

# NACADA QUARTERLY

A Publication of the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse



## Driving Students out of Alcohol and Drug Abuse: A Public Transport Driver Feted for Heroic Act

**Partnership to Enhance Access to TB Services at Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre**

**Top Addiction Relapse Triggers and their Coping Mechanisms**

**Authority Starts Development of a Communication Policy and Strategy**

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# CEO's Message



Welcome to the Sixth Edition of the NACADA Quarterly Newsletter that highlights our programs for the last three months.

We are excited to have closed the year on a high note and made surmountable achievements. The Authority was privileged to host His Excellency Hon. Jackson Mandago, Governor Uasin Gishu County Government and the County Alcoholic Drinks Licensing Committee at the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre to document best practices to establish a rehabilitation centre.

We also saw a public transport driver make history by tactfully detouring to a police station on suspecting that the minors he was ferrying to school were abusing alcohol and drugs in the vehicle. As NACADA, we acknowledge John Maina as a patriotic Kenyan and we shall pursue recognition and award by the Head of State. We encourage all Kenyans to emulate Maina and embrace collective responsibility in the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse.

We have also inked an agreement with the Centre for Health Solutions – Kenya to enhance access to TB services at the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre. In addition, road safety continues to be one of our priorities and we are in

talks with the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) to operationalize the long-term partnership to reduce road carnage through evidence-based interventions.

Towards the end of the year, we welcomed Mr. John Cheruiyot to the Board. We are optimistic that he shall help to scale our mandate at the strategic and policy level. We also celebrate Mr. Roy Sasaka, our board member too, for being awarded a Fellow award by the Institute of Human Resource Management.

The year 2021 was an important opportunity to turn the hard-won lessons of this pandemic into a healthier and equal opportunity for all.

As we begin 2022, a lot lies ahead. As we work towards normalcy, being vaccinated against COVID-19 can lower the risk of getting and spreading the virus and help prevent serious illness and death. We are getting into an election year, let us remember embrace peace and we should not allow politicians to divide us. We should not be swayed with alcohol and drugs to violence.

I am hopeful and looking forward to a peaceful prosperous new year.

**Victor G. Okioma, EBS  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

# Editor's Note



This edition of our quarterly newsletter highlights some of the outstanding activities carried out in the second quarter of the current financial year.

Read about a collaboration with ENACT Africa, an organization which enhances human security by providing authoritative research, expert policy advice and capacity building. The research-based collaboration is aimed at understanding the factors that inhibit female drug users from accessing treatment and rehabilitation services within three counties (Mombasa, Kwale and Kilifi) at the coastal region. The choice of location is informed by the fact that the region remains the most afflicted by drug-related issues.

As a key driver of the advocacy function within the Authority, the Communications department is in the process of developing a communications policy and strategy. In collaboration with the Ministry of ICT, Youth and Innovation (specific-

ally the Department of Public Communications in the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunications) the Authority looks forward to undertaking strategic communications as will be guided by the two policy documents.

Tobacco use and control continues to be a challenge within the country. Enjoy reading the various angles to this issue with contributors touching on how nicotine affects a tobacco user's body, some lessons learnt from a tobacco industry monitoring exercise in Senegal and why there is urgent need to deal with flavoured tobacco products.

The Authority has been keen on establishing and strengthening existing collaborations with various partners in the delivery of its mandate. Read about how a partnership with Centre for Health Solutions-Kenya (CHS) is aimed at promoting access to Tuberculosis treatment and services to clients at the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre.

There are a few other interesting articles in the newsletter which are aimed at keeping you, our valued stakeholder, well briefed about the various happenings within the Authority.

Enjoy the reading!!!

**Simon Mwangi**  
**MANAGER, CORPORATE  
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## Benchmarking Best Practice: Uasin Gishu County Government Comes Knocking at Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre



Uasin Gishu Governor Jackson Mandago (seated middle), NACADA Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma (seated left) together with staff from Uasin Gishu County and NACADA pose for a photo at the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre on December 15, 2021. / **Photo: Samuel Kamau.**

### By Caroline Kahiua

The Uasin Gishu Liquor Licensing Board organized a one-week benchmarking best practice visit to substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation centres in the coastal region. The aim of the visit was to document and borrow best practices that will assist the county to set up a rehabilitation centre.

Speaking during the planning meeting, the Board's Chair Ms. Josephine Tarus thanked the Authority for facilitating the visit saying alcohol and drug abuse used to be a problem for other counties but in the recent past, the increase in Uasin Gishu is alarming. She added that they not only want to establish a rehabilitation centre to assist those with substance use addiction but also learn interventions that can help prevent the use of alcohol and drug abuse altogether.

The highlight of the coastal visit was to the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre in Mombasa County where NACADA Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma hosted Governor Jackson Mandago. The county boss thanked the CEO and staff for hosting his team and recognized the efforts put in place to operationalize the centre.

"Uasin Gishu is unfortunately experiencing a rise in alcohol and bhang use and there is an urgent need to set up a rehabilitation centre before it becomes a county disaster. We are also very keen on setting up programs targeting the youth, children, and athletes," said Mandago. He added that his government would allocate resources to establish a drug and substance use rehabilitation centre at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) that will help ease demand at the facility.

"You need a multi-sectoral approach in drug demand reduction and supply suppression programs. There is need to work closely with the national government agencies such as NACADA, KRA, KEBS, and security organs. You can count on our full support in the implementation of this vision," said Okioma. He urged the Governor to not just aim at setting up a rehabilitation centre but a centre of excellence in the region that other counties can use as a best practice.

The team also visited Teens Watch Centre in Ukunda, Kwale County- a centre that largely focuses on harm reduction interventions such as the needle exchange program, HIV testing, and outreach to vulnerable/hard to reach populations within the region. Further, the team met Mombasa County Liquor Licensing Board Director Ms. Veronica Gitonga. In their discussions, it was evident that the two counties have cordial working relationships as the Mombasa Liquor Board had previously conducted a similar visit when they were drafting their county liquor law. In addition, they visited Reach Out Trust Centre, which offers prevention and intervention services for key populations affected by drug use and HIV/AIDS through outreach, advocacy, reintegration, and sustainable livelihoods.

