



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



We Lead to claim our
Sexual Reproductive
Health and Rights





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Introduction

The year 2025 elicited mixed emotions among We Lead teams, partners, and stakeholders. On one hand, it offered an opportunity to pause and reflect on the energy, passion, collaboration, and innovation invested in the programme over the past five years. On the other, the conclusion of something so profound and impactful brought a deep sense of loss. We Lead nurtured a strong global community with a shared vision. Something no one wished to see come to an end. The opportunity to come together and reflect on all these elements allowed us to recognize the program's true impact and celebrate the sustainable tools, systems, and processes we have developed.

After four annual planning and reporting cycles, teams within the consortium and across Communities of Action (CoA) organizations had become accustomed to projecting not only activities and milestones, but also the resources and timelines required to achieve them. This same discipline and foresight guided the 2025 annual planning process, resulting in a clear, focused, and time-bound plan that needed to be fully delivered within the year.

Following programmatic adjustments made in 2024 in response to the midterm evaluation and with full awareness of the programme's closure in December 2025, the focus for the final year was clear. The program aimed to accelerate results, document impactful stories of change, strengthen resilience and

sustainability, and produce materials that would capture and showcase We Lead's legacy.

The 2025 plan was implemented through activities and processes intended to ensure a strong and meaningful conclusion. Central to this effort was the End-Term Evaluation (ETE), which served as the primary mechanism for assessing results and impact. In keeping with the We Lead tradition of identifying a defining annual milestone, 2025 was designated the year of demonstrated results and impact, alongside a deliberate emphasis on sustainability and lasting change.

While the year unfolded within an increasingly challenging operating context, one that continues to threaten the sustainability of this work, it also created important moments for reflection, celebration, solidarity, and the sharing of achievements. These moments are documented across various formats and embedded throughout this report, with links provided in later sections. As anticipated, the programme's overall results are captured in detail in the ETE report, which accompanies this annual report as a standalone document.

This report, the programme's knowledge products, and the End-Term Evaluation aim to present an accurate and holistic picture of what We Lead has achieved over its five-year lifespan. It is our hope that these outputs will offer valuable insights and lessons to inform future programs and initiatives of a similar nature.

WE OWN OUR BODIES



Context Analysis

As anticipated during the 2025 annual planning process, the operating context remained volatile throughout the year. Persistent insecurity, political repression, and shrinking civic space continued to shape realities across all nine We Lead countries. These dynamics were exacerbated by violent conflict, economic hardship, mass displacement, and severe funding cuts, creating increasingly challenging environments for citizens, civil society, and rights holders alike. Shifts in development cooperation modalities and declining international aid further weakened civil society ecosystems, directly impacting programme sustainability and access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRH-R) services.

Across contexts, instability manifested through war, military interventions, and heightened securitization contributed to the erosion of democratic space and protections for women and marginalized communities. The global anti-rights and anti-gender movement, which has been gaining momentum in recent years, became increasingly emboldened in 2025. This trend was reflected in regressive legal frameworks, rising impunity, and deeply entrenched social norms that continue to undermine the realization of human rights. These dynamics were experienced differently across countries but consistently constrained advocacy, service delivery, and civic engagement.

Economic conditions further compounded these challenges. High unemployment, inflation, poverty, and inequality persisted across all nine countries, alongside a significant decline in international aid particularly for SRH-R programming. This erosion of funding severely undermined access to essential services and threatened the sustainability of community-led initiatives. The outcome of the U.S. elections had a particularly damaging global ripple effect on SRH-R and gender equality work. Policy shifts such as the reinstatement of the Global Gag Rule, cuts to multilateral health funding, and restrictive definitions of gender emboldened conservative and anti-rights actors worldwide. These developments were amplified by intensified online attacks on SRH-R narratives, including coordinated disinformation and backlash campaigns driven by influential figures and platforms, fueling narrative warfare in both digital and public spaces.

At the same time, bilateral funding priorities shifted sharply. Notably, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced plans to reduce funding for SRH-R initiatives by nearly 70%, raising serious concerns about the future of programs addressing human rights, social justice, and gender equality. These funding cuts threaten to undermine grassroots movements, international partnerships, and long-term investments in the rights of young women in all their diversity.

Environmental stressors added another layer of vulnerability. All nine countries remained highly exposed to the impacts of climate change, including droughts, flooding, land degradation, and water scarcity. These climate shocks disrupted livelihoods, intensified food insecurity, and increased displacement, disproportionately affecting women and girls. In conflict-affected settings such as Niger and Northern Mozambique, climate-related events compounded existing humanitarian crises, deepening insecurity and protection risks.

While these global and regional dynamics formed a shared backdrop, their impacts were felt in distinct ways across the We Lead countries, requiring context-specific coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies.

In **Guatemala**, political uncertainty intensified following the 2023 change in government, with regressive reforms threatening SRH-R gains. Digital attacks, hate speech, and threats against feminist and [REDACTED] organizations escalated, particularly around key commemorative dates. Conservative religious and political actors continued to block progress on reproductive rights, while climate change and migration further strained young women's access to healthcare and livelihoods. In 2025, a broader tightening of migration and asylum policies across the Americas, along with increased enforcement and shifting transit routes, continued to reshape mobility patterns affecting Guatemala and Honduras. Tougher controls along key northbound routes contributed to sharp changes in movement, which in turn disrupted migrants' ability to access consistent services along the route.

These dynamics disproportionately affected young migrant women and girls, who face heightened protection risks and barriers to sustained health care when travel becomes more prolonged, uncertain, or episodic, particularly for sexual and reproductive health and for psychosocial support, given the instability associated with irregular transit and changing policy environments.

In **Honduras**, progress such as the lifting of the ban on emergency contraception remained fragile. Legal challenges by religious groups persisted into 2025, raising the risk of policy reversal. Simultaneously, mass deportations following intensified migration crackdowns in the United States created a humanitarian crisis requiring urgent responses from government and civil society. The pre-electoral context that intensified during the first half of 2025 generated a highly polarized political scenario, in which various organizations focused a significant portion of their efforts on monitoring the electoral process and defending access to emergency contraception (ECP), in the face of attempts to roll back and public challenges to this right. This situation affected the temporary prioritization of the planned advocacy actions, without undermining the project's strategic objectives.

In **Jordan**, shrinking civic space, restrictive association laws, and strong social taboos constrained civil society engagement on SRH-R. Issues such as early marriage, Gender Based Violence (GBV), reproductive health education, and disability rights remained highly stigmatized. Within this environment, We Lead played a critical role in reframing SRH-R as an issue of dignity, equality, and justice, opening limited but meaningful spaces for dialogue and engagement.

