

May 31st – June 6th 2025

KEWI to Revolutionize Water Quality Testing in Remote Locations Through Portable Water Testing Kits



Mr. Adrian Letzner (holding the microphone) Owner and CEO of LETZTEST explains how to use a mobile water quality testing laboratory kit component during a training on how to use the kit at KEWI. KEWI is currently training its water quality officers on how to operate the kit ahead of its rollout for use to offer services for the water sector and for training to other users.

BY: PIUS KIMANI

In a country where access to clean and safe drinking water remains a major public health concern, especially in remote and underserved regions, the Kenya Water Institute (KEWI) is making a significant leap forward. In a bold and strategic move, KEWI has begun training its core team of water quality officers on the use of a state-of-the-art portable water quality laboratory kit. This training,

conducted with support from LETZTEST – a leading German manufacturer of innovative water testing solutions – marks the launch of a transformative initiative to decentralize water testing services in Kenya.

The newly introduced portable water quality lab kit is more than a technological upgrade; it is a lifeline for communities previously cut off from timely and accurate water safety assessments.

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KEWI to Revolutionize Water Quality Testing in Remote Locations Through Portable Water Testing Kits



The mobile Water Quality Testing Kit on display at KEWI.

Designed specifically for challenging environments, LETZTEST's equipment is tailored to function efficiently in regions lacking infrastructure, electricity, and technical expertise. This donation signals a strong international collaboration aimed at addressing critical public health risks associated with waterborne diseases, especially those stemming from fecal contamination.

LETZTEST's suite of tools includes easy-to-use, cost-effective, and robust testing equipment that functions entirely without electricity. This includes the world's first electricity-free incubator for microbiological testing—a groundbreaking solution for incubating water samples even in areas without power. Together with the portable membrane filtration kit, which quantifies E. coli and other

fecal indicator bacteria according to global standards (DIN EN ISO 9308-1), these innovations form a complete mobile laboratory system capable of delivering real-time data from the field.

The presence of fecal bacteria in water sources is a serious public health threat, often linked to outbreaks of cholera and other waterborne illnesses. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), safe drinking water must be free of fecal indicators such as E. coli. KEWI's use of LETZTEST's test tubes and filtration systems ensures that water sources, especially in remote areas, are regularly monitored and deemed safe before consumption.

However, KEWI's vision extends beyond mere testing. The ongoing hands-on training of its technical and consultancy staff serves a dual

purpose. First, it builds internal capacity to deploy and manage this sophisticated technology efficiently. Second, it lays the groundwork for the development of specialized Professional Development Coaching Programs. These programs will eventually be integrated into

KEWI's short courses department, reinforcing the institute's national role as a center of excellence in water quality services.

The mobile laboratories will be a critical extension of KEWI's recently revamped central laboratory infrastructure, reflecting the Institute's aggressive push toward modernization and innovation. With the mobile units, KEWI will be able to reach previously inaccessible communities, allowing for timely water quality assessments that could prevent the spread of disease and enhance the overall health outcomes of vulnerable populations.

The kits provided by LETZTEST are impressively comprehensive. They include the Household Water Test Kit—an educational tool designed to raise community

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awareness on the link between water contamination and health outcomes. This kit helps users identify possible contamination points between water sources and points of use, fostering behavioral change and promoting household-level water safety.

Moreover, the physico-chemical testing components, such as the turbidity tube and the visual color comparator kits, provide simple but critical measurements of water clarity, chlorine levels, pH, and other parameters. These are essential for assessing the effectiveness of water treatment interventions like chlorination. Additional tools, such as the LETZTEST Multimeter and Photometer Kit 2.0, allow for

the precise measurement of complex parameters including fluoride, nitrate, iron, manganese, and arsenic—many of which have serious health implications when present above WHO-recommended limits.

Another notable score in the Water Lab Box, is its availability in both Basic and Advanced versions. These “labs-in-a-box” serve different user levels, from first-time testers to seasoned professionals, and are particularly valuable in setting up temporary or field-based testing facilities. The inclusion of sanitary inspection sheets, quality assurance documentation, and QR-coded technical support

makes these boxes truly plug-and-play solutions, turning ordinary field officers into empowered frontline public health defenders.

