



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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1. Introduction

This report provides insights on implementation of the We Lead programme during the period 1 January to 31 December 2021. The consortium embarked on a daring dream to ensure that identified rightsholders could access and enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The programme was officially launched during a virtual kick-off meeting held in May 2021. The event brought together all the consortium members, host organisations, Community of Action Facilitators (CoAF) and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). In a year that should be considered the project set off period, a lot of the interventions were aimed at establishing the project - recruitment of key staff and contracting organisations. Therefore, most results are focused on the realization of the first intermediate outcome: strengthened CSOs are inclusive of or led by young women from four rightsholder groups, and work together in a Community of Action (CoA) to defend and promote their SRHR.

The report outlines the efforts made by the consortium and key stakeholders during the set up period and some of the achievements made. It begins with an analysis of the context. Progress is presented against the following benchmarks: programme management, lobbying and advocacy, communication, capacity strengthening, monitoring and evaluation, and safety and security. An outline of lessons and best practices is provided. The risk matrix is also reviewed in the report.

2. Context analysis

The context at the time of developing the programme in 2020 and the start of implementation in 2021 remained largely the same, with slight variations. The programme begun with the grim news of the murder of a [REDACTED] activist affiliated to the organisation [REDACTED] which is a member of the Community of Action in Guatemala. The space for civil society engagement continued to shrink/shift in countries like Nigeria and Uganda, where governments threatened to enact laws that would further criminalize rightsholders such as those identifying as [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. In Mozambique, the ongoing insurgency by the Al-Shabaab terrorist group in the Cabo Delgado region resulted in an increase in displaced individuals, creating additional pressure on the health system there. Regression in the US rose sharply during the Trump presidency and in 2021, Guttmacher reports that "state legislatures set an alarming record of 108 abortion restrictions enacted in 19 states".¹ The impact of regression in the US on global health legal and policy formulation cannot be understated. In 2020, conservative governments such as Kenya, Niger and Uganda as well as 'progressive' states like the US, signed on to the Geneva Consensus Declaration, which is an anti-rights instrument that was conceptualized by fundamentalist groups that are active in the US. Although the document is not binding, this action signalled a worrying trend of conservative governments being deployed in global health law and policy-making spaces to roll back gains made in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as the rights of gender minorities. The programme continued to monitor the impact of

¹ See <https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2022/03/2022-state-legislative-sessions-abortion-bans-and-restrictions-medication-abortion> accessed on 15-4-2022.

conservatism and fundamentalisms on rightsholders and in SRHR advocacy.

In Lebanon, the multiple crises occasioned by the collapse of the financial sector, the fuel crisis and the 2020 blast were compounded by Covid-19. This had implications on the programme set up as well as on rightsholders access to information and services. Government lock/shut-downs in the financial year resulted in economic shut-downs, which affected rightsholders. Subsequent vaccine mandates had implications on resumption of in-person activities. Covid nonetheless positively impacted the IT sector and the programme continued to leverage virtual meeting applications such as Zoom, Blue Jeans, Big Blue Button and Jitsi in its engagements. The programme also used virtual meeting facilitation aids such as Miro, among others, to ensure participatory interactions in the virtual meetings.



3. Program management

In 2021, we focused on several key activities. These included the recruitment of programme staff, establishing governance and coordination structures, development of policy frameworks, and engagement/contracting of partners, particularly the host and local organisation members of the CoAs.

Most We Lead programme staff were recruited in the first half of the year. Substantial delays were realized in recruitment of staff in MENA, Niger and Mozambique, but staff eventually joined the programme in August, September and October. All but one Community of Action Facilitators (CoAF) were recruited in 2021. In Niger, the programme experienced some challenges, but eventually got a CoAF at the end of the year. The CoAF in Jordan transitioned out of the programme in the middle of the year and a replacement was recruited towards the end of the year. Due to the challenging circumstances in Lebanon, Hivos experienced staff transitions in MENA which impacted program implementation. To ensure program continuity, Hivos moved these roles out of Lebanon to Jordan and a new Program Officer joined in October 2021 while the Financial Officer was recruited in early 2022.

The programme's governance and coordination structures were established. At the global level, the Global Coordination Team was set up. Comprising representatives from the consortium, the team met twice per month ensuring improved communication and coordination across the consortium. There is an opportunity to improve on these aspects in 2022 and beyond. Working groups on Capacity Strengthening, Linking and Learning, Advocacy, Communication,

Design-Monitoring-Evaluation and Learning, Safety and Security as well as Finance were created with clear terms of reference. These were instrumental in the implementation of the programme's strategies and ensured participation of the consortium and stakeholders. In the last quarter of 2021, the working groups incorporated rightsholders and Community of Action Facilitators, in keeping with the principles of meaningful youth engagement. At the regional level, Regional and Country Coordination Teams were created and met regularly ensuring enhanced synergies at that level. As the lead party, Hivos established a Global Management Team which kept an eye on critical issues regarding programme implementation and management.

The Steering Committee (SC), which is made up of senior leaders from the consortium, met in June and December. During the meeting in June, the SC approved the programme's governance structure and ways of working. In December, three rightsholders from Uganda, Lebanon and Guatemala were incorporated into the body. A mentorship and coaching framework was developed for these young leaders in the SC. An in-person meeting of the SC is planned in the first half of 2022.