In **Kenya**, 2025 was marked by political instability driven by socio-economic grievances and youth-led protests. Civic space remained under pressure through increased surveillance, arrests, and restrictions on demonstrations and media. While progressive court rulings particularly the Supreme Court's affirmation of [REDACTED] freedom of association expanded legal protections, social stigma, femicide, and conservative resistance continued to threaten women's and [REDACTED] rights. These challenges were further compounded by funding freezes, including USAID cuts that disrupted HIV-related services and heightened insecurity for [REDACTED] rights holders.

Lebanon faced one of the most complex and fragile contexts. Despite a ceasefire agreement in late 2024, continued attacks and violations sustained insecurity, displacement, and humanitarian need. Political deadlock eased with the election of a president and formation of a government, but sectarian fragmentation persisted, alongside extremely low women's political representation. A deepening economic crisis marked by hyperinflation, currency collapse, and rising poverty severely constrained access to SRH-R services. Women with disabilities, queer individuals, refugees, migrant women, and other marginalized groups were disproportionately affected.

In **Mozambique**, post-election instability spilling into early 2025 restricted civic action and limited young women's access to services and political spaces. Increasingly severe climate events cyclones, floods, and droughts exacerbated gender inequalities, displacement, and GBV risks, necessitating integrated resilience and psychosocial responses. Despite progressive legal frameworks, uneven implementation continued to hinder access to safe abortion and quality SRH-R services.

In **Niger**, military rule following the 2023 coup led to suspended democratic processes, severe restrictions on political activity, and shrinking media freedom. Insecurity driven by jihadist violence intensified displacement and GBV risks, while authorities increasingly targeted SRH-R and gender-related interventions. Although some legal reforms expanded access to family planning and school-based SRH-R education, abortion remained highly restricted; child marriage persisted, and [REDACTED] persons faced criminalization and stigma.

In **Nigeria**, a socially conservative political climate, weak enforcement of gender laws, and widespread insecurity continued to undermine women's and [REDACTED] rights. Abortion remained heavily restricted; unsafe abortions were widespread, and contraceptive access remained limited, particularly for rural and marginalized populations. Violence against [REDACTED] individuals persisted under the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act, while stigma continued to silence young women living with HIV and restrict access to care.

In **Uganda**, the effects of the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act continued to reverberate throughout 2025, deepening fear, silencing communities, and restricting civic participation. Regressive legislative debates, the rollback of rights-based sexuality education frameworks, and the closure of key community structures further constrained SRH-R advocacy and service delivery for marginalized groups.

Despite these challenging and restrictive contexts, the program remained adaptive and resilient. All targets set for 2025 were achieved, and the program was successfully concluded by 31 December 2025, as planned. The key results and outcomes from this final year are presented in the following sections of the report.



Progress under each Benchmark

Program Management

2025 marked the final phase of implementation of We Lead. To ensure the full and timely execution of all action plans, the teams adopted a shortened implementation schedule running from January to August. This approach was designed to mitigate the risk of delays toward the end of the year and to ensure that the Action Plans of the nine Communities of Action (CoAs) were completed as planned. This strategy proved effective: all CoAs concluded their core implementation by 30 June, with only selected wrap-up activities carried out in the subsequent months. This allowed sufficient time to meet deadlines for technical and financial reporting, as well as audits, during the final quarter of the year.

Throughout this period, the Hivos technical team and the CoA facilitator teams remained fully staffed and responsive, providing continuous technical support and follow-up to address the needs of the CoAs. The first six months of 2025 continued the positive trajectory observed in the previous year, with CoAs demonstrating increased maturity, consolidation, and autonomy. Strong local ownership was evident, with young women from the four rights-holder groups playing a predominant leadership role within the CoAs.

Capacity-strengthening efforts yielded tangible results, particularly in strengthening country ownership and empowering rights holders within CoA organizations. Despite changes in CoA facilitators in Uganda and Mozambique and adjustment within the Ugandan team to cover for the loss of the CoAF, programme continuity was not affected due to the strength, cohesion, and collaborative teamwork of the organizations involved.

All nine Host Organizations (HOs) remained engaged throughout 2025 and further strengthened their performance, facilitating the timely implementation of Action Plans and contributing to the successful closure of the program in each country. Capacity strengthening efforts focused primarily on reinforcing technical and administrative processes, with particular emphasis on supporting the development of CoA sustainability plans.

At the beginning of the year, the management team, in collaboration with the Design Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (DMEL) programme officers, initiated the contracting process for the consultancy team responsible for conducting the End-Term Evaluation (ETE). All ETE data collection processes were completed successfully by the end of November and validated by all key We Lead stakeholders, including CoA members, consortium partners, Hivos staff, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) focal point.

Throughout 2025, the program continued to operate under its established governance, leadership, and decision-making structures. Thematic working groups; Advocacy and Communication, Capacity Strengthening, DMEL, Safety and Security, and Finance met monthly to support a smooth and coordinated programme closure in line with their respective Action Plans and those of the CoAs.

In parallel, both the Global Management Team (GMT) and the Global Coordination Team (GCT) held monthly strategic meetings to ensure timely decision-making and to provide clear guidance on programme closure processes.

The Steering Committee convened three times in February, May, and November. The February meeting focused on setting priorities for the final year, identifying opportunities for fundraising and programme profiling, and addressing key challenges, including the armed conflict between Lebanon and Israel and the continued impact of the coup d'état in Niger. The May meeting concentrated on preparations for the ETE, budget status, and planning for the final We Lead linking and learning event. The November meeting served as the programme's formal closing session, reflecting achievements, lessons learned, governance and sustainability considerations, updates on the ETE, the Annual Report, and overall budget performance.

Beyond formal meetings, the Steering Committee was regularly consulted throughout the year to review and approve key documents, including the 2024 Annual Report, budget modifications, and other strategic and operational decisions.

Lobby and Advocacy

2025 created opportunities to showcase achievements, create spaces for dialogue, and offer a final push in our advocacy efforts. Although the year only covered six months of implementation, rights holders voiced their perspectives at local, national, regional, and global advocacy spaces as reported under different outcome areas below;

Advance public awareness and support (IMO 2)

With the support of We Lead technical partner M&C Saatchi, the CoA in Kenya created a campaign to include men and boys in the conversation on femicide. While public awareness on femicide had grown in the previous years with national protests, the number of men speaking out against this fatal violence was small. The Kenyan team decided to organize a "Men's Conference". This internet phenomenon surfaces each year around Valentine's Day. It's a long-running joke – men claiming they have to attend a mythical conference to avoid romantic commitments – but beneath the humor lies disengagement, misogyny, and avoidance of responsibility. On Valentine's Day 2025, Abel, actor, comedian, YouTuber with 2.6 million followers, aired a 20-minute feature of the first-ever [Men's Conference](#). Men from all walks of life – influencers, fathers, priests, businessmen, retirees – came together for unscripted, unfiltered dialogue that no one expected. Across platforms, Safisha Rada (the name of the campaign) reached 48.8 million people. Media coverage alone engaged 87% of the Kenyan population. Nearly 90% of active social media users in Kenya saw the campaign. This turned out to be one of the most successful campaigns that We Lead did.

