

# Stowelink News

## ABOUT US

Since 2016, we've worked with 80+ partners to deliver practical, community-first programs across 10 African countries through grassroots public health campaigns, health innovation and research, and policy advocacy across Africa maximizing impact with minimal cost, ensuring lasting change.

**We focus on tackling the most pressing health challenges affecting youth and communities across Africa through evidence-based, youth-led interventions.**

We focus on the major health priorities, including Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), sexual and reproductive health AND social behavior change. In achieving this objective we will address meaningful youth engagement in; health, and social inclusion; research learning and development; and health systems strengthening.



## WHAT'S IN THIS QUARTER'S ISSUE:

- MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE
- STOWELINK NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS
- HEALTH DIVISION UPDATES
- ADVOCACY DIVISION UPDATES
- RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATES
- CONNECTING TO THE WORLD
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## OUR MISSION

To transform public health across Africa by equipping youth to lead powerful, innovative initiatives that promote health equity, prevent noncommunicable diseases and related public health challenges, and uplift entire communities.

## OUR VISION

A global model for youth-led public health transformation in Africa and beyond.

# Message From The Executive

Dear Partners, Supporters, and Friends of Stowelink,

As we close Quarter 2 of 2025, I'm pleased to share a moment of deep gratitude and reflection on the strides Stowelink has made over the past three months. This has been a defining quarter for our organization — a time of visibility, influence, and meaningful action, driven by our shared mission to advance equitable health solutions for all.

One of the most defining highlights was the opportunity to represent Stowelink — and Africa — on the global stage during my appearance on Al Jazeera's flagship news program, where I joined a panel to discuss the global obesity epidemic. As someone who brings both lived experience and technical expertise to this issue, I was honored to amplify a rights-based, youth-centered, and systemic approach to tackling one of the most urgent public health challenges of our time. The global obesity conversation cannot be complete without African voices, and we are proud to ensure those voices are heard.

Stowelink's impact continued at the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA78) in Geneva, where we participated in a high-level side event titled "Taking the Right(s) Approach: Driving Action on Obesity and NCDs" with the Global Obesity Coalition. This session shifted the narrative from data and frameworks to dignity and lived experience. It was a powerful reminder that our work is not just technical, it is deeply human.

In May, we took this message further to ECO 2025, the European Congress on Obesity in Malaga, Spain. There, we advocated for localized people-led solutions and people-first language in all obesity discourse. We were inspired by the energy and innovation of partners around the world and equally driven to continue ensuring Africa is not just represented but leads the way.

Alongside these global engagements, we've deepened our work locally. From strengthening our mental health focus through the Africa CDC Training Programme where our team member Naila Chebet is representing us — to growing our youth-led programs, media campaigns, and school outreach, we are anchoring global insights into community-rooted action.

As always, none of this would be possible without your unwavering support. Thank you for believing in our mission, investing in our vision, and walking this journey with us. Together, we're not just responding to the NCD crisis, we're reshaping its future.



**Stephen Ogwen**- Founder and CEO

## BIGGEST HIGHLIGHT OF THE QUARTER

### STOWELINK FOUNDATION ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY 77 IN GENEVA

The 77th World Health Assembly (WHA77) in Geneva was a powerful moment for global health—and an important milestone for Stowelink Foundation as we contributed to conversations shaping the future of non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention and control.



# Notable Achievements Of The Quarter



## STOWELINK PARTICIPATES IN BETA 3.0 TRAINING BY ATIM

Oduor Kevin represented Stowelink Foundation at the BETA 3.0 training held in Entebbe, Uganda, organized by the Africa Centre for Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Policy Research (ATIM). The training, themed "Building Capacity in Industry Monitoring for Effective Tobacco Control Advocacy in Africa," brought together public health professionals, civil society leaders, and policy advocates from across the continent to strengthen collective efforts in countering tobacco industry interference.

## STOWELINK FOUNDATION AT THE AFRICA CDC MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY TRAINING,

Stowelink Foundation is proud to announce that our Mental Health Lead, Naila Chebet Koech, recently participated in the prestigious Africa CDC Mental Health Leadership and Advocacy Training, held at the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTc) in Nairobi. Her participation marks a vital step in strengthening youth-led efforts in advancing mental health across the continent.





# Health Division Updates

## ABOUT THE DIVISION

Under this division, our primary focus is to implement relevant health programs to serve our community. We primarily aim at making information and diagnostic services on non-communicable diseases available to ALL at ALL times in RELEVANT formats but also focus on the other components in our behavior change communication that include Mental Health, Drugs and Substance Abuse and Sexual and Reproductive Health.

We mainly focus on preventive primary healthcare by providing health education and diagnostic services. Our vision in this division is to ensure that the communities we serve live a healthy and productive life.

## WHAT'S IN THIS SEGMENT

- MAY MEASUREMENT MONTH
- TOBACCO TIIDWI PROJECT UPDATE
- PHYSICAL HEALTH IN NCDS SERIES
- OBESITY FOCUS: PROJECT UPDATE

## BIGGEST HIGHLIGHT OF THE QUARTER

### TIIDWI PROJECT ON TOBACCO PRESENTED IN IRELAND AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON TOBACCO CONTROL

Stowelink Foundation's TIIDWI Project was showcased at the World Conference on Tobacco Control (WCTC2025) in Dublin, Ireland, highlighting innovative digital strategies to combat tobacco industry interference in Kenya and across Africa.





