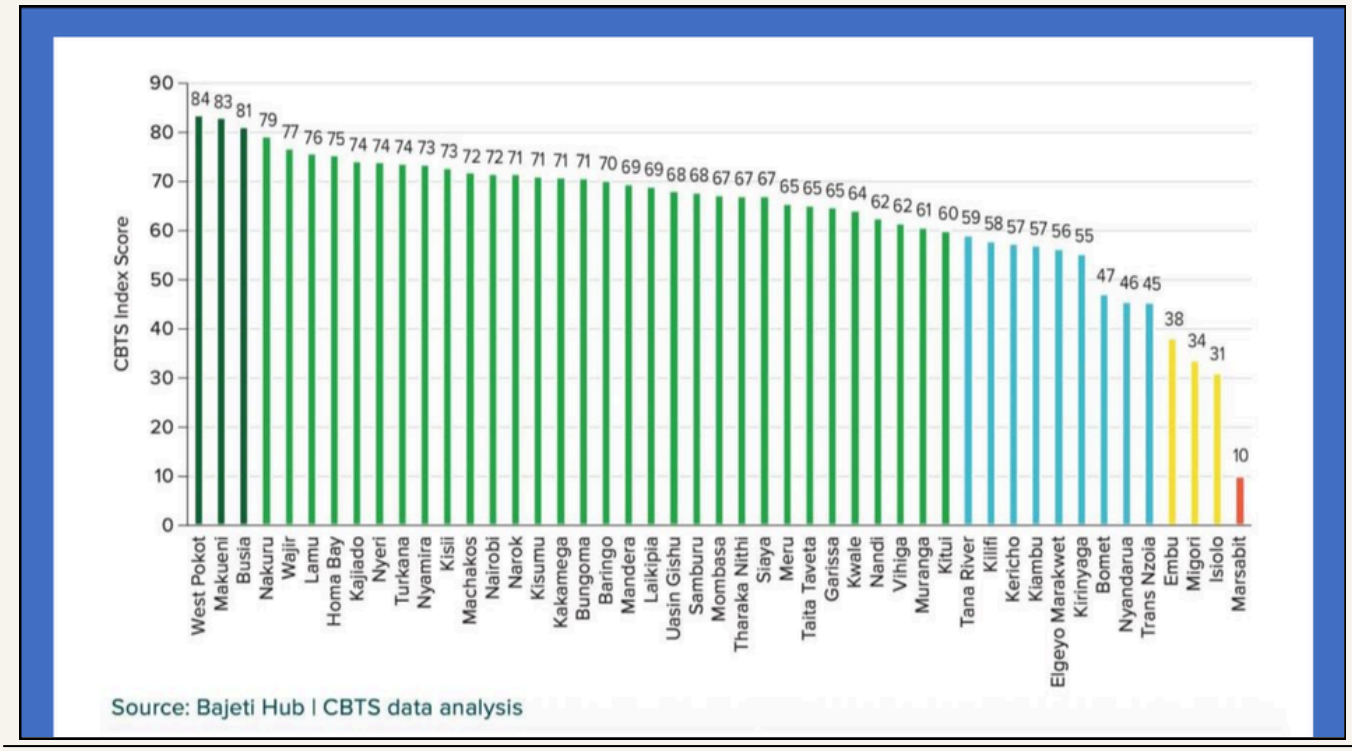
- **Community Resource Hubs:** IDF supported the establishment of local information hubs where residents could access simplified budget documents and policy briefs in Simplified Language
- **Ward-Level Budget Forums:** shifting participation from the sub-county to the ward level, making meetings more localized, inclusive, and relevant to community needs
- **Capacity Building for Citizens and Officials:** IDF in Partnership with HBCG trained both county officials and community representatives on the Public Finance Management Act, the role of public participation, and how to interpret and use budget information
- **Digital Innovations:** IDF piloted the use of SMS alerts and WhatsApp forums to share budget timelines, call for participation, and circulate key documents
- **Social Accountability Mechanisms:** Through a "Community Scorecard" approach, citizens tracked service delivery and provided structured feedback on budget implementation.

"Previously, we didn't know how the county was spending money. Now, we sit with officials and give our views. I saw a road built because we asked for it in a budget forum." Millicent Achieng', youth rep from Ndhiwa Ward.

""The ward forums and training helped us understand what to look for in the budget. The government is now more accountable because we are watching." Tom Odhiambo, Community Elder in Rangwe

Impact of Service Charters

In just one year, these Charters created a culture of openness and mutual accountability between the county government and its citizens. The 2024 CBTS reflected this dramatic transformation. Homa Bay County surged from position 44 to position 7, becoming one of the most transparent counties in Kenya.