KEWI’s adoption of these tools is not just about testing water—it’s about changing lives. The decentralized approach ensures that data collected at the grassroots level can inform timely policy interventions, public health alerts, and targeted

resource allocation. By equipping communities with both the tools and knowledge to assess their own water safety, KEWI is fostering a culture of accountability, sustainability, and resilience.

In an era where the impacts of climate change, population growth, and infrastructure gaps threaten to worsen water scarcity and contamination, KEWI’s strategic pivot toward mobile, electricity-free, and community-empowered testing solutions is visionary. This initiative positions the Institute as a frontrunner in public health innovation, fulfilling its mandate not only as a research and training institution but as a critical actor in Kenya’s broader development agenda.

World Environment Day 2025: Kenya Unites to Beat Plastic Pollution



A man is seen wading across a plastic-infested Nairobi River. Despite Kenya implementing a strict ban on single-use plastic bags, outlawing their manufacture, sale, and use, plastic pollution still remains a current environmental threat. (Photo – Courtesy)

BY: BRITNEY MOKEIRA

On June 5, 2025, people across the globe came together to mark World Environment Day under the theme “Beat Plastic Pollution.” This annual event, established by the United Nations in 1972, serves as a vital platform to raise awareness and inspire action on the most pressing environmental issues facing humanity today. Through global campaigns, local events, and individual commitments, World Environment Day continues to spark meaningful dialogue and drive impactful

changes in communities worldwide.

In Kenya, this year’s national celebration was held at Tharaka University in Tharaka Nithi County, drawing participants from government agencies, academic institutions, community-based organizations, and the private sector. The event focused on the critical importance of reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable practices. Keynote speakers and participants emphasized the need for continued vigilance, innovation, and cooperation to address the growing problem of plastic pollution, which poses serious threats to ecosystems, wildlife, and public health.

Kenya has made significant strides in environmental

protection in recent years, particularly in the fight against plastic pollution. In 2017, the country implemented a strict ban on single-use plastic bags, outlawing their manufacture, sale, and use. The ban was backed by hefty fines and prison terms. The results were immediately visible, with cleaner streets, waterways, and landscapes reported in many urban and rural areas. Despite ongoing challenges, such as illegal imports and black-market distribution, Kenya’s bold action remains a landmark policy in Africa’s environmental history.

Building on this momentum, Kenya extended its plastic ban in 2020 to prohibit single-use plastics in protected areas such as national parks, beaches, and forests. These measures aim to protect the country’s rich



World Environment Day 2025: Kenya Unites to Beat Plastic Pollution



KEWI students in partnership with other stakeholders during a past cleaning exercise of Nairobi River. (Photo – Courtesy)

biodiversity and natural heritage while promoting ecotourism and environmental education.

In addition to tackling plastic pollution, Kenya has embraced reforestation as a national priority. In 2023, the government launched an ambitious initiative to plant 15 billion trees by 2032, aiming to increase forest cover, restore degraded landscapes, and combat the effects of climate change. As part of this campaign, November 13, 2023, was declared National Tree Growing Day, a public holiday dedicated to large-scale tree planting across all counties.

The inaugural event witnessed the planting of over 150 million trees with citizens, schools, institutions, and government bodies participating enthusiastically.

World Environment Day in Kenya thus serves as a powerful reminder that protecting the planet requires both bold policies and grassroots action. By banning harmful plastics and investing in nature-based solutions like tree planting, Kenya is not only safeguarding its own environment but also contributing to global sustainability efforts.

This year's celebrations highlighted the need for continued collaboration among governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to climate action and responsible consumption, depends on shared responsibility and long-term commitment.

As the world grapples with the dual crises of pollution and climate change, Kenya's example shows that focused national action, combined with community involvement, can create lasting positive impact for people and the planet.

A Light Gone Too Soon: KEWI Unites in Grief, Love, And Remembrance of Mercy Muli



Candles outlining the name of the departed student; Mercy Muli flicker away against a background of a student forlornly holding her portrait during her memorial service at KEWI Nairobi.