# MAY MEASUREMENT MONTH

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May Measurement Month (MMM) is a global campaign initiated by the International Society of Hypertension to raise awareness of the need for regular blood pressure screening. In Kenya, the campaign is led by the Kenya Cardiac Society (KCS). Stowelink Foundation participated in MMM 2025 by conducting blood pressure screening exercises every Sunday from May 12th to June 2nd in Githurai 44, Nairobi County.

Over the course of the four-week campaign, 1,006 individuals were screened. In addition to blood pressure checks, participants were educated about the risks of hypertension, lifestyle changes, and the importance of routine health checkups. This report outlines key activities, data highlights, community observations, and recommendations.

## 2. Objectives

- To raise awareness about high blood pressure and its health implications.
- To provide free blood pressure screening to underserved communities.
- To contribute data to the national and global MMM database.
- To encourage early detection and proactive health behavior.

## 3. Methodology

- Site: Githurai 44 Sports Ground, Nairobi.
- Schedule: Weekly screenings conducted every Sunday between 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- Team: Comprised of Stowelink staff and health volunteers.
- Screening Process: Individuals were welcomed, given health education, and screened using validated digital BP monitors. High readings were followed up with counseling and referrals.
- Data Collection: Numbers were documented weekly and uploaded on to the MMM App (version 8.0).



# 4. Results and Observations

## Weekly Screening Breakdown:

Week	Number of Individuals Screened
Week 1	274
Week 2	252
Week 3	222
Week 4	258
Total	1,006



## Community Insights:

- Gender Engagement: Women were more open to screening. Men often expressed overconfidence in their health, leading to lower uptake.
- Age: Older adults were more receptive, while youth often downplayed the importance of blood pressure screening.
- Health Literacy: Some participants confused BP screening with HIV testing, indicating a need for more public education on NCD services.
- Integrated Services Demand: Several community members expressed interest in additional tests such as blood sugar checks, cholesterol testing, and nutrition counseling.



## 5. Impact and Reflections

The campaign helped demystify blood pressure screening in a peri-urban community. Over 1,000 individuals are now more informed about hypertension, and a number of referrals were made for follow-up care. This initiative fostered meaningful conversations around health and highlighted the need for decentralized, routine NCD screening services.

We are proud to have been part of a global movement, amplifying the call to "Know Your Numbers" and championing heart health in Kenya.



## 6. Risk Communication

The campaign helped demystify blood pressure screening in a peri-urban community. Over 1,000 individuals are now more informed about hypertension, and a number of referrals were made for follow-up care. Our risk communication to participants emphasized the importance of maintaining healthy blood pressure. We provided the following key recommendations:

- **Avoid Excessive Salt Intake:** High salt consumption is directly linked to elevated BP. We advised participants to avoid taking above recommended salt in their diet.
- **Increase Vegetable Intake:** A diet rich in vegetables can help lower BP. We encouraged incorporating a variety of vegetables into daily meals.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drinking enough water is crucial for maintaining healthy BP levels. We stressed the importance of adequate hydration.
- **Regular Exercise:** Physical activity is essential for cardiovascular health. We recommended regular exercise, such as brisk walking, running, or engaging in sports.
- **Limit Alcohol and Tobacco Use:** Both alcohol and tobacco can raise BP. We advised participants to limit their intake of these substances.

. This initiative fostered meaningful conversations around health and highlighted the need for decentralized, routine NCD screening services.

We are proud to have been part of a global movement, amplifying the call to "Know Your Numbers" and championing heart health in Kenya.





## 7. Recommendations

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- **Expand Scope:** Future MMM campaigns could integrate additional services like blood sugar testing and nutrition screening.
- **Targeted Outreach for Men and Youth:** Tailored messaging should be developed to encourage participation among men and young adults.
- **Data Utilization:** Screening data should be analyzed to inform local health interventions, including regular outreach in high-risk areas.



## 8. Voices from the Field:

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Throughout the May Measurement Month campaign, our dedicated volunteers played a crucial role in its success. To capture their invaluable insights and personal experiences, we recorded several volunteers sharing their stories from the field. These firsthand accounts provide a unique perspective on the impact of the campaign, the challenges faced, and the rewarding moments that made their efforts worthwhile. Below is the video link where you can hear directly from our volunteers about their experiences during MMM2025.

[Voice from the Field: Stowelink Staff and Volunteers](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5st05orUI3E&feature=youtu.be>





## 9. Acknowledgements

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We express our heartfelt gratitude to:

- The Stowelink Foundation team, for their dedication and professionalism throughout the campaign.
- Kenya Cardiac Society, for their leadership, technical support, and provision of reporting tools.
- The International Society of Hypertension, for spearheading the MMM initiative globally and uniting countries around a shared public health goal



## 10. Conclusion

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May Measurement Month 2025 was a resounding success in Githurai 44, with over 1,000 people reached and empowered with knowledge. As Stowelink Foundation, we remain committed to strengthening public awareness and access to preventative NCD services.





# TOBACCO TIIDWI PROJECT UPDATE Q2

Tobacco Industry Interference Digital Watch Initiative (TIIDWI) is a dedicated effort to monitor, analyze, and expose the ways the tobacco industry attempts to manipulate public policy, research, and media narratives. Using real-time tracking through Google Alerts and other sources, TIIDWI identifies articles that either support the industry's interests or provide valuable insights into tobacco control efforts. We then use digital advocacy platforms to challenge pro-industry narratives and amplify content that strengthens public health measures.

