



20 25 EMPOWERMENT IN ACTION

**HEALTH & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY ORGANIZATION JANUARY
NEWSLETTER**



*Promoting Healthy & Economically
Developed Community*

“A seed plated with knowledge and nurtured with innovation grows into a harvest that feeds not just a family but an entire communities future”

Editor's Quote



Welcome to the January edition of HEDSO Chronicles! As we embark on a new year, I am thrilled to share the impactful work our team has accomplished in just a few weeks. This month, we've witnessed remarkable growth—from the launch of our Smart Farm initiative to empowering communities through skills training and advocating for girls' futures. Each program reflects our unwavering commitment to uplifting vulnerable communities and promoting sustainable development.

At HEDSO, we believe in the power of collective action. Let us continue to collaborate, innovate and inspire change for a brighter tomorrow.

Carolove Oyola
Editor-in-Chief

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Director's Message

Dear Partners, Supporters, and Change-Makers,

As we embark on this new chapter of 2025, we are proud to reflect on the milestones and transformative initiatives highlighted in this edition of HEDSO Chronicles



Each story, from Achieng's journey of resilience in the "Beads of Resilience" feature to the groundbreaking innovations of the Smart Farm Initiative, underscores our unwavering commitment to empowering communities and fostering sustainable development.

At HEDSO, we believe that change starts with collective action. Through your unwavering support, we have empowered women, youth, and marginalized groups to overcome barriers and unlock their potential. Together, we are not only addressing urgent challenges like food insecurity, skills training, and gender inequality but also laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and equitable future.

As you read through this edition, we invite you to join us in amplifying our impact. Whether supporting the Knit Her Future Initiative, volunteering your expertise, or sharing our mission with others, every action counts toward creating lasting change.

Let's continue to dream, act, and transform lives together.

Warm regards

Joseph Ojuki
Executive
Director/Founder
HEDSO

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VISION AND MISSION

Vision

A healthy and economically empowered adolescent Girls , young women, youths and PWD'S free from socio-economic 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, PWD's, teenage mothers and marginalised youth within the community through strategic partnerships.

Background

The Health and Economic Development Strategy Organization was registered in August 2021. HEDSO was formed with the main aim of amplifying the voices and addressing the unique challenges faced by adolescent girls, young women, PWDs and youths in the rural communities in the Lake regions and sugar belt areas counties. HEDSO recognizes that these groups often encounter significant barriers to achieving their full potential, both in terms of their health and economic empowerment. By focusing on improving their health and wellbeing while simultaneously fostering economic empowerment, HEDSO aims to create a more equitable and inclusive society free from social injustices.

Programs Manager's Note

Dear Partners and Friends,
As we step into this new year, I am excited to share the incredible strides HEDSO has made in empowering communities and fostering sustainable change. January has been nothing short of remarkable. From launching the Smart Farm initiative to providing transformative skills through workshops and tailoring programs, we are witnessing firsthand how opportunity and innovation can change lives.



The Ride to Her Future campaign continues to inspire, rallying communities to support adolescent girls in accessing education and breaking barriers.

At HEDSO, we believe in the ripple effect—when we empower one person, they empower others, creating a wave of transformation that reaches far beyond our immediate efforts. This belief fuels our work, from training farmers in modern techniques to nurturing the talents of women and youth through skills programs.

As we look ahead, we are committed to expanding our reach, building partnerships, and innovating solutions to the challenges our communities face. None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our staff, partners, and the communities we serve. Together, we are creating a future where every individual has the tools and confidence to thrive.

Let us continue to work together in making a lasting impact. Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Warm regards,

Tyson Okello
Programs Manager

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SPOTLIGHT STORIES



Climate smart Agriculture demo farm

HEDSO's Smart Farm is a transformative project that integrates modern technology, traditional farming methods, and community participation to tackle food insecurity and unemployment in Kisumu County. The farm utilizes innovative techniques such as drip irrigation for efficient water use, soil testing to optimize productivity, greenhouse farming to grow high-value crops throughout the year, and organic farming practices to encourage chemical-free production and sustainable pest control.

