



SUKARI DIGEST

February 2026-Edition



Foreword:

Beyond the Factory Gates



“

Sukari Industries brings technical capacity, industrial expertise, and market access. Communities bring local knowledge, social cohesion, and the determination to improve their own circumstances. Together, we achieve what neither could alone.

”

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Sukari Industries Digest.

The sugar industry stands at an intersection of transformation. Global markets shift. Climate patterns become less predictable. Input costs rise. Consumer expectations evolve. In this environment, the companies that thrive will be those that recognize a fundamental truth: our resilience is inseparable from the resilience of the communities that surround us.

This digest is our contribution to a necessary conversation—about what it means to be a responsible corporate citizen in modern Kenya, about how industrial enterprise can strengthen rather than extract from its environment, and about the untapped potential residing in the people who power our sector.

Inside these pages, you will find stories that illustrate this vision.

You will read about water—not as a corporate donation, but as a community-led partnership. Three boreholes, three schools, three communities organised not around what a company could give, but around what they could achieve together. The formation of Community Based Organisations to manage these water points reflects a deliberate shift away from dependency and toward sustainability. When infrastructure belongs to the people who use it, it endures.

You will also meet a professional who embodies a principle we believe essential to the future of Kenya’s sugar industry: the diversification of income. In an era where no single revenue stream can be taken for granted, our feature story explores how technical expertise and agricultural enterprise can combine to build genuine financial resilience. It is a model we hope will inspire others to look at the land around them not as a passive asset, but as an opportunity for empowerment.

These stories matter because they speak to the challenges facing our sector and our country.

How do we ensure that industrial growth translates into community wellbeing? How do we prepare our workforce for economic uncertainty? How do we build institutions—whether companies, communities, or cooperatives—that outlast any single project or administration?

The answers, we believe, lie in partnership. Not the shallow partnership of photo opportunities and press releases, but the deep partnership of shared problem-solving. Sukari Industries brings technical capacity, industrial expertise, and market access. Communities bring local knowledge, social cohesion, and the determination to improve their own circumstances. Together, we achieve what neither could alone.

This digest will evolve with each edition, capturing the stories that emerge from this collaboration. We hope it informs you, challenges you, and reminds you that the sugar industry is ultimately about people—the farmers who plant and harvest, the workers who operate machinery, the families who depend on both, and the communities whose wellbeing determines our shared future.

Thank you for reading. Thank you for partnering with us. And thank you for believing, as we do, that our best work lies ahead.

EDWARD AHONOBADHA
Communications Manager
Sukari Industries Limited

From Dry Ground to Flowing Water:

Sukari Industries Brings Clean Water to Three Communities



At a glance: Access to clean water has been a generations-long challenge for communities surrounding our operational areas. This February, that story changed for three schools and their neighbouring households, as Sukari Industries' borehole project reaches final completion.

For many students in Kanyadoto, Kanyikela, and South Kabuoch locations, the typical school day once began with a familiar ritual: long queues at distant water points, late arrivals to class, and the heavy weight of jerrycans balanced alongside schoolbooks.

"It affected everything," recalls Chief Ogalo Owuor of Kanyadoto location. "Attendance, punctuality, concentration. A child who has spent the morning fetching water is already tired before lessons begin. Girls particularly struggled, often arriving late or missing days entirely."

This scene played out daily across our operational areas—not due to a lack of rainfall, but a lack of infrastructure to access the water beneath their own feet. Communities living adjacent to sugarcane fields, contributing their labour and land to the sugar value chain, lacked one of life's most basic necessities: reliable, clean water.

In February 2026, that reality is being rewritten by Sukari Industries Limited.

Community-Led, Community-Driven, Sukari Delivers

The borehole initiative was never designed as a top-down corporate donation. From the outset, Sukari Industries insisted that communities themselves must identify their priorities and lead the selection process. The question was not "where does the company want to drill?" but "where do communities say water is most needed?"

This community-led approach was operationalized through the National Government Administrative Officers—the very chiefs who serve as the frontline link between government institutions and grassroots communities. Their intimate knowledge of local needs, combined with their trusted position, made them ideal partners in site selection.

Edward Ahonobadha, Communications Manager at Sukari Industries, served as project lead, coordinating between company resources, technical teams, and community structures.

“Our role was to enable, not dictate,” Ahonobadha explains. “The chiefs know their communities better than any survey. They know which schools struggle most, which villages walk farthest, which households carry the heaviest burden. We brought the technical capacity. They brought the local knowledge. Together, we identified sites that would serve the greatest need most effectively.”