The visit would not have been successful without visiting the Kombani Rehabilitation Centre, a county owned and run centre in Kwale County. This is one of the centres set up and funded in partnership with NACADA. It is a male-only facility offering all services free of charge.

*The author is a Corporate Communication Officer.*

## Visit in Pictures



NACADA Public Education, Advocacy, Rehabilitation & Regional Coordination Director Dr. Yvonne Olando (middle) leads the Board visit to Teens Watch Centre on December 14, 2021. On her right is the Centre's Director Dr. Cosmus Maina. / **Photo: Courtesy.**



Visit to the Mombasa County Liquor Licensing Board on December 14, 2021. / **Photo: Courtesy.**



Reach Out Trust Centre Director Taib Abdulrahman (second left) with representatives from the Board and NACADA pose for a photo outside the Centre with on December 16, 2021. / **Photo: Courtesy.**



NACADA CEO Victor Okioma accompanied by PEAR Director Dr. Yvonne Olando welcome Uasin Gishu Governor Jackson Mandago to the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre on December 15, 2021. / **Photo: Samuel Kamau.**



Governor Jackson Mandago (squatting) plants a ceremonial tree to mark his visit to the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre on December 15, 2021. Next to him is NACADA Coast Regional Manager and Miritini Ag. Centre Manager George Karisa. **Photo: Samuel Kamau.**

## Partnership to Enhance Access to TB Services at Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre



NACADA Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma with his Centre for Health Solutions counterpart Dr. Paul Wekesa during the signing of the MoU between the two organizations. / **Photo: Courtesy.**

### By Simon Mwangi

The Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre for Health Solutions – Kenya (CHS) that aimed at enhancing access to TB services among the target population served by NACADA at the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre, Mombasa County.

Speaking during the ceremony, NACADA's Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma underscored the need for supporting the vulnerable group at the centre.

"We serve a unique clientele at the facility and this partnership comes at a very opportune time because it will help us address other related challenges facing persons with substance use disorders. As an Authority, we are fully cognizant of the value of partnerships and it is for this reason that we warmly welcome CHS to collaborate with us on this front," he said.

On the other hand, CHS Chief Executive Officer Dr. Paul Wekesa observed that people who abuse drugs or alcohol stand a greater risk of contracting Tuberculosis (TB).

"The use of drugs and excessive consumption of alcohol damages a person's organs and weakens their defenses (immune system) against illnesses such as TB. This

partnership will go a long way in ensuring that we deliver quality TB services among people who are at an increased risk to the disease due to behaviors that compromise their immune system," said Dr. Wekesa.

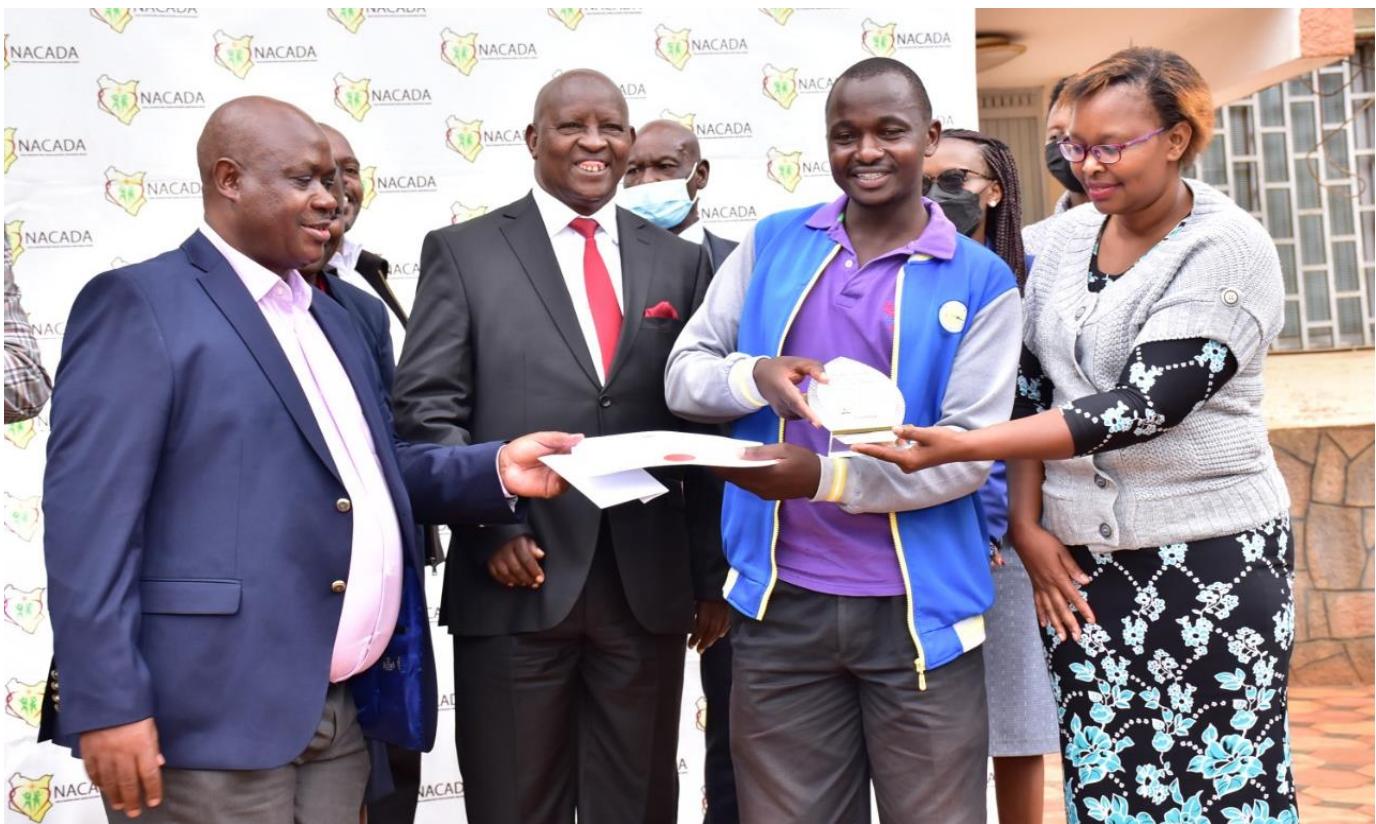
CHS, through the USAID funded TB ARC II activity, will be responsible for several functions, including creating awareness on TB disease within the NACADA rehabilitation centre in Miritini, screening and linking people seeking treatment at the rehabilitation centre to TB treatment and notification health facilities and documenting TB patients treatment journeys.