Several programme frameworks on finance, audit, monitoring, evaluation and learning, among others, were developed, approved and begun being implemented in the year under review. A draft programme manual was developed and a draft framework for safety and security was prepared.

During the year, engagements with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) were undertaken. The Global Programme Manager (PM) held regular check-in meetings with MFA. This ensured flow of information

from the programme to MFA and vice versa. The Global PM also engaged with embassy representatives in Costa Rica, Jordan, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda and Niger, briefing them on the programme and identifying areas for collaboration. The Hivos Program Officers in the countries continued engaging with relevant embassies and took part in meetings and other interventions planned by them and other partnerships. In Kenya for instance, the programme participated in a joint event with other partnerships during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The programme also participated in several meetings organised by the Embassy.

In October, the programme held an inclusive and participatory 2022 annual work planning session and submitted its annual plan, budget and baseline on 1 November 2021. This plan was approved on 10 December 2021. The baseline was reviewed and submitted on 31 January 2022.





4. Lobby and advocacy

Most lobby and advocacy spaces at national, regional and global remained largely virtual due to Covid, in the better part of the year. This section highlights some of the interventions the program made during the year under review.

Intermediate outcome 1: Strengthened CSOs are inclusive of or led by young women from four rightsholder groups, and work together in a CoA to defend and promote their SRHR.

Prior to the UN Commission on Status of Women in March, Hivos organised a briefing on how to be involved in the conference. As the conference took place virtually and not all CoA Facilitators were selected at this point, the call offered a moment to touch base with the different We Lead representatives. During the conference, Hivos actively participated in daily briefings with the Dutch delegation.

During the Safety & Security training in November, Hivos facilitated a 1.5 day session on how to engage in international advocacy spaces. The CoA Facilitators present, as well as other consortium staff, gained a better understanding of engaging with policy makers, creating advocacy strategies and personal safety within these spaces.

Intermediate outcome 2: The general public increasingly acknowledges and supports young women's SRHR.

In commemoration of International Human Rights Day, the CoA in Nigeria developed a position paper in which different forms of violations experienced by rightsholders were stated. It included a demand to end the violence against the rightsholders and to respect and protect their sexual reproductive health and rights. This position paper was published in 3 large print media in the country.

Working with Oxfam Lebanon, Marsa is developing a booklet for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] individuals, detailing the process for legal transition in Lebanon. This booklet will also be a part of the capacity strengthening activities targeting these rightsholder groups. Through this project, Marsa will be distributing reusable pads in Lebanon to rightsholders and will expand to include Jordan.

Intermediate outcome 3: Health service providers are more aware of the SRHR needs and situation of rightsholder groups, and increasingly provide accessible, comprehensive, high-quality, inclusive and respectful SRHR information and services.

Marsa was co-presiding AFRAMED2021, the MENA Regional Conference on HIV, Hepatitis and other Sexually Transmitted Infections, that was held from 19 November to 21 November, 2021 in Hammamet, Tunisia. The conference presented an opportunity to benefit from lessons learned by grassroots organisations from across the Middle East and North Africa and new scientific findings in the field of sexual and reproductive health. Marsa extended an invitation to all partners, including We Lead consortium partners, to attend. As co-president, Marsa also encouraged partners to ask members of their organisations

and rightsholders to apply for scholarships to support with the cost of participation and travel.

Intermediate outcome 4: Duty-bearers increasingly design, adopt and implement laws and policies that respect and protect the SRHR of young women from rightsholder groups.

Marsa and Hivos supported the CoA Facilitator in Lebanon to submit an official report to the UN Special Rapporteur on Health. The report illustrated the current situation in Lebanon, which is facing multiple crises and how this affects the SRHR of young women and girls in the country. In the report, experiences of all four rightsholder groups were reflected.

The CoA in Kenya participated in the march against the hate speech from the Cabinet Secretary of Education, who stated that students from the ██████████ community should not be admitted in boarding schools. The participants in the march demanded that he retrieves his statement. This was important in creating awareness and neutralize the opposition efforts that infringe on the rights of the ██████████ community.

The CoA Facilitator of Uganda participated in the UN Women Partnerships for Change Forum, where they shared about the aspirations and visions of the We Lead programme. In addition, the CoA Facilitator and some CoA representatives actively participated in the development and consultative processes of the East African Community Sexual and Reproductive Health Bill. During the EALA Parliamentary Consultation Plenary, the CoAF also presented a statement lobbying for the endorsement, since it is very supportive in

the realization of SRHR and protection of the future of girls and women; not only Uganda, but all other East African Community countries.

During the launch of We Lead in Nigeria, government stakeholders, especially from the Federal Ministry of Health, committed to supporting the implementation of the project while looking forward to collaborating with the CoA to ensure the success of the We Lead programme in Nigeria. Gaining the support and commitment of stakeholders is critical to the successful implementation of the We Lead program. We gained the commitment of the Director of the GASHE department of the Federal Ministry of Health to support the successful implementation of the programme in Nigeria.

Hivos is a co-initiator of the Multi-Party Initiative on SRHR including HIV/Aids, a collaborative platform between Dutch parliamentarians and NGOs. During its launch in October, political parties from across the aisle committed to SRHR as a priority for Dutch foreign policy.





