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EDITOR'S NOTE



Daniel M. Nzonzo
Head of Corporate Communication

As we release the 11th Issue of Unyunyizi News, the authoritative source of irrigation news in Kenya, here is a recap as we start a new year. We have enjoyed engagements from our readers through emails, face-to-face conversations, and phone calls on the direction we are taking.

It was good to hear from you. Your feedback, critique and perspectives are helping us to raise this publication to greater heights and give it firmer roots. Together, we are not just waiting for what comes next, we are helping to create it. One thing remains constant; our commitment to be better, to deliver, educate and inspire. Therefore, I believe these

insights have something useful to give your new year a kick-off.

In this issue we feature people who have embraced farming as a source of livelihood through opportunities opened up by irrigation and as implemented by the National Irrigation Authority. We continue demystifying irrigation terms, and in this edition, we focus on 'Water Conveyance'. We also explain Integrity in the National Cohesion and Values section.

We feature Mr Joel Tanui, the Nyanza Regional Coordinator and Western Kenya Irrigation Schemes manager at the National Irrigation Authority in our interview segment. We have also introduced an entertainment segment. Enjoy.

May you carry out as many little kind acts every day as possible in cherishing the gift of life.

Happy New Year full of God-given success.

Chairman of the Board

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WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In the second quarter of the 2021/2022 financial year, the National Irrigation Authority gravitated towards the execution, development and completion of various irrigation projects to pilot the nation towards food security.

The plans of introducing double cropping are under way at Mwea Irrigation Scheme with the objective of increasing crop intensity and acreage under irrigation through the Thiba Dam now at 91 percent completion. The dam's water capacity is projected to be 15.6 million cubic metres.

The Authority is also on course with the implementation of Household Irrigation Water Storage Programme, which incorporates construction of water pans



Chairman of the Board
Hon. Eng. Joshua Toro, REng, MIEK

and rehabilitation of community dams. The project is tailored to yield more acreage under irrigation through use of surface run-off water harvested from rainfall, collected in the water pans. Under the Expanded National Irrigation

Programme (ENIP), the Authority is executing over 200 irrigation projects across the country, putting over 250,000 acres under irrigation and benefiting about 109,000 farmers.

The Authority is studying potential areas to be opened up to irrigation and sustainable irrigation developments as well as educating stakeholders for sustainability.

To my Board, the Authority's management, our staff, farmers and all stakeholders, a big thank you for your profound contribution to the success of the Authority.

I wish you and your families a Happy and Prosperous 2022.

WORD FROM THE CEO



Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, EBS
CEO National Irrigation Authority

Agriculture being the backbone of Kenya's economy, the National Irrigation Authority is making efforts in providing and coordinating sustainable development and management of irrigation services. The goal is to attain sufficient food production in line with the Kenya Vision 2030 and the Big 4 Agenda economic blueprints.

In the second quarter of the Financial Year 2021/2022, the Authority continued to launch new irrigation projects as well as commissioning completed irrigation projects for use by farmers across the country. All these projects aim at accelerating irrigation expansion and support continuous food production for food security and self sustainability.

One of our major milestones within the quarter was hosting His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces when he inspected the works at

Thiba Dam and Mwea Irrigation expansion in Kirinyaga County. He was pleased with the overall progress of the works, which is 91 percent of completion with all its critical components complete.

Additionally, the Public Service Performance Management and Monitoring Unit assessed the Authority's performance, giving us an 'Excellent' score of 1.89. This has been achieved due to the commitment of the Board, Management, staff, stakeholders, and more importantly, farmers with all keen on the country attaining food security.

Throughout the quarter, I was privileged to host the Water, Sanitation and Irrigation Cabinet Secretary Sicily K. Kariuki (Mrs) EGH, the Principal Secretary in the ministry, Joseph W. Irungu, CBS, alongside other senior Government officials and local authorities. The Authority hosted them to launch, commission, and inspect the progress of various irrigation projects across the country. Apart from the execution of irrigation projects, the Authority is keen on ensuring the projects are sustainable and cost-effective. This is how to improve food security by accelerating irrigation expansion.

Last but not least, I was honoured with the Elder of the Order of the Burning Spear Award by His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH, President of the Republic of Kenya during the quarter.

From my office, I wish you a prosperous New Year.

GWA KIONG'O DAM EXPANSION TAKES COMMUNITY TO FOOD HAVEN



By **Rhoda Mbuvi**

At 75 percent completion, Gwa Kiong'o Community Dam expansion is a rich haven of economic activities. Besides the crops under irrigation and a domestic water treatment plant that supplies approximately 300 households, birds swim to the roar of machines compacting the dam walls. The spectacle has attracted bird watchers who agree the experience is therapeutic and a sight to behold. These tourists also enjoy the catches of the undisturbed young men fishing at the dam.