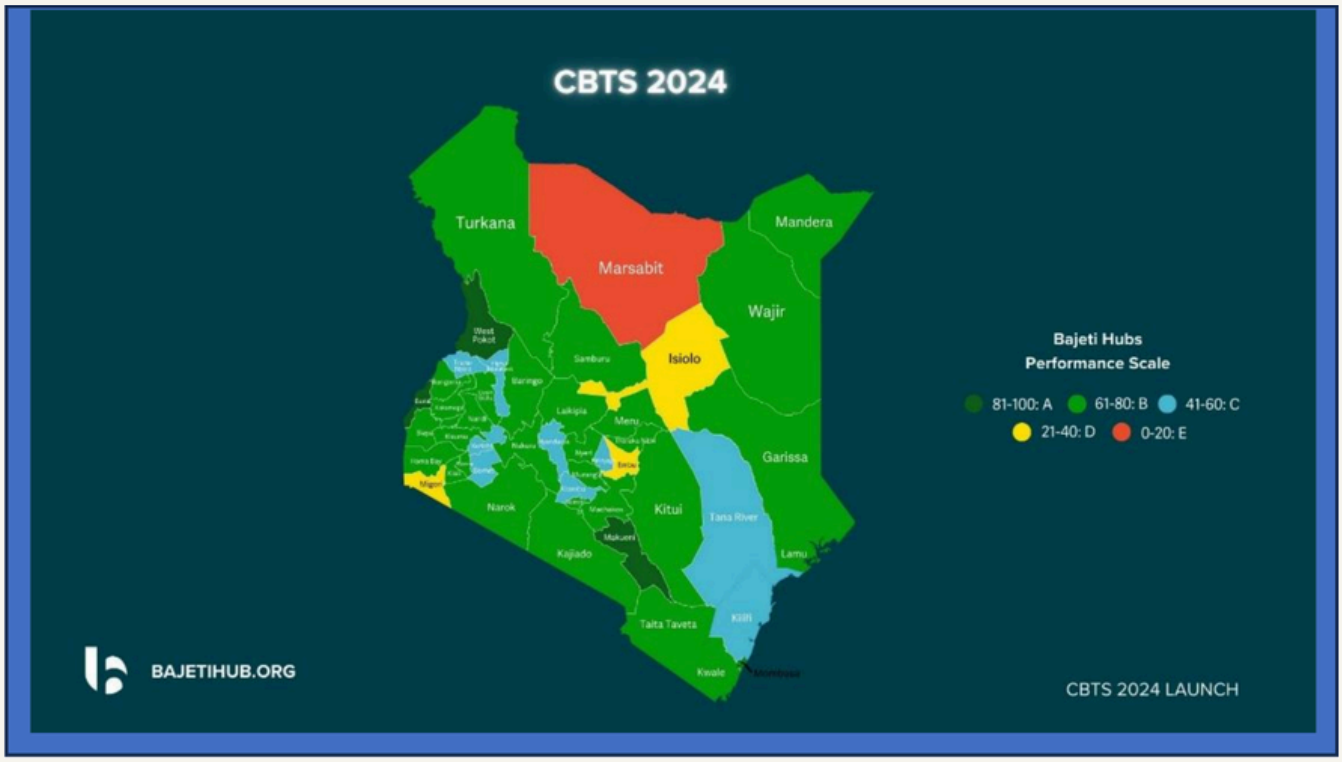


This achievement was attributed to:

The timely publication of key budget documents (CBROP, CFSP, Approved Budget)

Improved quality and accessibility of budget information

Evidence of structured public engagement and responsiveness to citizen inputs



Screengrabs from CBTS indicating Homa Bay's improvement from #44 to #7 because of a transparent Budget Process in HBC

About 1.1 million Homa Bay residents have benefited from the Charters. Homa Bay county's leap from position 44 to 7 in the CBTS is not just a number—it's a symbol of what happens when citizen voice is amplified and government becomes a listening partner.

IDF's public participation model proved that transparency and accountability are achievable when communities are empowered to take part in governance processes. Now a case study for other counties, Homa Bay's success story is a testament to the transformative power of inclusive public participation—and a reminder that leaving no one behind begins with ensuring everyone is heard.