## STOWELINK FOUNDATION'S TIIDWI PROJECT WAS SHOWCASED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON TOBACCO CONTROL (WCTC2025) IN DUBLIN, IRELAND

At the prestigious WCTC2025 in Ireland, Stowelink Foundation's work on countering tobacco industry interference in the digital space took center stage. Representing the team, Oduor Kevin presented the Tobacco Industry Interference Digital Watch Initiative (TIIDWI) — a pioneering project launched in 2024 to track and counter pro-tobacco narratives online. With digital platforms becoming new battlegrounds for public health, TIIDWI uses real-time surveillance, youth-led micro-influencers, and evidence-based content to expose and neutralize the industry's online manipulation.

The presentation highlighted the impact of TIIDWI, which has so far reached over 1.25 million people, flagged and countered 57 pro-tobacco posts, and helped shift media narratives in Kenya. The initiative has successfully amplified youth voices, built digital resilience, and generated momentum for stronger policy interventions, including tobacco tax advocacy. This work demonstrates how innovative, tech-driven approaches can safeguard public health in the face of a rapidly adapting tobacco industry.

Beyond TIIDWI, the conference also focused on tobacco control financing and global collaboration. Key takeaways included the launch of CTFK's Budget Advocacy Toolkit, high-level discussions on sustainable funding, and Kenya's own Solatium Compensatory Fund receiving over \$2 million to support tobacco control. With global leaders like WHO's Dr. Tedros and Ireland's Prime Minister calling for stronger action, WCTC2025 reaffirmed the urgency and collective will to end the tobacco epidemic — both offline and online.





# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) remains one of the gravest threats to public health policy and practice, especially in low- and middle-income countries where regulatory systems are still evolving. Recognizing the industry's increasingly digital and deceptive tactics, the Stowelink Foundation launched the Tobacco Industry Interference Digital Watch Initiative (TIIDWI) in 2024 to track, expose, and counter online misinformation and manipulation by the tobacco and nicotine industry.

TIIDWI serves as a digital defense platform aimed at countering narratives that undermine public health—ranging from lobbying efforts masked as advocacy to misinformation promoting nicotine alternatives as safe or less harmful. By combining real-time surveillance, digital storytelling, youth engagement, and evidence-based content creation, TIIDWI has built a robust system for rapid response and public education.

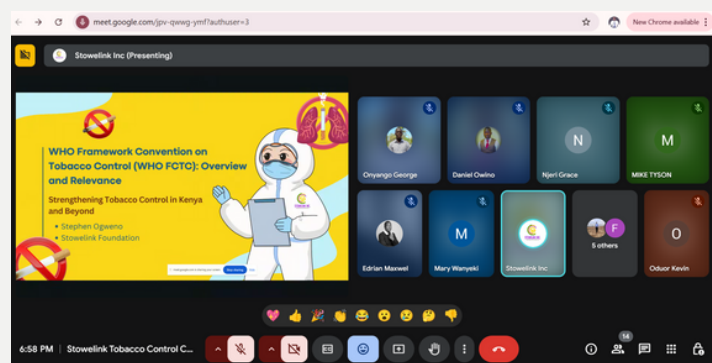
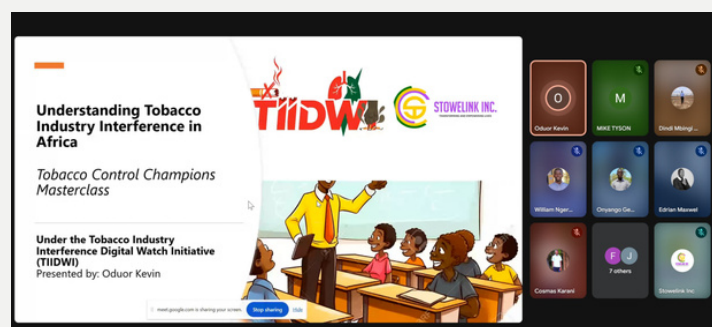
## EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH THE TOBACCO CONTROL CHAMPION (TCC) MASTERCLASS

As part of capacity-building under TIIDWI, Stowelink hosted a 3-day virtual Tobacco Control Champion Masterclass from June 3–5, 2025. The session brought together 15 youth leaders and professionals to be trained in the fundamentals of tobacco control, advocacy, and digital counter-messaging. The masterclass was led by Stowelink CEO Ogweno Stephen and Chief Programs Officer Oduor Kevin, both experts trained at the Africa Centre for Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Policy Research (ATIM).

Key modules included:

- Tobacco Industry Tactics in Africa
- WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)
- Tobacco Taxation & Illicit Trade
- Digital Monitoring Tools and TIIDWI engagement
- Advocacy strategies using storytelling and political mapping

The masterclass not only equipped participants with knowledge but also created a network of committed youth advocates ready to challenge tobacco industry narratives in their communities and online platforms.



# MONITORING MISINFORMATION & EXPOSING INDUSTRY TACTICS

TIIDWI's ongoing surveillance in 2025 has exposed several dangerous tactics by the industry, including the creation of "World Vape Day"—a false counter-campaign to World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), designed to distract and dilute global tobacco control messaging. TIIDWI published multiple alerts, including:

- TIIDWI Alert #006 – Unmasking CASA's role in delaying the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill 2024 using false claims of inadequate public participation.
- TIIDWI Blog #007 – Exposing the misuse of "lived experience" narratives, where ex-smokers are used to promote e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches as harm-reduction tools, despite clear evidence that these products sustain addiction and pose health risks.

