

KENYA



JOURNEYS OF COURAGE

Pains and triumphs of diverse women and girls
in accessing and enjoying SRHR in Kenya

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Foreword

Planting Seeds, Nurturing Change

The We Lead Kenya success stories booklet is a celebration of transformation, courage, and collective leadership. It brings together the lived experiences of diverse young women: those living with HIV, with disabilities, and identify as LGBTI. Their journeys reflect both challenges and triumphs in realizing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). This booklet showcases the diverse realities and narratives of rightsholders, each demonstrating that when marginalized women are empowered to lead, real change happens.

In Kenya, inequalities in SRHR persist, especially for young women facing multiple layers of discrimination. Many still struggle to access quality healthcare, encounter stigma within health facilities, and experience exclusion from decision-making and leadership spaces. Young women with disabilities often face widespread physical and communication barriers while seeking SRHR services. Those living with HIV confront heightened stigma and limited psychosocial support, while displaced and LGBTI young women have to constantly navigate environments where their very identities are questioned or criminalized. Sharing these lived experiences is vital; for it highlights systemic barriers and provides evidence to inform inclusive policies and programs that uphold the dignity and rights of all young women.

Stories in this booklet are not only personal reflections, but also powerful testaments to resilience, agency, and solidarity. They illustrate how the We Lead programme has empowered rightsholders to augment their voices, influence policy, and champion inclusive health systems. Each story contributes to a transformative narrative where empowerment fuels advocacy, and advocacy drives sustainable change.

Among these inspiring stories is that of a young woman, who through the support of this program, joined Kenya Medical Research Institute's Community Advisory Group, proving that investing in knowledge and leadership transforms rightsholders into invaluable community resources. There [→](#)

← is also the story of how a We Lead partner advocacy work in Siaya County contributed to the enactment of a law requiring health facilities to recognize reproductive rights in line with national standards. An indeed groundbreaking policy achievement for young women's health.

In the book, you will interact with the moving story of the journey of a young woman living with HIV who emerged from the We Lead empowerment programme as a vibrant community activist, leading conversations on stigma reduction and self-acceptance. Equally sobering is the story of a transgender woman whose life-changing journey through the legal system showcases the power of persistence and the impact of rights-based advocacy in securing identity and justice.

Finally, the success of women with disability in Kilifi County to get the county government to provide budgets and resources for financing disability related programmes illustrates how collective organizing and inclusive advocacy can result in meaningful policy and budgetary victories for one of the most marginalized groups.

Each of these stories reminds us that leadership takes many forms, from personal empowerment to influencing public policy. The unwavering spirit of these young women shows their ability to transform personal struggle into collective action. Their journeys teach us that when women are equipped, trusted, and supported in their diversities, they can bring about profound change and shape the future.

I hope these stories will inspire you to reflect, connect, and act. For these are not merely stories of survival; they are narratives of how We Lead ■

Betty Mtuweta

Community of Action Facilitator

We Lead Program Kenya.

Acknowledgements

The Journeys of Courage booklet is a result of the collective vision, passion, and dedication of many individuals and organizations who have walked this journey with us. To the young women rightsholders: your courage lit the path, your voices stirred the winds of change. To our Host Organizations, and Community of Action (CoAs): you nurtured the soil where these seeds could grow. To every hand that wrote, photographed, designed, and dreamed: you gave this story its colors. This booklet is a celebration of us all.

Our immense gratitude to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who funded the We Lead program under the SRHR Partnership Fund, which is part of the Strengthening Civil Society subsidy framework. Without your support, these stories of change would not have been possible.

Many thanks to our consortium partners: Positive Vibes, Restless Development, Marsa, FEMNET, and the Central American Women's Fund. Your support and thoughts contributed to changing the lives of hundreds of women in the countries we intervened in. To the team at Hivos, the Lead consortium partner: thank you for your tireless efforts that ensured the program was implemented seamlessly. To M&C Saatchi World Services, thank you being our much-valued technical partner

We sincerely thank the review team, specifically, Cynthia Omondi, Mary Kuiru, Nyambura Gathumbi, Catherine Ferrer, Mickey Andeweg and Mark Schleedoorn for their time, insights, and thoughtful feedback, which enriched the quality and depth of the stories. Your keen eye and commitment ensured that the booklet truly reflects the spirit and impact of the We Lead programme.