Beyond empowering individual farmers, the Smart Farm is focused on engaging youth by positioning agriculture as a viable and lucrative career through agritech workshops, mentorship programs, and interactive exhibitions. HEDSO is also planning to expand the initiative to include aquaculture systems for diversified income opportunities, a farmer resource center for accessing training materials and equipment, and an agri-tourism program to educate schools and visitors about sustainable farming practices.

The Smart Farm stands as a beacon of innovation and sustainability, driving food security, economic growth, and environmental conservation while empowering communities to embrace agriculture as a pathway to a better future

SEWING SKILLS AND STITCHING FUTUTRE

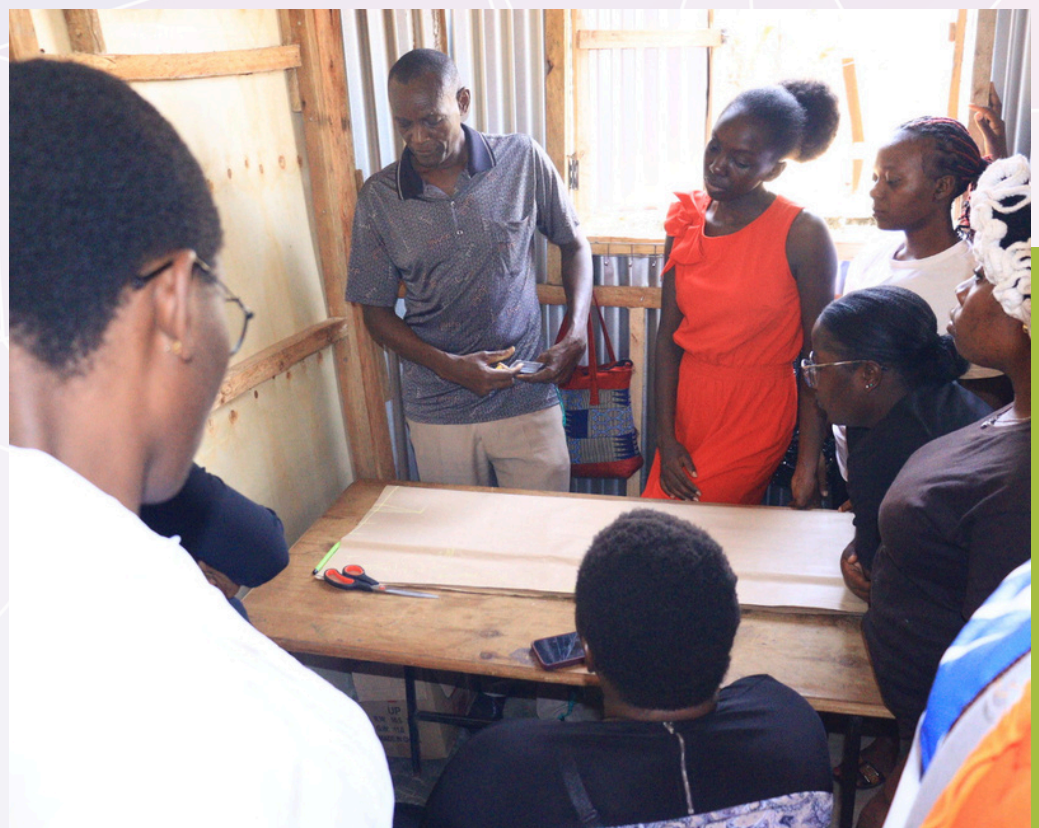
This program is empowering communities by providing practical tailoring skills that open doors to economic independence and creativity. Designed to cater to women, youth, and other vulnerable groups, the program combines hands-on training with mentorship and business development support to ensure participants not only master the craft but also build sustainable careers in the textile and fashion industry.