Three Sites, Three Leaders, One Vision

The selection process unfolded across three locations, each championed by a chief who understood local water challenges

intimately. A crucial part of this vision was ensuring long-term sustainability, leading each community to form a **Community Based Organisation (CBO)** to manage and maintain the water points for generations to come.

Otange Secondary School emerged as a priority through the leadership of Senior Chief Moses Ongonga of South Kanyikela Location. Chief Ongonga, whose own story of leading through personal example in sugarcane farming has inspired his community, brought the same advocacy to water access. He had witnessed students arriving late, girls missing school, and families spending hours on water collection.

“We formed a Community Based Organisation to oversee the daily running of the water point once completed,” explained Ongonga. “The community members expressed that the Otange Secondary School was the best site to have this investment as it would also serve Otange Dispensary, where Sukari Industries has built a maternity wing to help in maternal health challenges.”

Kaguria Mixed Secondary School was identified through the leadership of Chief Samuel Okinyi of South Kabuoch. His community engagement process brought together parents, teachers, and local leaders to assess needs and rank priorities. The consensus was clear: water at Kaguria would transform not only the school but the surrounding households who would access it. Following the selection, a CBO was formed to ensure the facility remains operational and serves the community effectively for years to come.

Koga Primary School completed the three sites, selected under the leadership of Chief Ogalo Owuor of Kanyadoto. His community engagement drew on deep local knowledge to confirm that Koga’s need matched the urgency of other sites. The school, situated in a densely populated area, will serve as a water access point for hundreds of families beyond its student population. A dedicated

CBO has since been established to manage the water point, ensuring it remains a reliable resource.

Technical Progress: Two Complete, One Finalizing

Today, two of the three boreholes are complete and operational. The Otange Secondary School borehole is in its final stages and is expected to be complete in the first week of March 2026.

Kaguria and Koga: Water Flowing

At Kaguria Mixed Secondary School, the transformation is already visible. A newly installed tower stands against the sky, the solar pump is operational, and water is flowing. Students who once arrived tired from water-fetching now arrive ready to learn. The school has water for drinking, cleaning, and the kitchen garden that supplements the feeding programme.

At Koga Primary School, the story is equally transformative. Head Teacher John Mokwa’s joy is now reflected in daily school life—children drinking clean water, classrooms being cleaned properly, and a small agricultural plot beginning to thrive.

Both sites have moved beyond construction into project closure and handover planning. Documentation is being prepared, and the newly formed community water committees (CBOs) are being trained on technical maintenance and financial management to ensure the water flows for years to come. A formal handover ceremony is scheduled for next month, where these facilities will be officially entrusted to the communities they serve.

Otange: Challenge Met, Solution Found

Not every site yielded easily to drilling. At Otange Secondary School, initial attempts encountered challenging soil composition—dense clay that threatened both drilling success and long-term water sustainability.

“Some projects would have pushed through anyway, accepting a compromised borehole just to check a box,” notes project lead Ahonobadha. *“We chose a different approach. We stopped, reassessed, and invested in an advanced hydrological survey to identify the optimal location.”*

The survey paid off. A new site was identified with a significantly better soil profile. Once complete, the facility will be handed over to the community’s CBO and Otange Secondary School who are already prepared to take on the responsibility of its management.

“Visibility matters,” Ahonobadha explains. *“Communities need to know who invested in their wellbeing. But more importantly, the visibility of responsible corporate citizenship encourages other organizations to follow suit. When companies see that community investment is recognized and appreciated, they are more likely to invest themselves.”*

With the final borehole at Otange set to come online in March, and all three communities now equipped with the organizational structure to manage their own water supply, the vision of three chiefs and the commitment of Sukari Industries will soon ensure that clean water is no longer a generational challenge, but a daily reality.



Leadership in Action

How One Chief Transformed His Community Through Farming



Senior Chief Moses Ooko Ongonga in official Kenya Administration uniform

Senior Chief Moses Ooko Ongonga

At a glance: When Senior Chief Moses Ooko Ongonga invested his own resources into 15 acres of sugarcane, he did more than expand his farm. He gave his community permission to believe in agriculture as a path to prosperity.