BY: FAITH TAUNET

“The flower is gone, but its beauty lives on. We stand in grief as a beautiful life is taken from this earth. And we stand in wonder at the legacy of love it leaves behind.” – Cat Hollyer

As twilight draped over the Kenya Water Institute (KEWI) Nairobi Campus on the evening of January 4th, 2025, the gentle flicker of candlelight pierced the growing darkness, casting long shadows of grief and remembrance. Inside the campus auditorium, a quiet reverence filled the space as students, faculty, friends, and family gathered to pay their final respects to Mercy Muli, a Diploma in Water Engineering student whose life was tragically cut short in a road

accident on Monday, May 26th, 2024.

The memorial service began with a solemn Catholic mass led by Fr. Kiarie of St. Catherine of Alexandria Catholic Church, South C, Nairobi. At 6:00 PM, a heartfelt candle-lighting ceremony bathed the hall in a soft, glowing tribute to Mercy—each flame a symbol of love, loss, and the memories she left behind.

Representing the KEWI Council and management, Deputy Director of Academic Affairs Mr. Erick Wamiti delivered a deeply moving tribute.

“This is a very trying time,” he said. “It is so painful for us to see a young soul go to rest,

especially for the parents. Mercy’s passing was sudden and tragic. We were expecting her in school, only to find out three days later that she had died. Her classmates have suffered great trauma. We say sorry for what has happened and pray that the Lord rests her soul and comforts us all.”

Head of the Management Information Technology Department, Mr. Leonard Makokha, also expressed heartfelt condolences:

“We are saddened by the demise of one of our students. Our deepest sympathies go to the family.”

Lecturers and support staff stood in solidarity with students, offering words of comfort and a presence of care.

A Light Gone Too Soon: KEWI Unites in Grief, Love, And Remembrance of Mercy Muli

A faculty member reminded the mourners to hold onto faith during the storm of grief:

“God is near to the broken-hearted. In this painful moment, let us run to Him for strength and comfort.”

School counsellor Rebecca Njeri

reflected on the emotional impact of Mercy’s passing during a recent debriefing session with her classmates.

“Mercy was a joyful young person. Just before her passing, she had been making plans with her classmates. Her life was full of hope, and it is devastating to see that journey cut short. Grief has no formula, and healing takes time. But we will walk this journey together.”

Mercy’s classmate, Linus Leshan of the Diploma in Water Engineering program, spoke tenderly of her spirit:

“She was a happy soul. May the Lord bridge the gap; all is not lost.”

Mercy’s family was present in full, including her uncle Mr. Titus Kimeu and her aunt Ms. Evelyne Syevanda, who had played a maternal role in



Ms. Evelyne Syevanda, flanked by her spouse Mr. Titus gives her tribute to her late niece Mercy Muli during the memorial service organized in Mercy's honor at KEWI Nairobi.

raising her. Ms. Syevanda’s emotional tribute recalled Mercy’s early years and the depth of their bond.

“Mercy was raised partly by our grandmother, and later I took charge of her care and education. She was the favourite grandchild – everyone knew it. She was also a mother figure to her two younger siblings, aged six and four. Today, it hit me differently. I wasn’t coming to pay school fees or visit her at school. I was coming to say goodbye.”

Fighting back tears, she expressed her family’s gratitude for the KEWI community’s compassion:

“Your prayers and kindness mean the world to us. My sister is hurting deeply; Mercy was her hope. We’re grateful to the

Governing Council chair, a family friend, for reaching out. KEWI is not just a school – it’s family.”

As night deepened and the candles flickered softly in the breeze, the KEWI fraternity stood together in sorrow and solidarity – honouring a life full of promise and potential. Mercy Muli, a bright, compassionate soul, was remembered not just for what she had achieved, but for who she was: hopeful, kind, and deeply loved.

Mercy was laid to rest in a solemn ceremony attended by thousands of mourners, among them Hon. Patrick Mbangula, Chairperson of the KEWI Governing Council, who joined others in bidding farewell to a young life gone too soon – but never forgotten.

