



**HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY ORGANIZATION**

*Promoting Healthy & Economically
Developed Community*

2025

APRIL NEWSLETTER



www.hedso.org

Message from the Editor



Editor-in-Chief

Dear readers,

April has been a month of momentum, reflection, and renewed partnerships at HEDSO. From empowering students through school outreaches to preparing for global observances like Menstrual Hygiene Day, our team has been deeply involved in meaningful, transformative work. This edition captures the highlights of our school mentorships, strategic partnerships, social media advocacy, wellness efforts, and more. As you read through, may you be inspired by the powerful stories, the passion behind our programs, and the collective commitment to change we continue to uphold.

Warm regards,

ELTON CHACHA

Editor, HEDSO Newsletter

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

From Director's Message

2

Mission, Vision and Background

3

Profile Report

4

Sportlight Stories

5

Succes Story

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JOSEPH OJUKI

Executive Director, HEDSO

April was a month of collaboration, learning, and meaningful community engagement at HEDSO. From school outreaches and mental health partnerships to social media advocacy and internal staff reflections, we continued our mission to create safe, inclusive, and empowering spaces for youth, adolescent girls, and communities at large.

One of the most significant moments this month was the commemoration of World Good Deeds Day under the theme “Wellness Without Limits.” This theme resonated deeply with our vision—to ensure every individual, regardless of background or ability, accesses holistic wellness support that promotes physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Together with our partners, we reinforced the importance of compassion, inclusion, and sustainability in every initiative we carry out.

As we prepare for a new quarter, I remain grateful for the unwavering commitment of our team, partners, and stakeholders. Let us continue amplifying community voices, breaking barriers, and co-creating sustainable change.

Vision, Mission and Background

Vision

- A healthy and economically empowered society of AGYW, Youth and PWDs free from socioeconomic and environmental injustices

Mission

- Promoting integrated health and Well-Being, HIV AIDS Prevention and Control, skills and knowledge development, human rights advocacy and protection, climate change action and economic empowerment among the adolescent girls, young women, pwds, teenage mothers and marginalised youth within the community through strategic partnerships.

Background

HEDSO began in February 2017 as a small youth group in Muhoroni Sub-County, driven by a simple yet powerful vision: to break the cycle of injustice and poverty holding back underserved most vulnerable adolescent girls, young women especially teenage mothers, young widows and youth. What started as a grassroots effort soon grew into a movement. By August 2021, HEDSO transitioned into a community-based organization, amplifying its reach and impact. On January 14, 2025, HEDSO achieved a major milestone officially registering as a National NGO. This expansion allows us to serve even more communities across western Kenya, particularly in the rural Lake Victoria fishing communities, sugar belt areas and slums, where young women and girls face systemic barriers to health and economic empowerment

FROM THE PROGRAMS MANAGER – ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD



MARYL OSGOOD

Program Manager, Economic Empowerment and sustainable livelihood

True empowerment begins when AGYW, Youths and PWDs are given opportunities to thrive—economically, mentally, and emotionally. This month, we deepened our focus on economic empowerment, mental health, and reproductive health through our programs and partnerships. During the Good Deeds Day, I was reminded that wellness is not just about the absence of illness but about the presence of opportunities, support systems, and inclusive environments where all people, especially youth and marginalized groups, can flourish. At HEDSO, we're committed to providing these spaces.

SPORTLIGHT STORIES

APRIL 2025/ISSUE 01



SCHOOL OUTREACHES AND MENTORSHIP SESSIONS

In April, our team continued our school engagement efforts, reaching both primary and tertiary institutions with impactful and age-appropriate mentorship programs.

Obinju Primary School,

The focus was on helping learners understand how to conduct themselves during the April holiday. Discussions centered around responsible behavior, safety, and making healthy choices while away from the school environment.



CAPYEI College

Our mentorship session tackled HIV prevention and healthy relationships. The students engaged in honest, open conversations around stigma, safe practices, and building respectful relationships. It was a transformative session that allowed for reflection and learning.

BUILD-UP ACTIVITY TO 2025 MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY (MHM) DAY



In preparation for the upcoming MHM Day on 28th May, we held several strategic activities. At CAPYEI College, we held an MHM planning session that brought together students and facilitators to explore key themes such as access to sanitary products, menstrual health education, and destigmatization of menstruation.