The administrative headquarters of South Kanyikela Location sits at the intersection of government policy and grassroots livelihoods. From this vantage point, Senior Chief Moses Ooko Ongonga has spent years observing the economic rhythms of his community — a predominantly agricultural area that hosts Sukari Industries Limited.

What he saw troubled him.

Despite the community's proximity to the

factory, despite the daily passage of cane lorries, despite the visible activity of an entire industry operating at their doorstep, many households remained trapped in cycles of economic stagnation. Formal employment was scarce. Income sources were unstable. Families struggled to meet school fees, basic needs, and long-term aspirations.

The problem was not a lack of opportunity. The opportunity existed — 15 kilometres down the road, at Sukari Industries. The problem was a lack of visible, credible proof that farming could transform lives.

“The chief occupies a trusted position,” explains Ongonga. “When I speak, people listen. But I realised that listening is not enough. They needed to see.”

Leading from the Front

In 2023, Chief Ongonga made a decision that would ripple through his community. He invested in 15 acres of sugarcane cultivation — not as a passive landlord, but as an active farmer. He prepared the land, followed agronomic recommendations, and managed his crop with the same discipline he brought to his administrative duties.

The message was unmistakable: if the chief can farm, so can I.

But Ongonga did not stop at personal example. Recognising that demonstration must be accompanied by education, he organised community forums and public engagements to sensitise residents on sugarcane farming's economic potential. He actively promoted participation in Sukari Industries' support programmes — including land preparation assistance, seed cane supply, and herbicide support — and facilitated open dialogue between farmers and the company.

“Many farmers did not know what help was available,” he notes. “They assumed the factory was just there to buy cane. They did not realise Sukari offers inputs, technical advice, and support at every stage. My role became bridging that gap.”

Measurable Transformation

The results have been tangible. Farmer participation in the sugar value chain has increased significantly. Trust between the community and Sukari Industries, once fragile due to information gaps, has strengthened. Confidence in agriculture as a dignified and profitable livelihood has grown.

Today, Chief Ongonga's 15-acre farm stands as daily, visible proof that farming

can complement formal roles and provide sustainable household income. Neighbours passing his fields see well-maintained cane and draw their own conclusions. Farmers who once viewed agriculture as a last resort now approach it as an aspirational activity.

“When a farmer sees another farmer succeeding, that is powerful,” says Ongonga. “But when they see their chief succeeding at farming, that is transformative. It removes every excuse.”

His integrated approach — combining personal enterprise with community engagement — has repositioned agriculture across South Kanyikela. Governance and personal action now reinforce each other, creating momentum that benefits individual households and the broader community.

A Model Replicated

Chief Ongonga's example has not gone unnoticed. Across the location, farmers who previously limited themselves to subsistence agriculture are expanding their acreage, registering with Sukari Industries, and approaching cane farming as a structured business.

The chief's office has become an informal agricultural advisory centre. Farmers stop by with questions about planting times, input access, and company programmes. Ongonga directs them to the right channels, connects them with field officers, and follows up to ensure they receive support.

“This is what leadership means,” he reflects. “Not giving orders from a desk. Not distributing pamphlets. Not holding meetings that end without action. Leadership means showing the way — physically, visibly, consistently. If I ask my people to farm, I must farm first.”

The Engineer Who Farms:

Building Financial Resilience Beyond the Factory Floor



Eng. Boaz Amoke at the Sukari Industries sugarcane yard

Eng. Boaz Amoke

At a glance: For 11 years, Eng. Boaz Amoke has served as Chief Engineer at Sukari Industries Limited. But his most enduring contribution to the company's ecosystem may be happening on 85 acres of farmland — where he proves that technical expertise and agriculture are natural partners.

When Eng. Boaz Amoke joined Sukari Industries Limited in June 2013, he brought more than engineering qualifications to the role. He brought a farmer's understanding of soil, seasons, and patience—knowledge gained during 18 previous years at West Kenya Sugar Company, where he observed sugarcane from both industrial and agricultural perspectives.

That dual understanding would shape his approach to personal financial planning.

"Many professionals in our sector make a common mistake," Amoke observes. *"They rely entirely on salary. They assume*

employment will always be there, that monthly income will never stop. But the sugar industry has cycles, like farming itself. Those who plan only for stability during good times often struggle when conditions shift."

Immediately upon joining Sukari, Amoke began investing in sugarcane farming. Not as a hobby. Not as a side project. But as a strategic parallel income stream, managed with the same precision he applies to factory operations.