Says Mr. Bernard Ndegwa, the project chairman: "We are happy for this project since rain is scarce in this region. This project is supporting irrigated agriculture, youth fish farming and boating, tourist attraction (birds viewing) and domestic use."



A Section of Gwa Kiong'o Dam in Nyandarua County
Insert: Men with their fishing nets in Gwa Kiong'o Dam

Mr. Michael Maina, one of the youth, says as a fisherman at the Gwa Kiong'o dam, "we are in a group of 10 youth but only five are active. We harvest the fish, sell and earn from it. When the dam is expanded, the shallow waters will increase, hence more youth will be attracted to actively join the group and we will be able to have a good harvest and add more fish species."

According to Joseph Kuria, a labourer

on the project, when he "heard about the commencement of the expansion of this project, I sought employment which has enabled me to develop. I have bought a cow and managed to take care of other projects at home."

Mr Ndegwa, the project chairman, says the expansion of the dam promises "a stable" economic outlook. "I am grateful to the Government through the National Irrigation Authority for this project. We can now say we are part of the President's Big 4 Agenda on food security. The youth here cannot say there is no employment."

“

Mr. Bernard Ndegwa

We are happy for this project since rain is scarce in this region. This project is supporting irrigated agriculture, youth fish farming and boating, tourist attraction (birds viewing) and domestic use.



Expansion works in Gwa Kiong'o dam

THIBA DAM: MWEA RICE FARMERS HAVE A REASON TO SMILE



By **JOHNBOSCO
OBONYO**

Excitement is in the air. Mwea rice farmers have a reason to smile as Thiba Dam, which will supplement water supply to the scheme is nearing completion. When this dream is finally realised and waters are channelled to the scheme, it will dovetail with the National Irrigation Authority's commitment to help farmers increase yields.

Farmers here cite several challenges in producing the crop. "Every year, we experience water shortages, water is rationed during distribution, our crop is suffering and we do not have enough water" Mr. Peter Muriithi, a farmer in Mwea Irrigation Scheme, says.

Speaking in Kabare Ward in Kirinyaga County while inspecting the progress of Thiba Dam and Mwea Irrigation Expansion Area, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H, stated that the dam will be a game-changer once completed and the Big Four Agenda pillar on food security and nutrition will increase



H. E Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta (Center) during a recent visit to Thiba Dam in Kirinyaga County.

exponentially. He further stated that Thiba Dam will provide enough water to enable the farmers in Mwea to practice double-cropping.

In line with building a robust economy in Kirinyaga County, the construction materials and labour are being procured from the region, creating many job opportunities. "Through this job, I earn a decent livelihood and I can afford to pay education expenses for my siblings," Mary Charles, a bulldozer operator in Thiba Dam, says.

"Being a woman in this androcentric work environment can sometimes be difficult, but this job has made

me stand out in my career through my work ethic and professionalism. It has also helped me break some stereotypes at work and take care of my family and myself. I appreciate how this project has empowered women in Kirinyaga County," shares Tabitha Njeri, an excavator operator at the Thiba Dam site.

Thiba Dam has a target capacity of 15.6 million cubic metres that is expected to stabilise water supply to the 25,000 acres in Mwea Irrigation Scheme and an additional 10,000 acres in the Mutithi expansion area. As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility under this dam project, the Authority will establish additional small-scale schemes to command around 1,200 acres.

Once the dam is completed, farmers will practise double cropping to increase rice production from 114,000 to 200,000 metric tonnes, thus increasing the value of rice from KSh10 billion to KSh18 billion and expanding into horticultural crops valued at KSh2.96 billion per annum. It is expected to increase the number of direct jobs from 125,000 to 175,000.



A section of Thiba Dam under construction in Kirinyaga County

PICTORIAL

1



2



1. His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Kenya and the Commander-In-Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H (second right) accompanied by Water, Sanitation and Irrigation Cabinet Secretary Sicily K. Kariuki (Mrs) E.G.H (second left), Water, Sanitation and Irrigation PS Joseph W. Irungu, C.B.S (left), National Irrigation

Authority Board Chairman Hon. Eng. Joshua Toro, REng, MIEK (right) and National Irrigation Authority CEO Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, EBS (centre) during an inspection tour of Thiba Dam in October 18, 2021.

2. Water, Sanitation and Irrigation CS Sicily K. Kariuki (Mrs), E.G.H (right) and National Irrigation Authority

PICTORIAL

3



4



Chairman of the Board Hon. Eng. Joshua Toro, REng, MIEK (centre) commission Upper Gitwe Irrigation Project in Nyandarua County on October 15, 2021.

