

Transforming Technical Education: Nyeri County Empowers Youth Through Leather Production and Skill-Based Initiatives

County:	Nyeri County		
Sector/s:	Education	Sub-sector/Theme:	Youth empowerment
Keywords: (for search in the online platform)	Rukira Technical Training Center Nyeri County Leather Production Unit Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers		
Target Audience:	Counties, Partners, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers		
Authors (contacts and their institutions can be included as well)	Nzei Mwende – Program Assistant Maarifa Centre		
Resource Persons (include their designations)	James Kiretai – Chief Officer Education, Nyeri County Lawrence Magaci- Institution Manager at Rukira Technical Training Centre Veronica Ndiritu – Trainer at Rukira Technical Training Centre Consolata Njai- Trainer at Rukira Technical Training Centre Evangeline Nyaguthi- Trainer at Rukira Technical Training Centre Monica Gitari- Trainer at Rukira Technical Training Centre		

--

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers play a vital role in providing a wide range of educational and training programs that offer practical knowledge and skills applicable to various industries and sectors. These programs encompass both formal and informal learning approaches, taking place within educational institutions as well as real-world work settings. The main objective of TVET is to equip individuals with the necessary competencies and expertise relevant to specific occupations, thereby preparing them for diverse roles within the economic and social spheres. The increasing demand for a skilled workforce has led to a growing recognition of the significance of a skill-based curriculum in educational institutions worldwide. Such a curriculum emphasizes hands-on learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and the acquisition of industry-specific knowledge. To align with this approach, the County Government of Nyeri is prioritizing the transformation of all TVET centers into vibrant business hubs, where the skill-based curriculum is implemented. One of the reasons behind the transformation of polytechnics into business hubs was to foster self-sustainability. For instance, polytechnics offering hair and beauty programs would establish salons where clients could visit to have their hair styled by professional students, hence generating income to support the institution's expenses. Guided by this vision, the County Government of Nyeri established a leather production unit at Rukira Technical Training Centre to provide skills in shoemaking to the students. Following the structured curriculum provided by the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), the Centre educates the students and subsequently administers examinations for them to obtain certifications. In a bid to assist students undertaking this course, the County Government has waived all school fees, ensuring it is accessible to interested individuals without any financial burden. Furthermore, the County has acquired state-of-the-art shoe-making equipment, constructed a specialized facility, and recruited competent instructors to offer training to the students. While the County Government presently donates the shoes manufactured by the production unit to underprivileged students in primary and high schools, the unit has the capacity to produce 900 shoes within a 24-hour shift with a team of 20 personnel.



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS



A trainer demonstrating on shoemaking at Rukira Technical Training Centre

Implementation of the practice

On Wednesday, April 12, 2017, Rukira Vocational Training Centre received official registration from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA). In 2019, the concept of establishing a leather production unit at the Centre originated from the Department of Gender, Youth, and Social Services to support the youth. In that same year, the County arranged for the trainers to participate in a six-week training program at the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI) to enhance their skills in crafting a wide range of leather products. Additionally, to acquire proficiency in utilizing modern shoe-making equipment, the County invited the Kenya Industrial Training Institute (KITI) for a ten-day training session specifically tailored for the teachers. Due to the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of the project was suspended throughout the entire year of 2020. However, in 2022, as curfews were lifted



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS



and people resumed their normal routines, the equipment was successfully imported from China to Kenya.

The following were the procured equipment.