6. Communication

Global level

In 2021, the Communication Working Group was set up, with representatives from all consortium partners. They drafted the terms of reference for the working group, as well as some basic communication guidelines for the programme, which will be expanded in 2022. For the safe communication policies for the national level, We Lead started engagement with global protection organisations. In the end, it was decided to work with national organisations instead. This will happen in 2022. To ensure safe file sharing within the consortium, We Lead uses the self-hosted Nextcloud Files platform. In 2022, the programme will start using a program management system.

Many publications were shared on the different channels of the consortium. 7 articles were published on the English website of Hivos, and 5 on the Dutch website of Hivos. The project was also mentioned in the e-newsletters, as well as the magazine that is sent to Hivos' private funders.

The voices and realities of the rightsholders were further amplified through FCAM's social networks, website and e-news. The formats for disseminating their stories and voices range from testimonial articles ("Beyond the stigma...my life, my dreams, my decisions", Kenia Donaire, a young woman with HIV from Honduras), historical memory articles ("Struggling bodies, disputed rights", about the advance of fundamentalism in Central America), inspiring short videos (honouring the memory of Andrea González, [REDACTED]) and graphic pieces, within

the framework of commemorative days and campaigns. In total, 7 publications were made.

During Pride Month, two CoA Facilitators wrote blogs, taking a stand and calling out for increased access to SRHR services for rightsholders identifying as [REDACTED]. These were published on the Restless Development blog 'We Are Restless'. Furthermore, the consortium created the social media campaign #WhatIsLove, featuring quotes from the CoA Facilitators about what love is to them.

During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, 10 activists from the different Communities of Action were introduced in social media posts and an article published by Hivos and Restless Development. This article was picked up by a UK-based media platform, who published an article on one of the activists. Restless Development also supported the CoA Facilitators to conduct a Twitter chat during the 16 Days, showcasing their leadership and calling for an end to gender-based violence for rightsholders.

Restless Development launched the Youth Collective regional chapters in MENA and Central America to deepen engagement of youth civil society. They set up regional newsletters going out in Spanish and Arabic, reaching out to over 595 organisations (including the CoAs) with funding and other opportunities for engagement. A regional Facebook group was established for Latin America, which will be a platform to share the Spanish newsletters with the CoAs.

National level

In Kenya, the CoA officially launched the programme to create momentum and visibility of the We Lead project by communicating the aim, strategies, and outcome areas of the project to relevant partners: the media, like-minded CSOs, rightsholders and policy makers. The CoA Facilitator introduced the project by presenting the ToC and the plans the CoA has to achieve the outcomes. Hivos presented on the consortium members and their role in We Lead. The policy officer from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was present, and communicated the plan the Embassy has in advancing the SRHR of young people.

In the Netherlands, Hivos has a growing support base of Dutch individuals who co-sponsor our work. Hivos was involved with the Women's March, the Pink Film Days in Amsterdam, the [REDACTED] Film Festival Utrecht and the [REDACTED] Walk. The work of Hivos and We Lead was also visible through different Dutch media platforms, such as 3FM and Koffietijd.



7. Capacity Strengthening, Linking and Learning

Capacity strengthening (CS) is at the core of the We Lead programme. It aims at strengthening the voice and the influence, personally and collectively, of rightsholders and their organisations. During the first year, the focus was setting up structures to realize smooth functioning of the programme and CoAs. Capacity strengthening activities were aimed at enhancing the ability of the consortium and the CoAFs to provide direction and support to the CoAs.

During the process of Theory of Change (ToC) localisation and development of action plans, the Capacity Strengthening & Linking and Learning (CSLL) WG identified what each organisation has to offer with regards to knowledge, capacities, experiences and networks. A CS 'menu' that reflects this was developed and disseminated to all the CoAs to inform action planning related to CS. In addition, the development of the CS strategy was initiated to present a coherent and practical framework that responds to the increasing demand for collaborative solutions that increase the capacity of organisations and people to shape their own futures. The strategy establishes the principles and basic processes for CS but is also flexible — one that will evolve over time. It also includes tools that facilitate the implementation of capacity strengthening activities. We have made progress towards the implementation of the strategy within the programme.

Some of the CS activities conducted within the year included the following:



Kick-off meeting

Despite the challenge of working across different time zones and 5 different language groups, a successful kick-off meeting was held for five days (3 hours each) on 10, 11, and 18 to 20 May 2021 bringing together all consortium partners, host organisations and CoAFs. The aim of this workshop was to meet and get to know each other, and learn more about the programme. A draft We Lead Programme Manual was shared, which included procedures around finances, safeguarding and safety and security, among others. This was also a good opportunity in getting to know the unique strengths that each of the consortium partners, CoAFs and host organisations bring to the programme to ensure high quality and effective implementation.