3. Water, Sanitation and Irrigation Cabinet Secretary Sicily K. Kariuki (Mrs), E.G.H (centre) and officials from the National Irrigation Authority inspect the works in Galana Kulalu Model Farm on October 25, 2021.
4. Water, Sanitation and Irrigation Cabinet Secretary Sicily K. Kariuki (Mrs), E.G.H, commissions the rehabilitation of Kanyiriri Water Pan in Oljoro Orok

5



Constituency, Nyandarua County, on November 26, 2021.

5. Water, Sanitation and Irrigation PS Joseph W. Irungu, C.B.S (centre), National Irrigation Authority CEO Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, EBS (right), Wajir North Member of Parliament Hon. Ibrahim Ahmed Abdisal and other local leaders during an inspection tour of irrigation projects in Wajir North Constituency on November 4, 2021.

END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REVIEW, 2021



STAFF NEWS

GET WELL SOON, MR. STEPHEN APOME!

Stephen, we remind you how strong you are and that we are thinking about you. We wish you a quick recovery.



Congratulations Ms. Maxmiller Ong'ondo, on the birth of your son. We send you and your family our warm wishes as the NIA family. May the baby grow to bring you joy, always.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MR. SAMUEL MURIUKI



Mr. Samuel Muriuki, who was a Reserach Assistant stationed at Tana Irrigation Scheme, passed away on October 23, 2021. He was a caring man who loved others deeply. Continue resting in eternal peace, Samuel.

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE TO THOSE THAT HAVE LOST THEIR LOVED ONES.



Today and always, may loving memories bring you peace and strength. May God comfort and heal you.

COCONUT STANDS TALL AT GALANA KULALU MODEL FARM

By LORNA MAKENA and KEN LANGAT

Maize is probably synonymous with the Galana Kulalu Food Security Project (GKFSP). Perhaps this is because the crop does exceptionally well at the model farm. However, there is a 50-acre demonstration farm for crop diversification, 40 acres (80 percent) of which are set aside for coconut.

The main coconut variety at GKFSP is the African Yellow Dwarf, which is shorter, matures faster and produces higher yield. The coconut tree grows under conditions of 27°C-36°C and in a well distributed rainfall pattern or irrigation of 200mm per day. Coconut seedlings are spaced 7m x 7m with a hole dug at one metre. An acre can hold up to 81 seedlings.

Preceding planting, the pits are filled up with top soil and powdered manure up to a depth of two feet. The seedlings are then planted and filled up with soil to avoid water stagnation.

About 20-30kg of organic and compost manure are applied annually to guarantee high productivity while



Photo Courtesy: The African Yellow Dwarf Coconut



Coconut crop plantation in Galana Kulalu Model Farm in Tana River County

40

Acres under coconut farming in Galana Kulalu Model Farm.

the method of irrigation is the drip system with a discharge of 1.6 litres per hour to that helps in water and energy conservation.

Soil moisture often limits coconut production and irrigation requirement varies, depending on the soil type and climatic conditions.

The rhinoceros beetle, the red palm weevil and the black headed caterpillar are its major insect pests. The Authority's team of researchers has devised control measures, including using pheromone traps for attracting weevils and killing them, practising clean cultivation by cutting and disposing of the damaged and decaying coconut stumps and also avoiding slashing trunks as the pests



Photo Courtesy: Coconut seed

lay eggs on the cut parts.

The African Yellow Dwarf takes three years to mature and produces about 240kg per tree translating to 19,440kg per acre and KSh194,400 at KSh10 per kilo.

Did you know? Coconut got its name from European explorers who named it 'coco,' meaning hobgoblin, because the three dark spots on the shell resemble a monkey's face.

IRRIGATION BEARS PEACE FRUIT IN ISIOLO COUNTY



Pawpaws in Rapsu Irrigation Project, Isiolo County



By Caroline Maina

The construction of intake works, canals and project access roads by the National Irrigation Authority in Rapsu irrigation project rescued the residents of Garbatulla in August 2013. Before this project, farmers struggled to access water points, not only walking several kilometres for it, but they were also at risk of wildlife attacks.

About 450 kilometres from Nairobi lies Rapsu Irrigation Project, a 200-acre project along the gentle slopes of Nyambene Hills. It is situated in Garbatulla and draws its

water from River Bisanadi.

Mr Abdinassir Ware is the Irrigation Water Users Association (IWUA) chairman in this project and also a beneficiary. Mr Ware has a two-acre farm where he plants paw-paws in one acre and onions, tomatoes and sweet potatoes in the other acre. He sells his pawpaws to a fruit company in Meru County. The rest of his farm produce is sold in Garbatulla. Through this, he has been able to educate his children and provide his family with basic needs.