NO	ECRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE(KES)	TOTAL AMOUNT(KES)
1	Clicking Machine 370mm	1	663,320.00	663,320.00
2	Skiving Machine(Heavy Duty)	1	95,996.00	95,996.00
3	Single Needle, lockstitch, flatbed sewing machine	1	91,876.00	91,876.00
4	Flat Bed Single Needle (Standard-Roller Feed)	1	130,192.00	130,192.00
5	Post Bed Single Needle Sewing Machine(standard)	1	118,450.00	118,450.00
6	Cylinder Arm Machine (Single Needle)	1	99,704.00	99,704.00
8	Labelling and Numbering Machine (pneumatic)	1	133,900.00	133,900.00
9	Plating and Embossing Machine	1	53,045.00	53,045.00
10	Toe Puff Steaming Machine	1	61,388.00	61,388.00
12	Toe Lasting Machine	1	3,553,500.00	3,553,500.00
13	Side And Heel Lasting Machine	1	2,703,750.00	2,703,750.00
15	Hydraulic De-Lasting Machine	1	267,800.00	267,800.00
SUB TOTAL				6,993,790.35
VAT 14%				979,130.65
TOTAL INCL. VAT				7,972,921.00

Equipment Procurement receipt

On August 4th, 2022, the machines purchased for the leather unit facility were successfully installed. Following that, school admissions began in March 2023 and a total of 12 students were enrolled.

During this pilot stage, the County Government of Nyeri has allocated a budget of Ksh2.1 million to cover the students' school fees and procure essential raw materials such as leather, soles, shoelaces, cutting pads, cutting dies, and other necessary items.

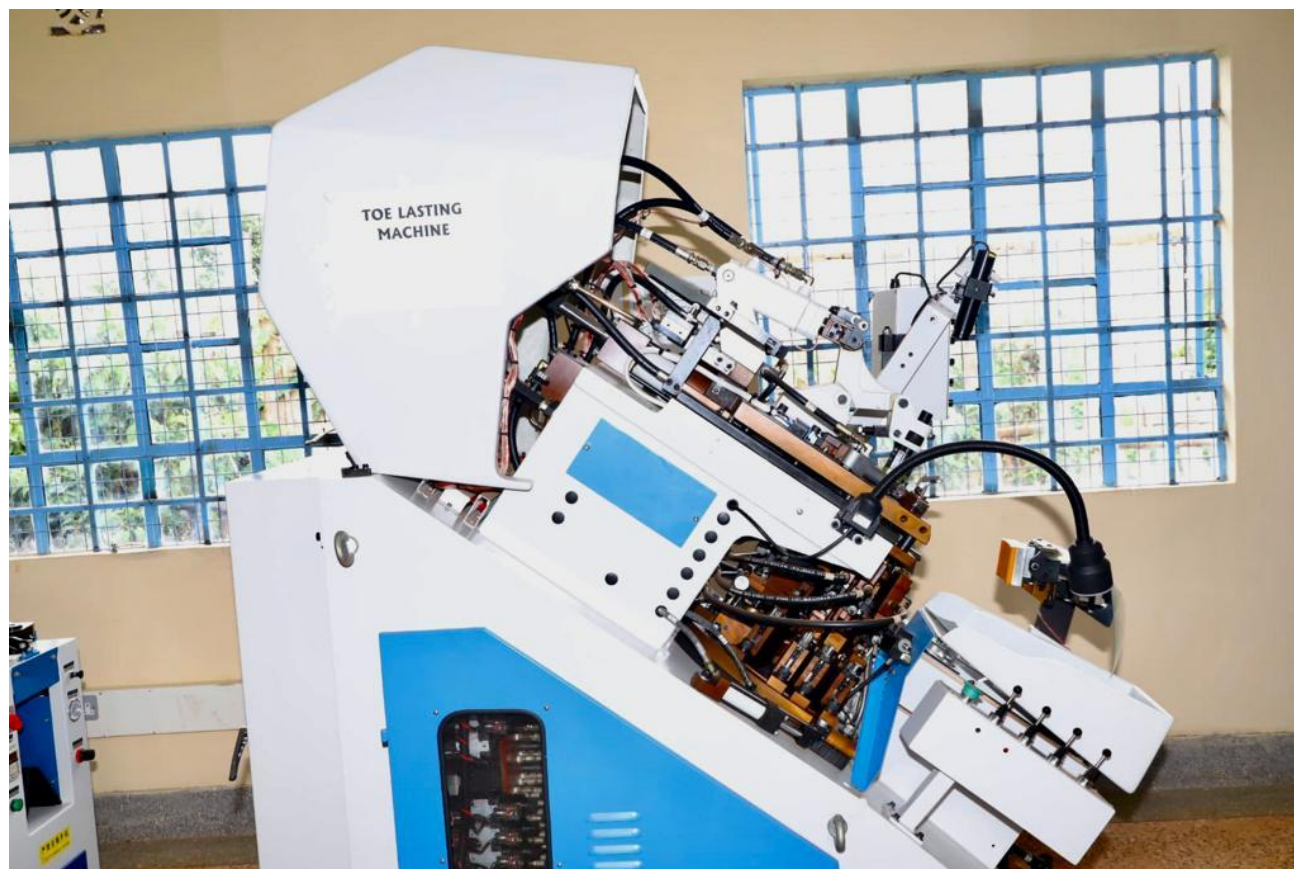
While the County is currently working on developing a legal framework to ensure the sustainability of this initiative, it holds the hope that the trained students will become ambassadors for this skill in their respective sub-counties. The County plans to expand the