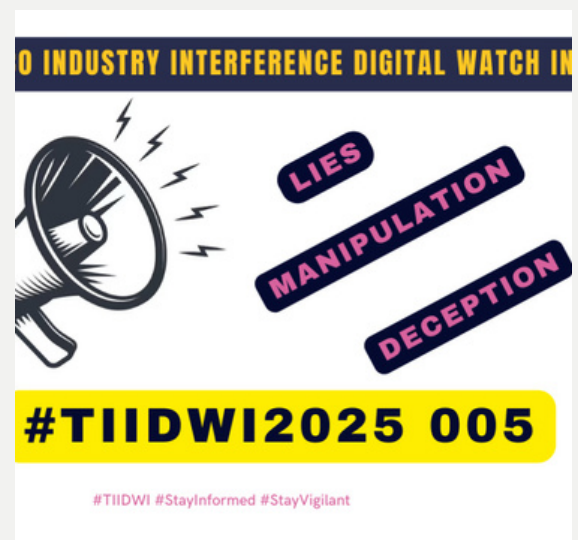
Stowelink also addressed misleading claims in BAT Kenya's press release, which framed smokeless products as "safer alternatives" without disclosing their long-term harms. These communications demonstrate how the tobacco industry continues to use partial truths, co-opted voices, and digital platforms to manipulate policy and public opinion.

## GLOBAL RECOGNITION AND POLICY IMPACT

The TIIDWI project gained international visibility when Stowelink presented it at the World Conference on Tobacco Control (WCTC2025) in Dublin, Ireland. Representing Kenya on a global stage, Oduor Kevin showcased the initiative's results:

- 1.25 million people reached
- 57 pro-tobacco narratives flagged and countered
- Youth engagement in digital advocacy
- Media narratives deconstructed
- Increased momentum for legislative reforms

The initiative has contributed significantly to pushing back against the tobacco industry's attempt to derail the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill 2024, which seeks to regulate Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and nicotine pouches in Kenya.



## CONCLUSION: A TOBACCO-FREE DIGITAL FUTURE

TIIDWI has proven that youth-led, tech-enabled public health surveillance works. It's more than a monitoring tool—it's a movement. As Kenya and other African nations confront new waves of digital interference, TIIDWI is leading the charge with truth, data, and purpose. As the world marks World No Tobacco Day 2025, the call is clear: Let's reject manipulation, support evidence-based policies, and build a nicotine-free generation.

# PHYSICAL HEALTH & NCDS PROJECT Q2 UPDATE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the rising burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), Stowelink Foundation launched a multimedia education series promoting physical activity as a preventive tool. Through podcasts, video series, and personal stories, the campaign highlights how consistent exercise—particularly morning workouts and structured fitness routines like gym attendance—can transform health outcomes. With a focus on storytelling and real-life experiences, the series aims to inspire sustainable behavior change across Kenya and beyond.

## INTRODUCTION

Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular illnesses are on the rise, with physical inactivity being one of the leading risk factors. Recognizing this challenge, Stowelink Foundation has launched a health education initiative focused on building sustainable physical exercise habits. This multimedia series features expert discussions, personal reflections, and actionable guidance to help individuals integrate fitness into their daily routines—starting with small, consistent steps.

The project has been spearheaded by Program Officer Oduor Kevin, whose personal fitness transformation forms the foundation of the series. His journey from a sedentary lifestyle to an active, gym-focused routine underscores the practical benefits of physical activity in NCD prevention. His insights are supported by evidence-based recommendations and strategies aimed at empowering communities to take control of their health.

## KEY EPISODES AND LEARNINGS

### 1. Morning Workouts as a Habit-Builder:

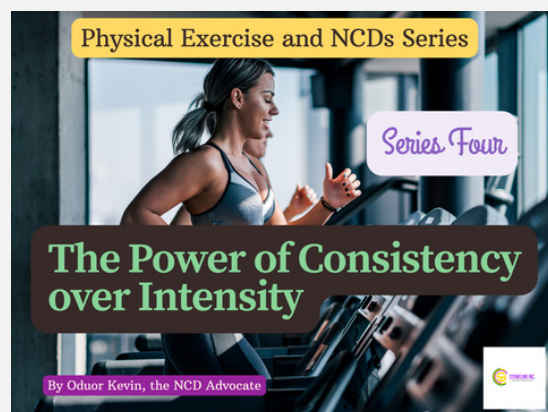
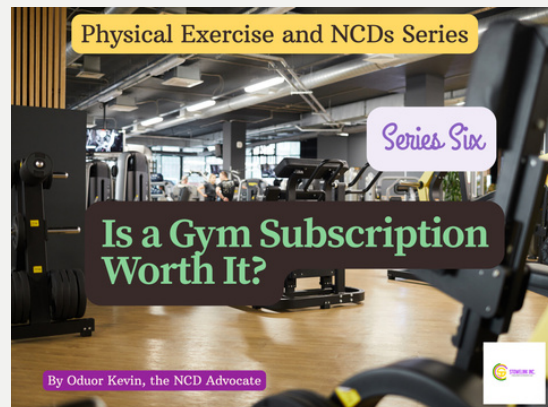
Episode 7 of the series dives into the power of morning workouts, drawing from Brian Tracy's "Eat That Frog" philosophy. Kevin explains how exercising early in the day enhances productivity, sharpens focus, and creates a domino effect of healthier decisions throughout the day. This episode offers practical tips on how to gradually transition into a morning routine—even for those who consider themselves night owls.