Aside from water, he says technological know-how was also a challenge. However, Mr. Ware is thankful that the Authority not only provided irrigation water to him and his community, but the NIA

sent experts to teach them how to cultivate crops of their choice. "The Rapsu Irrigation Project has provided a livelihood to the locals in Garbatulla. It has also provided jobs for the youth, and as a result, crime rates in the area have

dropped considerably," Mr. Ware explains.

They are no longer reliant on neighbouring villages for food, but instead produce enough to eat and sell the surplus in the Isiolo-South Constituency and nearby communities. Agricultural production, he explained, has a big growth impact on the economy and that it has a multiplier effect when production is stable, reliable, and predictable.

“

Mr. Abdinassir Ware

The Rapsu Irrigation Project has provided a livelihood to the locals in Garbatulla. It has also provided jobs for the youth, and as a result, crime rates in the area have dropped considerably



Onions in Rapsu Irrigation Project, Isiolo County

IRRIGATION DEMYSTIFIED: WATER CONVEYANCE



By **Dennis Indimuli**

Unyunyizi News continues with its series of explaining irrigation words and terms to stakeholders, among them farmers, and putting them into context. In this edition, the term is ‘Water Conveyance’.

Definition

Water conveyance is the process of channelling water from its source (river, water pan, dam, tanks...) to the farm. This can be through tanker trucks, canals, pipelines, siphons, and sprinklers among others.

Case study

At Mwea Irrigation Scheme, water is drawn from Thiba and Nyamindi rivers. The water is collected in a weir, channelled to the farms through a canal to irrigate crops through different irrigation systems. This is the case in the irrigation schemes under the Authority’s man-



Mwea Irrigation Scheme intake along river Nyamindi

agement. (Refer to *Unyunyizi News* 6th, 7th and 8th editions for in-depth assessment of weir, canals and irrigation systems at <https://www.irrigation.go.ke/news-letters/>).

In Galana Kulalu Model Farm, water is abstracted from River Galana at the intake and pumped to a filtration point after which it is conveyed to the farms through High Density Polythene (HDPE) pipes and used to irrigate crops using centre-pivots, drip, and sprinklers. Muringa Banana Irrigation Project on the other hand uses pipelines to convey water. Water is trapped from Mutonga and Maara Rivers into a water intake point. It is then directed to the farms using pipes. The beneficiaries use sprinklers and drip to irrigate crops.

The Authority is also excavating water pans across various counties. Water is channelled to the water pan using an inlet for storage. The farmers draw the water in various ways, including solar, moneymaker and motor pumps to irrigate using sprinklers, drips or furrows.



Galana Kulalu Model Farm Intake in Tana River County

Best practices

80 percent of Kenyan land is arid and semi-arid; so, it is needful to use water responsibly for maximum gains. There are many water-saving measures that may be used by both large and small-scale farmers.

The Water Saving Rice Culture and System of Rice Intensification first introduced in Mwea Irrigation Scheme are some of the methods that have not only proved to be efficient in saving water but also increasing yields.

The use of water saving irrigation systems such as drips and sprinklers at the household level is another way of using water sparingly and more efficiently. Most farmers at the household level have embraced these irrigation systems assuring sustainability and longevity of the available water.



Drip Irrigation System

HOW INTEGRITY IS GROWING IRRIGATION IN KENYA



Fundermental Values of Integrity



By Caroline Maina

Doing the right thing when no one is watching is integrity. Ethical and truthful service delivery and upholding consistent moral principles are at the core of integrity. Being steadfast and consistent in what is right, both in public and private, says it all as captured in the National Values and Principles of Governance booklet by the Directorate of National Cohesion and Values. Integrity is one of the national values as well as a core value at the National Irrigation

Authority.

Under it, the Authority endeavours to demonstrate the highest ethical standards in all aspects of service delivery, complete with transparency, deep commitment to customers and every community we serve. The Authority also thrives in disclosure while upholding clarity and simplicity in all its undertakings.

In a customer satisfaction survey done by the Authority in the 2020/2021 financial year, in one of the questions, we sought to know how satisfied our external and internal customers were on several service delivery attributes. Among others, the respondents strongly agreed that the Authority

was ethical while delivering services and professional.

Values can be placed in several levels, including personal, family, religious/spiritual, cultural/communal/societal, institutional/corporate/organizational planks. Upholding any of the 17 national values at an individual or family level is that, bringing on board the other values at different levels becomes easier.

The development and contributing factors to good character is the continual process of understanding the components and actions of love. It is these components that provide the guidance for compassion, integrity, behaviours and actions that transcend living only for self.

“Creating a culture of integrity and accountability not only improves effectiveness, it also generates a respectful, enjoyable and life-giving setting in which to work.” -Tom Hanson

“To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.” -Donald A. Adams

In the 12th issue of *Unyunyizi News*, we will look at ‘Transparency and Accountability’.