The partnership target population includes people who inject drugs and suffer from substance use disorders.

The MoU underscores CHS and NACADA concerted efforts and collaboration in the fight against alcohol and drug abuse.

*The author is the Manager, Corporate Communications.*

## Driving Students out of Alcohol and Drug Abuse: A Public Transport Driver Feted for Heroic Act



John Muthoni, driver (second right), receives a token of appreciation, trophy, and certificate of recognition from NACADA CEO Victor Okioma (far left) and Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga on December 24, 2021. / **Photo: Samuel Kamau.**

By Caroline Kahiu

On November 19, 2021, John Maina Muthoni, a public transport driver, made history after tactfully detouring to a police station on suspecting that minors he was ferrying from school for their half-term break were abusing alcohol and other drugs in the vehicle. Little did he know that his courageous act would, ironically, cost him his source of income. On the flipside, it also garnered public accolades.

“As a parent, I tried to talk to the minors to stop taking alcohol and smoking bhang as it is illegal but they could not listen. I opted to drive the vehicle to the nearest police station but the 14 minors chose to jump out of the windows fearing for the consequences of their acts,” narrated Muthoni. This was during a meeting with Governor Mutahi Kahiga, NACADA Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma, and Parastatal News Agency Director Faith Muthoni at the Governor’s office in Nyeri.

The meeting was solely convened to honour Muthoni, and as he narrated his life story, he endlessly mentioned that he had never dreamt of such an occasion in his lifetime. All smiles, he mentioned that he had also met DCI Director George Kinoti who assured him that an investigation would be launched to find the culprits who sold alcohol and drugs to children.

Governor Kahiga regretted that Maina had been sacked and accused of fraud when he should have been feted for being a responsible member of the society. “I was shocked to learn that this man had lost his job. I took it

upon myself to reach out to him and as you are aware, I have helped him to clear his secondary school fees arrears and as a county, we have agreed to offer him a job,” he said.

“As NACADA, we acknowledge Maina as a patriotic Kenyan and we shall pursue recognition and award by the Head of State. We encourage him to continue upholding the moral values of what is right and exemplifying duty to care within his workplace and society,” said Okioma. He also appreciated the move by the Nyeri county administration to give him a job.

Speaking after receiving the award, Maina cautioned those selling drugs and alcohol to minors, saying those found culpable should face the full force of the law. He also pleaded with drivers to exercise caution to avoid road accidents during the holiday season.

In his festive season message, the CEO stated that children are highly likely to emulate their parents’ behaviours and it is the responsibility of parents to be role models to their children. “As we all are aware, we have seen the alarming rise of the cases reported of minors abusing alcohol and drugs. As parents, let us safeguard the lives of our children by being positive role models.”

*The author is a Corporate Communication Officer.*

The screenshot shows the NATION news website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a menu icon, the word 'NATION' in large letters, and a 'Subscribe' button. Below the navigation bar, the word 'News' is visible. The main content area features a headline 'Nacada recognises driver who was fired for reporting intoxicated students' with a sub-headline 'A 2NK Secco matatu picks passengers in Nyeri'. Below the headline is a small image of a white and yellow 2NK matatu van. A Google Ad is displayed with the text 'Ads by Google' and buttons for 'Stop seeing this ad' and 'Why this ad?'. The date 'Thursday, December 23, 2021' is also present.

## Nacada recognises driver who was fired for reporting intoxicated students

Thursday, December 23, 2021



A 2NK Secco matatu picks passengers in Nyeri. Photo credit: File / Nation Media Group



John Muthoni displays his trophy and certificate. / Photo: Samuel Kamau

## APPRECIATION

# Nacada fetes sacked 2NK driver, says he deserves recognition

**EUTYCAS MUCHIRI/** Nacada has feted former 2NK driver John Muthoni.

Muthoni was sacked for driving his student passengers, who he said were smoking bhang and drinking alcohol, to a police station.

Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga later offered him a job in the county as a driver. Muthoni will start with a six-month contract and later sign a three-year contract.

Nacada chief executive officer Victor Okloma, while addressing the media, said the driver did not deserve condemnation from his former employer but praise. "We have come here today to commend the governor for that kind of act which actually demonstrated that he recognised the good work done by John (Muthoni)," he said.

Courtesy: The Star Newspaper.



## Partnership for Research on Factors Inhibiting Uptake of Treatment and Rehabilitation Services among Female Drug Users at the Coast Region



NACADA Coast Regional Manager George Karisa conducts a key informant interview at the Reachout Trust Centre, Mombasa County.  
/ Photo: Courtesy.

**By Simon Mwangi**

The Authority entered into a partnership with ENACT Africa, a program under the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), which is a non-profit organization, to conduct a survey on Factors Inhibiting Uptake of Treatment and Rehabilitation Services among Female Drug Users in the Coast Region.

This activity is a culmination of the enhanced partnerships that NACADA continues to cultivate with like-minded organizations with a view to support delivery of its mandate. In undertaking this unique research exercise, which is expected to provide groundbreaking findings, the Authority seeks to galvanize its service delivery across the wide spectrum of clients requiring support.

Medics blame societal attitudes for the situation where more men than women are coming out to seek help for drug abuse and mental disorders. They argue that the high number of men admitted in various facilities is a reflection of how the society makes it easier for a man to come out and seek help for drug abuse while, at the same time, make it difficult for female drug abusers who are often branded as women of loose morals.