KEWI Sports Teams Mark Powerful Return with Dominant Performances During Friendly Fixtures



KEWI Men Volleyball team squares it on with their KISM counterparts during their friendlies.

BY: BRITNEY MOKEIRA & FAITH TAUNET

After a brief hiatus from competitive action, the Kenya Water Institute (KEWI) sports teams made a resounding return over the Madaraka Day weekend, participating in a multi-sport tournament held at the Nairobi Institute of Business Studies (NIBS), Ruiru Campus. The event, marked by an atmosphere of high energy and camaraderie, saw KEWI athletes reaffirm their presence on the sports scene with stellar performances across floorball, basketball, netball, football, and more.

Floorball, one of KEWI's flagship sports, took center

stage as the institute once again demonstrated its pedigree in the fast-paced indoor game. Known as perennial champions in the discipline, the KEWI floorball team controlled the court with characteristic confidence and finesse. Their technical skill and strategic play impressed not only their opponents but also captivated the NIBS student body, many of whom engaged with KEWI players for the first time.

Despite a separate tournament on April 31st and May 1st along Thika Road where KEWI did not clinch the top honors, both the men's and women's floorball teams displayed exceptional heart

and resilience. The KEWI ladies played six tightly contested matches, finishing fourth out of seven teams – an admirable position in a fiercely competitive field. Their matches included a thrilling 2-2 draw with NIBS, a hard-fought 1-1 draw with Beast, and back-to-back 2-1 victories over Meru Polytechnic and Central A from Meru University.

The KEWI men's team faced a formidable Black Birds side, losing 7-1 but showcasing glimpses of brilliance and potential for future success. While the result was tough, the experience proved invaluable for the team's development.

On the courts, KEWI delivered commanding

KEWI Sports Teams Mark Powerful Return with Dominant Performances During Friendly Fixtures

performances that underscored their preparation and athletic depth. In basketball, the men's team defeated the East African School of Aviation (EASA) 71-46 before overpowering Kenya Institute of Supplies Management (KISM) 41-26. These dominant wins showcased KEWI's strategic play, fitness, and shooting precision.

Meanwhile, the KEWI netball ladies were equally formidable, crushing KISM 25-1 and shutting out EASA with a flawless 13-0 win. Their seamless teamwork and quick ball movement made them a standout team throughout the tournament.

Football action thrilled spectators with high-intensity matchups, all ending in closely

contested draws – 0-0, 1-1, and 2-2. Although no clear victor emerged, the matches featured skilled midfield play and strong defensive organization, reflecting the growing technical sophistication of KEWI's football squad.

Beyond the wins and draws, the tournament served a greater purpose – fostering unity, resilience, and a spirit of sportsmanship among KEWI students. The event, held in honor of Madaraka Day, became a symbol of national pride and student excellence.

KEWI's resurgence in competition was made possible through the unwavering support of the institution's management and the Academic Registrar's Department, who played a key role in organizing and facilitating the

event. Their commitment to holistic student development continues to shine through the institution's athletic achievements.

While the weekend saw many triumphs, it also highlighted areas for growth. The floorball teams, particularly, have taken the recent tournaments as a learning experience – an opportunity to refine skills, build mental toughness, and come back stronger. KEWI's sports teams remain focused on their long-term goals, determined to reach even greater heights in upcoming competitions.

As the curtain falls on a successful weekend of sport, KEWI athletes walk away with pride – not just for their victories, but for their unwavering spirit, teamwork, and commitment to excellence. Whether on the court or in the classroom, KEWI continues to prove that it is a force to be reckoned with.



State Department for Water and Sanitation Reviews 2023–2027 Strategic Plan

BY: PIUS KIMANI

Under the leadership of Principal Secretary Mr. Julius Korir, CBS, the Heads of Departments within the State Department for Water and Sanitation convened to undertake a comprehensive review of the Draft Strategic Plan 2023–2027. This crucial session aimed to align departmental priorities with the nation's pressing water and sanitation needs, ensuring the next four years are guided by a responsive and forward-looking implementation framework.