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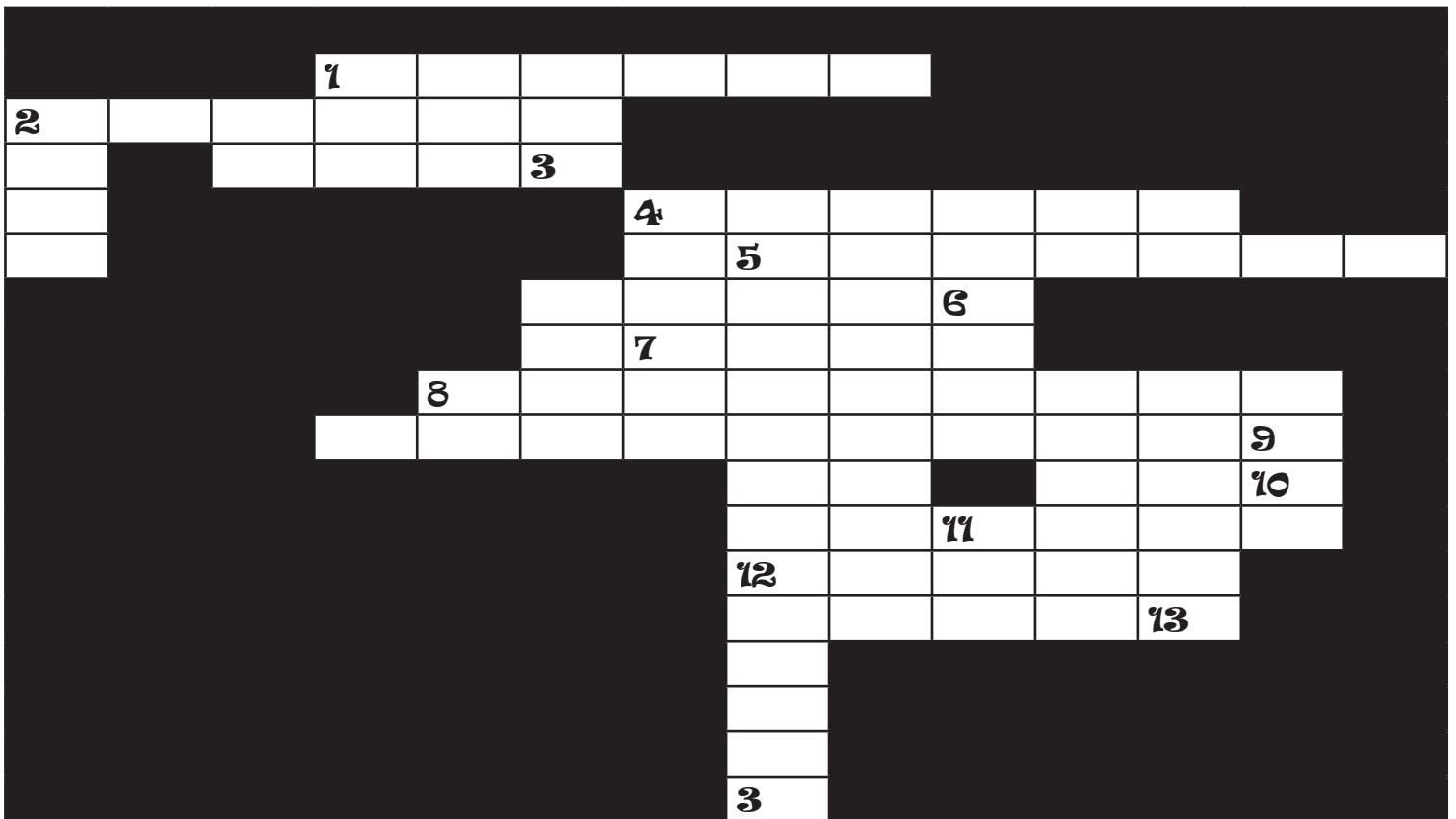
**Send them to complaints@irrigation.go.ke
We will act.**



www.irrigation.go.ke



CROSS WORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. Earnings
2. Used for dampening soil
3. Produce
4. The structure between a river and canal
5. Isaac Newton discovered it
6. Conveys water for irrigation
7. Sediment
8. Remove suspended sediment
9. Carrying from one place to another