Special appreciation goes to Arthur Okwemba, Faith Muiruri, and Ruth Omukhango, who worked tirelessly to compile, edit, and design the booklet. Your creativity, persistence, and teamwork have made this product both inspiring and memorable.

We extend our gratitude to the Centre for the Study of Adolescence, our host in Kenya, for their exceptional leadership in making the We Lead Program a remarkable success in the country. A special thanks to Dorcas Mwachi, the We Lead Project Officer, and Betty Mtuweta, the Community of Action Facilitator for We Lead Kenya, for their unwavering dedication and seamless coordination throughout the program.

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Our appreciation to the following partners and allies for your critical support in championing inclusive sexual and reproductive health and rights: Domic Omolo, Bondo Reproductive Health Coordinator; Tracy Iminza of NYECBO; Marion Adhiambo Odwar; Anne Mugo, Project Manager; Lydia Odipo, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at PYWV; Ednah Nyadiga, Community Engagement Officer at KEMRI; Mathias Tsuma of the National Council of Persons with Disabilities in Kilifi County; Dr. Dama Masha, CECM for Gender, Social Services and Sports in Kilifi County; Sophy Pwani, We Lead Program Officer; and Susan Lankisa, Monitoring and Evaluation officer at Dream Achievers Youth Organization. Together, your relentless dedication has helped realize the We Lead vision of ensuring that every young woman can exercise her rights and lead change beyond this program. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey ■

Because when We Lead, change blossoms.

New health law redefines the rights of people with disabilities

Thanks to a community-led advocacy campaign, Siaya County passed groundbreaking legislation upholding the reproductive health rights of people with disabilities as well as adolescents and other marginalized groups. They are no longer an afterthought in policy documents, but rightsholders protected by law.

The achievement represents a remarkable victory for the county's people with disabilities, who for many years had unsuccessfully pushed the County Assembly to design and finance programs addressing their challenges. County officials had long felt their concerns were not a priority compared to other issues.

The challenge

"There were misconceptions that reproductive health was only a youth or women's issue, and they lacked data on how discrimination plays out in clinics and hospitals," explains Claris Abwao, assistant project officer at Nyimine Empowerment Community-Based Organization (NYECBO).

The county also lacked a specific reproductive health policy or laws to respond to high maternal and child mortality issues, high adolescent pregnancies, and limited access to reproductive health services.

A three-pronged strategy

So Abwao and her team designed a comprehensive strategy to address this gap and increase visibility around the rights of people with disabilities. They reached out to the We Lead program to support their three-pronged approach: mentorship sessions, community forums, and listening sessions.

It was in these community forums and listening sessions that county government officials and other stakeholders heard about the lived realities of people with disabilities and the challenges they faced in the community. Recommendations emerging from these forums were shared with county government officials.

NYECBO worked closely with people with disabilities and other civil society actors in pushing for the adoption of these recommendations and broader Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), including for women and adolescents.

Strategy pays off

This solidarity and strategic approach yielded results. The county government set up a team to draft legislation to address the needs of marginalized groups, including people with disabilities. →



← NYECBO was enlisted as one of the organizations to provide technical assistance to the drafting committee. As a member of the committee, NYECBO ensured that people with disabilities and other marginalized groups shared their stories with the drafting team to help inform the provision of the proposed law.

One powerful testimony came from 24-year-old Joy Otieno, who narrated her harrowing experience when she went to give birth at a government hospital in Siaya County. Otieno, who has disability challenges, told the drafting team how the maternity environment was profoundly unwelcoming to people with disabilities.

"I faced great difficulty giving birth at Bondo Hospital because the facility did not have reasonable accommodation, and the medical equipment and beds were not disability-friendly," she said.

