

**20
25**

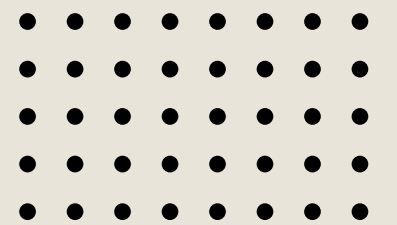


*Promoting Healthy & Economically
Developed Community*

**HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY ORGANIZATION**

MARCH NEWSLETTER

www.hedso.org





FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear readers,

Welcome to the March edition of the HEDSO Newsletter! This month has been both dynamic and inspiring. Our outreach activities, strategic partnerships, and advocacy work have deepened our impact across Kisumu and beyond. We continued to walk closely with young people, educators, parents, and policymakers to address pressing social issues –from menstrual hygiene and mental health to gender equality and economic empowerment. Through powerful collaborations and relentless community engagement, we are advancing our mission of holistic development and social justice. Thank you for walking this journey with us. We invite you to read through our updates, celebrate our achievements, and join us in shaping a brighter future for all.

Warm regards,

Chacha Elton
Editor-In-Chief



Table of Content



From Director's Message 1

Our Mission, Vision and
Background 2

Sportlight Stories 3

Strengthening Partnerships

Multy-stake holder Engagement

Human stories 4



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Partners and Supporters,

This March, we've seen the power of collaboration and community in full force. Our engagements in schools, vocational training centers, and county forums have highlighted both the challenges and the resilience of our young people, especially girls and marginalized communities. As an organization, we've strengthened partnerships, explored new programmatic areas with institutions like UNICEF and Segal Family Foundation, and continued to create safe, empowering spaces through mentorship, education, and advocacy. I'm proud of the HEDSO team and grateful to our partners for championing gender equality, youth development, and health rights with us. Let's continue to forge pathways for inclusion, empowerment, and sustainable development.

In solidarity,

JOSEPH OJUKI

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HEDSO

VISION, MISSION AND BACKGROUND

VISION

A healthy and economically empowered society of AGYW, Youth and PWDs 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 adolescent girls, young women, PWDs, teenage mothers, and marginalized youth 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

SPORTLIGHT STORIES

SCHOOL OUTREACHES AND MENTORSHIP SESSIONS

MARCH 2025/ISSUE 01



Our grassroots engagement remained vibrant this month through multiple school outreach and mentorship sessions:

CAPYEI College, Kisumu

HEDSO held impactful discussions around mental health, healthy relationships, and menstrual hygiene. In addition, our economic empowerment initiative introduced crocheting as a creative and sustainable income-generating skill for young women, paired with business development training to help them transition these skills into viable enterprises.



Obinju Primary School

We conducted sessions focused on drug and substance abuse prevention, the realities of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and how to navigate youth challenges through informed decision-making. The session emphasized peer influence, self-esteem, and open communication.



Akado Vocational Training Center

Our session here tackled gender stereotypes, unpacking how they shape opportunities and limit young people's potential. The discussions emphasized critical thinking, gender equality, and the importance of inclusive environments in education and the workplace.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

We're proud to have worked alongside like-minded organizations in March:

TINADA

Through Tinada's Bridge Beyond Barriers Project, we joined hands to advance the mental health and well-being of children with disabilities. Our discussions focused on inclusive education, stigma reduction, and creating nurturing environments for all learners.



SEGAL FAMILY FOUNDATION

We explored partnership avenues during a strategic meeting and were honored to attend their Networking Party at Sarova Hotel, Kisumu, to connect with fellow change-makers and share innovative ideas for community transformation.

HOMELESS OF KISUMU:



Together, we led a collaborative outreach session at Obinju Primary, focusing on holistic well-being and behavior change for school-aged children.



NAIROBITS:

At CAPYEI College, we partnered on mentorship sessions addressing menstrual health management, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and gender-based violence (GBV). The forum empowered youth to become informed advocates of their rights and bodily autonomy.



UNICEF

HEDSO had the privilege to hold exploratory discussions with UNICEF around potential partnerships in integrated child protection services, gender equality, climate change resilience, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene)**. This dialogue promises future collaborations with far-reaching impact.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AWARENESS



TIKTOK LIVE



Discussion on Intimate
Partner violence



12 MARCH, 2025



2:00PM-3:00PM

This month, our GBV department ran a powerful digital campaign on our Facebook live highlighting intimate partner violence (IPV). Through survivor stories, expert tips, and legal information, the campaign aimed to educate the public on recognizing abuse, understanding support mechanisms, and promoting respectful relationships. The campaign reached hundreds of users, ignited online conversations, and helped connect survivors to professional help and safe spaces.