10. Free from all deductions

11. An irrigation scheme in the Coastal Region of Kenya

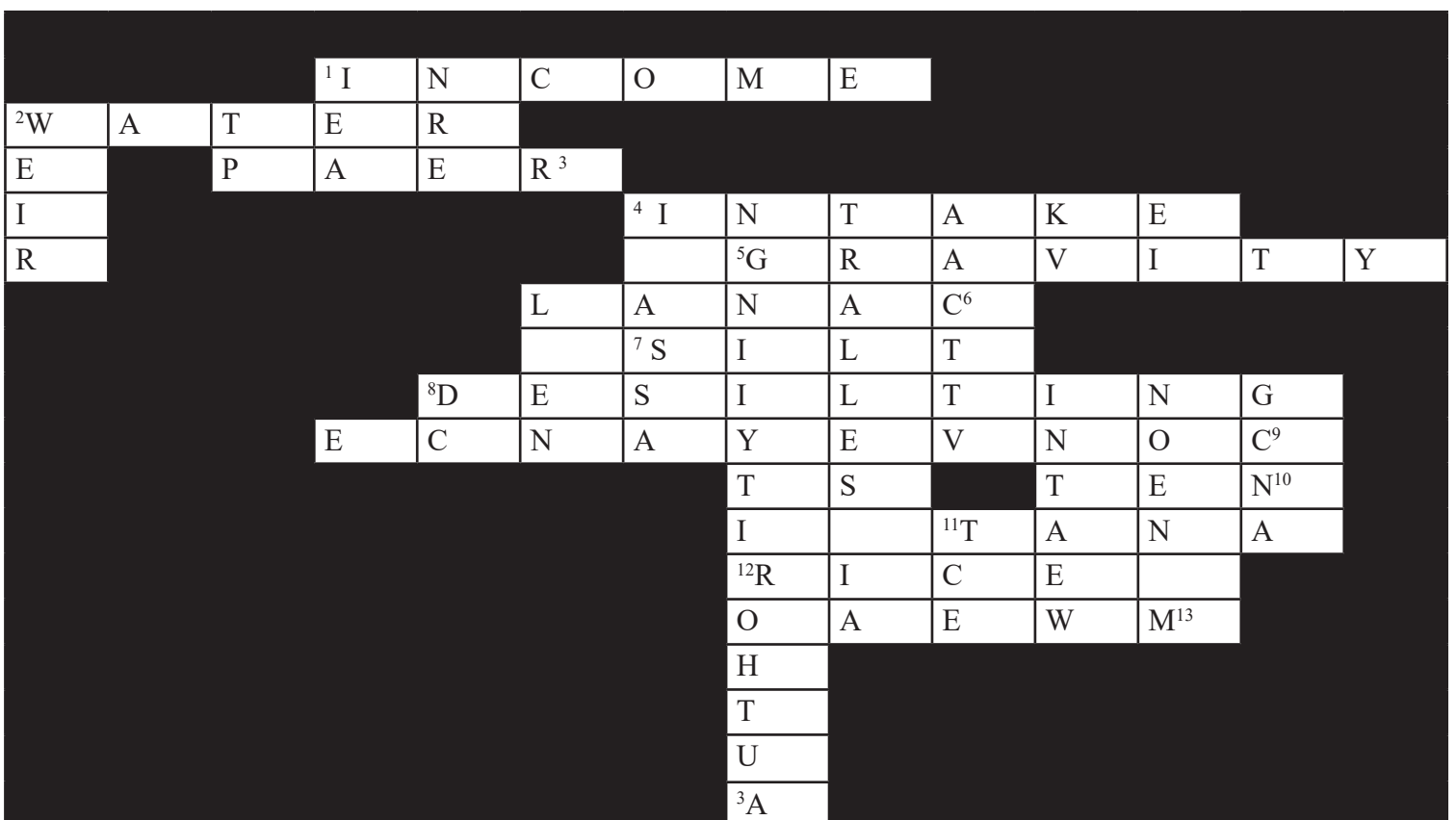
12. A favorite serving on our tables

13. Currently the largest irrigation scheme in Kenya

UP/DOWN

2. A low dam built across a river

3. Of power



JOEL TANUI: AGRONOMIST WITH GOLDEN HANDS DELIVERING CHANGE



By [Brendah Rajwayi](#)

Mr. Joel Tanui is the Nyanza Regional Coordinator and Western Kenya Irrigation Schemes (Ahero and West Kano) manager at the National Irrigation Authority (NIA). People, his colleagues, including those he supervises regard him as a performer, philanthropist, and a mentor par excellence. He is an honourable man honored in this region.

Widely read and experienced in matters agriculture, he never thought he would fall in love with this discipline. His heart was in commerce, eyeing Finance to deal with stocks and related subjects.

This interview was conducted at his office in Ahero Irrigation Scheme.

The praises I have heard about you are overwhelming. How have you obtained this favour?

Nothing really (he murmurs). Thinking of it, I came to make change and change is what I have delivered. I am a hands-on person and as such, I am fully involved in everything I do.

Take me through your growing up.