The legislative breakthrough

Her testimony and that of others led to the drafting of Clause 13 in the 2024 Siaya County Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health Act.

It requires every licensed health facility to recognize reproductive rights in line with national standards, and it guarantees special groups →

← the right to make independent reproductive choices free from discrimination, coercion, and violence. Facilities must also provide comprehensive reproductive health information and services and assisted reproduction services according to existing national guidelines.

Transforming lives

People with disabilities and marginalized groups in Siaya County have welcomed the legislation warmly.

“This Act has given me hope and dignity. I am no longer invisible in health services. It protects my rights to make decisions about my body without discrimination or coercion. For women like me with disabilities, this is a transformative step that ensures we receive the care and respect we deserve in Siaya,” said one woman during the launch of the Act in early 2025.

Jatugo, a transgender man, added: “The new law is life changing. Before, I was afraid to seek care because I often felt ignored. Now, I know I have the right to information and services, and I can make decisions for myself.”

Health workers have also embraced the new legislation. “We received training on respectful care from the We Lead project to help us put the new law into practice. Now we are seeing more people from marginalized groups coming forward for services,” says Nurse Carolyn Werunga of Kambajo Health Centre.

Changing attitudes

The law is also positively influencing community attitudes towards people with disabilities. NYECBO says the community now better appreciates the



needs of people with disabilities thanks to the awareness created by their community forums and listening sessions, as well as the law-drafting process.

The organization has likewise held monthly mentorship sessions with rightsholder groups to sensitize them about the Act and radio programs to create public awareness about the reproductive health rights and needs of rightsholder groups.

Challenges and lessons

Despite limited funding and logistical resources to conduct more extensive community outreach, NYECBO says it has learnt the best way to make sure everyone enjoys the rights they deserve. That is when marginalized groups share their real stories with policymakers and the community and take the lead in advocating for their rights, as is now happening in Siaya County ■

Power in Solidarity: Women with Disabilities Win Historic Budget Allocations in Kilifi County

The story of women with disabilities in Kilifi County, Kenya, has long been marked by struggle. From violations of their basic rights to the failure by county and national governments to formulate policies and financial proposals addressing their plight, this group has faced significant challenges.

Discrimination has kept them from accessing essential healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, while their voices have been absent in leadership and decision-making spaces. Nowhere has this neglect been felt more acutely than in sexual and reproductive health services, where inaccessible facilities, harmful cultural attitudes, and inadequate funding have left many without the care and dignity they deserve.

Rights advocates for women with disabilities have been campaigning tirelessly to draw the county government's attention to two key demands: first, acknowledge in policies that women with disabilities constitute a strategic group requiring county focus; and second, allocate a budget to address this group's specific needs.

This rising wave of advocacy found its champion in the Dream Achievers Youth Organization (DAYO), a grassroots group committed to advancing the rights of women with disabilities in Kilifi County. With support from We Lead, DAYO set out on a bold mission: to lobby and advocate


to the county government and key stakeholders to recognize and prioritize the unique needs of women with disabilities in both programming and financing.

Building momentum through dialogue

In 2022, DAYO began hosting a series of awareness forums and listening sessions with duty-bearers and healthcare workers. These gatherings became safe spaces where women with disabilities could speak their truths; sharing raw, firsthand accounts of exclusion and offering concrete recommendations for change.

Among their most urgent demands were the deployment of sign language interpreters in every healthcare facility, ensuring that no woman would ever again be turned away for lack of communication. They called for disability-friendly infrastructure, the immediate operationalization of the Kilifi County Disability Act, and, most critically, the creation of dedicated budget lines to finance rehabilitation services, including the procurement of assessment machines and assistive technologies vital for their wellbeing and autonomy. These recommendations were submitted to the county government for action.

Empowering women to lead their own fight

But DAYO recognized that more needed to be done to drive home the message of 



← inclusion. In a strategic shift, the organization empowered women with disabilities to lead campaigns for their own voices to be heard on critical needs.