Engineering Discipline Applied to Agriculture

Drawing on agronomic experience from his West Kenya years, Amoke approached farming systematically. Land preparation followed strict timelines. Weeding was never delayed. Fertiliser application was precisely calibrated. Herbicides were targeted. Every stage adhered to recommended guidelines.

"The mind of an engineer suits farming well," he explains. *"Farming requires planning, measurement, monitoring, and adjustment. These are engineering habits. When I look at a field, I see variables to manage—soil health, moisture levels, pest pressure, nutrient requirements. My training teaches me to control variables, not be controlled by them."*

Through consistent reinvestment and careful planning, Amoke expanded his farm to 50 acres under active cultivation, primarily through leased land. Each acre is managed professionally, with records maintained and performance tracked. The operation functions not as subsistence agriculture but as a structured agribusiness enterprise.

Today, his farms deliver reliable, sustainable returns that complement his professional income. The combination creates what he

calls “*financial resilience*”—the ability to withstand economic fluctuations without distress.

A Quiet Influence on Colleagues

Amoke’s example has not gone unnoticed within Sukari Industries. Colleagues observe his dual success and increasingly approach him for advice. How do you balance factory responsibilities with farm management? How do you access quality inputs? Which varieties perform best under local conditions?

He mentors quietly, without fanfare, encouraging fellow professionals to view agribusiness as a pathway to financial independence. His advocacy has already influenced several colleagues to explore farming, creating a ripple effect throughout the organisation.

“When a colleague tells me they have started farming, even on one acre, I consider that a success,” Amoke says. *“A 100-kilometre walk starts with a step somewhere. The important thing is to begin.”*

Protecting What Matters

The decision to share Amoke’s story requires balance. His position as Chief Engineer makes him valuable to Sukari Industries—and potentially attractive to competitors. Yet his story also carries vital lessons about financial resilience, professional integrity, and the compatibility of technical expertise with agricultural enterprise.

What emerges is a portrait not of an individual vulnerable to poaching, but of a professional deeply rooted in an ecosystem. Amoke’s success is intertwined with Sukari Industries’ success. He has seen the factory grow from milling 800 tons per day to the current 3,500-plus tons. His farm benefits from the same agronomic support available to all Sukari farmers. His engineering work benefits from his agricultural insights. The relationship is mutually reinforcing, not easily replicated elsewhere.

“Working at Sukari has enabled my farming,” he acknowledges. *“The knowledge I access here, the networks, the understanding of the value chain—these come from my role. In turn, my farming makes me a better engineer. I understand farmers’ challenges more deeply because I share them. I appreciate the production cycle from both ends.”*

A Model for Financial Resilience

Amoke’s 50-acre farm now ranks among a select few that prove formal employment and strategic land investment can work hand in hand to secure long-term economic empowerment.

His story challenges the false choice between professional career and agricultural enterprise. At Sukari Industries, they are not mutually exclusive. They are complementary.

“Financial resilience is not about how much you earn,” Amoke reflects. “It is about how many income streams you have. It is about not depending on a single source. For professionals in the sugar sector, farming is the most natural second stream. We are surrounded by the industry. We understand the crop. The question is not whether we can farm. The question is whether we will.”



Eng. Amoke on the factory floor in full PPE

KEN82-601:

The High-Tonnage Powerhouse for Western Kenya



When yield per acre is the primary objective, KEN82-601 consistently ranks among the top-performing varieties in Kenya's sugar belt. It is widely regarded as a high-tonnage cultivar that rewards farmers who apply proper agronomic management and timely inputs.

Origin, Parentage and Release

KEN82-601 was developed in Kenya under the national sugarcane improvement program.

Parentage: Co 6415 x Phil 54-60

Country of Origin: Kenya

Year of Release: 2011

The breeding objective focused on developing a variety capable of producing significantly higher cane tonnage while maintaining strong sugar recovery and ratoon performance across diverse agro-ecological zones.

Botanical and Field Characteristics

Appearance:

Erect greenish-yellow stalk that gradually turns brown upon exposure.

This upright growth habit supports easier field management and contributes to moderate lodging resistance under good agronomic practices.

Maturity and Growth Profile

Recommended Harvest Age: 12–14 months (Plant Crop)

Although previously categorized in some zones as medium to medium-late, current recommendations indicate optimal harvesting at 12–14 months to capture peak sucrose accumulation and prevent fibre escalation.