Our partnership with We One Action Network and Riley Orton Foundation (ROF) led to a vibrant two-day engagement at Akili STEM Academy that blended fun with learning. Day One focused on equipping adolescent girls and young women with practical knowledge on menstrual hygiene. Day Two shifted attention to younger children, where interactive games, storytelling, and group activities were used to promote emotional well-being and normalize open conversations about menstruation.



It was during this period that HEDSO formally signed a partnership with We One Action Network to support MHM Day celebrations.

We recognize that menstrual health and mental health are deeply interconnected. When young people feel emotionally supported, they are more likely to manage menstruation with confidence and dignity. Through education, play, and open dialogue, we are breaking the taboos and creating a generation that views menstruation as a natural, empowered part of life.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

This month, we were honored to engage with a variety of partners whose values align with our mission.

SHOFCO

We hosted a team from SHOFCO under their Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Livelihoods Program. This strategic engagement focused on potential collaboration in the areas of economic empowerment, climate-resilient livelihoods, and capacity building, especially targeting adolescent girls, young women, persons with disabilities, and youth. We look forward to working together to amplify community impact and co-create transformative solutions.



MEGA MOTIVE

We also held a strategic meeting with MEGA MOTIVE, a leading organization in mental health and psychosocial support, to align on the upcoming BeT Aware Project. This initiative will focus on promoting mental wellness, creating peer-led safe spaces, and addressing stigma among youth and community advocates.

Our continued partnership with We One Action Network and Riley Orton Foundation enabled us to execute the MHM build-up activities successfully. These collaborations brought inclusive education, mental wellness, and joy to children and adolescents.

COMMEMORATION OF WORLD GOOD DEEDS DAY



HEDSO was privileged to participate in this year's World Good Deeds Day under the theme "Wellness Without Limits." The day provided an opportunity to promote holistic well-being without discrimination or barriers—supporting individuals physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. The day served as a reminder that small acts of goodness, when shared widely, create waves of change.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY AND DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

HEDSO
Health And Economic Development Strategy Organisation
Promoting Healthy & Economically Developed Community

TINADA
Initiate, Grow, Sustain

Eagle Wings Organization
Initiator, Empower, Transform

UNDETECTABLE=UNTRANSMITABLE HIV

LIVE FACEBOOK

30TH APRIL 2025

2:30PM-3:30PM

DORIS OMUGAH
PROGRAM OFFICER HIV-HEDSO
MODERATOR

LOYAN AMONDI
HIV OFFICER-TINADA
YOUTH ACTION AFRICA
SPEAKER

MMBOGA SHEILA
PROJECT OFFICER-EAGLE
WING ORGANIZATION
SPEAKER

TYSON OKELLO
SENIOR PROGRAMS
MANAGER- HEDSO
SPEAKER

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Our digital platforms remained vibrant and engaging this month with targeted campaigns led by our program departments.

The HIV Prevention Department hosted a Facebook Live session discussing the concept of Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U). The interactive session provided clarity on HIV transmission, medication adherence, and living positively.

HEDSO
Health And Economic Development Strategy Organisation

TINADA
Initiate, Grow, Sustain

Alliance Youth Organization
Change through Action

MIKEDA
Mentoring Initiative for Kenya's Economic Development

AYSRHR
Adolescent and Young People's Reproductive Health

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ENSURE COMPREHENSIVE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE FOR ADOLESCENTS IN KENYA ?