This approach was launched in 2023 with the training of 12 women with disabilities on budget advocacy and leadership skills. The women also learned how to hold duty-bearers accountable for promoting and safeguarding their rights.

Following the training, the women developed a memorandum highlighting poor communication,

high healthcare costs, inaccessible facilities, and livelihood programs as areas requiring urgent county government action.

The memorandum was shared with several strategic officers within Kilifi County government, including the departments of Gender, Devolution, and Health; the chief of staff in the governor's office; the Department of Devolution; and members of the County Assembly.

Representatives from these offices pledged → to address the issues raised. Crucially, they

← committed to pushing for the inclusion of disability issues in their respective departmental budgets and the overall county budget, ensuring financial allocations were disability friendly.

Breakthrough: Historic budget wins

The results of these sustained advocacy efforts proved significant for the over 15,000 women with disability, given the absence of such substantial allocations in the past. On 4th July 2024, Kilifi County approved a program-based budget for the 2024/2025 fiscal year, presented by the Department of Gender and the Directorate of Social Services.

This budget allocated millions of shillings to programs aimed at improving the wellbeing of people with disabilities, particularly the more than 15,000 women with disability living in the county.

The allocations included approximately \$38,500 (Ksh5 million) for Persons with Disability (PWD) empowerment, \$23,100 (Ksh3 million) for procurement of assistive devices, and \$66,500 (Ksh8.6 million) for completing a PWD center in Malindi's Shella Ward.

The sustained advocacy by DAYO and women with disabilities achieved further wins. Kilifi County Referral Hospital and Mtwapa Sub-County Hospital now have sign language interpreters, though the challenge remains to extend this service to Level 2 and Level 3 health facilities throughout Kilifi County.

The advocacy also led to operationalization of the Kilifi County Disability Act. The Kilifi County Board for Persons with Disabilities—a corporate

body responsible for overseeing disability-related matters in the county—is now in place.

Expected impact and future accountability

Women with disabilities believe the budget allocations will have far-reaching positive effects on their lives. “The assistive devices will increase our mobility and independence, reducing over-dependence on caregivers,” said one elated woman with disability.

The PWD centre, once established, will support greater empowerment and autonomy for PWDs, particularly young women with disabilities. These interventions should help reduce the financial dependency of women with disabilities on their families and combat discrimination in service provision.

However, DAYO recognizes that these funds will only be meaningful if used effectively. This requires high levels of commitment and accountability on disability issues. Consequently, DAYO has strengthened the capacity of rights holders, particularly women with disabilities, on budget advocacy and social accountability to enable them to monitor the implementation of relevant county policies and Acts.

Through its active membership in the Kilifi County Disability Network (KCDN), DAYO continues to work alongside the Departments of Health and Gender and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD). This collaboration ensures the gains achieved are not only protected but built upon, driving forward a future where women with disabilities are central to the planning, budgeting, and implementation of county programs that affect their lives ■

From suffering in silence to leading the fight for sexual and reproductive health and rights

For years, Mary lived with a secret that weighed heavily on her soul. In 2007, she discovered she was infected with HIV. The stigma and discrimination that people living with HIV faced in her community silenced her. “When I first discovered my HIV status, I chose to keep much of my story to myself,” she recalls. So, she suffered in silence for 14 years, believing that the disease had condemned her to a hopeless life.

Until 2021, when she was selected by Action for Sustainability Initiative (AFOSI) to join a cohort of rightsholders under the We Lead Program. The group included 20 participants living with HIV or with disabilities, all struggling with their conditions and the stigma attached to them.

Building confidence from zero

The We Lead program had a major task to carry out: to help the participants accept their conditions and become outspoken advocates for their rights.

At first, the cohort members were timid, unsure of what they were getting into when the program’s empowerment sessions began. Aware of this, AFOSI began by reassuring them they were on a path that would change their lives for the better.


Mary and her colleagues first underwent mentorship, wellness, and confidence-building sessions on the importance of positive living and self-awareness. This was followed by training on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and how to take leadership in advocating for these rights.

