

***Kizingitini Fishermen In Lamu County Benefit From High Powered Racing Boats By Safaricom Foundation.***  
***6th Jun 2017***

A group of fishermen in the far flung Kizingitini in Pate Island have received four high powered racing boats from Safaricom Foundation.

The Tawasal fishermen self-help group got the 1.5 horse power engine racing boats that are expected to provide employment to at least 50 youths of Kizingitini, the largest fishing port on Pate Island, Lamu County.

Statistics indicate that Lamu County has a poverty level of 31.6 percent and a school enrolment of 23 percent at both primary and secondary level.

Safaricom Foundation Chairman Joseph Ogutu said: “The main economic activity in Lamu is fishing. We want to promote livelihoods here by supporting activities that will empower the community.”

Pate is the largest island in Lamu Archipelago which lie between the towns of Lamu and Kiunga close to the border with Somalia.

Previously, the self-help group which has a membership of 30 had only three dhow boats which are smaller in size and slower. With this, they would fish between 100-200 kilograms of fish per day which they would sell at between Kshs.100 and Kshs.160 per kilogram depending on the season.

Tawasal Fishermen self-help group Chairman, Ali Bakar said that with the new racing boats, they are now able to fish at least 50 kilograms of lobsters per day which they sell at between Kshs.1, 600 and Kshs.2, 000 per kilogram depending on the season.

“We are grateful to Safaricom Foundation for giving us these racing boats. We have stopped focusing on fish and are now trading lobsters which have a higher market value. Apart from earning a livelihood, the racing boats will enable us assist during emergencies to transport patients from Pate Island to Lamu town and also in rescue operations in the ocean.”

The self- help group runs a programme that empowers fishermen to engage in sustainable projects and also train them on managerial skills. The group also emphasises on the importance of education with an aim to transforming the town into a commercial island.

Safaricom Foundation funded the purchase of the four 1.5 horse power engine racing boats at a cost of Kshs. 800,000.

Pate Island forms one of the major fishing areas on the Kenyan coast. State of the coast report shows that 97 percent of the Islanders depend on fishing as their source of livelihood.