This variety demonstrates:

- Strong vegetative growth
- Thick stalk formation with good girth
- High biomass accumulation
- Vigorous early canopy development when well fertilized

Timely harvesting is critical to maintain sugar quality and avoid yield stagnation.

Yield, Sugar and Fibre Performance

Expected Cane Yield: 90–130 tonnes per hectare

This wide performance range reflects its responsiveness to soil fertility and input management.

Sucrose Content (Pol % cane): 16.6

Fibre % cane: 13.6

The sucrose level of 16.6% positions KEN82-601 as both a tonnage and sugar recovery performer. Fibre levels remain within commercially acceptable milling standards when harvested at the recommended age.

Compared to older varieties averaging 65–75 tonnes per hectare, KEN82-601 offers a

significant productivity advantage under proper management.

Ratooning Performance

- Strong first and second ratoon yields. Can go up to 7 ratoon under good management.
- Reduced replanting frequency
- Sustained biomass production under structured input programs

However, productivity declines can occur if ratoons are extended beyond optimal cycles without adequate nutrient replenishment.

Disease and Stress Tolerance

Disease Reaction: Intermediate resistance to smut

The variety demonstrates reasonable field tolerance but is not immune. Strict field sanitation and use of certified clean seedcane remain essential.

It also shows tolerance to mosaic under standard management conditions.

Under prolonged waterlogging, growth performance may decline. Proper drainage is therefore critical, particularly in high rainfall zones.

Recommended Growing Zones

KEN82-601 is recommended for:

- Coastal region
- Western Kenya
- Transmara
- Nyando
- Sony Sugar zone

Within the Western Kenya Sugar growing region, it performs best in:

- Fertile soils with adequate organic matter
- Farms applying fertilizer at planting and top dressing
- Areas with reliable rainfall distribution

Suitability Within West Kenya Sugar Zones

Because of its high biomass production and

elevated sucrose levels, KEN82-601 supports:

- Increased cane supply per hectare
- Strong factory throughput
- Improved grower income potential

It is strategically valuable where structured agronomic support is available.

Strategic Positioning Recommendation

KEN82-601 should ideally be:

- Planted on well-managed farms with consistent fertilizer application
- Used alongside more conservative varieties to spread production risk
- Targeted at growers aiming for maximum tonnage and sugar output

It is not the lowest-risk variety under low-input systems, but under proper management, it ranks among the highest-yielding and most profitable options.

Farmer Management Tip

To unlock full potential:

- Apply basal fertilizer at planting
- Top-dress within 2–3 months
- Maintain strict early weed control
- Ensure adequate drainage in high rainfall areas
- Harvest at 12–14 months for optimal sucrose recovery

Conclusion

KEN82-601 is built for productivity and profit. With yield potential ranging from 90 to 130 tonnes per hectare and a sucrose level of 16.6%, it offers a powerful combination of tonnage and sugar value.

Where soil fertility is maintained and management is proactive, it stands out as one of the strongest commercial performers in Kenya's sugarcane portfolio. For farmers focused on maximizing output and income per acre, this variety remains a strategic choice in the West Kenya Sugar growing belt.

Choosing the right cane variety is the foundation of profitable sugarcane farming.

A Widow's Journey to Financial Independence



Jane Adhiambo Ajuma

At a glance: Widowed in 2015 with four children to support, Jane Adhiambo Ajuma faced the dual burden of grief and financial uncertainty. Ten years later, her 11-acre sugarcane farm provides the backbone of her household — and hope to women across Otange Village.

The year 2015 brought Jane Adhiambo Ajuma to a crossroads. Her husband had passed away suddenly, leaving her solely responsible for four children. Grief was compounded by acute financial insecurity. In rural Otange Village, formal employment opportunities were scarce. Widows, particularly those heading households, faced disproportionate vulnerability with few safety nets.

Jane had no steady income. School fees loomed. Daily needs pressed. The path ahead appeared narrow and uncertain.

"I could have given up," she recalls quietly. "Many women in my situation do give up. Not because they lack strength, but because the obstacles seem impossible. When you are grieving and worrying about feeding children, the future becomes very small."

Choosing Resilience

Jane made a choice that would define the next decade of her life: resilience over dependency. Looking around her community, she identified one asset within reach — land. And one opportunity within the local economy — sugarcane farming, supported by Sukari Industries.

"I knew farming. Every woman in this village knows farming. But knowing farming and treating it as a business are different things," she explains. "I decided my farm would not just feed my children. It would educate them."