Engaging Health Service Providers (IMO 3)

In line with the health systems monitoring work that PV has been spearheading, the Guatemalan CoA hosted a data analysis of 676 responses captured on the ma 'Box virtual feedback platform by health facility service users between October 2024 and April 2025 in Guatemala City. This was supported by two other CoA organisations – Vidas Paralelas and Tan Ux'il. All three have been working together on health systems monitoring – cascading skills and knowledge and supporting each other's processes. Later in April, Restless Development, in collaboration with PV, supported partners and community members to hold a Leadership Lab where a larger data analysis convening taking all the data generated through the HSMA work to date was used to engage higher level government officials.

Community members demonstrated the ability to analyze, validate, and draw meaning from service delivery data. Key reflections included that many still struggle to access services due to physical barriers, such as long waiting times or poor signage as well as social stigma. However, adolescents reported high satisfaction for confidentiality, non-discrimination, and respectful treatment at the clinic. During the data analysis discussions, structured reflection on ma'Box data created space to question and critique existing practices, and facilitated dialogue surfaced inconsistencies between formal consent and meaningful understanding. This resulted in increased awareness of gaps in informed consent and HIV knowledge among adolescent participants. The group further noted that recording data about the clients and services, as well as introducing an accountability mechanism, improves the provision of said services. Another key success worth highlighting is the Health Systems Monitoring and Accountability (HSMA) work undertaken in collaboration with the Kenyan CoA, [REDACTED]. This important work continues beyond the program funding period with the implementation of recommendations made earlier in the program continuing to show results to date.

Changing Laws and Policies (IMO 4)

The following global events were selected by the consortium:

- [Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\), February 2025, Geneva, Switzerland](#)

After submitting a joint stakeholder report on behalf of the We Lead partners, a delegation of the Kenyan CoA attended the UPR session in February. The report illustrated how SRHR services are limitedly accessible for right holder groups and specifically called out the budget reductions for maternal and child health programs.

- [Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW69\), March 2025 in New York City, USA](#)

In 2025, eleven young women were supported to join the CSW by We Lead. Prior to attending, the rights holders participated in a regional preparatory trajectory, focusing on both logistics and planning advocacy efforts. We Lead secured six speaking slots for young women of the program, including moderating the official Townhall Meeting of the CSW, resulting in a lot of visibility for the program and the rights holders.

During the CSW, the team organized a gallery night with the central theme: What brings you hope? In the uncertain times of war, unstable governments and the change of presidential administration in the US, We Lead invited guests to reflect on hope. With inputs from all regions, the gallery walks showcased examples of feminist movements continuing their work. The stories of the Lebanese CoA organizations were especially applauded for their courage and determination. The event also launched the Feminist 30 Under 30 campaign, in which young women from the program were interviewed on their feminist journeys and especially their participation in We Lead and what it means in their leadership journey.

- Africa Disrupt CSW69

Due to visa inequality, rising costs and other structural barriers, (young) women from the Global South have limited access to global advocacy spaces. For this reason, FEMNET organizes the yearly Africa Disrupt CSW, a regional conference to host a more inclusive dialogue on the priority theme of the conference. In 2025, the conference took place in Gaborone, Botswana. A key outcome of the event was the adoption of Africa CSW69 outcome documents, including an advocacy letter to Botswana and Ireland, urging for concrete commitments and meaningful participation of African women and girls in the CSW revitalization process. Participants also finalized recommendations for an implementation framework to monitor and track Africa Member States' commitments to the CSW69 Political Declaration. We Lead supported 5 RHs to the Africa Disrupt CSW 69, which provided a platform for them to co-develop advocacy strategies and articulate their collective demands and contribute to the recommendations on revitalization of CSW revitalization.

- Commission on Population and Development (CPD58), April 2024 in New York City, USA

The CPD58 was attended with We Lead representation from Jordan, Lebanon and Kenya. With the support of the Netherlands' permanent mission at the UN, Restless Development managed to secure a meeting with the Lebanese Delegation to discuss the importance of adopting comprehensive sexual education language and ensuring youth official representation within the delegation for meaningful participation of the Lebanese youth.

- Advocacy and campaigning in the Netherlands

To enhance public support in the Netherlands, Hivos collaborates with cultural events, such as the Pink Film Days Amsterdam, Winq Awards and Tomorrow Festival. The organization is supported by over 23,000 individual donors. Hivos is represented in several platforms, such as Partos, the Dutch Human Rights Platform (BMO), WO=MEN and the SRHR+ Platform.

In collaboration with campaigning agency Meute, Hivos launched a campaign to increase support for development cooperation. The target audience was specifically policy makers from the political middle to moderate right-wing. After testing several frames, the campaign focused on empowering strong women. Through online advertising and targeted outdoor advertising, 3818 persons from the target group were reached.

As an active member of the SRHR+ Platform, Hivos co-organized an election debate on the role of the Netherlands in securing global health and SRHR. Candidates from seven different political parties participated in the debate and voiced their commitments.



Communications

In 2025, communications played a pivotal role in documenting the program's legacy, amplifying the voices of rights holders, and showcasing the transformative impact achieved across the nine countries. As implementation ended, the communications team focused on strategic storytelling, knowledge product development, global visibility, and supporting evidence dissemination that reflects five years of feminist, youth-led, rights-based work.

Documenting Impact Stories: Journeys of Courage Publications

One of the flagship achievements of 2025 was the development of the ["Journeys of Courage"](#) publication series. As part of the program's commitment to centering rightsholders' lived experiences, the communications team led a comprehensive documentation mission across all nine countries. Through in-depth interviews with CoA members, the team captured powerful narratives of leadership, resilience, and advocacy for SRH-R justice. This work culminated in the production of **10 booklets**; one global edition and nine country-specific editions, each profiling young women who shaped their communities through activism, evidence generation, policy engagement, and movement-building. These publications now serve as a permanent archive of the program's human impact and a tool for learning and inspiration within and beyond the SRHR ecosystem.

Contribution to Global Publication: The Power of Partnerships

We Lead was featured in the global publication ["The Power of Partnerships,"](#) coordinated by Partos. The program's contribution highlighted the strength of cross-country collaboration, feminist leadership, and intersectional advocacy as a blueprint for transformative partnership models.