Theory of Change Facilitation Training

This was conducted on 7 to 10 June, led by Hivos with support from other consortium organisations. The objective of the training was to introduce and internalize the We Lead overarching ToC; strengthen CoAFs', Program Officers' and host organisations' capacity to facilitate the localisation and use of ToC at country level; and to develop a roadmap for localisation of ToC. The ToC Facilitation Training included both complex theoretical content, and more practical breakout sessions allowing regional and country specific discussions. To support the ToC localisation process, Positive Vibes in collaboration with Restless Development designed and implemented a LILO Inclusive Facilitation Workshop over 3.5 days for the CoAFs. The workshop focused on approaches, knowledge, attitudes, and skills, that make one a great facilitator. A total of 8 CoAF were trained (Niger CoAF had not been recruited by the time of the training). After the ToC Facilitation

Training, a 2.5 days LILO Inclusive Facilitation Practice Workshop was held, which provided an opportunity for the CoAF to replicate an element of the ToC Workshop by designing an inclusive approach to facilitation; and then facilitating a session with the participants of the Facilitation Practice Workshop. In pairs they were given assignments and pre-work, and after facilitating their session they were given feedback by the trainers as well as their peers. This workshop not only provided skills in facilitation, but also provided an opportunity for the CoAFs to build a close-knit relationship with each other. As a result, during the reporting period, five out of nine CoAFs successfully led ToC localisation sessions and work plan development in their countries. The consortium organisations supported the process in ensuring there is 'local ownership' of the programme by supporting the rightsholders in defining their local SRHR priorities while working from their own safe space (CoA).

LILO Inclusion

Positive Vibes transferred the Looking In Looking Out (LILO) Inclusion methodology to Kenya and facilitated the experience to Uganda, Nigeria and Mozambique. LILO Inclusion aims at assisting in exploring how personal ideas, values and attitudes develop around various topics and people. The aim of the workshops was to build better understanding and empathy at a cognitive and emotional level as the basis for communities experiencing better support. These workshops brought together CoAFs, local organisations and some consortium members for the first time in such an intimate manner. It was a unique opportunity to create a positive space and collaboration among the organisations. It was an opportunity for members of local organisations representing the rightsholder groups to meet, get to know each other –



some for the first time – and to find common ground as the programme took off. A total of 67 rightsholders were trained on LILO (representing 120% achievement of the target). The workshops were very participatory and the group shared deep, past and present life experiences with each other. For them to confide in each other such painful histories – some of which were being shared for the first time as mentioned by participants – is testament to how valuable the experience was in creating a conducive and safe environment. Eight CoAFs successfully completed the Inclusive Facilitation Workshop and Facilitation Practice Workshop (the Niger CoAF had not yet been recruited by the time of the training).

The Kenya CoA completed the training of facilitators and rolled out their first supervised workshop. The supervision helps in strengthening the facilitators during their first workshop, constantly giving feedback on what is going well and what needs to be improved as the workshop is ongoing. Four (4) rightsholders were confirmed as lead facilitators to roll out LILO Inclusion as part of their work plans, six (6) as support facilitators and should only roll out LILO with a lead facilitator, and four (4) still need further accompaniment from Positive Vibes before facilitating LILO workshops.

Leadership training

Restless Development conducted tailor-made leadership training, informed by CoAFs needs. A total of 7 CoAFs were trained (Niger and Jordan CoAFs had not been recruited by the time of the training). The training focused on time management, conflict resolution, public speaking and critical thinking which has resulted in the CoAFs being more confident and effective when engaging with the CoAs. To ensure

coaching and support structures are in place, an accompaniment plan to continue supporting, coaching and mentoring the CoAFs was developed. This included setting up a WhatsApp and Signal group, and holding global group calls and one-on-one conversations with the CoAFs to support their leadership journey. This has enabled the CoAFs to stay connected, inspire each other, and exchange ideas on how to lead the CoAs to success by drawing on their personal experiences. The one-on-one support has provided a safe space for the CoAFs to share their unique leadership goals, and get tailor-made mentorship and guidance to support their individual leadership goals. The space has also been safe for CoAFs to share their challenges, struggles and potential solutions as they conduct their roles. In addition, Restless Development organised a training on using digital platforms to deliver workshops. These included how to use MURAL, Zoom, Mentimeter and LinkedIn. This has enhanced their leadership skills and their ability to lead the CoAs confidently.

MARSA supported a staff in Jordan to participate in CREA's Disability, Sexuality, and Rights Online Institute (DSROI) which is a six weeks long online course (Aug-Oct 2021). The DSROI provides a study of theory and practice of the intersections of disability, gender and sexuality with a focus on perspectives from the global South. This is important as the course gives better insight of how to identify the existence of intersectionality among rightsholder groups and how this information could be used to benefit the implementation of We Lead in such a conservative context. In addition, it also provides insight on how to minimize safety and security risks by using intersectionality when dealing with sensitive rightsholder groups. More CoAFs have expressed interest in taking up this course in 2022.



Youth Collective Leadership Labs

Restless Development held two Leadership Labs in English (for the global audience) and in Spanish (for Central America) looking at grassroots innovations to strengthen the resilience of youth civil society. These are peer-led series where members share their leadership skills and tools through interactive, online sessions with over 3,500 youth CSOs. This offers collaborative spaces to explore effective leadership approaches together, and develop stronger collaborations. Further Leadership Labs will be held in 2022 to ensure cross-learning and sharing among the Youth Collective members, CoAs, and CoAFs.