CAUTTAH OSIMBO, AYSRHR Program Officer - HEDSO
MODERATOR

TOM OGALO, SOCIOLOGIST, SRHR EXPERT
SPEAKER

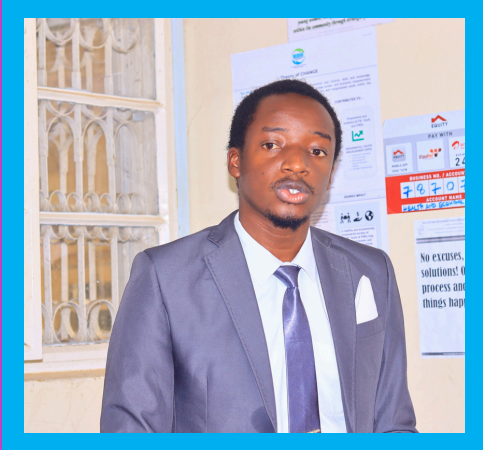
FLEVIA VIVIAN, TEAM LEAD KANO CBO, RHNK YOUTH ADVOCATE
SPEAKER

TYSON OKELLO, SENIOR PROGRAMS MANAGER-HEDSO
SPEAKER

DATE: 11TH APRIL 2025 **TIME: 8:00PM - 9:00PM** **X-SPACE** **@HEDSOorg**

www.hedso.org

The AYSRHR Department led an X (Twitter) Space conversation on "What It Takes to Ensure Comprehensive Reproductive Health Care for Adolescents in Kenya." Youth voices shared their lived experiences and called for more inclusive, accessible SRHR services. Both digital sessions sparked important conversations and connected us with youth beyond physical outreach.



QUARTER ONE STAFF MEETING AND INTERNAL REVIEW

HEDSO held its Quarter One departmental review a time to reflect, assess progress, and realign strategies. Each department Programs, Communications, Monitoring & Evaluation, Finance, and Human Resource—shared key achievements, lessons learned, and action points for the next quarter.

These sessions are essential in promoting transparency, accountability, and continuous learning. We remain committed to enhancing teamwork, embracing innovation, and ensuring that the voices of our communities remain central to our approach.

STAFF WELLNESS AND EASTER ENGAGEMENTS



Staff wellness remained a priority throughout April. HEDSO held weekly internal wellness sessions aimed at reducing burnout and enhancing team cohesion.

In celebration of the Easter season, HEDSO collaborated with Homeless of Kisumu and Better Me organization to host the Easter Wellness Edition Match at the Kisumu Children's Remand Home. The initiative blended sports, psychosocial support, and restorative conversations for children in need of emotional healing.



We also had a friendly staff wellness match with BetterMe to promote work-life balance and emotional well-being among our team.



SUCCESS



STORY

In the heart of Muhoroni, at Nyatao Primary School, a shocking reality unfolded—68 teenage mothers, all struggling to balance childhood and motherhood. The classrooms, meant for eager young minds, were instead filled with the anxieties of girls as young as 14, forced to leave their babies behind each day to pursue their education. The burden of early motherhood had robbed them of their innocence and dreams, replacing them with exhaustion, stigma, and an uncertain future.

Many of these girls had been forced into relationships for survival, exchanging their childhood for the promise of food and school fees. Others had fallen victim to sexual violence, left with no choice but to carry the weight of their experiences alone. Once bright and hopeful, they now sat in class with empty eyes, battling shame and the relentless whispers of a society that had already written them off. The constant worry for their children left at home added another layer of burden to their already challenging situation.



When HEDSO learned of this crisis, it became more than just a concern—it became a mission. The stories of these girls ignited a fierce drive to fight for their right to education, economic independence, and dignity. HEDSO launched an advocacy campaign, rallying stakeholders, community leaders, and policymakers to take action. We provided mentorship, psychosocial support, and vocational training to ensure these young mothers had a fighting chance at a better future. Recognizing the need for childcare solutions, HEDSO also worked to establish community-based childcare centers, allowing the girls to focus on their studies knowing their children were safe and cared for.

Through our economic empowerment initiatives, we equipped the teen moms with skills in tailoring, agribusiness, and small-scale entrepreneurship. Some of them, like Amina, a 16-year-old mother of two, learned how to make and sell liquid soap, enabling her to afford food, school supplies, and childcare fees. Others, like Faith, discovered farming as a way to sustain themselves, growing vegetables to feed their families while selling the surplus for profit.

"I thought my life was over when I became a mother at 15," Faith admits. "But HEDSO showed me that my dreams don't have to end because I have a child. They just have to be adjusted."

Today, Nyatao Primary School is no longer just a place of despair—it is a symbol of resilience. Thanks to continuous efforts, many of these girls have not only stayed in school but have also gained the confidence to rebuild their futures. HEDSO remains committed to breaking the cycle of teenage pregnancy, pushing for better policies, stronger community involvement, and more opportunities for young mothers to thrive.

Our work is far from over. Every girl deserves a future free from limitations. To support our advocacy and empowerment programs.



Promoting Healthy & Economically
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hedso