IDF Leads the Way in Tracking SDG Implementation Through Voluntary Local and National Reporting

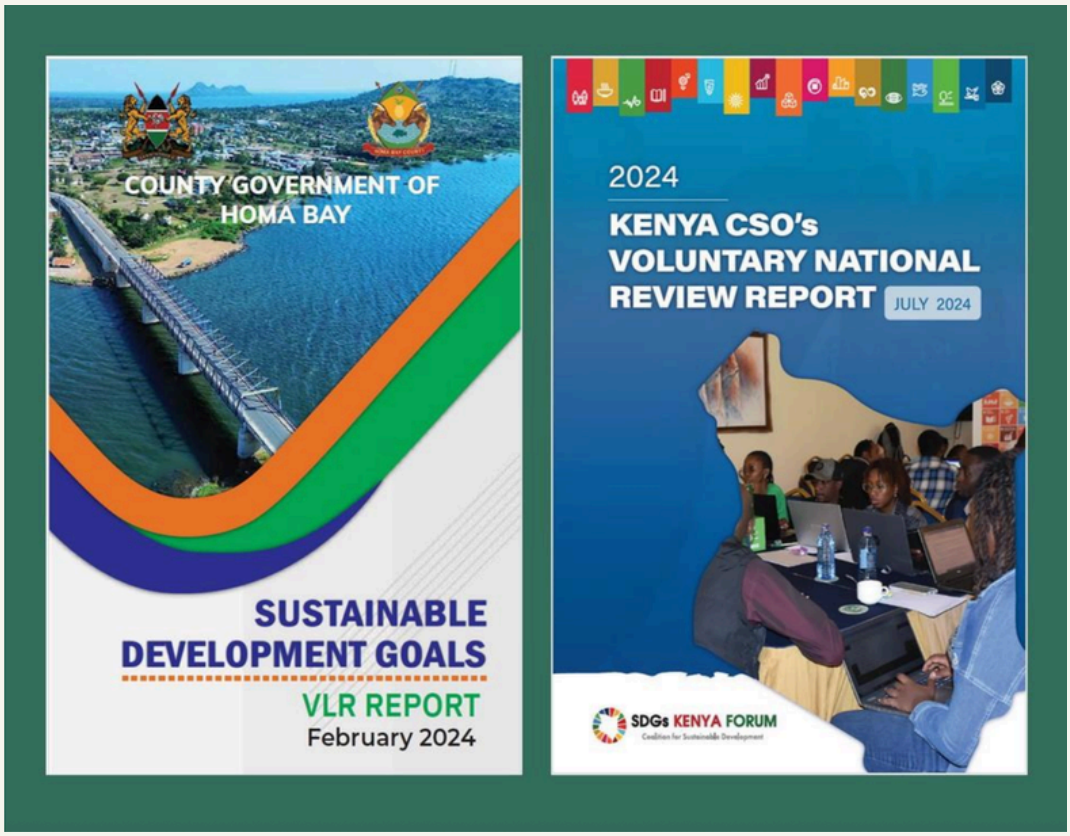


Photo of the Voluntary Local Report (VLR) for Homabay County & the Kenya CSOs Voluntary National Report (VNR) on SDG Implementation – 2024

Integrated Development Facility (IDF), SPARKE implementing partner in Homa Bay County has set the pace in monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at both local and national levels. Through its flagship project, *"Accelerating the Promise of Leaving No One Behind through Social Accountability"*, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Uraia Trust, IDF has earned national recognition as one of Kenya's top civil society organisations in SDG implementation and tracking.

IDF's outstanding work on SDGs began in earnest after the commencement of the SPARKe program in 2021. They strategically aligned their social accountability initiatives with the SDGs, ensuring their contributions supported both local and international frameworks advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This focused approach became a catalyst for evidence-based advocacy, positioning IDF at the forefront of SDG implementation and reporting.

IDF's Contribution to SDGs

IDF contributed to SDGs through its achievements in project interventions in health, water and public participation. These achievement are:



Completion of the theatre wing at Rachuonyo East Sub-County Hospital



Construction of the Seka Kagwa Clean Water Project

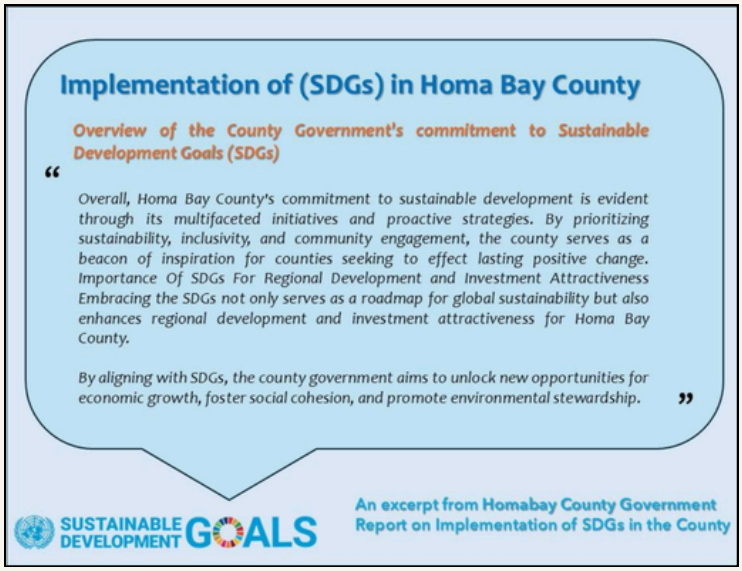


Development of the County Public Participation Matrix

The County Public Participation Matrix is a groundbreaking tool that has transformed structured citizen engagement in Homa Bay County. These contributions earned IDF the coveted Ndovu Award by the Council of Governors in 2023, recognizing its excellence in promoting structured citizen engagement in democratic governance.

In 2024, IDF's remarkable engagement in SDG implementation caught the attention of the County Government of Homa Bay, which had been struggling with structured reporting on service delivery.

Despite substantial investments in development projects, the absence of a defined reporting framework made it difficult to assess their contributions against national and global development commitments.



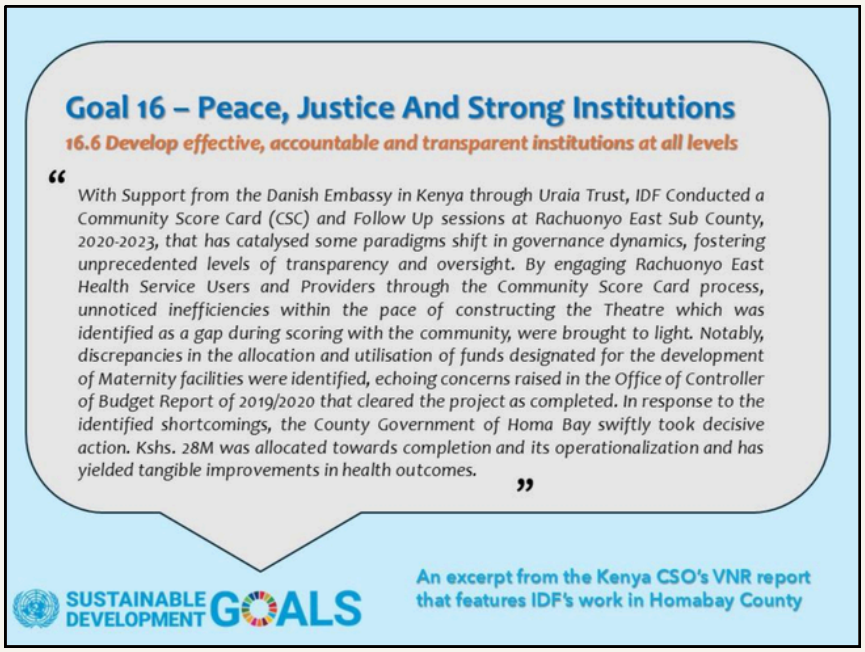
To bridge this gap, IDF provided technical support, guiding the county government in developing a localized SDG framework. This initiative led to the integration of SDGs into Homa Bay County's third-generation Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2023–2027. Additionally, the county established an SDG Coordination Team, with representation across all departments, to oversee implementation and track progress.

Impact of IDF's SDG Tracking Work

These efforts yielded significant results when, in February 2024, Homa Bay County launched its first-ever County SDG Tracking Report, contributing to a nationwide increase in counties participating in Voluntary Local Reporting (VLR), from seven to seventeen. IDF's influence extended beyond the county level when Kenyan CSOs participated in the third Voluntary National Reporting (VNR) process, joining 44 other countries in a global review of SDG progress following the successful reporting rounds in 2017 and 2020.

IDF played a leading role in coordinating reporting for SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, with a particular focus on Indicator 16.6 –Developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels. A key highlight of IDF's contribution was its partnership with the Homa Bay County Government to develop and institutionalize a Citizen Charter, guaranteeing the quality, accessibility, and responsiveness of public services in the county.

Kenya's CSO Voluntary National Report, featuring IDF's work, was later presented at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York in July 2024.