The communications team supported the pre-launch phase, coordinated content review, and aligned messaging for external engagement. Partners were equipped with:

- A comprehensive social media kit
- Suggested posting timelines (announcement on November 6 and spotlight posts throughout November–December)
- A customizable Canva template to create visuals from their own story content

The publication positioned We Lead as a leading example of collaborative, rights-holder-driven programming within the Partos network and global development community.

Feminist Leadership Guideline: Knowledge from Lived Experience

In December 2025 the program finalized the [Feminist Leadership Guideline](#), a unique knowledge product grounded in the lived experiences, practices, and reflections of CoA members, host organizations, facilitators, and the broader consortium. This guide documents what feminist leadership looked like in practice within the We Lead model, leadership characterized by empathy, shared power, collective decision-making, care-centered approaches, and accountability to rightsholders.

The guideline provides a robust resource for practitioners, youth leaders, feminist organizations, and policymakers seeking to integrate feminist principles in leadership development, movement building, and program governance.

Safety & Security and Learning Publications

The communications team supported the packaging, editing, and dissemination of several key technical documents produced by the DMEL and Safety & Security teams, including:

- [Safety and Security Guide](#) developed to support youth-led organizations in navigating shrinking civic spaces, digital threats, and physical risks.
- [Learning Briefs](#) generated from DMEL analyses, capturing lessons emerging from local ownership strategies, innovative advocacy, intersectional inclusion, and movement-building practices.

PV developed a short video on the experiences and transformations from the LILO Women workshops during We Lead featuring footage from the workshops and reflections from We Lead staff and rights holders. They speak about the power of PV's LILO (Looking In, Looking Out) approach in building community, providing a space for storytelling, creativity and expression, and transforming relationships. The emergence of a community of trained facilitators to take the methodology forward into organisations and communities was also a key achievement.

- These publications contributed to institutional memory, strengthened Hivos' global knowledge base, and served as reference materials as the programme closed.

Knowledge Visibility and Digital Documentation

Communications collaborated with DMEL and country teams to ensure visibility of the newly developed programme-wide knowledge tools:

- **The Outcome Harvesting Dashboard**, a dynamic visualization tool capturing outcome-level insights across all regions.
- **The Global Impact Map**, which documents We Lead's transnational influence through cross-country collaborations, global events, and international advocacy engagements.

These tools were consistently promoted across channels and integrated into country close-out events, global events, and learning spaces.

Supporting National and Global Close-Out Events

The communications team played a central role in ensuring that close-out events across the nine countries and the global final convening were captured and communicated effectively. This included:

- Curating storytelling spaces for COAs to share achievements
- Developing visual summaries, banners, and event documentation
- Coordinating media engagement and messaging for stakeholders
- Producing high-quality photography and videography for archival and reporting

These efforts ensured that the program's final year ended with powerful public reflection and celebration of achievements. [Global Close Out Event](#)



Capacity Strengthening, Linking and Learning

Capacity strengthening efforts continued being at the heart of the program, with less activities implemented and more specific focus going into giving continuity to the efforts initiated in the previous year, with emphasis on fostering sustainability and enhancing safety and security capacities, which had been previously identified as capacity improvement opportunities areas for the CoAs. Energies were also put in closing processes, collectively sharing and celebrating results, internally and externally, making visible not only the activities undertaken but the changes that were achieved in the middle of highly challenging social, political and economic contexts.

Sharing tools and experiences was also a focus during this period. A good example on documentation and sustainability is the creation and launching of the “We Lead” Platform by the Jordan CoA. This is a centralised digital platform that consolidates all produced content and materials under the programme. It serves as a comprehensive reference and a valuable resource for CoAs and the broader community, fostering knowledge sharing and ensuring long-term accessibility to SRHR-related materials, even after We Lead initiative. (<https://welead.jo/>). Sharing research results, like the “No Time to Bleed” participatory research report by [REDACTED] and migrant community leaders in Lebanon (May 2025) is one example of production and knowledge sharing on the challenges related to the SRHR of rightsholders with strong participation of them.



[These publications contributed to institutional memory, strengthened Hivos' global knowledge base, and served as reference materials as the programme closed.](#)

In Kenya, physical copies of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), submitted in October 2024, as well as a friendly summary, were produced. While in Nigeria a menstruation card game was produced as a tool to work with girls to create knowledge and information on menstruation.



The consortium partners continued working in collaborative ways, both in technical and financial areas, leveraging limited resources and increasing impact. Being the final year of the programme, the focus was on developing resources and creating learning spaces to reinforce the skills and the knowledge gained by the CoAs over the past four years. With earlier years prioritizing intensive capacity building, this year emphasized consolidating understanding of consortium methodologies and supporting CoAs to lead their own initiatives. Restless Development (RD) spearheaded the Youth Power Toolkit Rollout, a key capacity-building resource designed to strengthen the capabilities of young

young leaders and youth civil society organizations (CoAs). The toolkit equips participants to lead facilitative discussions with young people, helping them to recognize and navigate their diverse and intersecting experiences and identities, and understand how these shapes their power and ability to challenge structural inequalities. By operationalizing the toolkit, CoAs will be able to apply the toolkit directly within their contexts, adapting it to meet local needs and priorities beyond the programme.

As part of our commitment to fostering sustainable leadership and leaving a programmatic legacy, Hivos led the process of developing a Feminist Leadership Guide *'We Lead with Power'* that would provide young people and emerging leaders with the tools, principles, and approaches they need to lead using a feminist lens across different thematic areas. This guide was unveiled during the global close out event held in August 2025 and was informed by diverse voices from rightsholders, COAs, feminist leaders, and consortium staff to ensure it reflected the realities and aspirations of those it aims to support. The guide is also available on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDp79s_Lh7s and also as a podcast episode.

RD collaborated with PV in developing a *Feminist Inclusive Facilitation Workshop guide*. In its updated and strengthened form, the methodology was piloted by RD in Lebanon in partnership with Hivos. The workshop used a participatory, experiential approach, encouraging participants to actively engage in shaping outcomes while integrating knowledge and guidance from the trainers. By fostering open discussion and mutual sharing of experiences, the workshop promoted collective knowledge.

Furthermore, PV prioritized sustainability work with CoAs in different countries to develop sustainability plans. Sustainability remained a critical capacity need for the programme as organisations needed to plan for their future beyond *We Lead*. PV rolled out the Pathways to Sustainability workshops as key element of capacity building across the organisations. CoA organisations appreciated sharing with one another, building practical skills on how to engage with donors and strategic partners.

In Kenya, physical copies of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), submitted in October 2024, as well as a friendly summary, were produced. While in Nigeria a menstruation card game was produced as a tool to work with girls to create knowledge and information on menstruation. Additionally, PV continued to invest in the LILO Comms platform which connects LILO facilitators across countries and programmes. They supported more sign-ups (growing from 86 to 136 people) and added translation facilities available for Spanish, Arabic, and Portuguese.