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS



unit and hire more trainers to enhance production. Further, there is a plan to commercialize the unit to secure its long-term sustainability.



Toe lasting Machine at Rukira Leather Production Unit



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS



A photo of students attending a practical class session in the leather production unit

Results of the practice

- As a result of free education, young individuals have relinquished the usage of drugs and redirected their focus towards acquiring skills.
- Through enrolling the teachers in KIPi (Kenya Industrial Property Institute) for training on the utilization of modern machines, the institution is now able to provide training that aligns with the current market demands, facilitated by the acquisition of new equipment.
- Parents have had a mindset shift towards Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and embraced curricula that prioritize skill-based education.



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS



- The Centre has created job opportunities for the teachers who instruct the students and granted them the opportunity to pursue further studies.
- The shoes manufactured at the Centre are generously donated to underprivileged students in primary and high schools, which has greatly benefited the society. This initiative not only provides necessary footwear to those in need but also contributes to enhancing their overall well-being and educational experience. The donations help improve the students' self-esteem, health, and overall access to education by addressing the challenges they may face due to lack of proper shoes. Furthermore, it fosters a sense of community support and solidarity, promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities for all. shorten and use professional vocabulary.

Lessons learnt:

- Strict adherence to occupational safety requirements is crucial, necessitating the utilization of personal protective equipment (PPE). This measure serves to prevent injuries and mitigate the potential risk of substance dependency that may arise from handling specific products, such as adhesive substances utilized in the shoe manufacturing process.
- It is essential to have local mechanics available for the repair and servicing of the machines. Currently, in case of any repairs, the leather unit trainers have to wait for a technician from Nairobi to go to Rukira to repair a broken machine.
- To ensure a healthy working environment for trainers and teachers, the facility requires fume and noise extraction machines. These machines are essential in removing harmful fumes and reducing noise levels, safeguarding the well-being of the staff.
- To address potential electricity outages, it is necessary to have a power backup system in place for the facility. This ensures uninterrupted operations and allows for continued productivity even during periods of power failure.
- Expanding the facility's space, particularly by adding an outdoor shade, is crucial to provide a designated area for teachers and students to apply glue without compromising their health. The open space outside can serve as a suitable location for this activity, ensuring proper ventilation and minimizing potential health risks associated with glue application.



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS



Conclusion

In conclusion, the establishment of the leather production unit at Rukira Vocational Training Centre, supported by the County Government of Nyeri, has been a significant stride towards promoting technical and vocational education. This initiative, accompanied by the procurement of modern equipment and the enrollment of trainers in specialized training programs, has ensured the provision of relevant and market-driven skills to the students. The Centre's commitment to offering free education, along with the donation of shoes to underprivileged students, has positively impacted society by enhancing access to education, improving well-being, and fostering inclusivity. However, there remains a need for continued efforts in developing a legal framework, ensuring occupational safety measures, and addressing logistical challenges such as the availability of local mechanics and power backup. By addressing these aspects, the Centre can further strengthen its role as a catalyst for skill development, community support, and the empowerment of youth in the region.