Through disciplined management and consistent reinvestment of earnings, Jane

established 11 acres under sugarcane cultivation. She prioritised proper agronomic practices — timely planting, weeding, fertiliser application. Her farm operates not as subsistence agriculture but as a professional enterprise.

Balancing large-scale farming with single motherhood required extraordinary effort. Jane also maintains casual employment at Otange Dispensary, serving her community while supplementing household income. The combination leaves little idle time.

“I wake early. I plan each day. I do not waste hours,” she says simply. “Children need attention, farms need attention, patients need attention. You learn to give each what it requires when it requires it.”

Transformation Visible and Lasting

The transformation in Jane’s household has been profound. Income from her sugarcane farm now provides the financial foundation for her family — covering food, clothing, basic needs, and most importantly, keeping all four children in school.

“My children are my legacy,” Jane states. “Everything I do, I do for them. When I pay school fees, I am not just paying for this term. I am investing in their future, in the families they will raise, in the cycle I am breaking.”

Beyond her household, Jane has become a beacon of hope to widows and women across Otange Village and surrounding communities. Women who once viewed farming as merely survival now see it as a path to independence. Widows who assumed their circumstances were fixed now approach Jane for advice on registering with Sukari, accessing inputs, and managing cane professionally.

“When a widow sees me standing in my farm, paying school fees from my cane money, she begins to think differently,” Jane observes. “She thinks: if Jane can do this, perhaps I can too. That thought is powerful. It changes everything.”

Proof in Practice

Jane’s 11 acres stand as daily proof that strategic investment and hard work can rebuild livelihoods, even in the face of profound loss. Her story challenges assumptions about who can succeed in agriculture. It demonstrates that with courage, discipline, and proper support, farming can lift households from vulnerability to stability.

She credits Sukari Industries with providing the institutional backing that made her success possible — access to markets, agronomic advice, timely payments.

“The company does not discriminate. They support anyone who farms properly, whether man or woman, married or widowed,” she notes. “That consistency matters. It gives women confidence that our effort will be rewarded fairly.”

A Legacy Growing

Today, Jane Adhiambo Ajuma stands tall in her community — not despite her circumstances, but because of how she responded to them. Her farm flourishes. Her children attend school. Her example inspires.

“When I look at my farm, I see more than cane,” she reflects. “I see the journey from 2015 to today. I see the tears I cried and the prayers I prayed. I see school fees paid and uniforms bought. I see my children’s future, growing row by row.”

Young, Determined, and Farming:

One Youth's Countercultural Choice



Mike Otieno Odeka

At a glance: At 25, Mike Otieno Odeka belongs to a demographic particularly vulnerable to unemployment and urban migration. His deliberate choice to invest in agriculture challenges prevailing perceptions — and provides a model for rural youth across South Kabura.

In Kamasi Village, South Kabura, the pressures on young people are familiar and intense. Formal job opportunities are scarce. The prevailing perception, reinforced by generations, holds that farming is a last resort — what you do when nothing else works. For many rural youth, the path of least resistance leads to urban migration, searching for short-term income that rarely materialises sustainably.

Mike Otieno Odeka, 25 and unmarried, grew up surrounded by these messages. He watched peers leave for towns, seeking work that often proved temporary and precarious. He observed the cycle of underemployment that trapped young people who neither migrated nor found local opportunities.

And he made a different choice.

“Everyone told me farming is for old people, for those who failed in school, for those with no ambition,” Mike recalls. *“I looked at the farmers around me and saw something else. I saw people with land, with crops, with income. I asked myself: why should that not be me?”*

Farming as Business, Not Last Resort

In 2023, Mike dedicated 3.5 acres of land to sugarcane cultivation. But he did not approach farming casually. He committed to professional management — timely land preparation, proper weeding, fertiliser application, strict adherence to recommended agronomic guidelines.

“I decided early that my farm would be a business, not a garden,” he explains. *“Business means records. Business means following instructions. Business means reinvesting profits, not spending everything. Business means planning for next season while this season is still growing.”*

This disciplined approach set Mike apart from peers who viewed farming as temporary or inferior. He attended farmer trainings, sought advice from Sukari Industries field officers, and networked with experienced growers. His 3.5 acres became a laboratory for proving that youth and agriculture are compatible.

Measured Success, Visible Results

Today, Mike's farm provides him with a reliable income stream. At an age when many peers lack economic independence, he saves, reinvests, and plans. His goals extend beyond

current acreage — he intends to scale up over time and diversify into broader agribusiness ventures.