PV held an in-person Legacy workshop with 27 participants including partners, rightsholders, facilitators, and PV staff from the We Lead and Free to be Me global programmes within which PV was a consortium partner. Partners came together in this cross-regional gathering to honour the journeys within these programmes, and imagine what comes next. In reflecting on key insights participants noted the importance of local ownership as both an aspiration and work-in-progress, the growth of movements beyond programme structures, and the importance of meaningful partnerships in shifting power dynamics within global programming. They also reiterated the importance of person-centered programming where connections have become a lasting resource, where the importance of collective care was highlighted, and the value of LILO methodologies as a powerful tool for partners and PV to carry forward. For We Lead specifically, participants highlighted that the programme created spaces where diverse marginalized young women could engage and lead differently through the LILO methodologies and the HSMA work healing, leadership, advocacy and meaningful change took place. As summarised in the Legacy workshop learning brief:

The programme leaves behind strong seeds in wellness, strengthening a rightsholder-centered facilitation, and transformative partnership approaches.

In the PV Legacy workshop, LILO Comms was identified as a tool for maintaining connection beyond programme timeframes with LILO facilitators and communities of practice. The WL programme served as a learning process for PV to enhance accompaniment at a larger scale and across several regions.

Overall, capacity strengthening of organisations and rightsholders was recognized as a strong point of the program achievements, which was highlighted in the ETE findings. The ETE process integrated a capacity assessment aspect which allowed the program to measure the technical contributions of the Capacity Strengthening, Linking and Learning (CSLL) processes and working group in the content and approaches of the program. According to the capacity assessment results, capacity strengthening was recognized, both for organisations and rightsholders, as a highly appreciated and welcome support, with a particular transformational impact on the lives and psychosocial wellbeing of many rightsholders. The program provided institutional strengthening support to the CoA organisations across a range of technical, operational, management and governance areas.

Key topics included SRH-R, SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity/Expression, and Sex Characteristics), youth leadership development, youth-led accountability and research methodologies, advocacy and policy analysis and influencing (including SRH-R policy frameworks at national, regional and international levels), lobby and advocacy skills, evidence-based advocacy techniques, opposition monitoring and mitigation, media campaigning and communication skills, psychosocial wellbeing, safety and security (including threat prevention, monitoring, and response), participatory and/or creative methodologies, inclusive facilitation with a feminist approach, financial management, resource mobilization, theory of change localization, monitoring and evaluation and outcome harvesting approach.

Capacity support approaches, both for rightsholders and organisations, included training sessions, participatory workshops, peer learning, mentoring and coaching, knowledge and experience sharing between organizations, face-to-face meetings in supportive environments, and training of facilitators models (which enabled peer education multiplication), as well as the preparation and accompaniment of CoA's and rightsholders participants previously and during the international advocacy and linking and learning (L&L) events.

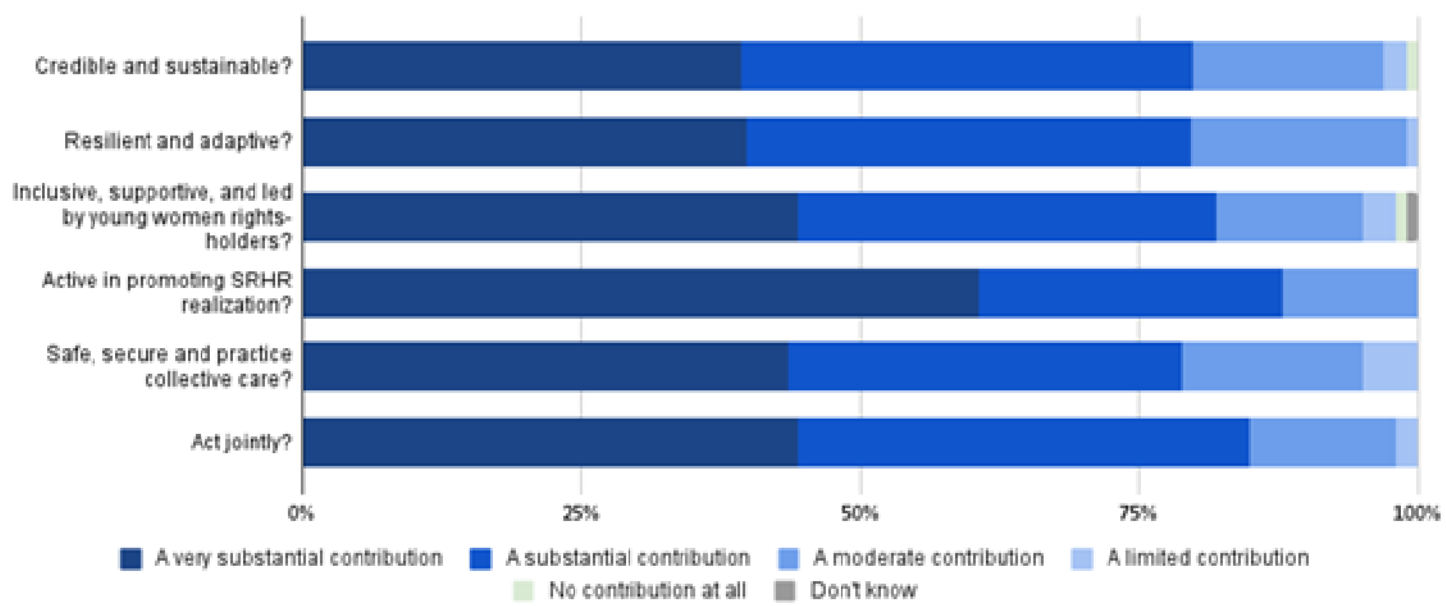
Organisations reported substantial improvements across all capacity domains, with the highest gains in their ability to support rightsholders participation and leadership and respond to their needs, financial and administrative management, rightsholder priority inclusion, and SRH-R knowledge.

Notably, participation of rightsholders and young women in leadership positions within CoA organisations, including those in charge of the implementation of the We Lead programme and activities, increased during programme implementation. For example, at the beginning of the programme more adults participated as institutional representatives in the meetings and processes (e.g. the CoA meetings and events, the annual planning), while at the end most of the participation was of young women, mostly rightsholders. The inclusion of specific rightsholders SRH-R claims and needs as part of many organisations' work and advocacy was also strengthened

“The sessions with Restless Development were an invaluable component of the program. They provided a safe and reflective space for me to decompress from the pressures of serving as the COAF, while receiving practical guidance and emotional support that made the work more sustainable. I often refer to them as my ‘unpaid therapy sessions’. It was a truly grounding experience for which I remain deeply grateful.” - ██████████ Nigeria CoAF

Through We Lead, many participating organisations received their first substantial grants, enabling them to develop their financial, administrative and monitoring and evaluation systems, and technical and operational policies and strategies and subsequently secure additional funding from other donors. The support from We Lead was foundational and considered key by many of the organisations for their resilience and future sustainability.