Training on Youth Led Research Approach

Restless Development recruited and trained 11 youth researchers (representing 110% achievement of the target) from Nigeria, Uganda, Mozambique, Lebanon and Guatemala on the Youth Led Research Approach. As a start to the longitudinal study to document the development of the CoAs, the youth researchers are now using peer-to-peer methods to collect data on “youth civil society’s experience and changes in SRHR, and how these CSOs are building resilience to claim their SRHR” in their countries. The research will provide insights to CoAs on adaptive SRHR advocacy and especially in the face of pandemics such as Covid-19.

Safety and Security Training

Hivos organised a Safety and Security Training on 29 November to 3 December 2021 for all the Safety and Security Focal Points and CoAFs. The training focused on the legal framework; contextualizing SRHR activists as human rights defenders; understanding organisational

working environment; risk assessment; basic device security and secure communications including how to develop a security plan. In addition, Hivos organised a Safety and Security Workshop in Central America where the safety and security measures were contextualized for both Guatemala and Honduras, and procedures were put in place on how to report incidents and share urgent alerts in the region. This ensures that safeguarding and security of CoAFs, rightsholders and programme staff is promoted.

Participation in MFA session on strengthening civil society

Some consortium organisations participated in the MFA online dialogue to strengthen civil society in June 2021, exploring how to approach the challenges and opportunities of (local) ownership and shifting power dynamics effectively.

SRHR Participatory Advocacy

FEMNET hosted a two-day advocacy virtual webinar on SRHR Participatory Advocacy. The main objective of the webinar was to equip young women with relevant knowledge, skills and tools to effectively advocate for the realization and enjoyment of SRHR. Specifically, the webinar sought to share knowledge on the existing advocacy tools and spaces at the CoAs disposal (including the Maputo Protocol); share knowledge on how to engage in these spaces; and create SRHR advocacy toolkits and road maps to be used in each country. In addition, FEMNET mobilized and supported young women from Mozambique, Kenya and Nigeria to attend the 3rd African Girl’s Summit (AGS), organised by the African Union. This Summit is a strategic space

for girls across Africa to influence negotiations and hold member states accountable for girls' rights.

Training on international lobbying and advocacy

In Latin America, all the CoA organizations in Honduras and Guatemala through the support of FCAM attended a workshop focused on international lobby, facilitated by the organisation AKAHATA. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen the capacities of the organisations on lobby and advocacy at international levels, including development of a strategy, identifying opportunities for collaboration with and between the organisations.

Linking and learning

During the year, We Lead joined the Share-Net Netherlands (SNNL), a Dutch knowledge platform for SRHR whose mission is to strengthen linkages between research, policy and practice through generating, sharing, translating and promoting the use of knowledge for the development of better policies and practices in SRHR. SNNL is supporting MFA in working towards increasing cross programme learning and knowledge exchanges for the programmes that are included within the SRHR Partnerships of 2021-2025.

FEMNET partnered with Outright International on advocating against conversion practices. Outright International has conducted research on the prevalence in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. FEMNET will leverage on the We Lead in Nigeria and Kenya to disseminate the findings of the research at regional level as a strategy to influence states to protect and promote SRHR. In 2022, FEMNET will link the CoA in

Nigeria and Kenya with the Outright partners in these countries to ensure the discussions are captured at regional level.





8. DMEL and research

Localisation of ToC

The CoAF with support from Hivos and consortium members facilitated the localisation of the ToC in 5 out of 9 countries. The participatory and inclusive process aimed to contextualize the We Lead's overarching ToC to the realities of each country. The localisation sessions which were attended by CoAs, rightsholders, local organisations and SRHR experts aimed at networking among CoA members, outlining the laws, policies and regulations they will focus on during the implementation of the project, as well as conducting a context analysis of the status of SRHR, the general context, and potential pathways of change, with a particular focus on the four rightsholder groups. An in-depth context analysis and baseline assessment was also made for each country in order to validate the relevance and validity of the We Lead ToC, to identify initial assessments gaps and to envisage possible desired outcomes after the 5 years of the implementation period.

Baseline

To establish the programme benchmarks, We Lead applied a stepwise approach in conducting the baseline assessment. Selection of the basket indicators was done at global level, heavily informed by the context analysis and ToC in the We Lead project proposal. A template to capture the basket indicators was then developed. The two processes were approved by the relevant governance structures.

During these formative assessment exercises that applied the localisation of the ToC methodology exercises conducted in all countries, the CoAs and rightsholders deliberated on the basket indicators, outlining the current status (baselines) for each of the indicators and the changes they would want to see at the end of the project. The baseline was approved by MFA. It will guide the project during mid- and end term assessments.

Research

Following the successful localisation of ToCs in 5 countries, the CoAs mapped out research topics that would generate evidence for their programme implementation. Examples of research topics include (but are not limited to) the SRHR situation of rightsholders in Kenya to inform evidence based advocacy; safety and security status of SRHR activists in Nigeria; and the SRHR of young women at a time of rising violent extremism in the Sahel: case study of Niger and Nigeria. A mapping of all the studies to be conducted across the countries was done. This will ensure proper coordination of studies and dissemination of findings.

Hivos will contribute to the body of knowledge through conducting an action learning and research on local ownership and localisation. The research aims at strengthen knowledge bases on what localisation processes entail for rightsholders and local partners in different contexts. The study will target one country per region.