### 2. The Gym Decision:

Kevin's personal story of overcoming fatigue and inconsistency through gym attendance serves as an anchor for Episode 5. He discusses how the gym became a place not only for physical change but also for accountability, structure, and community. Within 45 days, he had lost 6 kilograms and significantly improved his mental and emotional well-being. This episode reinforces that while home workouts are valuable, structured environments can be game changers for consistency.

### 3. The Broader Picture – Exercise and NCDs:

In Episode 3, the Foundation zooms out to explore the broader scientific and public health case for exercise. This includes definitions of physical activity, types of beneficial exercises (from gardening to intense aerobics), and WHO-recommended activity levels. The episode aims to demystify exercise and empower listeners with manageable, evidence-backed goals to reduce their NCD risk.





# OBESITY FOCUS: PROJECT UPDATE

## INTRODUCTION

Between May and June 2025, Stowelink Foundation's global advocacy on obesity prevention and care reached major milestones through impactful engagements on world stages. Our CEO and Founder, Ogweno Stephen, brought African and youth perspectives into critical dialogues hosted by Al Jazeera, the World Health Assembly (WHA78), and the European Congress on Obesity (ECO 2025). These moments highlighted our continued leadership in reframing obesity as a rights-based, systemic, and equity-centered issue.

## RAISING THE AFRICAN VOICE ON AL JAZEERA

In June 2025, Ogweno Stephen was featured on Al Jazeera's flagship current affairs program in an episode titled "Can We Reverse the Obesity Epidemic?". Joined by global experts Dr. Rocio Salas-Whalen and Adrian Scarlett, the panel unpacked the root causes of obesity and called for system-level change.

Stephen's contributions drew from both personal lived experience and his work with Stowelink and the World Obesity Federation. He emphasized that:

- Obesity is not a personal failure but a systemic issue linked to inequality, poor urban planning, and food systems.
- Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), especially in Africa, lack adequate investment in prevention and care.
- Youth and people with lived experience must be central in designing obesity policies.

This appearance helped amplify the African voice in a global narrative often dominated by high-income country perspectives, reinforcing Stowelink's commitment to shifting the discourse toward justice and inclusion.



## ADVOCATING RIGHTS-BASED OBESITY POLICY AT WHA78

At the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Stowelink joined a powerful side event titled “Taking the Right(s) Approach: Driving Action on Obesity and NCDs” in partnership with the Global Obesity Coalition.

Moderated by Ogwen Stephen, the event brought together diverse voices—from grassroots advocates to representatives of WHO and UNICEF—and focused on:

- Corporate influence on unhealthy food environments.
- Replacing stigma with dignity in obesity care.
- Redesigning systems to ensure access to healthy food and care for marginalized populations.

The event positioned obesity as a human rights issue, connected to wider public health challenges such as mental health, poverty, and HIV. It was a rallying point ahead of the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health scheduled for September 2025.



## ELEVATING OBESITY ADVOCACY AT ECO 2025

In May 2025, Stowelink was honored to participate in the European Congress on Obesity (ECO 2025) in Malaga, Spain. Representing the African continent, Ogwen Stephen delivered key messages on:

- Using people-first language in obesity conversations.
- Youth-led, community-driven approaches tailored for LMICs.
- Addressing the systemic causes of obesity in African contexts, such as food deserts, stigma, and urbanization.

While advances in treatment (e.g., GLP-1-based therapies) dominated much of the scientific dialogue, Stowelink emphasized the continued importance of prevention, equity, and culturally relevant solutions.



## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Across these three global engagements, Stowelink Foundation reinforced a consistent message: Obesity is a complex, rights-based public health issue that demands inclusive, contextual, and systemic responses. Through global panels, advocacy platforms, and coalition-building, we are helping redefine the obesity narrative and ensuring that Africa’s youth are not sidelined, but centered.

We remain committed to:

- Supporting policy reform grounded in dignity and equity.
- Engaging youth and lived experience leaders in co-creating solutions.
- Translating global insights into local impact across African communities.

The road to reversing the obesity epidemic requires bold leadership, radical inclusion, and unwavering action. Stowelink Foundation is proud to be part of that movement.

# Advocacy Division Updates

## ABOUT THE DIVISION

The Stowelink advocacy division focuses all issues advocacy. This division aims at addressing and contributing actively to the key advocacy asks that are in line with our organizations values and missions. More than that ,the advocacy division is also responsible for the media and communication features of the organization ensuring that the organization is positioned correctly in the public.

### WHAT'S IN THIS SEGMENT

- ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS AT THE WHA77
- ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS AT THE ECO 2025
- TOBACCO ADVOCACY EFFORTS

## BIGGEST HIGHLIGHT OF THE QUARTER

### STOWELINK ON PAEDIATRIC NCDs AT THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY IN GENEVA

At WHA78, Stowelink joined a groundbreaking side event that redefined how obesity is framed and addressed in global health. Ogwen Stephen was a panelist in the session that brought together WHO, UNICEF, government representatives, and grassroots advocates to center lived experience and rights in NCD policymaking.





# ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS AT THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (WHA78) – GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

**Event Title:** Taking the Right(s) Approach: Driving Action on Obesity and NCDs

**Date:** May 2025

**Hosted by:** Global Obesity Coalition

At WHA78, Stowelink joined a groundbreaking side event that redefined how obesity is framed and addressed in global health. Ogweno Stephen was a panelist in the session that brought together WHO, UNICEF, government representatives, and grassroots advocates to center lived experience and rights in NCD policymaking.

**Key Advocacy Themes:**

- Obesity as a human rights issue, not a personal failure
- Youth and people with lived experience as essential policy drivers
- The need to dismantle stigma in healthcare and expand access to nutritious food and quality care in LMICs
- Connecting obesity to broader challenges like HIV, poverty, and mental health to maximize public health outcomes

**Outcome:** The session sparked actionable commitments to embed dignity, justice, and humanity into global NCD responses. As a lead voice, Stowelink strengthened its role in shaping rights-based global obesity discourse ahead of the September 2025 UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health.



## Event 2: Pediatric NCDs: Building Systems-Based Approaches in Nutrition

**Date:** May 23, 2025 | **Host:** International Initiative for Pediatrics and Nutrition (IIPN) & Columbia University

As a panelist, Ogweno Stephen shared his personal story growing up with obesity and GERD in Kenya. He spotlighted how stigma, weak health systems, and limited provider training delay access to care for youth in LMICs.

**Key Advocacy Messages:**

- Shift from individual blame to system-wide accountability
- Prioritize pediatric nutrition in UHC and health systems
- Leverage digital tools like the AI-powered Lifesten app to expand access
- Tackle provider gaps, food affordability, and school-based nutrition integration

**Quote:**

"We don't need more evidence that NCDs are urgent. What we need is courage, coordination, and commitment to act—especially for our children."



# ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS AT THE EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON OBESITY 2025



Obesity is now a global health emergency, impacting over 1 billion people, with prevalence rising rapidly across Africa. At the European Congress on Obesity (ECO) 2025 in Malaga, Stowelink Foundation joined global public health leaders to reflect on the journey so far—and the path ahead.

The timing of the congress was symbolic. Coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), it sparked much-needed conversations about adopting similar regulatory momentum for unhealthy food systems and obesogenic environments.

Our engagements spanned key thematic areas:

- Policy innovations, including sugar taxation and mandatory front-of-pack labelling
- Built environment design that encourages physical activity
- Breakthrough medical interventions, such as semaglutide and tirzepatide, that are transforming clinical approaches to weight management

But the strongest consensus was this: Prevention must remain the frontline of the global obesity response.

Stowelink Foundation's work reflects this priority. Across our public health campaigns, digital innovations, and policy advocacy, we are embedding obesity prevention within broader NCD strategies. Our approach is rooted in behavioral insights, youth engagement, and systems thinking—ensuring our interventions are both locally relevant and globally informed.

ECO 2025 reaffirmed the urgency of our mission. As we move toward the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs in September 2025, we commit to continuing our advocacy so that Africa is not just included but centered in global health strategies.

The work continues. And our resolve, strengthened by global collaboration, remains unwavering.

Share this:





# TOBACCO ADVOCACY EFFORTS UPDATES

## Tobacco Control Advocacy Approach

Stowelink's work in tobacco advocacy focuses on three key pillars:

- **Youth Engagement and Empowerment**

We equip young advocates with knowledge, tools, and platforms to expose and counter the tactics of the tobacco industry. Through the Tobacco Industry Interference Digital Watch Initiative (TIIDWI), we train youth in digital literacy and watchdog strategies to monitor, report, and push back against tobacco industry interference in policymaking and youth spaces.

- **Public Education and Awareness**

Stowelink leads high-impact digital campaigns, school outreach programs, and community events aimed at raising awareness about the harms of tobacco use and the manipulation of young people by the tobacco industry. We center lived experience and storytelling as powerful tools for advocacy and policy change.

- **Policy Influence and Accountability**

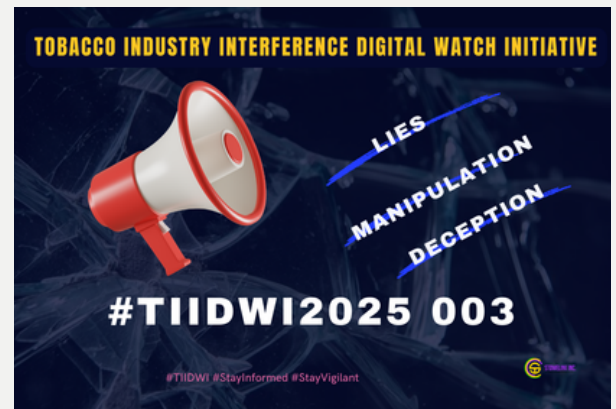
We engage in policy dialogue at national and global levels to advocate for stronger implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Our CEO, Ogwen Stephen, has contributed to international forums, bringing African youth perspectives into key conversations about tobacco regulation, marketing bans, and public health protections.

## Key Highlights

- Trained over 100 youth in 2025 through the TIIDWI program across East Africa.
- Participated in key international advocacy spaces, including the World Health Assembly and other global health summits, amplifying the African voice.
- Developed educational toolkits and social media campaigns reaching thousands across 15 countries.

## Our Commitment

Stowelink continues to advocate for a tobacco-free future led by informed and empowered youth. We believe that ending the tobacco epidemic requires dismantling industry influence, holding governments accountable, and creating environments where every young person can thrive tobacco-free.