The rareness of research on the treatment needs of women with substance abuse problems has been a serious impediment to the development of empirically validated

treatment programmes. Women continue to be seriously under-represented as research subjects and clients of treatment services.

This is disturbing because various studies show that female drug abusers suffer greater social and health problems than their male counterparts, which indicates they need more help to resolve the problem.

Substance use disorders may progress differently for women than for men. Women often have a shorter history of using certain substances such as cocaine, opioids, marijuana, or alcohol. However, they typically enter substance use disorder treatment with more severe medical, behavioural, psychological, and social problems. This is because women show a quicker progression from first using the substance to developing dependence.

ENACT Africa's work covers transnational crimes, migration, maritime security and development, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, crime prevention and criminal justice, and the analysis of conflict and governance. The organization has offices in South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Senegal.

*The author is the Manager, Corporate Communications.*



NTSA Director General George Njao (middle), NACADA CEO Victor Okioma (second left) with staff members during the planning meeting for the festive season campaign to curb road carnage at NTSA Headquarters. / **Photo: Samuel Musungu.**

### By Caroline Kahu

"Statistics show there is usually a rise in road accidents during holiday seasons. The period from mid-November to mid-January alone accounts for about a quarter of all accidents recorded every year, with the main causes being speeding, overloading, and driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs," said NTSA Director General George Njao. He noted that it is imperative to join hands and strive to ensure the same doesn't repeat this time round.

Echoing his words, NACADA Chief Executive Officer Mr. Victor Okioma shared that most of the calls received on the Authority's 24hr Helpline reported intoxicated road users and that people are back to excessive drinking following the lifting of the key Covid-19 restrictions by President Uhuru Kenyatta.

To avert this crisis, NACADA and NTSA top leadership convened a meeting attended by the road safety focal team members to deliberate on strategies aimed at reducing road accidents during the festive season.

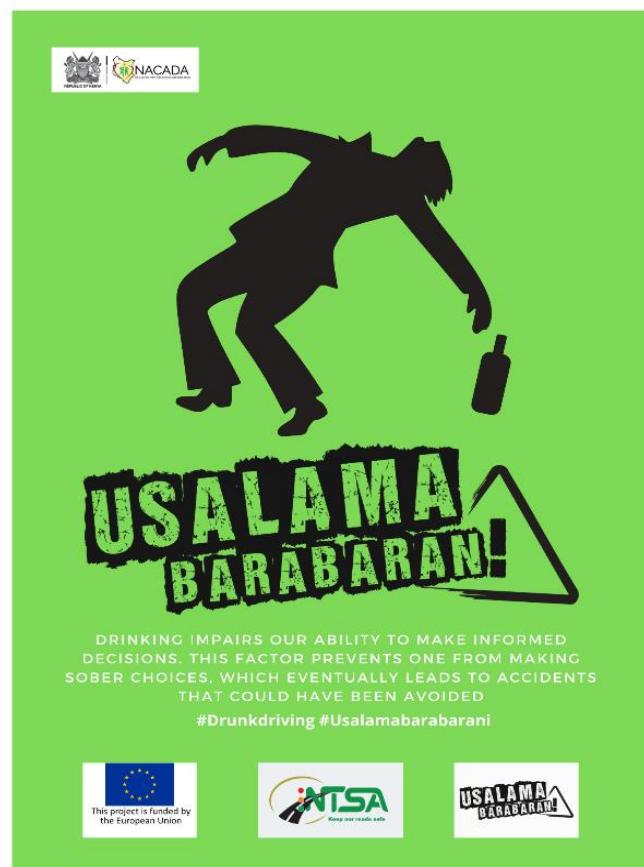
From the meeting, it was agreed to identify and implement long-term and short-term sustainable actions. It was also agreed that at the moment the team focuses on strategies to be implemented during the festive season and embark on the long-term strategies in the coming year.

"The festive season campaign should be undertaken based on the available evidence and tailored to various road users with clear messages through various

communications channels," advised NACADA Public Education, Advocacy, Rehabilitation and Regional Coordination Director Dr. Yvonne Olando. This will include raising awareness of harm to others, ensuring broad access to information and effective public awareness programs through social media and bulk SMS about the full range of alcohol and drug abuse related harm and effective preventive measure.

The campaign will be implemented under the *Usalama Barabarani* thematic area that NTSA has partnered with the European Union (EU) and other like-minded stakeholders in the transport industry. It underscores NACADA and NTSA concerted efforts and partnership in prevention and management of alcohol and drug abuse issues in the country.

***The author is a Corporate Communication Officer.***



NACADA 2

Monday, 20 December 2021

**1:** Road users under the influence of alcohol or drugs are a major cause of road accidents. Be safe  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5# 11:00

**1:** Spend time with your children to help you stay connected tomorrow and reduce their likelihood to use tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5# 15:00

Wednesday, 22 December 2021

**1:** Drugs and alcohol affects vision, judgment and reaction time. Avoid alcohol and drug abuse.  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5# 11:00

**1:** Drunk driving is illegal in Kenya. Report drunk driving. Call 1192 for FREE anytime any day #NACADACares  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5# 15:00

Friday, 24 December 2021

**1:** During this festive season, have frequent conversations with children and youth to avoid smoking, drinking or using other drugs. Be factual and avoid scary tactics.  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5# 11:00

**1:** Alcohol abuse is a risk factor for many pedestrians who are involved in road crashes  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5# 15:00

Saturday, 25 December 2021

**1:** Merry Christmas. Do not drink and drive. Arrive alive.  
 NACADA Cares.  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5# 11:00

Monday, 27 December 2021

**1:** Road users who have been drinking or using drugs have a much higher risk of involvement in crashes than those with no alcohol in their blood.  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5# 11:00

**1:** Drinking or using other drugs in the presence of children increases their chances of substance abuse. Avoid exposing children to alcohol and drugs.  
 STOP?\*456\*9\*5#

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## Observations Picked from Tobacco Industry Monitoring Training in Senegal



Africa Tobacco Control Advocates pose for a photo after the training opening ceremony in Dakar, Senegal. / Photo: Courtesy.