Most organisations attributed their improved skills and capacities to the support provided by We Lead, as can be seen in the following chart which illustrates to what extent the CoA's organisations considered that the We Lead programme has contributed to strengthening their organisation's capabilities to be:



Rightsholders reported significant improvements across all four competency areas defined by the Capacity Strengthening (CS) strategy, with the largest improvements reported in relation to self-confidence and resilience, followed by effectiveness in SRH-R advocacy, strategic and thought leadership, and finally political consciousness. The qualitative evidence also highlights improvements in SRH-R knowledge and relationships with other rightsholders, with a better understanding of the needs and rights-claims not only of the own group but also other rightsholders groups, setting the base for the intersectional solidarity, shared agendas and collective action needed for advancing rightsholders needs and rights-claims.

An example of the former is the increasing interest and understanding, during the implementation, of the needs of women with disabilities by other young women participating in CoAs: accessibility was increasingly considered in activities organized by them, including physical and communication accessibility, which implied revision of budgets to guaranteeing sign interpretation and assistance, both at country levels and in international events. In Honduras women from different rightsholders groups undertook courses on sign language, including the learning of specific SRH-R signs of a manual developed during the program implementation in this country, allowing communication in these topics with a strong element of local ownership. This being only one of the multiple examples that happened during the programme in diverse contexts.

The following charts, taken from the ETE, illustrate the perspective of rightsholders about their capacities before and after We Lead in four key areas of the highlighted competencies:



It is important to note that creating capacities for mutual recognition and inclusion among rightsholders was not always easy. Overcoming lack of knowledge, lack of trust and discrimination was a process. Through the time programme efforts increased empathy, acceptance, and willingness to collaborate, reducing initial barriers and expanding the sense of belonging within the CoAs.

The CoA model, implemented as a pillar of the programme, successfully brought together previously siloed groups, fostering intersectional solidarity and joint advocacy. The implementation of the model itself enhanced the capacities of organisations and rightsholders to think and act jointly, being the sum of consortium CS efforts instrumental in enabling environments to create “communities in practice” during all the implementation but particularly in the first period, going beyond the development of specific topics and methodologies.

Creating CoAs was not just a matter of bringing everyone together, but investing and providing spaces for dialogue, sharing and mutual learning what helped the actual creation of boundaries, “complicities”, collective awareness, empowerment and common understandings to enable “living communities” to emerge. The CoA was also a space that allowed us to unlearn and reflect on our own practices through direct interaction with people with whom we would otherwise not have contact from one’s own experience and life lessons. The CoAs themselves increasingly developed their own CS initiatives, including the adaptation of models to the local realities, processes in which not only CoAs strengthened their capacities but also consortium members through mutual learning.

As a key example, the Looking in Looking Out (LILO) methodologies developed by Positive Vibes (PV), at times in collaboration with other consortium organisations, were consistently identified as foundational to individual transformation and coalition cohesion, applying in practice the feminist principle of the personal being political. One of the strengths of these methodologies is that they entail a structured process of training and accompaniment with different phases, offering a holistic journey: living and experiencing the methodology, receiving facilitation training, and engaging in supervised practice.

This approach gave rise to better coordination. For example, in Central America, a regional community of practice where LILO facilitators came together to share experiences and reflect, further enriched by collaborative efforts among different consortium members like Restless Development and Hivos. These learning experiences created opportunities to review and adapt methodologies to diverse contexts. A powerful example of this collaborative adaptation is the revision of the LILO Women methodology by young women with disabilities in Guatemala in Sololá, rightsholders who were also indigenous, making the methodology more inclusive and responsive to their lived realities.

It is important to note that capacities to act together and coalition building among CoA organisations and rightsholders and with other wider movements and networks (e.g. SRHR, feminist and women, disability, [REDACTED] among others) vary in different contexts. While some CoAs increased collaboration and joint action and implementation during the process, as well as integration in wider social movements. In Honduras, the CoA's participation and leadership in the SRH-R movement, particularly on sexual comprehensive education and emergency contraceptive pill, while within other CoAs organisations tended to act individually, only coming together in the context of particular events.

Linking and Learning was a core pillar of the program, shaping how rightsholders and Communities of Action (CoAs) interacted, grew, and influenced the SRH-R agenda in their specific contexts. The learning methodologies already mentioned, plus the learning visits, global and regional learning events and online learning spaces proved to be significant as spaces to share and learn together.

Through our Learning Partner, The Constellation, the Global Close Out event brought together over 70 participants who from 12 countries across Africa, the Middle East, Central America and Europe and over 20 online participants across the three days. The participants included rightsholders, donors, implementing partners, government actors, senior leadership, and program representatives. The forum served as a space to celebrate achievements, showcase innovations, reflect on key successes, share best practices, and engage in discussions on strategies to sustain impact beyond the program's lifecycle.

Virtual webinars were held in topics such as local ownership; diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI), and wellness. In addition, through the We Lead podcast '[We Speak](#)' three episodes were aired. These spaces served to share some theoretical reflections and local practices to inspire and enrich learning. For example, the wellness webinar positioned self and collective care, as a condition for fostering wellbeing and political organisation and action, and, to ensure sustainability of efforts in challenging contexts. Some local practices, insights and challenges were shared, from different contexts in which We Lead was implemented.

It is also interesting to note that in some cases, there was a disruptive effect to the capacity strengthening processes. In some instances, we witnessed actions related to the very intrinsic adult centric and patriarchal culture, and with structural inequalities and models of development. One relevant example is the unexpected result of some young rightsholders, who were empowered through the CS processes, having to leave their organisations due to open conflicts and harassment that emerged when they showed strengthened leadership in an organizational culture of high adult centrism and traditional leadership and power dynamics.

Another example was the gap that emerged when rightsholders increased their capacities to produce and use data and draw attention to their specific needs and rights (e.g. through the monitoring process, data analysis and dialogue with health care providers supported by the PV HSMA system). This was in tension with the lack of capacities in the healthcare system to respond to their claims, even when alliances with health care providers had increased during the process.

Even when claiming rights through opening spaces and improving services, it was frustrating for rightsholders and committed healthcare providers to continuously clash with structural barriers that did hindered progress.

Experiencing these tensions expressed in these last examples provide good learnings for CS processes in general. This related to the need to work on cultural change capacities with organisations (including the revision of adult centric and patriarchal beliefs and practices) while working in CS of rightsholders. It also raised the need to consider parallel support for the improvement of health system capacities, particularly in countries in the Global South in which cultural barriers related to discrimination, economic decisions and structural inequalities have increasingly diminished the capacity of health care systems to respond to the overall population, and even more to marginalized groups.