# Research & Development Division Updates

## ABOUT THE DIVISION

Stowelink Research and Innovation Segment showcase research work, innovative activities and publications that have been conducted by Stowelink or its executive that is related to the work that we do

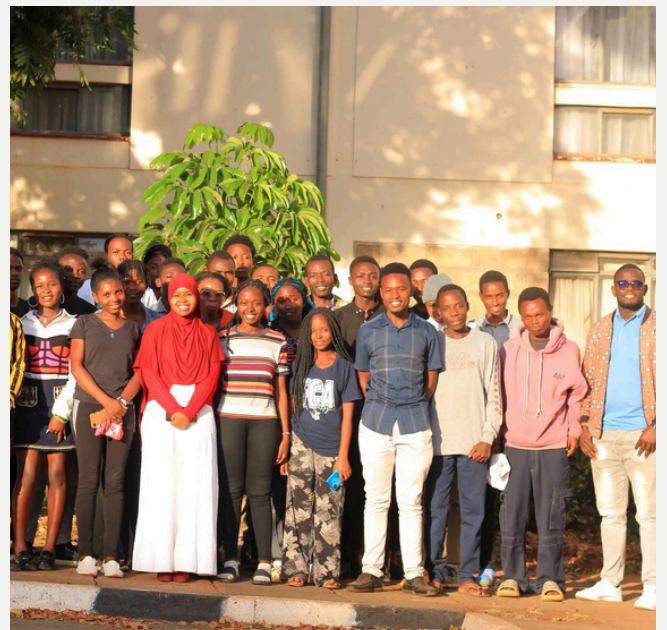
## WHAT'S IN THIS SEGMENT

- NEW RESEARCH ON THE NCDS 365 PROJECT PUBLISHED WITH THE HIGH IMPACT JOURNAL (AMERICAN JOURNAL OF HEALTH RESEARCH )

## BIGGEST HIGHLIGHT OF THE QUARTER

**NEW RESEARCH HEALTH INTERVENTIONS FOR HEALTH PROMOTION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: ASSESSING IMPACT ON HEALTH LITERACY AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**

We recently received confirmation of the publication of our latest paper titled "Health Interventions for Health Promotion in Sub-Saharan Africa: Assessing Impact on Health Literacy and Comparative Analysis of Online Communication Channels" in the British Journal of Healthcare and Medical Research



# ABSTRACT TO THE PAPER

## HEALTH INTERVENTIONS FOR HEALTH PROMOTION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: ASSESSING IMPACT ON HEALTH LITERACY AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

**Introduction:** Considering the increased incidence of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and the need for novel approaches to health promotion, this study investigates the feasibility of cross-country mHealth interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study, which focuses on using digital platforms for health communication, intends to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of cross-country mhealth interventions aimed at disseminating health promotion materials in Sub-Saharan Africa across various platforms. The study is based on the NCDs 365 project, a year-long health promotion initiative in five nations aimed at promoting NCD literacy.

**Methodology:** The study utilized a multi-stage sample technique, including an intentional selection of five nations (Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) with active local partner organizations conducting the initiative. The following stage was convenience sampling of members of these organizations who participated in the NCD365 project activities. Data gathering included the distribution of questionnaires via local partners, followed by thorough analysis using descriptive techniques and comparison tests such as ANOVA and the Kruskal-Wallis test. The extensive methodology ensured a broad and representative sample, which increased the findings' validity and generalizability.

**Results:** The findings demonstrated the potential of mHealth interventions to close health literacy gaps and promote positive health behaviors throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. According to an analysis of online communication platform usage, WhatsApp was the most popular (58.6%), followed by X (20.8%) and Facebook (6.8%). The study also found significant trends in platform preference across all five countries. Furthermore, gender-specific study indicated comparable literacy rates, with males slightly outperforming females. The Kruskal-Wallis test found no significant difference in the efficacy of various online communication channels for health promotion, confirming the viability of cross-country mHealth programs.

**Conclusions:** This study highlights the significant potential of cross-country mHealth interventions for health promotion in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study's strong methodology, agreement with current research, and gender-specific analysis add to its dependability and credibility. The findings of this analysis provide significant recommendations to policymakers seeking to optimize platform-specific policies and stimulate cross-country collaborations in health promotion. Finally, these findings expand the discussion on health literacy promotion and establish the groundwork for evidence-based recommendations that might drive effective health communication initiatives in the region and beyond.

### CITE THIS ARTICLE

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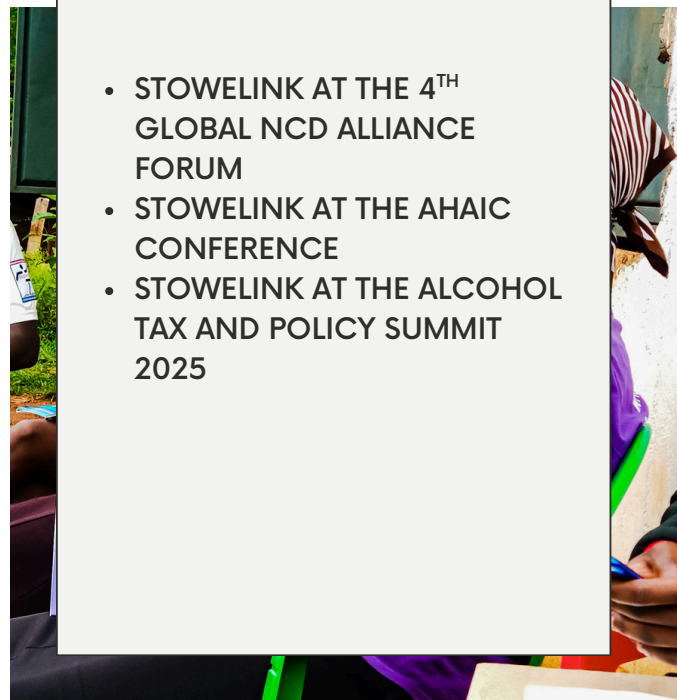
# Stowelink Connecting to the world