### By Ken Marau

The tobacco industry monitoring training was organized and sponsored by the Africa Centre for Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Policy Research (ATIM) from October 11-15, 2021 in Dakar, Senegal. ATIM is a South African-based observatory that offers up-to-date information on activities and developments in the tobacco industry that could have an impact on tobacco control policies.

Here are the lessons I learnt from the training:

- Advocates must understand their role in tobacco control and realize the damage caused by tobacco smoking across the globe and more so in Kenya.
- A multi-sectoral approach should be applied in combating tobacco industry interference in policy processes, legislations, litigation, use of front groups and other allies raising conflict of interest even among government MDAs.
- NACADA and Tobacco Control Board (TCB) must incorporate other anti-tobacco industry players e.g. IILA, KETCA among other to provide statistical data on the tobacco industry interference index and share best practices in tobacco control in the country. In the same breath, both state and non-state actors have a role to protect the citizenry from the dangers of tobacco smoking.
- The cost of treating tobacco-related illnesses in Kenya and in the world at large is far much higher than the taxes paid to the government by the tobacco industry. Heightened advocacy against the TI and monitoring of the same should be made a priority to protect the human life from the glaring loss brought about by tobacco smoking.
- Continued advocacy and lobbying efforts must uninterrupted apply pressure with significant government officials and/or stakeholders during the entire lawmaking and budgetary process.
- The Rapid Situation Assessment survey to be carried out by NACADA in partnership with the TCB in 2022 will go a long way to generate country-specific data on tobacco which will then inform advocacy strategies and messaging.
- Effective advocacy requires anticipating tobacco industry interference and arguments followed by constant monitoring, exposing, and countering industry tactics and interference.
- The public can be proactively engaged using appropriate media channels and messages to cultivate support for strong taxes and other Tobacco Control policies.
- The government must work with partners with technical macroeconomics expertise e.g. IILA so as to develop successful tax proposal and to ensure a credible voice in the public debate.
- Engaging the Finance Committee of the National Assembly before the Bills (e.g. Finance Bill, Excise Bill, etc.) ensures that there are informed Policy Champions present during discussions once tax proposals are tabled.
- Partnering with the media will be very essential for provision of critical and timely information of TI interference tactics hence exposing them to the general public for their knowledge. Building relationships with critical actors in the process is also vital to gain critical and timely information and access to decision-makers throughout the process.
- TCB, NACADA and other relevant partners in the tobacco control field should evolve partnership with different departments within the Treasury (e.g. Department of Budget Fiscal and Economic Affairs) to build a broad and robust commitment to tobacco tax among key decision makers.

## What Nicotine Does to the Body



Nicotine can enter the body through ingestion, inhalation, or absorption via the eyes or skin in liquid form. / **Photo: Havana House**

**By Samuel Musungu**

Although majorly found in tobacco plants, traces of nicotine also exist in nightshade vegetables such as cauliflower, tomatoes, potatoes, and eggplant. This toxic compound is used in the manufacture of tobacco products that include cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, cigars, blunts, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco and snuff, some insecticides, as well as nicotine replacement products like nicotine gum, inhaler, nasal spray, lozenges, and patches.

Nicotine can enter the body through ingestion, inhalation, or absorption via the eyes or skin in liquid form. It is highly addictive and keeps tobacco users hooked to the products. Once in the body, it occasions the following negative health effects.

### **Stops Formation of New Brain Cells**

Nicotine is proven to have the ability to kill cells and prevent the formation of new ones in the hippocampus- the complex part of the brain majorly involved in learning and memory. This, according to France's National Institute for Health and Medical Research (INSERM), could be the explanation behind cognitive challenges experienced by the majority of heavy smokers during the withdrawal phase after quitting the habit.

### **Insulin Resistance**

Nicotine alters chemical processes in the human cells, making them unable to respond to insulin. The cells require insulin to extract glucose from the blood and convert it into energy. If that doesn't happen, the glucose remains in the blood and causes a rise in the blood sugar level.

Moreover, nicotine can trigger the human body to produce more triglycerides- fats found in the blood that cause insulin resistance. Nicotine may as well increase the amounts of hormones that inhibit the secretion of insulin by the pancreas.

If insulin resistance is not reversed, it can lead to conditions such as severe high blood sugar, kidney disease, heart attack, cancer, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, eye problems, et al.

### **Narrowing of Blood Vessels**

Like other chemicals contained in e-cigarettes, cigarettes, and cigars, nicotine can lead to peripheral artery disease (PAD). This is the constriction of blood vessels, which results in reduced blood flow to the hands, arms, legs, and feet. After some time, this constriction makes the blood vessels stiff and less elastic.

Narrowed blood vessels reduce the quantity of oxygen and nutrients that flow to the body cells. And to meet the oxygen demand required, the heart may increase its rate to pump more blood to the different parts of the body.

Stiff and less elastic blood vessels, an inflamed heart, and increased heart rate pose a challenge to effective pumping and circulation of blood. These alterations in the function and structure of the heart and blood vessels predisposes one to the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and even heart attack.

### **Increased Seizure Risk**

Excess exposure to nicotine can cause nicotine poisoning/toxicity. According to a study by *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, this poisoning may activate neurons in the brain region known as the amygdala and end up sparking seizures. The findings also showed that the seizures may start happening in a matter of minutes after using any product that contains nicotine.

Another study by *Nicotine and Tobacco research* concluded that people with epilepsy may be at a greater risk of seizures should they come in contact with nicotine.

### **Nicotine Dependency Treatment**

Addictive as it may be, it's still possible to treat nicotine dependency through pharmacotherapy, behavioural therapy, counseling, and support groups. Pharmacotherapy, which involves nicotine replacement therapy and drug therapy, helps to relieve nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

Behavioural treatment engages people with substance use disorders and provides them with incentives to continue their abstinence as well as change their drug-related behaviours. It includes cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, telephone support, automated text messaging, social media support, web-based services, among others.