I grew up in Nandi, the land of tea, in a family of five. The first born and the only boy child. My father worked for a multinational company as a manager, hence we had enough to go by. My education started at Nandi Hills Academy, now referred to as Nandi Hills Primary School and continued at Lelwak Primary School in the village after my father resigned and ventured into dairy and tea farming. My first day at school was dramatic. Kids surrounded me, amazed to see me in shoes. As you



Mr. Joel Tanui, Nyanza Regional Coordinator and Western Kenya Irrigation Schemes Manager

can guess, that was the last day I wore shoes to Lelwak. My mum, the disciplinarian, ensured I was in full school uniform, including shoes, but on leaving her sight, I would remove them and have them back on in the

evening. I had to fit in, or maybe, I needed to.

My performance earned me a space at Kapsabet High School then later to the University of Nairobi (UoN) for a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture

(he pauses). By the way, I shared the same university and hall with our current Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr. Gitonga Mugambi and his Deputy General Manager, Operations (DGM,O), Mr. Daniel Atula. We have a common training background.

Was your heart always in Agriculture?

Not at all. Commerce was it for me. I declined an offer to study agriculture at UoN and had my parents and uncle take me to Kenya School of Professional Studies where I thought I would talk the Principal into studying commerce as a self-sponsored student. It turned into a guidance and counselling session, leaving me convinced to study Agriculture.

Back then, I understand you had a two-year break before joining university. Was it the case with you?

Yes. It worked very well with me because as I helped my father with his dairy and tea farming, he was gracious enough to gift me 10 acres of land on which I cropped sunflower and Boma Rhodes and sold the produce to Kenya Seed Company. I joined UoN in 2001 a rich kid with a Sony Ericsson worth KSh10,000 and a Sh3,000-sim card. Nowadays sim cards go for KSh50.00? (We laugh and I interject, 'Some are actually free of charge' and the laughter continues. He still uses the same phone number to date).

What do you recall about your first job?

It was at Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), [now the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation, KALRO]. In my last year, I visited the Director General to pitch for a job which he granted, saying that my daring and courageous spirit earned me the position. I began at the Agricultural Information Centre with the task of reviewing the agricultural goods received at the institution. Six months into it, I applied and got a job as the assistant project manager with Farming Systems Kenya (FSK), department of Crops and Environment, providing leadership in the crop production trainings. I also planned and facilitated implementation of rural households integrated agricultural and water projects funded by United Nations Development Programme in Nakuru and Baringo counties.

Where did your story at NIA begin?

A year into FSK, I applied for an advertised Irrigation Officer job in the Daily Nation newspaper to an undisclosed organisation (ended up to be NIA). Two months later, I received a call from Grace Gitahi, the then secretary to the CEO (Eng. Phillip Olum) and now the Senior Administration Officer at the Authority, inviting me for an interview. Out of 12 candidates, 10 were already working as casuals in the organisation. Catherine Machunga, an Irrigation Research Officer at Tana Irrigation Scheme and

I got the job. Notably in the interview was Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, at the time in charge of Planning and Ag. Chief Human Resource Officer and Mr. Daniel Atula, the Chief Irrigation Officer. Later, I learnt from Mr. Mugambi that after my interview, the Chairman of the Board seconded by his Board said "Wow. We have the candidate we were looking for."

How is the journey?

I began as an Irrigation Officer at Mwea Irrigation Agriculture Development (MIAD) Centre tasked with developing and managing a model farm to generate income for Mwea Irrigation Scheme under Dr. Raphael Wanjogu, currently the Chief Officer in charge of Research at NIA. A year later, I was deployed to Ahero Irrigation Research Station (AIRS) as the Officer-in-Charge. I revived the station and developed a model farm with the guidance of Mr. Abdi Hassan and Stephen Apome, who were the Manager and Irrigation Officer for Ahero respectively. The revival attracted international collaborators such as World Food Programme, Food and Agriculture Organisation, and students from different universities (local and international) doing their research from the station among others.

What do you pride in so far?

Among others, getting about 12,000 acres under irrigation. 1,500 acres in Bunyala Irrigation Scheme and about 10,000 acres in Ahero Irrigation Scheme, which currently has over 13,000 acres under irrigation in a record four years. It has needed a lot of community mobilisation and



Farmers in Ahero Irrigation Scheme transplanting rice

sensitisation and it wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of the highly talented and skilled officers in Nyanza, support from the Management and CEO and more so the farmers. As a result, we now serve over 10,000 farmers directly, have created over 50,000 jobs and benefitting more than 200,000 people indirectly. The CEO's Award I got recently caught me by surprise and it is humbling to know that good work doesn't go unnoticed.



Mr. Joel Tanui receiving an award from the National Irrigation Authority CEO Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, EBS at Safari Park Hotel on December 17, 2021.

