NAKURU COUNTY | NEWS FEATURE

Nakuru Empowers 1,257 Youth Groups with Sh127 Million in Equipment

Initiative targets entrepreneurship, job creation and improved livelihoods across the county

By Joy Muthoni | NAKURU, Kenya

From tailoring and catering to plumbing, beauty services and technical trades, young people across Nakuru County are set to receive practical support to help turn their skills into income-generating businesses following the distribution of equipment worth Sh127 million to 1,257 youth groups.

Nakuru Governor H.E. Susan Kihika presided over the distribution exercise at the Agricultural Training Centre (ATC) in Soilo, saying the initiative was intended to give young people practical resources to establish or expand enterprises, create jobs and improve livelihoods.



Nakuru Governor Susan Kihika walks through the empowerment event at ATC Soilo as equipment and county-branded umbrellas are displayed for distribution.

Equipment aimed at turning skills into businesses

The equipment displayed during the exercise included sewing machines, egg incubators, welding equipment, concrete mixers, smokie trolleys and supplies for catering, event management, hairdressing, barbering, car washing, plumbing and electrical work. The range is intended to support enterprises across different sectors of the local economy.

For youth groups that have the skills but lack the capital to purchase essential tools, equipment support can help lower one of the barriers to starting a business. The longer-term impact will depend on how beneficiaries use the equipment, secure customers and keep their enterprises operating.



Rows of sewing machines displayed during Nakuru County's youth empowerment exercise at ATC Soilo.



Governor Susan Kihika and members of her team inspect equipment displayed for distribution to youth groups.



Pressure washers and other machinery among the equipment displayed during the empowerment exercise.

County targets 3,000 youth groups

Kihika said the county had allocated Sh383 million in the current financial year to empower 3,000 youth groups. The distribution to 1,257 groups forms part of that wider target, according to the information provided for this story.

The governor also said Youth Empowerment Centres had been established in Bondeni and Naivasha to provide spaces for talent development and skills training in music, fashion, tailoring and technology.

The county's approach combines equipment support with skills development, with the aim of helping young people move from training into self-employment and business ownership.



Governor Susan Kihika examines a toolbox among the supplies prepared for youth groups.

Wezesha Fund to support access to finance

Kihika further highlighted the county's Sh100 million Wezesha Fund, which is intended to improve access to affordable financing for enterprises and cooperatives. The fund is expected to complement equipment support by giving eligible businesses another potential avenue to seek financing.

The overall success of the programmes will be measured not only by the equipment distributed or funds allocated, but also by the businesses that remain active, the income generated and the jobs sustained.



Large cooking pots and catering equipment displayed to support youth enterprises in catering and event management.

Bursaries support 4,753 students

The governor also announced bursary allocations for students in Nakuru Town West and Nakuru Town East. Nakuru Town West received Sh18,566,373 for 2,140 students, while Nakuru Town East received Sh14,114,500 for 2,613 students.

Combined, the two constituencies received Sh32,680,873 to support 4,753 students. The allocations are intended to help families meet education-related expenses and reduce financial pressure that can interfere with school attendance.

Free ECDE uniforms planned for January 2027

Kihika said the county planned to introduce free uniforms for learners in public Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) centres from January 2027. She also pointed to the existing Lishe na Mama Uji programme, which supports early childhood nutrition.

The proposed uniform initiative is intended to ease some of the costs families face when preparing young children for school. Its reach and implementation will become clearer as the county moves toward the announced start date.



Youth group representatives and other participants gather under tents during the empowerment exercise at ATC Soilo.



Plumbing materials among the supplies displayed during the youth empowerment exercise.

The empowerment initiative places youth entrepreneurship at the centre of the county's development agenda. For beneficiaries, the equipment offers a starting point; sustained progress will depend on effective use of the tools, access to markets and finance, and the ability to maintain viable businesses.

As Nakuru County pursues its target of reaching 3,000 youth groups, the number of enterprises established, jobs created and livelihoods improved will be important indicators of the programme's long-term impact.