DMEL Working Group

As mentioned above, a DMEL Working Group was formed. The WG has representation from all consortium members and a CoAF from each region. The WG has actively supported in the development and deployment of tools and templates, offering technical assistance to partners on planning, generation of evidence through studies, training on monitoring and evaluation methodologies and approaches as well as guiding countries and capturing and reporting results.



9. Safety and security

Overall safety and security situation during the year

Covid-19 containment measures put in place by governments, which included complete or partial lockdowns, restricted people in their homes which saw a rise in cases of gender-based violence globally. The preventive measures also affected access to essential sexual and reproductive health services, particularly for adolescent girls and young women. [REDACTED] people who are part of marginalized communities in the society were hit disproportionately by the pandemic.

In Uganda, just after the government ordered a Covid-19-related lockdown, a shelter for [REDACTED] people was raided by neighbours and security forces, and 23 people at the shelter were arrested. A search was conducted in the shelter to find evidence of [REDACTED]. Two of those arrested were beaten, and all were subjected to verbal taunts due to their perceived sexual orientation. Nineteen of those detained were formally charged with engaging in "a negligent act likely to spread infection of disease" and "disobedience of lawful orders".

Attacks against [REDACTED] people escalated in Guatemala. The country reported at least 13 anti-[REDACTED] homicides in 2021. Two prominent [REDACTED] activists, Andrea González and Cecy Ixpata, were killed in the month of June. González had been the victim of extortion: she was being threatened because of her work advocating for [REDACTED] people equality.



Across the globe, states are increasingly enacting laws aimed at restricting the SRHR of [REDACTED] women. In May 2021, the Ugandan Parliament passed the Sexual Offences Bill, which contains a clause criminalizing [REDACTED] relationships. The newly enacted law prescribes a five-year-jail term for anyone guilty of [REDACTED] acts. The overarching objective of the new piece of legislation is to provide for a broader application of the law while repealing some provisions of the Penal Code Act, including those on so called "unnatural offences".

We also observed that criminalisation of SRHR issues such as abortion, adolescent consensual sexual conduct and perceived sanctioning of the provision of comprehensive sexuality education resulted in self-stigma amongst SRHR advocates in the countries of operation. Further, the perceived ranking of human rights issues with civil and political rights occupying the top rung of the ladder compounded the stigma associated with SRHR and SRHR advocates and contributed to their non-recognition as legitimate human rights defenders. This exposed SRHR defenders to arbitrary arrests, harassment and protracted legal proceedings. It also restricted their freedom of expression and association and their right to be free from violence. When SRHR advocates took their campaigns online, they faced the challenge of online violence in form of trolling, among other violations. In 2022, the program will engage big tech and allies to address online violence against women and SRHR advocates. The program will also connect rightsholders to mainstream human rights defenders networks in order to mainstream SRHR issues and advocates and ensure an intersectional approach to protection of these individuals.

Strengthening the capacity of the CoA to mainstream safety and security in its structures and processes

During the year, the programme focused on foundational work on safety and security, which was planned under intermediate outcome 1. The programme planned to create the overarching and national frameworks on safety and security, as well as recruit and train safety and security focal points at the CoA level. Additionally, the programme planned to bolster the conflict, risk analysis and mitigation capacities of CoAs.

The draft security framework comprising the global security policy, crisis response guidelines and the accompanying emergency response protocol, incident reporting form, risk analysis and the monitoring framework were developed. The framework will be approved by the Steering Committee in 2022 and will thereafter be rolled out to the respective Communities of Action.

The conflict analysis and mitigation procedures are embedded in the security training and will be developed during the training with the security focal points in 2022. Each security focal point will be tasked to lead the CoA in analysing their environment through which they will identify how conflicts take shape in their working environment, the history of conflict in their country e.g. tactics used by the opposition and violence against SRHR activists. They will also analyse the political, economic, social and environment as well as institutions and structures in their countries and how they shape conflict. Finally, they will identify the different actors in their working environment their interests, capacities and vulnerabilities. This information will be consolidated and used as a guideline while addressing conflict.



To bolster coordination on this theme, the Safety and Security Working Group was set up with representation from 3 consortium members and rightsholders. The Working Group drafted a standard job description for the CoA security focal points. Host organisations in Kenya, Jordan, Guatemala, Honduras and Nigeria contextualized this document and successfully recruited safety and security focal points in the year under review. Uganda, Mozambique, Lebanon and Niger scheduled their recruitments in 2022. They attributed the delay in recruitment to a shortage of qualified applicants. The programme noted that this pointed to a shortage of safety and security experts among rightsholders and in the human rights space generally, and the programme is on track to contribute to an increase in human resource in this field.

In November, the programme undertook an in-person training on safety and security, targeting the newly recruited focal points. 15 participants attended the training, which included 2 security focal points from Kenya and Nigeria, 4 CoAFs from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Mozambique and 9 regional and global staff from Hivos. Although the training sought to reach the 9 security focal points, this was not possible due to travel restrictions due to Covid-19 and some countries were yet to hire the security focal points. It was nonetheless useful to equip Hivos staff with security information to enable them integrate this in their work with CoAs and partners during the programme set up. A second phase of the training targeting the other safety and security focal points is planned in early 2022.