Another important point to reflect was the significant challenge the program faced at its start in the context of the COVID19 pandemic, which affected the implementation of CS activities, since it was not possible to have physical meetings for more than one year. Many stakeholders felt overwhelmed by the number of trainings developed when physical meetings started to be possible, bringing heavy workloads for everyone, but particularly affecting small organisations who were participating in CoAs. On the other hand, the pressure to implement was high. Learning from this experience, in extraordinary cases like this, it would be beneficial to pause, reflect and propose a more strategic distribution of CS activities, including budget redistribution, across the programme lifecycle. The decision to place most of the CS efforts and budget at the beginning of the programme, leaving the last years with little resources, based on the assumption that capacities were going to be strengthened enough during the first years, has also to be revised.

In Kenya, for instance, CoA members engaged in a 3-month Learn Visit series exploring “Three Spheres of Response” (home, community, and administrative spaces) supported by different CoA organizations. The process built a strong network of peer facilitators and encouraged independent linking and learning initiatives.

The bilateral Learn Visit between Niger and Nigeria CoAs became a turning point in how organizations approached intersectionality, including better inclusion of the people who are deaf and intersex persons. Beyond the technical exchange, there was a deep humanizing aspect to these visits. “The visit happened in an atmosphere of mutual respect where uninformed misconceptions could be addressed, and common humanity could be explored.” – COA Representative, Nigeria.

The We Lead MENA Convention (December 5–7, 2022, Beirut), organized by Restless Development in collaboration with Marsa, bringing together young leaders from the Communities of Action (CoAs) in Jordan and Lebanon. The convention emerged from the aim of strengthening youth leadership, inclusiveness, and advocacy on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the MENA region. It provided a youth-friendly, inclusive, and creative space to share experiences, expand knowledge, and build peer networks.

Another example was the Festival in December 2023 in Panajachel, Guatemala. It integrated participation of rightsholders from Guatemala and Honduras, as well as consortium members, local organizations and other regions participants. This space provided an opportunity to build connections and reflection among different rightsholders groups and consortium members, to put in common different perspectives and learn from each other. The implementation of spaces opened to communities and the use of art-based methodologies, like the living museum by women with disability, the theatre of the oppressed and the presentation by rightsholders of their own art-pieces was very important for fostering sensitization and for positioning rightsholders perspectives and struggles for their rights. This experience allowed participants to inspire and learn from each other perspectives and strategies, and at the same time recognize and celebrate their efforts and work. Some of this art pieces were lately presented in global spaces like Association of Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) conference in 2024.

Design Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Research (DMEL)

Throughout the year, the CoAs continued to strengthen their Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (DMEL) practices, generating robust evidence to support program learning, adaptive management, and the ETE. Guided by the program-wide DMEL framework, country teams applied mixed-methods approaches, participatory tools, and youth-led methodologies to document change, capture learning, and ensure that rights holders remained at the center of evidence generation and reflection processes.

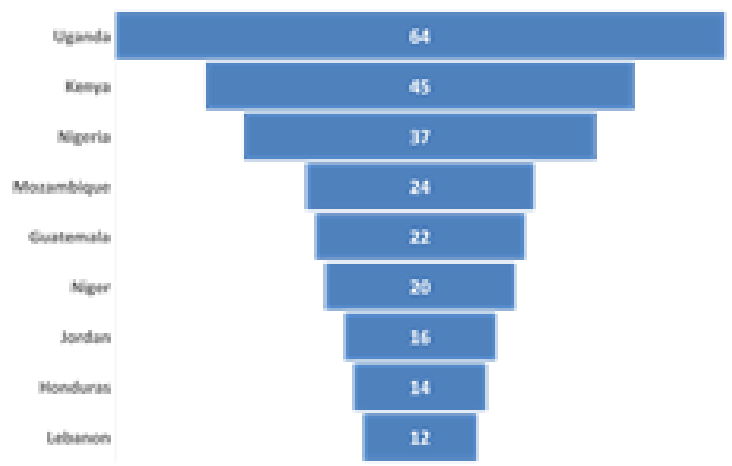
Data Capture and Evidence Management

Across implementing countries, partners systematically tracked progress using results frameworks, indicator monitoring, qualitative documentation, and regular monitoring visits aligned with the Theory of Change (ToC). These processes produced a diverse and rich body of knowledge products, including consolidated outcome documents, health surveys, case studies, digital safety assessments, policy briefs, newsletters, and audio-visual materials. Collectively, this evidence strengthened institutional memory and informed strategic decision-making at both country and regional levels.

Outcome Harvesting

Outcome Harvesting (OH) remained a core methodology for capturing qualitative change, with countries contributing to different outcome areas based on their contexts and interventions. Over the five-year period, We Lead harvested a total of 254 outcomes. Uganda recorded the highest number (64), followed by Kenya (45) and Nigeria (37). Intermediate Result 1 (IR1: Strengthened CSOs are inclusive of or led by young women to defend and promote their SRHR) accounted for the largest share of outcomes (75). This was followed by Intermediate Result 4 (IR4: Duty bearers increasingly design, adopt, and implement laws and policies that respect and protect the SRHR of young women), which recorded 60 outcomes. Intermediate Result 2 (IR2: The general public increasingly recognizes and supports young women's

SRHR) had 59 outcomes, while Intermediate Result 3 (IR3: Health care providers adopt youth-friendly SRHR and HIV/AIDS services) recorded 43 outcomes. The remaining 17 outcomes cut across multiple intermediate results.



We went a step further in analyzing the outcomes and grouped them into six thematic areas: policy and governance reform; advocacy and awareness; feminist and youth leadership; disability and inclusion; service delivery innovations; and economic empowerment and livelihoods. This helped us better understand not just how many outcomes were achieved, but the kind of change they represented.

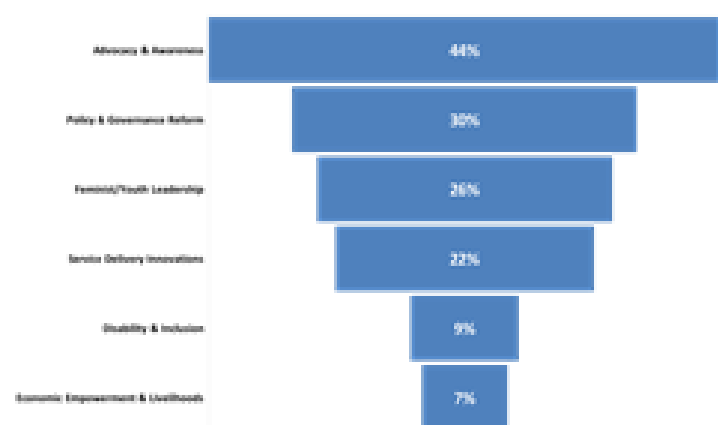
Nearly half of all outcomes (44%) were related to advocacy and awareness. This tells a powerful story. It shows that the program was especially strong in influencing narratives, raising visibility of young women's SRHR, and mobilizing public support. Partners and rightsholders were active in shaping conversations and pushing issues into public and policy spaces.