Anyone you look up to at NIA?

Yes, Mr. Mugambi and Mr. Atula. I appreciate their guidance and belief in me. They have always tasked me with challenging responsibilities with the belief that I can deliver. I also admire how they work and I believe that having a common training background with them has helped us have a better understanding of each other.

What are some of the major setbacks you have experienced in line of duty?

Floods! In this region, when it rains, it pours. The bursting of the River Nzoia banks and the rising of water levels in Lake Victoria are catastrophic. In 2010, as the Manager at Bunyala Irrigation Scheme, I was excited with the developments in the Scheme among them increasing the acreage from 500 to 2,000 acres. The excitement did not last long; floods swept it all, submerging the infrastructure. This being my first experience with floods, I laughed off people's counsel to move to the highlands, which were safer and instead took my blanket and slept on my house's rooftop. I hoped that by morning the water levels would have gone down only to wake up to the water levels having risen to my rooftop from where I was rescued. Ahero and West Kano Irrigation Schemes are also prone to floods. Through collaborations with the farmers and political leaders in the region, who appreciate the impact of rice in this region, we have always managed to get the farmers back to production.

What causes are you undertaking to give back to the Society?

I am a philanthropist. My wife and I have constructed a facility for Early Childhood Development and Education here in Ahero and plan to construct a modern facility in Nandi County. One's upbringing influences them greatly, and as such, my wife and I would like to see young

children learn in better environments. I also sponsor football tournaments in the community annually as well as pay school fees for some of the needy students in this community. Thirdly, through my connections with the University of Queensland, we have a Memorandum of Understanding for six months study sponsorship of one NIA staff annually. Eng. Charles Wanjala, an engineer at Ahero Irrigation Scheme, is a beneficiary. Finally, I am into mentoring young people who come under my wings. In my basket, I have among others, Mr. Ken Ouma, the current Manager at Lower Kuja Irrigation Scheme and Mr. Isaac Munga, an Irrigation Officer at Ahero Irrigation Scheme.

Family?

Yes, apart from the broader extended family, my nuclear circle includes my wife and three beautiful daughters (two are twins). She is from Pakistan. I met her in 2009 as a student from Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands. She was in Kenya for her research on entomology and mosquito control as part of her post-doctorate studies. Now, she is Kenyan and a researcher at International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE). Some of the things, which beautify our union, are, firstly, contrary to the African norm of having your elders negotiate for your wife's hand in marriage, I did it on my own. Secondly, manoeuvring through the cultural, racial, social and religious differences between us successfully contributes to the cherished moments and, thirdly, among others, the blessing of twins, in a period I was outside the country for studies and still being a hands-on dad, thanks to her making countless travels crowning it all.

How do you balance work and family life?

Thanks to my wife, I have a routine, which I follow to the letter. As a fitness enthusiast, I wake up every day at 4:00am and spend an hour at the gym. Then I prepare breakfast for my girls who are up at 6:30am for school. I get to the office by 7:30am. My days in the office are scheduled such that, I have time at the field with farmers, time with service providers/customers sorting out their issues and so on. Between 5:00-6:00pm, I follow up on my side-hustles, among them being poultry and avocado farming. I dedicate my time to my girls once I am home at 6.00pm.

Any advice to people starting out on their career?

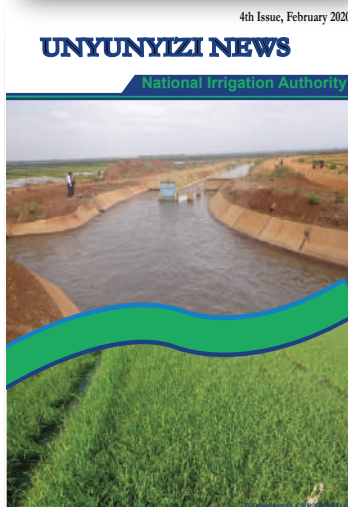
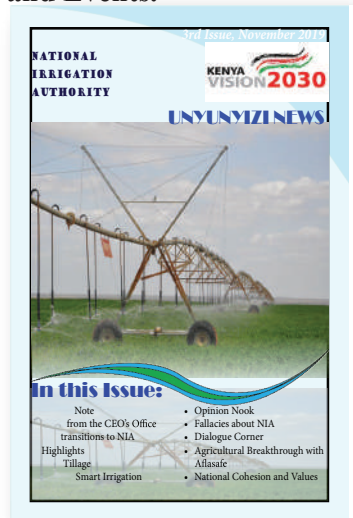
Renew yourself professionally, take an extra mile, seek mentorship, and mingle with smart people.

Parting shot?

Something I learnt from my favorite human; my grandma: never pay evil with evil, and you will never lack when you give.

OUR JOURNEY

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