“The money from cane is not quick money,” he notes. *“You wait months before harvesting. But when it comes, it comes in amounts that matter. You can do things with cane money — pay school fees for siblings, buy additional land, invest in livestock. Quick money from casual work disappears. Cane money builds.”*

Mike’s success has not gone unnoticed. Young people in Kamasi Village and wider South Kabura are taking notice. A 25-year-old managing productive farmland challenges entrenched stereotypes. If Mike can farm profitably, perhaps farming deserves reconsideration.

“Some young people now ask me questions,” he says. *“How did you start? How do you access inputs? What does Sukari provide? These questions did not come before. Young people assumed farming was not for them. Now they see it differently.”*

Disrupting Negative Perceptions

Mike’s story disrupts the narrative that rural youth must choose between idleness and migration. It demonstrates that with vision, patience, and proper management, agriculture can serve as a powerful foundation for independence and long-term prosperity.

His countercultural choice carries significance beyond personal success. Each young person who sees farming as viable reduces pressure on urban job markets. Each young farmer who succeeds creates a visible alternative for peers. The ripple effects extend through communities, gradually shifting perceptions that have constrained rural youth for generations.

“Farming is not easy,” Mike acknowledges. *“But what worthwhile work is easy? The difference is that farming is here. The land is here. The company is here. The market is here.”*

Everything I need to build a future is within walking distance. Why would I leave that to look for something uncertain somewhere else?”

A Foundation for the Future

Mike Otieno Odeka’s 3.5 acres represent more than sugarcane. They represent a deliberate choice to build rather than wait, to invest rather than migrate, to prove rather than accept.

Standing in his well-maintained fields, weeding alongside workers he employs, Mike embodies a different possibility for rural youth. Not everyone must leave. Not everyone must wait for formal employment. Agriculture, properly approached, can provide.

“When my cane is harvested and payment comes, I feel something I cannot describe,” he reflects. *“Not just the money. The satisfaction of choosing my own path. The knowledge that I built this myself. The proof that young people can farm and succeed.”*



Closing the Information Gap:

How One Church Gathering Strengthened Farmer Partnerships



Rabare Full Gospel Church Farmer Engagement

At a glance: On 22nd February 2026, Benard Way Omollo from Sukari Industries Limited brought the conversation directly to Rabare's farming community. The venue: a trusted local church. The outcome: strengthened trust, renewed relationships, and farmers equipped with actionable information.

The men and women who gathered at Rabare Full Gospel Church on a Sunday morning in February shared something fundamental. They were smallholder sugarcane farmers, the backbone of the local sugar sector. They depended on timely support, reliable inputs, and strong institutional partnerships to sustain their livelihoods season after season.

Yet despite playing a central role in the sugar value chain, many had been operating with incomplete information.

"I have been farming for years," one farmer shared during the session. "But I did not know about land preparation support. I did not know about herbicide programmes. I thought Sukari only bought cane. I did not realise they helped with growing."

This information gap was not a matter of willingness — it was a matter of access. Farmers unaware of available services missed critical programmes, delayed resolving concerns, and underutilised resources at their disposal. Without clarity on how and where to seek help, productivity suffered and trust eroded.

Bringing the Conversation to the Community

Sukari Industries recognised that expecting farmers to travel to headquarters with questions was insufficient. If information gaps existed, the company would need to close them by going where farmers gather.

Rabare Full Gospel Church offered an ideal venue — a trusted local landmark, accessible to the community, neutral ground where farmers could speak freely. On 22nd February, Sukari facilitators arrived not with presentations to deliver but with conversations to facilitate.

The session was structured as genuine two-way dialogue. Farmers received the floor to ask questions, voice concerns, and receive clear, direct answers. Topics covered included:

- Land preparation assistance
- Seed cane supply and herbicide support
- Importance of improved farming practices
- Benefits of formal farmer registration
- Ongoing Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives
- Customer care channels for follow-up support

“We did not come to lecture,” explained Omollo. “We came to listen and respond. Farmers know their challenges better than anyone. Our role is to connect those challenges with solutions the company offers.”

Immediate, Tangible Results

The impact was immediate. Farmers left the session with clearer understanding of how to access available support. Information barriers that had previously limited

participation were dismantled. Practical knowledge — what to ask, whom to contact, when to act — replaced uncertainty.