*The author is a Corporate Communications Intern.*

## Why Kenya Should Ban Flavoured Tobacco Products



Flavoured vaping products containing nicotine fill a store shelf. / Photo: Getty.

By Ken Marau

The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing more than eight million people a year around the world. More than seven million of those deaths result from direct tobacco use while around 1.2 million from non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke (UNODC 2018). The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2014 data showed that smoking prevalence in Kenya is higher than other African countries, with 2.5 million (11.6 percent) adults consuming tobacco.

It has been observed that the use of emerging tobacco products like the oral nicotine pouches, e-cigarettes and 'Kuber' is on the increase, especially among young women in colleges. Oral nicotine pouches and lozenges are a new category of tobacco products that come in many flavours. They include brands like zyn and velo, which are mostly marketed online targeting the youth. Unfortunately, policies haven't been put in place yet to curb such hence increasing the prevalence of tobacco abuse among young adults.

These tobacco products have been flavoured and attractively packaged to make them more appealing for women and minors. According to a survey carried out by the NACADA, the current use of tobacco among the population aged 15-65 years stands at 9.1 percent. Cigarette smoking is leading in prevalence among the tobacco products at 8.6 percent.

Globally, various countries like the UK, USA, Brazil, Chile, Canada, Ethiopia, and Turkey have legislated against mentholated cigarettes. Smoking-related illnesses are the leading cause of death in the African-American community. Making profound progress in the ban of flavoured tobacco products has become an uphill task in many countries because the tobacco industry has deep pockets and a lot of influence in interfering with policies and legislations.

In Kenya, lobby groups have asked the government to ban the production, importation, sale, and consumption of mentholated tobacco products. This is in a bid to protect the youth from getting initiated into smoking.



Menthol cigarettes. / Photo illustration: Getty.

The Tobacco Control Board (domiciled in the Ministry of Health), which is the custodian of the Tobacco Control Act (2007) and Tobacco Control Regulations (2014), must move with speed to ban the sale and consumption of flavoured tobacco products because of the tendency of the youth and women progressing into nicotine dependence. According to WHO, tobacco products are mostly used by the youth due to their enhanced sense of taste and flavour.

To save the lives of many vulnerable young people, the government through Parliament should ban such harmful tobacco products amid the tobacco industry interference. The government should as well not engage with the tobacco industry as that may end up violating the laws and regulations of tobacco control in the country and may also lead to compromising the health of the Kenyan citizenry.

The tobacco industry should also be held accountable for the many deaths of the young people claimed by tobacco smoking. The Tobacco Control Act (2007) needs to be reviewed to continue raising taxes of tobacco products to make them more unaffordable by the Kenyan youth.

*The author is a Public Education and Advocacy Officer at the NACADA Nyanza Regional Office.*

## Top Addiction Relapse Triggers and their Coping Mechanisms



Many people receiving treatment for substance use disorders end up regretting or feeling shameful after a relapse. / **Illustration: Addiction Center.**

By **Samuel Musungu**

Relapse during drug addiction recovery is, unfortunately, a pretty common occurrence. Data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) indicate about half of recovering drug addicts get back to substance use at least once in their journey to sobriety. Knowing the top red flags that prompt relapse is a good starting point in drug use prevention. The following are the main addiction triggers to watch out for during recovery.

### Stress

This is perhaps the major cause of relapse thanks to its wide range of effects on not just the mind but the body as a whole. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), stress is a risk factor in addiction relapse vulnerability. Most people struggling with substance addiction resort to either their activity of choice or drugs to cope with their stress.

While we cannot completely avoid stressful situations in life, those in drug addiction recovery ought to identify potential causes of stress in their lives and be proactive in effectively managing them.

### People or Places Associated with Substance Use

People who contributed to an individual's drug addiction are possible triggers to relapse. Similarly, places linked to substance use such as wineries, liquor stores, bars and casinos can trigger a relapse. While in recovery, it's critical to try as much as possible to avoid individuals or places that can act as a reminder of drug addiction. It's also important to consult a therapist or counselor and prepare ways to handle such occurrences ahead of time.

### Positive Life Events

Although often overlooked, positive events in life that call for a celebration such as a new job or promotion, graduations, holidays, and birthdays can also be addiction relapse triggers. There's a possibility of subscribing to the false idea that a drink, smoke, or drug would be okay for that particular

moment. This can easily make one lose the capacity to control themselves and not know when to stop.

A person in recovery needs to stay away from celebratory events unless in the company of somebody who will ensure they don't retreat to substances. Having a plan on how to deal with temptations at such events is also key to preventing drug use.

### Overconfidence

Being too confident in recovery is a recipe for relapse. While self-confidence is essential, becoming overconfident can result in complacency, which is a relapse risk. During recovery, a person may start feeling like they don't need to adhere to their relapse prevention plan anymore. They may also feel they're strong enough and end up putting themselves in risky situations.

To avoid falling back to substance use, it's vital to keep in mind that drug addiction is a chronic condition which requires humility and discipline to overcome. Furthermore, staying close to other recovering addicts helps to maintain sobriety awareness.

### Social Isolation

Failure to connect with others or form a recovery group can result in isolation and loneliness. The longer a recovering addict is isolated the easier it is for them to resume alcohol or drug use. Since social anxiety is often a struggle for most recovering drug addicts, having a strong support system can help in preventing isolation. That can mean being close to supportive loved ones, attending peer support groups, or going for regular counseling.

### What Should One Do in Case of Relapse?

Many people receiving treatment for substance use disorders (SUDs) end up regretting or feeling shameful after a relapse. Instead of staying committed to avoiding the desire to use drugs, one may feel like abandoning the fight and yielding to addiction. But to win this challenge, it's critical to first identify the root cause of the relapse then lay a solid foundation for an addiction recovery path that will lower the chances of reverting to substance use. If relapse occurs, an addict needs to get back to treatment as quickly as possible.