IDF's efforts highlight the crucial role of effective SDG monitoring and reporting in advancing sustainable development. Their dedication to structured social accountability, civic participation, and institutional collaboration earned them recognition as the 2nd runners-up among organizations in Kenya actively engaged in this process. This achievement was celebrated by the members of SDG Kenya Forum, the country's leading coalition of CSOs working on SDGs in November 2024. Through their approach, IDF has established a model for tracking and accelerating SDG implementation at both county and national levels.

Completion of Rachuonyo East Sub-County OPD and Maternity Block Transforming Healthcare in Rachuonyo East



The front face of the newly built hospital facility at Rachuonyo East

The successful completion of the Outpatient Department (OPD) and Maternity Block at Rachuonyo East Sub-County Hospital marks a significant milestone in improving healthcare services for the local community. This project, which was initiated to bridge critical gaps in healthcare access, has now become a beacon of hope for thousands of residents in the region.

Addressing a Critical Need

Before the completion of this facility, the hospital faced numerous challenges, including overcrowding, inadequate maternity services, and a lack of essential medical infrastructure. Expectant mothers had to travel long distances to access proper maternity care, while outpatient services were overstretched, leading to delays in treatment.

Project Implementation and Completion

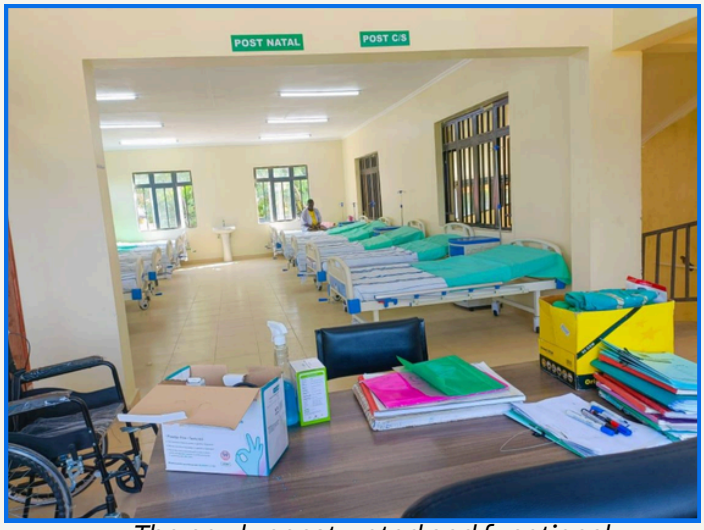
With support from the County Government, the construction of the OPD and Maternity Block commenced. The project focused on ensuring modern, well-equipped medical facilities to provide comprehensive healthcare services. The facility now boasts:

- A fully equipped maternity unit with delivery rooms, postnatal care, and neonatal services
- State-of-the-art medical equipment to enhance service delivery and efficiency
- Expanded OPD services, including consultation rooms, diagnostic labs, and a pharmacy.
- Adequate staff trained to handle emergency and routine maternal and outpatient care

Impact on the Community

Since its opening, the new OPD and Maternity Block have significantly improved healthcare delivery in Rachuonyo East by:

- Reducing maternal and infant mortality rates by providing timely and quality maternal care
- Enhancing access to medical consultations in outpatient
- Reducing referrals to distant hospitals
- Boosting community confidence in local healthcare services
- Reducing patient congestion in existing hospital facilities



The newly constructed and functional Maternity Block



An image of the state of the facility before completion of construction.

Residents of Rachuonyo and community leaders have lauded the project's completion, noting its transformative impact:

"Previously, we had to travel to other towns for maternity care, but now, we have quality services right here. This has changed our lives," Rachuonyo resident, Miriam Achieng said.

Healthcare providers also say the new facility has improved their working conditions, enabling them to provide quality services to citizens.

"This facility has greatly improved our ability to provide timely and effective medical care. We now have better equipment and space to attend to patients," Medical Superintendent at Rachuonyo Sub-County Hospital, Dr. James Onyango noted.

Looking Ahead

With the OPD and Maternity Block now fully operational, the County Government and health stakeholders continue to explore ways to enhance service delivery. Plans are underway to introduce specialized maternal health programs, additional staffing, and improved community health outreach initiatives. The completion of this facility is a testament to the power of collaborative development and a commitment to quality healthcare for all. It stands as a model of progress, ensuring that residents of Rachuonyo East receive the best possible medical care close to home.



Stakeholders alongside the IDF, Denmark in Kenya & Uraia Trust representatives during a visit to Rachuonyo East Sub County Hospital after the completion of the facility



County Health representatives, IDF team, Uraia Trust & Ministry of Denmark in Kenya representatives pose for a picture during the facility visit



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