## ABOUT THE DIVISION

This segment demonstrate our passion to connect with the world while promoting NCDs Advocacy. Our team is keen on reaching the world audience with active NCDs work that aims at promoting NCDs Literacy and contributing to the NCDs knowledge gap across the globe. We leverage the strength of social media and our networks to work with world advocates and leaders to have maximum impact on the community that we endeavor to serve.

### WHAT'S IN THIS SEGMENT

- STOWELINK AT THE 4<sup>TH</sup> GLOBAL NCD ALLIANCE FORUM
- STOWELINK AT THE AHAIC CONFERENCE
- STOWELINK AT THE ALCOHOL TAX AND POLICY SUMMIT 2025



## BIGGEST HIGHLIGHT OF THE QUARTER

### STOWELINK'S MENTAL HEALTH LEAD JOINS WOMEN IN GLOBAL HEALTH KENYA WORKSHOP

Stowelink Foundation is proud to highlight the participation of our Mental Health Lead, Naila Chebet Koech, in the Women in Global Health (WGH) – Kenya Storytelling Workshop. This inspiring three-day training, organized by WGH Kenya, explored the transformative power of storytelling as a tool for advocacy, empowerment, and social change.





## STOWELINK AT THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (WHA)

Stowelink Foundation participated in the 77th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, amplifying the voice of African youth in global health governance. Our presence at WHA focused on elevating noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and tobacco control as central issues impacting youth across the continent. Through bilateral meetings, side events, and policy dialogues, we emphasized the need for youth inclusion in health policy formulation and implementation. Stowelink's engagement reinforced the importance of meaningful participation, accountability, and intergenerational collaboration in achieving Universal Health Coverage and protecting future generations from tobacco harm.



## STOWELINK AT THE EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON OBESITY



Stowelink made a strong showing at the European Congress on Obesity 2025, contributing perspectives from Africa on the growing burden of obesity and related noncommunicable diseases. Through participation, we shared insights from our community-based prevention programs and youth-led digital health campaigns. Emphasizing the need for culturally responsive solutions, Stowelink highlighted the importance of empowering young people with the tools to lead behavior change and policy advocacy to address obesity in low- and middle-income countries.

## STOWELINK AT BETA 3.0: ADVANCING TOBACCO CONTROL IN AFRICA

From April 28 to May 2, 2025, Stowelink Foundation's Chief Programs Officer, Kevin Oduor, joined public health leaders at the BETA 3.0 training in Entebbe, Uganda, organized by the Africa Centre for Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Policy Research (ATIM). The training deepened our technical expertise in tobacco industry monitoring, advocacy strategy, and policy engagement, focusing on tools like the EMPOWER framework and Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. Stowelink presented its "STAMP Out Tobacco Initiative" as part of the Kenyan team, showcasing our integrated approach to digital and grassroots industry monitoring. The training significantly boosted our capacity and reaffirmed our commitment to a tobacco-free future for Africa.



## **STOWELINK AT THE WOMEN IN GLOBAL HEALTH KENYA WORKSHOP**

Stowelink Foundation is proud to highlight the participation of our Mental Health Lead, Naila Chebet Koech, in the Women in Global Health (WGH) – Kenya Storytelling Workshop. This inspiring three-day training, organized by WGH Kenya, explored the transformative power of storytelling as a tool for advocacy, empowerment, and social change.

Held in Nairobi, the workshop brought together women leaders from across the health sector to learn how to craft and share impactful stories especially those that remain untold or are considered sensitive in many communities.



## **STOWELINK AT THE AFRICA CDC MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY TRAINING (MHLP)**

Stowelink Foundation is proud to announce that our Mental Health Lead, Naila Chebet Koech, recently participated in the prestigious Africa CDC Mental Health Leadership and Advocacy Training, held at the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC) in Nairobi.

This intensive two-week training, organized by Africa CDC in collaboration with the Ministry of Health Kenya, KMTTC and the University of British Columbia (UBC), brought together mental health leaders, practitioners and advocates from across the continent to strengthen the capacity for mental health leadership and systems reform.

During the training, Naila had the privilege of learning from some of the continent's most respected mental health experts. One of the most impactful sessions was led by Dr. Mercy Karanja, Director at the Division of Mental Health, Ministry of Health, and the first-ever female President of the Kenya Psychiatrist Association.





# Acknowledgements

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EXECUTIVE TEAM**

- Stephen Ogwen
- Oduor Kevin
- Naila Chebet
- Ongola Otieno
- Harrizon Ayallo



We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to transform and empower lives.

## CONTACT

Stowelink Inc

BSSC ROOM 252

Kenyatta University

P.O.Box 43844-00100

[www.stowelink.com](http://www.stowelink.com)

[stowelink@gmail.com](mailto:stowelink@gmail.com)

@Stowelink\_Inc