*The author is a Corporate Communications Intern.*

## Are Universities Turning Our Children to Alcoholics?



When it comes to partying then having university students around will mean the party will be one of a kind. / **Photo: Canva.**

**By Laura Agesa**

Taking alcohol is proving to be the norm in most campuses. What is fun without partying and getting intoxicated? I can barely remember the last time a party was organized without alcohol as part of the fun. When it comes to partying then having university students around will mean the party will be one of a kind.

There is this day I received a call from an old friend asking if I can attend her birthday party. I was so excited considering she still meant something in my life. Parties are often celebrated in the evening and that particular evening I dressed for the occasion and ordered a taxi to the venue. House parties are not my thing but there is always a first time for everything. That day was full of several activities and after two hours, all I could hear was music and senseless talks.

At around 3am, everyone had left and I was left with my friend. One of the things that had distanced us was her drinking culture but here I was, nursing the drunk her again. I remember swearing not to ever call or visit especially when she was drunk and thought that could scare and help her stop the habit. Then reality dawned on me, Lora could be slipping into alcohol and drug addiction. I go to the parties with her in the name of "protection" only to watch her drink to her full, guard her belongings and later escort her back home. Which type of friend had I turned into? It was entirely my fault and having distanced myself from her made it even worse. Lora was now a heavy drinker.

Talking to her was not helping and I decided to visit a nearby hospital for assistance. The doctor was amazed by my courage. Having to walk to a hospital in search of help was not anything anyone can do willingly. I did this because my friend's condition was deteriorating. The doctor referred me to a nearby rehabilitation centre where Lora could get some assistance. I came back home and initiated a talk about rehabilitation and suddenly saw the hate in Lora's eyes. With tears flowing, she asked if I thought she was a drug addict. I had no option but to nod in agreement and assured her the rehab was the only place she could get assistance. Yes, she was defiant and even accused me of being a bad friend who does not know what fun meant.

These words hurt but I had to help a friend. Her consent was required and I could not just take her to the rehab against her wish. I called the rehabilitation centre and canceled my appointment. The doctor, a soft-spoken lady, asked to meet me the next day with my friend in one of the eating joints but how could I invite Lora yet she had cut all ties with me? Are universities slowly turning all the nice and well-behaved youths into alcoholics? I left Lora a note asking her to accompany me to the meeting the next day, hoping that she will one day receive help and see the light again.

*The author is a Corporate Communications Attaché.*

## Investing in Stakeholder Engagement and Management among NACADA's Leadership



NACADA and KBC senior management officers pose for a photo during the training in Mombasa. / **Photo: Courtesy.**

**By Simon Mwangi**

The Authority has invested in equipping its top management with skills that will enable them better undertake stakeholder engagement and management. This was manifested in a training which saw part of the top and regional management adequately prepared on various aspects of stakeholder relationship management.

Speaking during the official opening of the first cohort training in Mombasa, NACADA Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma observed that the unique position in which the Authority operates requires concerted efforts from various stakeholders every so often.

"Stakeholder engagement helps organizations to proactively consider the needs and desires of anyone who has a stake in their organization, which can foster connections, trust, confidence, and buy-in for key initiatives. At NACADA, we understand well that stakeholder engagement will greatly assist us to mitigate potential risks and conflicts with stakeholder groups, including uncertainty, dissatisfaction, misalignment, disengagement, and resistance to change," he said.

Stakeholder engagement is critical for organizational strategic planning. It's important that stakeholders understand why organizations exist, where they want to go, and how they're going to get there.

Furthermore, it's essential that *KEY* stakeholders are aligned with and bought into the strategic direction of the organization so they can become advocates and help to achieve the mission and vision.

The three-day training saw participants cover a wide range of topics ranging from strategic communication with stakeholders, mapping and managing the stakeholders and discussions on challenges faced during stakeholder engagement among others.

*The author is the Manager, Corporate Communications.*

## Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Effective and Efficient Service Delivery



### STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 - 2022

By Adrian Njenga

In October 2021, the Authority initiated the process of conducting a mid-term review of its current strategic plan that was developed in 2019 and will be implemented until June 2023. Strategic planning is the ongoing organizational process of using available knowledge to document an institution's intended direction. This process is used to prioritize efforts, effectively allocate resources, align stakeholders and employees on the organization's goals, and ensure those goals are backed by data and sound reasoning.

NACADA's Strategic plan was developed as a guide to the implementation of the Authority's mandate of coordinating a multi-sectoral campaign to prevent, control and mitigate the impact of alcohol and drug abuse in the country.

Speaking when officially opening the mid-term review exercise, the Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma observed that in the plan the Authority has defined its strategic objectives, strategies, key activities, expected outputs as well as the strategies for mobilizing resources for funding the documented programmes.

"The strategic plan has provided a framework within which the Authority has operated the last two years to realize both of its short-term and long-term objectives. It has also been the basis for identifying deliverables under the performance contracting mechanism and for individual annual Performance appraisal. The main purpose of the midterm exercise is to objectively assess

the extent to which the plan is meeting its implementation objectives, outputs and timelines and to develop recommendations to help optimize the implementation of the plan in the remaining timeframe," said Okioma.