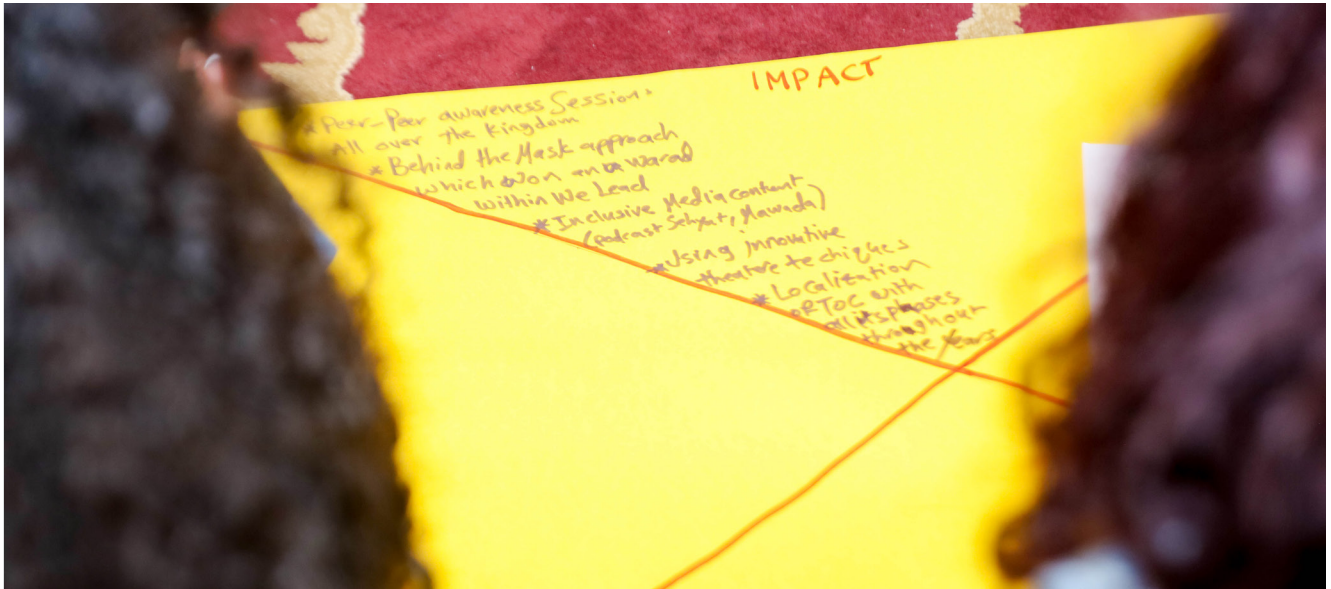
After that followed community dialogues and listening sessions in various parts of Nairobi County that offered them safe spaces to share their experiences, learn from each other, and speak out on SRHR issues.

Taking advocacy to the communities

Gradually, the participants gained confidence. They started visiting communities in Embakasi South and Kibra sub-counties to speak about their conditions and their rights. Mary was one of them.

“These sessions transformed me from a frightened woman who avoided speaking about her condition to one who confidently shared her HIV status story,” Mary explains.

“That experience gave me the courage to educate others whilst promoting sexual and 



◀ reproductive health and rights for young women living with HIV and those with disabilities.”

AFOSI noticed her abilities and assigned her to mentor other participants. She gave them hope, using herself as a living example of the benefits of positive living. In the end, Mary mentored a critical mass of advocates willing to fight stigma and discrimination and demand their rights.

Deepening her expertise

Even with this success in positively influencing lives, Mary was not resting on her laurels. She enrolled for paralegal training offered by AMKA Africa to deepen her understanding of SRHR and how to articulate them.

Mary’s knowledge and skills had reached another level. The AFOSI We Lead team recognized this.

The organization appointed her as a Project Assistant Officer to support resource mobilization, implementation of We Lead activities, and to lead youth empowerment sessions, including the Sheria Ya Vijana Project.

A legacy of empowerment

“Even as the We Lead Program comes to an end, I am deeply grateful for this journey. I have gained skills, found purpose, and now I am giving back to the same community. This is not just growth, it is empowerment I will always be grateful for,” she says.