But the benefits extended beyond information transfer. The session restored and deepened the human connection between Sukari Industries and the farming community. Trust, that essential but fragile component of agricultural partnerships, strengthened visibly.

Farmers expressed genuine motivation to participate more actively in partnership programmes. Those who had hesitated to register due to uncertainty now committed to completing paperwork. Those who had assumed support was not for them now understood how to apply.

A Renewed Partnership

The Rabare engagement demonstrated what is possible when companies meet farmers where they are — physically, relationally, and communicatively. Information gaps that previously constrained productivity were closed not through pamphlets or announcements, but through patient, respectful dialogue.

The renewed partnership positions both the farming community and Sukari Industries to work in closer alignment toward improved productivity, enhanced livelihoods, and a more resilient sugar sector.

“We need each other,” Omollo summarised. “Sukari cannot succeed without cane. Farmers cannot succeed without a reliable buyer and support system. When we understand each other, when trust exists, when information flows both directions — everyone benefits.”

For the farmers of Rabare, the February engagement marked not an end but a beginning. Armed with clearer information and stronger trust, they returned to their fields ready to farm differently.

Future Farmers:

Saramba Comprehensive School Discovers the Sugar Value Chain



Students in hard hats during an interactive briefing at the factory yard

Saramba Comprehensive School Educational Tour

At a glance: Over 140 learners from Grades 8 and 9 walked through Sukari Industries' facilities on 20th February 2026. What they discovered changed how they view agriculture — and their own futures.

The students who arrived at Sukari Industries Limited on 20th February came from a predominantly agricultural community. Most came from families directly connected to the sugar sector. Sugarcane farming surrounded their daily lives.

Yet for all this proximity, their understanding of the production value chain remained largely theoretical.

"We teach Agriculture, Science, Business Studies, and Environmental Studies in school," explained lead teacher Pauline Aseto. "But textbooks and classrooms cannot fully convey what happens inside a factory. Learners knew cane becomes sugar. They did not know how."

This gap between classroom instruction and real-world industrial application limited

students' ability to connect academic learning to career pathways. It made it difficult to appreciate the full scope of opportunities within their own local sector — opportunities that could become their futures.

Opening the Factory Gates

Sukari Industries opened its facilities to more than 140 Grade 8 and 9 learners, accompanied by three teachers. The structured educational tour took students through the entire sugar production process — from cane reception and weighing, through crushing and processing, to quality control, packaging, and storage.

Company staff from engineering, laboratory services, logistics, and administration patiently explained each stage. They highlighted safety standards, environmental management, and the teamwork required for efficient operations. The tour was deliberately interactive, encouraging students to ask questions and engage with professionals.

Immediate Impact

The tour's impact was immediate and multi-dimensional. Grade 9 learner Britine Owigo reported that observing production stages firsthand deepened her understanding of Agriculture and Science lessons — and inspired consideration of agribusiness as a career path.

"I did not know so many different jobs exist in sugar production," she said. "Engineers, laboratory technicians, logistics coordinators, quality controllers. These are careers I can prepare for. These are jobs in my community."

Grade 8 student Brian Otieno described the experience as eye-opening, noting the impressive scale and coordination of operations. "Everything must work together — the machines, the people, the timing. If one part stops, the whole process stops. It is like a team, but bigger."

Lead teacher Pauline Aseto emphasised that such exposure strengthens competency-based learning in ways the classroom alone cannot replicate. *"When learners see, touch, and ask questions in real environments, understanding deepens. They do not just know facts. They understand processes. They grasp why things matter."*

Beyond Academic Gains

The tour's benefits extended beyond academic reinforcement. Students experienced a professional industrial environment, complete with safety protocols and workplace expectations. They interacted with professionals who started where they are now. They saw, perhaps for the first time, that the sugar industry offers diverse, dignified career paths.

The tour also reinforced the school-industry partnership, demonstrating Sukari Industries' active commitment to education, youth empowerment, and community development. Students left not only with deeper understanding but with positive associations — a factory that welcomed them, professionals who answered their questions, an industry that values learning.

Seeds Planted

For the 140 learners who walked through Sukari Industries that February morning, the experience planted seeds that may take years to fully germinate. Some will pursue agricultural careers. Some will become engineers, laboratory technicians, or logistics coordinators. Some will farm. Some will teach.

All will remember the day they saw their community's central industry from the inside.



A company guide explains production processes to attentive learners

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