The review underscored several key pillars that will anchor the department's strategy. Institutional strengthening emerged as a top priority, with a focus on streamlining governance structures and scaling up capacity-building initiatives to enhance service delivery across all levels. The meeting also refined approaches for infrastructure acceleration, particularly the expansion of water supply networks, rehabilitation of aging systems, and investment in climate-resilient projects to safeguard long-term access.

In recognition of persistent sanitation challenges, the plan integrates fresh strategies to boost access to safe sanitation and hygiene. These include behavior change campaigns and deeper integration of



Principal Secretary State Department for Water and Sanitation Mr. Julius Korir, CBS.

WASH services, especially in underserved and vulnerable communities. Moreover, the department highlighted the need to foster partnerships and innovation by encouraging public-private collaborations, adopting digital tools for real-time monitoring, and exploring additional financing mechanisms to strengthen the sector.

To ensure measurable progress, the strategic plan incorporates robust performance metrics—clear key performance indicators (KPIs), reporting mechanisms, and accountability structures that will guide implementation and enable regular assessment.

With the internal review complete, the draft strategic plan is now set to be shared with external stakeholders, including county governments, development partners, and civil society organizations, for validation and feedback. Their input will

be vital to crafting a comprehensive and inclusive roadmap toward sustainable water access and improved sanitation services for all Kenyans.

This strategic planning exercise closely followed another significant event chaired by Principal Secretary Korir—the Auditor's Entry Meeting with the Office of the Auditor-General, led by Director of Audit Mr. Wilson Maiyo. The session formally marked the beginning of the external audit for the State Department's 2024/2025 Financial Year.

The audit entry meeting served to outline the scope, timelines, and expectations for the audit process, ensuring that all departmental units are prepared and aligned with compliance requirements. Key areas of focus for the audit include the verification of financial records, assessment of internal control and risk management systems, and evaluation of adherence to public finance regulations. Transparency, accountability, and accuracy in the utilization of budgeted resources remain central to the audit's objectives.

The State Department reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to sound financial management, prudent use of public funds, and full cooperation with the Office of the Auditor-General.

Round up of The Week's Events



Moments during the memorial service for the late Mercy Muli

Picture of the week



Beneath the hushed stillness of the memorial, loved ones bent forlornly, cloaked in grief, their faces drawn with the quiet ache of loss.

Teetering between disbelief and the crushing certainty that nothing could bring their loved one back, they clutched emotionlessly on their hot dripping candles. At that sacred moment, the unbearable truth loomed: this pain could not be undone, this absence not reversed.

Yet, within this weight of finality, a fragile light began to flicker – acceptance, not as surrender, but as the only path to carry forward the beauty of what was. For in embracing what cannot be changed, they could begin to Honor what was lived: a presence that, though now gone, would never truly vanish.

Quote of the Week

"You will never grow if you're not willing to feel awkward and uncomfortable when trying something new."

Brian Tracy

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor

Dorine Eva Irungu

Writers:

Pius Kimani

Faith Taunet

Britney Mokeira

Photographer

Pius Kimani

Designer

Pius Kimani

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Vision

A Technical Centre of Excellence in Training, Research, Innovation and Consultancy in the water, Sanitation and Irrigation Sector.

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To offer Competency-Based Training, Research, Innovation, Consultancy and Outreach Services in the Water, Sanitation and Irrigation Sector for sustainable development.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US

The Director,
Kenya Water Institute,
P.O. Box 60013-00200 Nairobi
TEL: +254 722-207757
Email: info@kewi.or.ke
Website: www.kewi.go.ke

For enquiries about our TVET programs
Contact the Registrar, Admissions Office.
Phone: 0735339206
Email: admissions@kewi.or.ke

KEWI Nairobi Campus
P.O. BOX 60013 – 00200
Tel: 0722207757
Email: info@kewi.or.ke

KEWI Chiakariga Campus
P.O. BOX 12 – 60215
Tel: 0729009104
Email: chiakariga@kewi.or.ke

KEWI Kitui Campus
P.O. BOX 1514 – 90200
Tel: 0707566395
Email: kitui@kewi.or.ke

KEWI Kisumu Campus
P.O. BOX 7825 – 40100
Tel: 0746212708
Email: kisumu@kewi.or.ke

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