



HITAJI
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
FOSTERING WOMEN & GIRLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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Dear Friends, Partners, and Collaborators,

What a year 2024 was with exciting milestones and robust programming for Hitaji women and girls! I am proud to share with you our Annual Report in which I seek to highlight success stories and the achievements we have made through your generous gifts of money, time, efforts, and partnerships.

I am proud about what we were able to achieve in 2024 as highlighted in this report. I will focus on the growth of our programs as well as the impact we have made on secondary school girls, women, and the communities within which we work.

Hitaji has steadily supported access to education for girls through education scholarships and psychosocial and STEM mentorship. We have economically empowered hundreds of women through micro-loans and training. The micro-loans and revolving funds program have helped families to rebuild their lives while gaining financial independence. We have also improved women's public health through interventions such as women's soccer program and health talks. We have achieved this in partnership with various stakeholders.

We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report. We are grateful for your continued support these past years and hope that you will continue to travel with us on this journey of impacting lives, one girl, one woman, and one family at a time.

Asenath Lutabingwa



Founder and CEO

About Hitaji Development Initiative

Hitaji Development Initiative (Hitaji) is a Non-Governmental Organization that works to address the challenges and needs that poor women and girls face in Migori County in Kenya. Founded in 2012, it was established with a mission of mitigating suffering, embarking on providing lifesaving holistic services to most vulnerable communities focusing especially on women, children, and youth.

At Hitaji, we believe in and practice collaboration and cooperation as necessary vehicles for creating lasting and sustainable impact among vulnerable women and girls in rural communities. We work in collaboration with other partners to build community resilience with the hope that they become self-sufficient. Hitaji's long-term vision is to increase the pool of capable community members able to transform the whole society and pull it out of extreme poverty, illiteracy, and diseases, and improve people's livelihoods.

OUR MISSION

Hitaji is committed to fostering sustainable economic development, empowerment, and financial independence for vulnerable women and girls in rural areas.

OUR VISION

To create, develop, and integrate communities in which women and girls realize their full potential.

OUR CORE VALUES

- Faith
- Neutrality
- Humanity
- Impartiality
- Transparency



IMPACT PER THEMATIC PROGRAM AREA

EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Poverty in Migori County, where Hitaji operates, has forced many girls to struggle with paying their school fees, negatively impacting their academic performance. To address this challenge in 2024, Hitaji continued to support educational scholarships for eight bright secondary school girls from marginalized and vulnerable families. The girls were enrolled in five different local secondary schools within Migori County and had shown interest in the STEM fields.



Students and Principal are receiving sanitary towels delivered by the Hitaji team to girls at Olasi Secondary School.

Impact Overview of Hitaji Educational Scholarship Program (2024)

Metric	Details
Number of girls supported	8
Number of schools enrolled	5
Support provided	School fees, pocket money, sanitary towel
Activities	School visits, progress meetings with teachers, direct engagement with girls
Outcome	Improved academic performance, positive feedback from school principals

49%

of young Kenyan girls (15-24) considered illiterate.

14.3%

of girls in rural Kenya enroll in secondary school.

50%

of girls in Kenya drop out of school after giving birth.

18%

of Kenyan women have completed secondary education.



Students and Head teacher posing for a photo with the Hitaji staff at Nyandango Mixed Secondary School.

At the start of each term, the Hitaji team visited these schools to deliver school fee payment slips, pocket money and essential personal items such as sanitary towels. They also engaged with school principals to monitor the girls' academic progress and held discussions with the girls to identify challenges and plan support strategies. The principals expressed deep appreciation for the educational scholarship program, noting it had contributed to improved academic scores among the recipients. By focusing on STEM and vulnerable girls, Hitaji's program plays a crucial role in empowering a key demographic for long-term community development.



Students and Head teacher posing for a photo with the Hitaji staff at Nyandango Mixed Secondary School.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

In 2024, over 500 secondary school girls from two local schools-Bande Girls Secondary School (300 girls) and Olasi Mixed Secondary School (200 girls)-participated in the general mentorship. Inspired by Michelle Obama’s words, “There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish,” the mentorship aimed to empower young girls by providing them with the tools and motivation to succeed. The mentorship sessions offered a valuable opportunity for one-on-one follow-up with girls sponsored through the Hitaji scholarship program. The team engaged participants in discussions centered on real-life scenarios and academic motivation. In addition, the sessions emphasized the vital role of self-esteem in supporting spiritual, social, academic, and mental well-being. The mentors highlighted how self-

perception shapes life trajectories, encouraging the girls to recognize their worth and pursue their dreams regardless of their background. A standout moment was the involvement of a mentor from Rongo University, who shared her personal journey from a similar school to university success. Her relatable experience made the mentorship more impactful and inspiring for the students.