MULTY-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS

HEDSO was actively involved in key county-level planning and advocacy platforms



SECTOR REVIEW FORUMS

We took part in reviewing the Kisumu County Sector Reports, assessing progress in youth-targeted programs, and identifying gaps in implementation. HEDSO contributed data and insights from our on-the-ground work.

2025 WORK PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Our team contributed to shaping the county's work plan, ensuring youth development programs are inclusive, strategic, and aligned with the changing realities of our communities.



NYOTA PROJECT SENSITIZATION

As part of the national strategy to uplift youth through skills development and job creation, HEDSO joined stakeholders in a sensitization session, advocating for inclusive access to opportunities for marginalized youth.



OPEN POLICY FORUM PARTICIPATION

HEDSO was honored to contribute to the Open Policy Forum, where young women, policy makers, and duty bearers discussed urgent issues like women's access to justice, SRHR, leadership, peace, and security. Leaders in attendance included the Assistant County Commissioner, the National Gender and Equality Commission, the CEC for Gender, Youth, Sports, and Culture, and representatives from the Directorate of Children's Services.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - POST CELEBRATION EVENT



To commemorate International Women's Day, HEDSO hosted a post-IWD session at CAPYEI College. The interactive event featured bold conversations on breaking gender stereotypes and empowering young women to redefine societal expectations. Students shared personal stories, asked critical questions, and were challenged to take leadership roles in advancing gender equity both at home and in their communities.

The day her husband hit her for the first time was a turning point. It wasn't the physical pain that was the worst, but the shattering of her belief that things would somehow get better. She knew then that she couldn't stay. But where could she go? She had no money, no education, and no family to return to. Her parents, bound by tradition and their own financial struggles, had made it clear that they couldn't take her back.

She felt utterly lost and alone, carrying the weight of her baby and the burden of her despair. The nights were the hardest. She would lie awake, listening to her baby's soft breaths, wondering what kind of future she could offer him, a future that seemed to stretch out before her, bleak and uncertain. She worried about his health, about feeding him, about protecting him from the harsh realities of their life. She felt like a failure, a young girl who had been thrust into a world she wasn't prepared for, a world that was slowly crushing her spirit.

One afternoon, while fetching water from the local well, she overheard some women talking about HEDSO. They spoke of a place where women could get help, learn skills, and find support. Chebet desperate and with nothing to lose, decided to seek them out. The HEDSO centre was a bus ride away, a journey she made with her baby tied to her back, her heart pounding with hope

At HEDSO, she found a lifeline. She met women who had been through similar experiences, women who understood her fear and her pain. They didn't judge her; they offered her help. HEDSO provided her with counselling, helping her to understand that she wasn't to blame for the abuse she had suffered. They also offered her a chance to learn a trade

Chebet chose tailoring. The rhythmic clatter of the sewing machine became a form of therapy, a way to focus her mind and build a new future. The small income she earned gave her a sense of independence she had never known.

She could now buy food for her child, pay for his schooling, and even save a little bit for the future. More importantly, she had regained her self-respect. She was no longer just a victim; she was a survivor.

Amina's story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of organizations like HEDSO, which empower women to break free from cycles of violence and build a brighter future for themselves and their children. She went from a scared, trapped girl to a confident, independent woman.

SUCCESS STORY



STITCHING A NEW FUTURE

Chebet's story began at Sigowet a small village in Kericho county. She was a bright, curious girl, but her dreams of finishing school were cut short when she was married off at just 16. Her new life was a stark contrast to the carefree childhood she had known.

She was now a wife, expected to run the household, work in the fields, and soon after, became a mother. Her husband, though not intentionally cruel, struggled with his own frustrations. Life was hard, and sometimes, those hardships manifested in anger directed at Chebet. She felt trapped, isolated, and increasingly afraid. The whispers in the community about women who left their husbands echoed in her mind, a mix of fear and a desperate longing for something better. She also faced the constant judgment of her in-laws, who saw her as just another pair of hands to work the land and provide them with grandchildren. They criticized her cooking, her cleaning, and her ability to bear more children, constantly reminding her of her shortcomings and making her feel inadequate.



Promoting Healthy & Economically
Developed Community



“

*An ideation aint
work without
execution*

Contact Us

0746046192

www.hedso.org

info@hedso.org