Her growth and journey are now a major inspiration to others, who find comfort and hope that the possibilities of succeeding in life and enjoying their SRHR, regardless of their situation, are limitless ■

A transgender woman's life changing journey through the legal system

The knock on the door came without warning. At just 20 years old, Sarah* had been living authentically as herself for the first time, until the morning police officers arrived to turn her world upside down. What she didn't expect was that the person who had reported her to the authorities was someone from her own family, someone who couldn't accept that the person they once knew as a son had found peace living as a daughter.

"I felt like the world should just open up and swallow me alive," she recalls, her voice still heavy with the memory of that devastating betrayal in 2019.

The charges were serious: obtaining by false pretenses, under Section 320 of Kenya's Penal Code. It all started when Sarah wanted to change her identity documents to her a female name. Under the Kenyan law, a person must submit a copy of the ID card of at least one of their parents to get such documents. Because she declared herself as a transgender person, her family had ostracized her, making it very difficult to get these documents.


Finding herself in this difficult situation, she collected lost ID cards of strangers and presented them as her mother, father, and guardian. They passed the test, and she got a birth certificate, ID, and passport using her name. She then managed

to bypass the legal system and changed her documents to recognize her as female. From male, she was officially female in the new documents.

She was arrested in Eldoret while seeking health care, and detained at Eldoret Central Police Station before being taken to court to face the charges of obtaining registration by false pretenses.

This arrest exposed her to many threats. The police who had gone to her house to look for evidence, made fun of her panties and bras; displaying them to the neighbors. Before this, many people did not know that she was transgender. She was in danger. Amka Africa, one of the partners of We Lead, a Hivos program, intervened immediately, and helped her travel from Kapsabet to a safe house in Eldoret, about 46 kilometers away.

But for Sarah, this exposure and the legal battle that ensued represented something far more fundamental: her right to exist as herself. Sarah had been navigating life in a society where transgender identity is still largely misunderstood and, in many cases, criminalized.

According to the United States National Institute of Health, Gender dysphoria is defined as a marked incongruence between their experienced or expressed gender and the one they were 



← assigned at birth. People who experience this turmoil cannot correlate to their gender expression when identifying themselves within the traditional, rigid societal binary male or female roles, which may cause cultural stigmatization.

Her worst nightmare was being forced into male police cells, where she became vulnerable to violence of cell mates. "This was my first time being arrested. I actually felt like committing suicide," she recalls. The fear wasn't just about legal consequences; it was about surviving a system that didn't recognize or protect people like her.

An unlikely lifeline

While out on bail and struggling to come to terms with what had happened, Amka Africa came to her aid. The organization managed to transform what seemed like Sarah's darkest moment into a beacon of hope for Kenya's wider transgender community. Through the We Lead program, they didn't just provide legal representation, they embarked on an educational mission that would change minds in Kenya's courtrooms.

The organization's approach was revolutionary: rather than simply defending Sarah, they chose to educate. Their lawyers spent considerable time helping court officials understand →

← transgender identity, the challenges faced by this community, and the human story behind the legal case.

When the ruling came in June 2024, nearly five years after her first arrest, it marked a watershed moment. Yes, Sarah was found guilty, but the magistrate handed down a suspended sentence, allowing her to serve her time outside prison. It was an unprecedented decision that reflected the court's newfound understanding.

"I believe this ruling opened the minds of the magistrate, the prosecutor, and the justice system generally," Sarah reflects. During proceedings, the magistrate openly admitted wanting to learn more about transgender persons, a remarkable shift in judicial attitudes.

The court went even further, requesting that Sarah participate in training workshops to educate court officials and the community about transgender experiences. What began as a prosecution had evolved into a platform for change.

Today, Sarah moves through Eldoret with a confidence she never thought possible. "These days, I walk around with my head held high. I don't pretend to be someone I'm not," she says, carrying a printed copy of Kenya's Constitution to educate other transgender people about their rights.