10. Networking and collaboration

The programme collaborated with others in the following ways:

Participation in MFA events

Consortium partners also attended the SRHR partnerships session in May, convened by the MFA. The session enabled the programme to connect and network with the different SRHR partners funded by MFA from 2021-2025. We will continue to explore opportunities to collaborate with the partners to increase the impact of our SRHR interventions.

Restless Development participated in the 1 Year Youth at Heart Forum (led by MFA) as a main panellist, sharing key insights on meaningful youth engagement in consortia.

Coordination with embassies

In Jordan the programme attended the regular Power of Voices Coordination meetings convened by the Netherlands Embassy in Jordan. In one of the meetings we learnt about the Jordanian SRHR strategy and their national SRHR priorities. The meeting was an opportunity to learn more about the context in Jordan and explore partnership opportunities and collaboration with the Embassy and other partnerships.

Staff and CoAFs in other regions attended regular coordination meetings convened by relevant embassies and used the opportunity to network with other partnerships and organisations funded directly by them.

In Kenya, We Lead took part in a boot camp convened by the Netherlands Embassy. During this meeting, which was attended by some consortium partners and the CoAF, the programme presented its Theory of Change and anticipated results. The meeting presented an opportunity for the programme to connect with other partnerships. An outcome from the strategic engagements with the Embassy was that in 2022, Hivos through the We Lead and Free to be Me programmes will jointly convene strategic partnerships to collaborate on safety and security in the context of the upcoming general election.

Coordination with other SRHR partnerships

During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence in Kenya, the programme joined the Right Here Right Now, Make Way Alliance, Break Free Alliance and the Netherlands Embassy in Kenya, to implement an awareness raising activity in one of the informal settlements in the country. The event was a community dialogue between rightsholders, the community and duty bearers (leaders, police officers and health workers). Rightsholders had an opportunity to share their experience accessing SRHR information and services.

Integration of local ownership in the programme

Rather than engage an external individual to undertake the baseline research, the programme opted to work with the CoAFs and CoAs to

collect data. Consultants were engaged to compile the report, but the resulting report and data is owned by local partners. Additionally, the localisation of the ToC was one of the ways the programme integrated local ownership in its formative stages. CoAs contextualized their results framework and developed local plans that resonated with their needs and priorities. These are what informed the programme's grant making priorities. Hivos' direct regranting was informed by a gaps analysis that was undertaken by the CoAs. Partners benefiting from this grant making were identified jointly by the local organisations and Hivos. This ensured complementary grant making that aligned with the priorities of rightsholders.



11. Programming shifts

During the year, the programme planned to localise the Theory of Change through (i) building the capacity of the CoAFs to lead the localisation process, (ii) holding localisation of ToC workshops with members of the CoA, and (iii) validating the Theory of Change. After this, the CoAs were to develop their work plans and budgets which would then inform regranting from the host organisations, Hivos and FCAM. This process was duly followed in Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria. In Lebanon, this approach did not work primarily because of the challenges in country that inhibited participation of local organizations and rights holders. The team quickly reviewed this plan and, applying adaptive programme management in Jordan and Lebanon, used the methodology of an expert reference group that worked with the CoA and the CoAF to develop a localised TOC. Comprehensive ToC workshops are planned for 2022.



12. Cross-cutting themes

Fundamentalisms was a key cross cutting issue that impacted on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of rightsholders. In Central America, this is an issue that will be present in the future, directly impacting and risking rights already gained. For example, fundamentalist sectors in Guatemala are trying to declare 9 March as the day for the defence of the (traditional) family, in clear defiance of the commemoration of 8 March and all the actions and visibility around this day. In Kenya, opposition actors have moved their strategies to court and in one constitutional case in the High Court, are attempting to affirm particularly harmful anti-rights narratives like 'fetal rights' and 'rights of the unborn'. Fundamentalisms has had an impact on law reform in the country - a pending law on reproductive health was defeated because of intense lobbying and advocacy by anti-choice advocates. In Central America, FCAM has started working on this issue and profiled it in articles, various publications, among other materials. In Kenya, the CoA is working together with other actors to continuously monitor and block the surge of the opposition. Similar actions are ongoing in Uganda and Nigeria.

Conflict manifested in the programme in a number of ways. In Mozambique, it was the Al-Shabaab militia action in Cabo Delgado area. In Nigeria, Boko Haram continued its harmful acts in the northern part of the country. In Niger, militia groups in the Tilabery area continued their insurgent actions. The net effect of these conflicts was (i) an increase in displaced people, especially women and girls, (ii) strain on social services such as health and education, (iii) rise in generalized security. This meant the programme had to ensure its grant making did

not expose partners to more harm and therefore ensured to fool proof its partner engagements by not requiring organisations to work in conflict-ridden areas until significant security changes were realized.

Covid also impacted the programme. Government shutdowns in 2021 resulted in delayed programme implementation. They also impacted access to services by rightsholders since reproductive health funds were moved to Covid health departments. When shutdowns were lifted, vaccine mandates impacted resumption of in-person activities. In fact, the Safety and Security workshop held in November was hit by this reality as some of the participants were unable to travel.