The January cohort saw participants successfully graduate who are going to act as TOTS to other AGYWs, PWDS and youths in the community after an intensive three-month training that covered essential skills such as fabric selection, sewing techniques, pattern making, and garment finishing. In addition to practical tailoring skills, participants were also trained in business essentials like pricing, customer relations, and marketing strategies to help them establish and grow their enterprises.

Moving forward, HEDSO plans to expand the TOTS program by introducing advanced modules in digital fashion design, embroidery, and fabric dyeing.

Inspirational stories often highlight remarkable resilience, creativity, and perseverance in the face of challenges.

The program will also establish a shared workspace equipped with sewing machines and tools, where graduates can continue to hone their skills and collaborate on projects. Plans are underway to partner with local designers and retailers, providing graduates with access to a larger market for their products.



EMPOWERING CREATIVITY

HEDSO's capacity-building sessions in bead making, soap making, and mat weaving are sparking creativity and promoting self-reliance AGYW. These sessions are designed to equip AGYW, with hands-on skills that translate into sustainable income-generating opportunities. By combining technical training with entrepreneurial guidance, the program ensures participants can turn their newfound skills into thriving small businesses



Participants in the bead-making sessions mastered intricate designs for necklaces, bracelets, and other accessories, which are already being sold in local markets. The soap-making training introduced environmentally friendly practices, using organic ingredients to create high-quality, natural soaps that cater to the rising demand for sustainable products. Meanwhile, the mat-weaving sessions taught participants how to craft durable, beautiful mats using recycled materials, blending tradition with environmental consciousness.

The capacity building sessions also emphasized the importance of collaboration and peer learning. Participants formed small support groups where they exchange ideas, refine their skills, and explore ways to combine their crafts for unique product offerings. For example, some have started pairing hand-woven mats with bead-decorated cushions, creating value-added products that appeal to broader markets.

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HEDSO plans to take these workshops a step further by introducing advanced training in product branding, digital marketing, and access to micro-financing. Additionally, the organization is working on establishing market linkages, connecting participants with regional and national platforms where they can showcase and sell their products.

THE RIDE TO HER FUTURE CAMPAIGN



HEDSO's Ride to Her Future campaign continues to make waves, using cycling as a powerful tool to raise awareness about the challenges adolescent girls face and to advocate for their education, health, and empowerment. This initiative brings communities together in rural and underserved areas, fostering dialogue and collective action to break barriers and create opportunities for girls to thrive

The campaign rolled through Usoma, where cyclists including parents, community leaders, and students participated in a ride. The ride itself was more than just physical activity—it was a vibrant showcase of community unity. Along the route, banners and posters displayed messages of encouragement for girls, while volunteers handed out educational materials on reproductive health and access to resources

HEDSO also organized mini workshops at key stops, where participants could engage in discussions about the importance of delaying early marriages, preventing teenage pregnancies, and fostering leadership among young women

The campaign's impact goes beyond awareness; it also offers tangible support. Through partnerships with local organizations, HEDSO distributed sanitary kits to promote menstrual hygiene. The goal of this program is to create a network of support that enables girls to envision and pursue ambitious futures



TRUSTLAB INCUBATOR WORKSHOP



HEDSO's Successful Participation in the 10-Day Trust Lab Workshop Leads to New Digital Threat Project .Last year, HEDSO participated in a 10-day Trust Lab workshop held in Kisumu, bringing together key stakeholders, organizations, and community representatives to tackle emerging digital threats. The workshop was a resounding success, with participants developing innovative, community-driven solutions** to enhance digital safety and resilience.

Throughout the sessions, HEDSO engaged in problem framing, stakeholder mapping, roadmap development, and real-world testing of solutions designed to address digital risks. A key highlight was the community stakeholder exchange, where participants collaborated directly with local communities to co-create and refine practical, sustainable solutions.



As a result of this successful engagement, HEDSO secured funding for a digital threat project set to begin in March this year. This project will focus on enhancing digital literacy, promoting safer online spaces, and strengthening community resilience against digital threats.

We are excited about the impact this initiative will have and remain committed to leveraging technology, fostering community trust, and driving meaningful change in the digital space.

WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR STAFF

We recognize that our most valuable resource is our people, and we are committed to fostering a healthy and supportive work environment. Our wellness programs, which have become a cornerstone of the organization's culture, are designed to ensure that staff members remain motivated, energized, and mentally resilient as they navigate the challenges of their impactful work. The January wellness sessions featured an exciting blend of activities aimed at promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being.



One of the most impactful moments of the month was a team-building retreat held at a serene outdoor location. The retreat included engaging activities such as trust-building exercises, problem-solving games, and reflective sessions that strengthened bonds among team members. "The retreat reminded us of the importance of teamwork and showed us how much we can achieve when we work together," said one of the staffs.

The impact of these programs is evident in the energy and enthusiasm of the staff. Team members report feeling more engaged and connected, with a renewed sense of purpose in their roles.



HUMAN STORY

Beads of Resilience

Achieng sits at her modest wooden table, her hands moving gracefully as she strings vibrant beads onto a nylon thread. The beads, in hues of red, green, and gold, shimmer under the sunlight streaming through her tiny workshop's window. To an observer, this might look like just another craft, but for Achieng, each bead tells a story of resilience, creativity, and hope.



Just a few months ago, Achieng's life was very different. As a single mother of three, she struggled to provide basic needs for her children, often taking on menial jobs that barely put food on the table. Her days were long, filled with worry, and her nights even longer, as she wondered how she could break the cycle of poverty. When HEDSO announced a bead-making workshop in her village, she hesitated.



What could I possibly learn at my age?" she wondered. Yet, something inside her whispered to give it a try.

The first day of the workshop was daunting. Surrounded by younger women and unfamiliar tools, Achieng felt out of place. But as the instructor demonstrated how to design intricate patterns, her apprehension melted into curiosity. She picked up the tiny beads and, with trembling hands, began to string them together. By the end of the day, she had created her first bracelet—a simple design, but to her, it was a masterpiece.

Encouraged by the trainers and her peers, Achieng quickly mastered advanced techniques, from crafting multi-layered necklaces to designing custom bead art. Her creativity blossomed as she began experimenting with colors and patterns inspired by her Luo heritage. "Each design I make is like painting a picture, telling a story of where I come from and where I'm going," she explained.

Today, Achieng is a celebrated artisan in her village. She runs a small business, selling her jewelry at local markets and through social media. Her creations have caught the attention of customers in urban centers, with some placing custom orders for weddings and special occasions.

Her bestselling piece is a bead-encrusted choker inspired by the traditional adornments worn by Luo women—a perfect blend of culture and contemporary design.

Her children now attend school without interruption, and Achieng beams with pride when she talks about the future. “Beads have given me a voice,”* she says. *”Through them, I can provide for my family and show my children that creativity and hard work can change our lives.”

But Achieng’s journey doesn’t end there. She’s started mentoring other women in her community, teaching them the craft that transformed her life. Every Saturday, her workshop buzzes with chatter and laughter as women gather to learn and share ideas. “It’s not just about making jewelry, ”she says. “It’s about creating a network of support, a space where we can inspire each other and grow together.”

Achieng’s story is a testament to the power of creativity and opportunity. What began as a hesitant step into the unknown has turned into a journey of empowerment, resilience, and artistic expression. With every bead she strings, she’s not just crafting jewelry—she’s building a legacy of hope and inspiration for her family and her community.



KNIT HER FUTURE INITIATIVE



**HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY ORGANIZATION (HEDSO)**

KNIT HER FUTURE INITIATIVE

Launch

**GOAL: Enhance Socio-economic stability and well-being of
AGYW in Kisumu's Sugarbelt areas and beaches.**

DONATE NOW



DAIL: *483*57*103484#

PAY BILL: 891300

ACCOUNT: 103484



Join us in changing lives

The Knit Her Future initiative empowers adolescent girls through mentorship, education, and resource distribution. With your support, we can help break barriers and create opportunities for these girls to thrive.



HOW TO REACH US



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