Mentor from Rongo University sharing her personal journey with Olasi secondary students.



Bande Girls High School and Olasi Mixed Secondary School students during the mentorship event.

In addition to self-esteem, the event addressed period poverty and provided basic counselling support. The girls actively participated through questions, icebreaker activities, and sharing personal stories, creating an engaging and supportive environment. The session was a resounding success, filled with learning and laughter. Both girls and teachers expressed strong interest in more such sessions, appreciating the fresh perspectives and motivation they provide beyond typical classroom talks.

WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM



This program forms a key part of Hitaji's broader strategy to empower women groups in Nyatike, Migori County. In 2024, Hitaji worked with more than 500 vulnerable women and young girls from seven registered women groups. Notably, two women groups that applied for financial support were awarded a revolving fund of Ksh 150,000 to accelerate the growth of their businesses and projects.

The revolving fund offered flexible financing for income-generating activities, helping members start or grow businesses and improve economic stability. Beyond financial support, Hitaji integrated capacity-building initiatives such as entrepreneurship and financial literacy training. These initiatives fostered stronger bonds among group members, increased participation in group activities like farming and table banking.





COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE PROGRAM

Women Soccer Project

Women's soccer in rural and remote areas holds tremendous potential to transform the lives of women and girls, yet access to such opportunities remains limited due to resource constraints and social barriers. In 2024, Hitaji made significant strides in addressing these challenges by organizing women's soccer activities. The soccer activities brought together seven women's groups from Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County.

These activities were made possible through the generous support of NIKUMBUKE UNITED, USA, and collaboration with local government leaders, CIHEB, and Blue Cross Nyatike. A highlight of the year was the inter-group soccer matches and tournaments, which fostered healthy competition, encouraged the physical fitness, and strengthened bonds among the participating women's groups.

PUBLIC HEALTHCARE PROGRAM



In the second quarter of 2024, Hitaji, in collaboration with the Enhancing Technical Responses to HIV Epidemic Control through Nimble County Health Systems Center for International Health, Education, and Biosecurity (ENTRENCH CIHEB-K), leveraged a soccer tournament event to educate 7 women groups and 200 community members on physical health, and sexual and reproductive health. During the tournament, CIHEB-K staff delivered health talks emphasizing the significant benefits of regular exercise in managing conditions such as high blood pressure and joint pain. They highlighted how incorporating physical activity into daily routines improves cardiovascular health, enhances joint flexibility, and reduces discomfort.



Hitaji women soccer during the Nikumbuke Women Coast Cup 2024 Tournament in Kwale County, Libra playground.



Health Talk by CIHEB-K staff during the Soccer Tournament at Ochuna community playground.

In October 2024, the Hitaji women's soccer team, composed of 20 players from seven women groups, participated in the Nikumbuke Women Coast Cup 2024 Tournament held at Libra Playground in Kwale. The tournament featured teams primarily from the Hijabi Mentorship and Nikumbuke Women United organizations. The main aim was to raise awareness about the importance of physical activity in addressing community health challenges. The event was celebrated as more than just a competition. It became a powerful movement of strength, resilience, and sisterhood among women from different regions.

HITAJI FOUNDER AND CEO VISIT TO KENYA

During the Hitaji's CEO visit to Kenya, numerous critical meetings were held to discuss and examine strategic aspects of the organization. The Director met with Hitaji Scholarship alumni to review their professional development and future ambitions. She also held a constructive meeting with the Hitaji team, concentrating on critical concerns such as organizational growth, resource mobilization, impact, and scaling strategies. Importantly, the CEO took the



opportunity to heartily welcome the new Head of Programs to the organization, expressing her excitement for this addition and recognizing the value it would bring to the team. The visit also included a meeting with the board, where significant issues of organizational leadership and resource mobilization were addressed.

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<https://hitajinitiative.org/donations-hitaji/>. Hitaji is a registered 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization.

We are always grateful for your support.

Yours Truly,

Asenath Lutabingwa
Hitaji Founder and CEO