Her message to others in her community is powerful in its simplicity: "Don't be afraid to be who you are. You are a human being just like every other person."

The court went even further, requesting that Sarah participate in training workshops to educate court officials and the community about transgender experiences. What began as a prosecution had evolved into a platform for change.

A ripple effect

Sarah's case and experiences are huge personal victories, which offer a template for other people going through similar legal situations. Amka Africa now uses her experience to guide other transgender individuals through legal name-change processes, steering them away from potentially dangerous illegal alternatives.

Her story represents a crucial shift in how Kenya's legal system approaches transgender rights, proving that education and empathy can transform even the most challenging situations into opportunities for progress.

"Every day I pray for Amka Africa to be blessed abundantly," Sarah says. "I don't know what could have happened to me without them." ■

*Name changed to protect privacy

From stigma to leadership: How one woman living with HIV became a champion for youth rights



The story of women with disabilities in Kilifi County, Kenya, has long been marked by struggle. From violations of their basic rights to the failure by county and national governments to formulate policies and financial proposals addressing their plight, this group has faced significant challenges.

“One day after facilitating a session with adolescent girls, a teenage girl approached me, saying how grateful she was for the session. She had been using Postinor-2 (P2) every time she had unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy, not knowing the negative effects of such behavior. She was grateful for what she learnt in my session,” Marion Adhiambo Odwar recounts. →

← This encounter made Odwar realize she was no longer an ordinary person, but someone who had become a role model and carried the hopes of many peers like her.

"I realized the information and awareness I was creating was power, and the conversations were positively transforming people's lives," she reflects.

Positive Young Women Voices (PYWV), said she was in her own league.

"Among the many rights-holders we have engaged with and beyond the We Lead program, Marion stood out because of her courage, vision, and resilience," noted Anne Mugo, We Lead Program Officer, in reference to Marion.

Odwar was part of the first cohort of rights-holders who participated in a We Lead-funded empowerment program designed to transform participants into confident and effective advocates of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

Living with HIV, Odwar had lost hope of achieving her dreams. The stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS had made her retreat into herself. The empowerment sessions offered a lifeline perfectly suited to her state of mind and condition.

From a timid and reserved individual, she gained confidence and started sharing her story about her struggles with HIV status as testimony to other participants in similar situations. She went into the communities to advocate for her rights and those of other marginalized individuals.

"The We Lead program largely contributed to

“Living with HIV, Odwar had lost hope of achieving her dreams. The stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS had made her retreat into herself. The empowerment sessions offered a lifeline perfectly suited to her state of mind and condition.”

my transformation as an emerging leader by providing me with in-depth training on SRHR, confidence, and practical skills to engage with other rights-holders and stakeholders to advocate effectively and with empathy.”

Led by young women, PYWV has a deliberate strategy of building the capacity of participants to enter leadership spaces and influence decisions that affect their lives. The organization works to connect participants like Odwar to leadership opportunities and platforms by using its relationships and networks with key policymakers, leaders, and institutions.

Late in 2023, the organization exemplified this by on-boarding Odwar onto its Board and Advisory Group. Her star was rising.

As her prominence grew, her abilities started being noticed by other respected institutions as well. The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), a premier research institution in →



Kenya, enlisted her into its Community Advisory Group. The group has 22 members, with the role of helping the participation and contribution of youth and community members affected by KEMRI's research work.

A voice for the voiceless

Odwar's role is to act as a liaison between KEMRI researchers and her peers living with HIV. Notes Ednah Nyandiga, Community Engagement Officer at KEMRI: "Marion's perspectives continue to ensure our research is more respectful, fair, and relevant to the community."

"When young women see one of their own in decision-making, it builds trust in KEMRI as a research institution. This is part of our broader push for inclusive, rights-based, and community-engaged research," she adds.

Marion shares this sentiment. "My inclusion in the Community Advisory Group is a personal milestone and symbol of representation, hope, change, and progress. For others observing this journey, I hope it serves as a source of encouragement and proof that their voices are valid and that leadership is within their reach." ■

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