

Organizational Background and History

Help REACH Africa (HERA) is a local non-profit NGO that was established in 2009 and is legally registered in Kenya. It operates with a local Board and dedicated staff. The acronym REACH stands for Rights, Empowerment, Advancement, Care, and Health, which represents the technical approaches employed by the organization in the implementation of its projects and programs. HERA envisions a world where all individuals are empowered to live their dreams, while its mission is to save and transform lives. The organization upholds the values of **P**assion, **I**ntegrity, **R**espect, **E**xcellence, and **T**eamwork (**PIRET**).

HERA's strategy involves close collaboration with various stakeholders, including the National and County Governments, Local Implementing Partners, Private Sector, Children's Department, Local Administration, Religious and the Community Based Organizations. The aim is to ensure project ownership and leadership at the local level, with HERA providing technical guidance and support in the journey towards self-reliance.

HERA focuses on several technical areas, including Maternal, New-born and Child Health (MNCH) and Family Planning (FP), Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health (AYSRH), HIV/AIDS, TB/Malaria, Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), Advocacy, Key Populations and Health System Strengthening (HSS). Over the past seven years, HERA has worked closely with the Ugunja Sub-County Health Pillar in Siaya County to strengthen the health system. Through collaboration with various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Anglican Church, Youth and Sports, Local Administration, Judiciary, and Commissioner's office, HERA has addressed societal issues such as teenage pregnancies, drug and substance abuse, home deliveries, and lack of medicines and supplies in facilities. These efforts have resulted in improved health infrastructure in 19 health facilities, enhanced service delivery capacity, strengthened commodity supply and improved local leadership. Consequently, there has been increased utilization of health services and a notable reduction in maternal and new-born mortality.

In addition to health system strengthening, HERA has implemented the OVC Program in 11 counties in Eastern and Central Kenya, including Machakos, Makueni, Kitui, Tharaka Nithi, Kakamega, and Vihiga. Through this program, HERA has supported over 140,000 OVCs in accessing HIV services and education, facilitating their school attendance, and constructing houses in areas of need. Moreover, HERA has reached over 2,500 households with Household Economic Strengthening (HES) interventions, while providing capacity building

to 50 Local Implementing Partners (LIPs) working with OVCs, empowering them to better manage their programs.

In the realm of adolescent health, HERA has implemented programs in Nairobi, Makueni, and Siaya Counties. These programs have reached over 10,000 Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) with sexual and reproductive health information/services, career guidance, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene education. Additionally, more than 2,000 girls have adopted family planning methods. In Machakos, HERA introduced Group Antenatal Care (ANC) in 32 health facilities, resulting in over 90% of women delivering in health facilities, more than 70% adopting family planning methods, and over 86% being empowered with knowledge on HIV testing, treatment, care, and support.

HERA has also played a significant role in implementing HIV testing, Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT), and Antiretroviral treatment services across 11 counties in Siaya, Eastern, and Central Kenya. Through these efforts, over 1.5 million individuals have been reached with HIV testing, more than 350,000 with PMTCT interventions, and 38,000 have been placed on Antiretroviral therapy (ART).

HERA's expertise extends to capacity building for Local Implementing Partners (LIPs). The organization has worked in approximately 10 counties to provide quality community-based case management services to over 100,000 OVCs. Furthermore, HERA actively participates in the government initiative to promote alternative family care for children, particularly through foster care and adoption. Collaboration with schools, health facilities, churches, and communities is instrumental in addressing the issue of teen pregnancy and finding solutions. HERA possesses deep knowledge of the Kenyan situation regarding HIV/AIDS, acquired through years of experience working with donor agencies, the National AIDS and STI Control Program (NASCO), the National AIDS Control Council (NACC), County Governments, and implementing partners.

Currently, HERA is implementing the CIRA Award funded by Yale University, which focuses on Key Populations and linking them to HIV testing, prevention, care, and treatment. Additionally, HERA has recently received an award from the Yale School of Nursing to conduct research on Diabetes and Hypertension in informal settlements of Nairobi.

Notably, Help REACH Africa has successfully implemented a two-year HIV Education, Empathy, and Empowered (HIVE3) program in Kenya in partnership with Yale University, Q-Initiative and collaboration with HOYMAS which is a local based organization. The

program aimed to provide comprehensive peer support for men who have sex with men (MSM) by utilizing a discrete mobile app platform. HIVE3 was initially delivered using WhatsApp, a widely used online communication platform in Kenya. The program focused on connecting Kenyan MSM, regardless of their HIV status, with trained peer mentors.

Objectives of the HIVE3 program included increasing peer social support, reducing social isolation, mitigating the impact of HIV and same-gender stigmas on HIV self-care and healthcare-seeking behaviours.

The target population for the HIVE3 program was MSM who face heightened risks of HIV infection due to the multifaceted stigmas hindering their utilization of HIV prevention and care services. The original HIVE3 program was piloted with a group of ethnically diverse HIV-positive MSM volunteers recruited from Accra in 2016, followed by a refined randomized controlled trial conducted in Ghana in 2021. In Kenya, an adapted version of HIVE3, tailored to the local culture and context, was implemented in Nairobi and Eldoret. Peer mentors, selected based on specific criteria, were recruited from within the MSM population to ensure representation and understanding. These mentors received comprehensive training to deliver online mentoring, and data collected from focus group discussions and interviews with MSM is currently being analysed for publication.

HERA's organizational systems are designed to support its mission and objectives effectively. The organization has a Strategic Plan in place to guide its activities, with a focus on realizing its vision and adhering to the national agenda of Universal Health Care. HERA follows a competency-based recruitment plan that emphasizes equal opportunities for women, youth, and People Living with Disabilities. The organization has established collaborations with various stakeholders, including government bodies, donors, private sector entities, faith-based organizations, local administration, and communities. To ensure program effectiveness and accountability, HERA has robust monitoring and evaluation strategies, with regular data quality assessments and transparent reporting. The financial and procurement policies are responsive to the needs of donors and program beneficiaries, and the organization operates under the guidance of a professional Board of Directors. The CEO, supported by a management team, oversees the implementation of programs and ensures the fulfilment of Board resolutions.

With an experienced and dedicated team of 25 staff members, HERA is currently implementing programs in five counties: Siaya, Nairobi, Makeni, Machakos, and Kitui. The organization's annual budget is approximately \$150,000

For further information, please contact: Dr. Mildred Mudany, Executive Director Phone: +254 718883461 Email: mmudany@helpreachafrica.com / mmudany@gmail.com Physical Address: Nyari Good News off Red Hill Road 25 Robins Close.