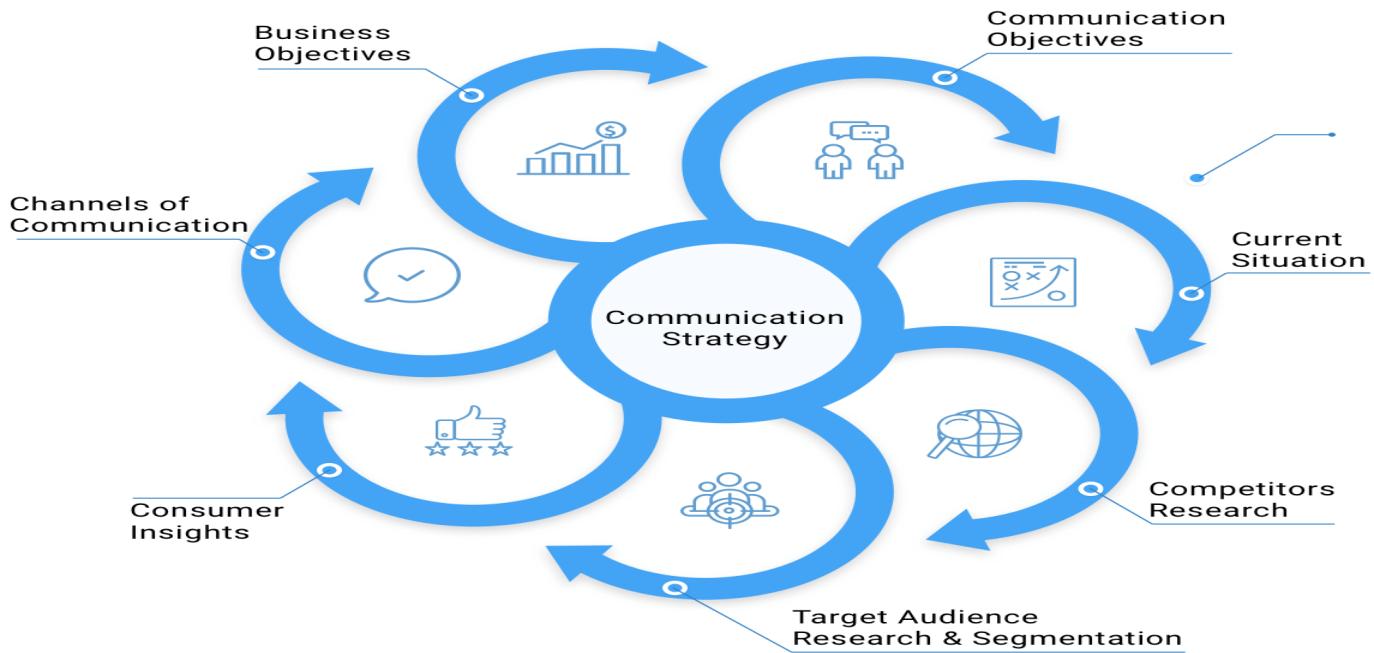
In addition, the CEO noted that the evaluation will also assess the implementation of the plan in relation to the lessons learnt and challenges experienced during the implementation of the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, the Authority's contribution to Kenya's development agenda, the environmental factors impacting the implementation (SWOT, PESTEL & Stakeholders), Institutional Capacity, resource flow, risks and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework.

The exercise will also allow the Authority to document the lessons learnt and the challenges experienced during the implementation of the plan in the period under review. The methodology of the midterm review exercise will be through a cross-sectional survey approach of the Authority's departments and sections. Data will also be collected by way of review of reports of the activities implemented over the last two years.

The strategic planning process is an ongoing process and not a one-time event. While implementing an existing strategy institutions run into unanticipated opportunities and threats, (such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic) and they have to respond. Sometimes the response is adequate sometimes it's not. But most strategies develop through this process.

*The author is a Senior Policy and Planning Officer.*

## Authority Starts Development of a Communication Policy and Strategy



Strategic communication is critical to bringing purpose, mission and values to life across an organization. / **Illustration: Product Tribe.**

### By Simon Mwangi

The Authority has earnestly embarked on the process of developing a robust communications strategy and policy with a view to ensure effective flow of information between all relevant parties, reducing the potential for misunderstanding, dissatisfaction and lack of trust.

In collaboration with the Directorate of Public Communication, which is under the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunications in the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, the Authority fully appreciates that communication is the cornerstone of any organization's success as it comprises of continuous interactions with multiple parties – managers, employees, suppliers, and clients.

Speaking during an inception meeting with the Director of Public Communications Mulei Muia, NACADA Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma took cognizance of the dynamism of communications in the workplace and underscored the need for the policy framework.

"Our organization is unique in the sense that we are campaign oriented and thus strategic communication is at the core of all that we do. Communication in our context takes many forms, ranging from oral and written to communication through email and even body language, which is very critical in today's increasingly multi-cultural workplace. And so, the way in which we communicate needs to be consistent and clear across multiple channels. It is for this reason that we have set in motion the process

of contextualizing our communications to our diverse publics through a well-researched and thought out strategy and policy," said Okioma.

Lauding NACADA for the initiative, the Director of Public Communications reiterated that strategic communications has to be underpinned by policy frameworks and must also be driven from the top.

"A crucial but often overlooked function of leadership is creating a culture in which effective communication can flourish. Broadly speaking, consistent and open communication across an organization ensures all employees, from senior management to entry-level staff, understand the company's goals and culture as well as how it presents itself to its customers and clients. We are happy to assist a crucial government body as NACADA to streamline their communications to achieve intended purposes," said Mulei.

Strategic communication is critical to bringing purpose, mission and values to life across an organization. It provides clarity and alignment, establishes expectations and motivates employees to work towards a shared objective. Effective organizations weave purpose, mission and values into ongoing strategic communication initiatives.

*The author is the Manager, Corporate Communications.*

## Appointment of John Cheruiyot to the Board



Mr. John Cheruiyot holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry and Physics from Moi University. He is a growth-oriented and highly skilled general management professional with extensive operational and managerial experience in business leadership, procurement, and agriculture and manufacturing.

He is fully conversant with corporate governance matters, analytical thinker with decision making and problem solving skills able to coordinate instructional programs, including operational procedures/policies and delivery. He is currently the Chief Executive Officer at East African Tea

Investment and has previously served as a Procurement Manager at Unilever besides also holding other high profile positions regionally within the same organization.

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## Congratulations Roy Sasaka!



Congratulations to Roy Sasaka, NACADA Board Member and National Youth Council (NYC) Chief Executive Officer, for being awarded the Fellow Award by the Institute of Human Resource Management. This award recognizes his outstanding achievement, good standing, professional excellence in human resource management and practice.

# Need Help With Alcohol and Drug Abuse?

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