13. Sustainability

We Lead integrated sustainability mechanisms from the onset on programme implementation. Emphasis on a local ownership approach during all processes ensures that local organisations are not only informed and consulted but actively participate in decisions regarding the implementation of the programme. CoAs and rightsholders capacity is strengthened to ensure that they make meaningful and informed contributions. This approach will continue for the duration of the programme.

The transfer of Positive Vibes' LILO methodologies to the local organisations is another example of integrating sustainability. Rightsholders in-country are trained as facilitators of methodologies, so they can roll out this work beyond the project cycle. Organisational leads are involved in the transfer of the methodology to ensure a culture shift at leadership level and integration of learnings into organisational ways of working.

Restless Development's led Youth Collective supports the sustainability of the We Lead project beyond the 5-year project lifespan, providing answers to the "missing ecosystem" beyond the project. Restless continues to explore ways to connect the CoAs to the Youth Collective, and will come together to connect, learn and share.

Hivos and FCAM's grant-making structures embed elements of sustainability. The participatory grant-making process applied by both organisations ensures that rightsholders are at the centre of framing their priorities, designing interventions, determining recipients of

funding and ultimately driving the implementation of strategies. This is a critical aspect of capacity strengthening for rightsholders and their organisations and positions them as credible partners for funding entities.

Hivos is also concluding strategic grants to partners who will support local organisations to build resilience as they continue working in restricted environments. Recognizing that one of the ways governments attempt to stifle the civil society voices is through compliance checks, strategic legal partners will be deployed at global level to support the legal and regulatory aspects of organisational strengthening. Rightsholders and their organisations will be equipped through know your rights resources and other tools that will ensure they remain viable going concerns in the long term.



14. Good practices

The programme and its processes require a lot of cohesion and dialogue: political and strategic, but also operational. A good practice we highlight is understanding of these needs, and we have generated spaces for debate on these aspects. It has not been easy, but we are trying to give the necessary time to be able to generate joint goals that comply with the principles and values of the members of the programme.

Restless Development's Youth Leadership Labs are a bottom-up approach that bring together members of youth civil society to connect, collaborate and explore leadership approaches together. The Labs seek to unpack different models and experiences of youth leadership in action and explore how leadership patterns and approaches have changed in a post-pandemic world. This innovative way of engaging the Youth Collective will create the space for CoAs to achieve organisational resilience through exploring more effective leadership approaches as a growing and more connected youth civil society community.

Prioritising wellness and well-being during training and meetings through supporting the teams, CoAFs and consortium partners to practice work wellness and well-being habits in the implementation of the We Lead project has become important since it checks against burn out.

15. Lessons learnt

Building trust among organisations is a process that requires time and space. This important aspect was realized as the organisations held more meetings to deliberate on activities together, given the different context and different processes in organisations. These meetings were important to allow more time for organisations to know each other better and be comfortable with each other to a level they can easily collaborate and work together.

Creating a safe space for rightsholders is interpreted differently in different contexts. In conservative countries like Niger and the MENA region, convening of all rightsholders at the beginning was not acceptable despite the safe spaces created. This would be a process that would slowly be accepted with time. In addition, virtual meetings created discomfort in such contexts and therefore were not considered safe spaces

Application of the local ownership approach differs in different context and is based on many factors including readiness on the civic space, capacity of the local organizations and rightsholders. A blended approach that includes light or heavy local ownership foot print has shown significant results.

Through the discussions with rightsholders, ensuring an inclusive approach when recruiting rightsholders has for instance adapted the recruitment approach, moving away from Google forms, signposting opportunities in English only to using videos, one-to-one calls with

rightsholders, and using peer-to-peer approaches, which were more accessible to the rightsholders.



16. Budget management

Comprehensive financial report and explanatory notes can be found in the annex provided with this report. Below is a summary of the financial report.

	We Lead -Financial Report by Year-2021 (Year 1)			
	Revenue/ Budget Year 1 €	Aggregated Actual Expenditures for Year 1 €	Variance/ Actual Rollover to Year 2 €	Burn Rate %
Revenue				
Grant Received	6 224 373	-		
Interest Earned/Accrued	-	-		
Total Revenue	6 224 373	-		
Expenditure				
I. Direct staff costs				
A. Staff costs	656 611	619 819	36 791	94%
B. Local staff costs	385 614	327 810	57 804	85%
C. Consultants and advisers	97 294	61 201	36 093	63%
Subtotal I	1 139 519	1 008 830	130 688	89%
II. Other direct programme costs				
A. Activity costs	1 128 518	283 776	844 742	25%
B. Costs of consortium partners and local NGOs	2 770 657	1 070 466	1 700 191	39%
C. Activity-related travel costs	314 783	39 295	275 488	12%
D. Project office costs (if applicable)	45 739	14 441	31 298	32%
E. Equipment and investments	30 620	12 417	18 203	41%
F. Monitoring, evaluation and auditing	77 824	12 250	65 574	16%
Subtotal II	4 368 141	1 432 646	2 935 496	33%
Total of I and II	5 507 660	2 441 476	3 066 184	44%
III. Overheads / indirect costs				
A. Costs of support staff	-	-	-	
B. Not directly allocable administrative costs			-	
C. Other non-allocable costs	716 713	321 105	395 608	45%
Contingencies (max. 5 %)				
TOTAL	6 224 373	2 762 581	3 461 792	44%