Policy and governance reform also stood out as significant. About 30% of outcomes involved changes in policies, laws, or governance practices. This suggests that advocacy efforts were not stopping at awareness, but they were translating into engagement with duty bearers and contributing to more systemic shifts.

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Feminist and youth leadership (26%) and service delivery innovations (22%) also emerged as important pillars of change. Strengthening youth and feminist leadership reflects meaningful investments in capacity, voice, and representation. Meanwhile, service delivery innovations point to tangible improvements in how services are designed and delivered, bringing change closer to young women's lived realities.

Disability and inclusion (9%) and economic empowerment and livelihoods (7%) appeared less frequently. This does not mean they were unimportant, but it does signal opportunities to more intentionally deepen and scale work in these areas going forward. Economic empowerment and livelihoods outcomes were mainly linked to Uganda's financial literacy and savings groups, linking SRHR with livelihood strengthening. Several outcomes cut across more than one category, showing that change was rarely linear; a reflection of the interconnected and layered nature of transformation.



Learning, Reflection, and Adaptive Programming

Learning and reflection were embedded throughout the programme implementation. Country teams convened with regular strategic meetings, joint reflection sessions, and monitoring missions to harvest outcomes and sense making, assess contextual changes, and adjust implementation strategies accordingly. These spaces enabled teams to respond effectively to political instability, safety and security risks, and shrinking civic space, while sustaining meaningful engagement with rights holders. Young women- and girl-led groups participated actively in these processes, reinforcing ownership of outcomes and grounding learning in lived experience.

Research and Contribution to the End-Term Evaluation

Structured research efforts including surveys, adolescent and young people health assessments, and policy and legal analyses were combined with systematic documentation of outcome-level change to create a strong evidence base for the End-Term Evaluation. Research outputs from Kenya and Nigeria, such as training manuals, policy analyses, impact documents, and narrative publications, were integrated into global knowledge management systems to ensure that Africa's contributions were fully reflected in the final evaluation of the program.

Creative and Global Approaches to Learning and Evidence

Complementing country-level monitoring and outcome harvesting, the DMEL team advanced innovative global tools to enhance collective learning, increase the visibility of program impact, and support cross-regional analysis. These include the We Lead Data Dashboard and the Interactive Global Impact Map.

We Lead Data Dashboard: A Flexible Tool for Integrated Analysis

Over the past year, Hivos developed a dynamic dashboard that visualizes harvested outcomes and creates new entry points for program-wide analysis. Current features include:

- A geographic map showing the number and distribution of harvested outcomes by country and county;
- Visualizations by type of actor influenced (e.g., government, health providers, community actors);
- Distribution of outcomes across the four intermediate outcomes of the Theory of Change; and
- Disaggregation by rights holder groups, enabling analysis of which groups have benefited most from program interventions.

Designed as a flexible and evolving tool, the dashboard can incorporate additional variables and analytical views as data availability expands, allowing regional teams to tailor insights to their advocacy, learning, and strategic priorities.

To access the tools click here:

[a. We Lead dashboard](#)

[b. We Lead interactive map](#)

Interactive Global Impact Map: Capturing Transnational Influence

As part of the program's closing phase, the DMEL team also developed an interactive global map to visualize We Lead's influence beyond national borders. The map highlights:

- Participation in international conferences, advocacy spaces, and global events;
- Cross-country partnerships and collaborations led by rights holders and allies;
- National initiatives that gained international recognition; and
- Advocacy milestones and publications with regional or global reach.

Initial entries were populated following the 2025 Kenya Close-Out Event, with further contributions submitted collaboratively by Program Officers, CoAs, and rights holders. This collective documentation

preserves We Lead's legacy as a connected, transnational feminist movement for SRHR and gender justice.

Global Outcome Analysis Report

To complement the dashboard's quantitative insights, the DMEL team produced a global qualitative analysis of synthesizing trends across all harvested outcomes. This report examines cross-country patterns, identifies key drivers of change, and distills lessons emerging from the five-year program. Together, the dashboard and the qualitative analysis offer a balanced, comprehensive view of We Lead's impact, integrating quantitative reach with qualitative depth.

Published Paper: We Lead, We Measure, We Transform

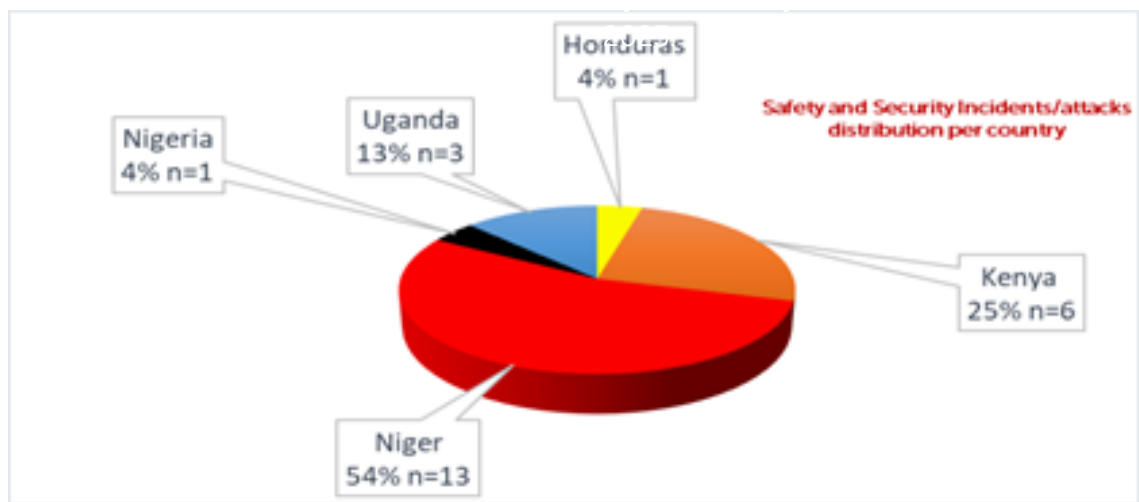
As part of the program commitment to feminist evidence practices, the DMEL team published [We Lead, We Measure, We Transform: A Feminist Approach to Data-Driven Harvests](#). The paper documents the program's methodologies, lessons learned, and contributions to feminist monitoring and evaluation practice, positioning We Lead as a reference point for youth-led, rights-based, and data-driven approaches within the wider M&E and SRH-R community.



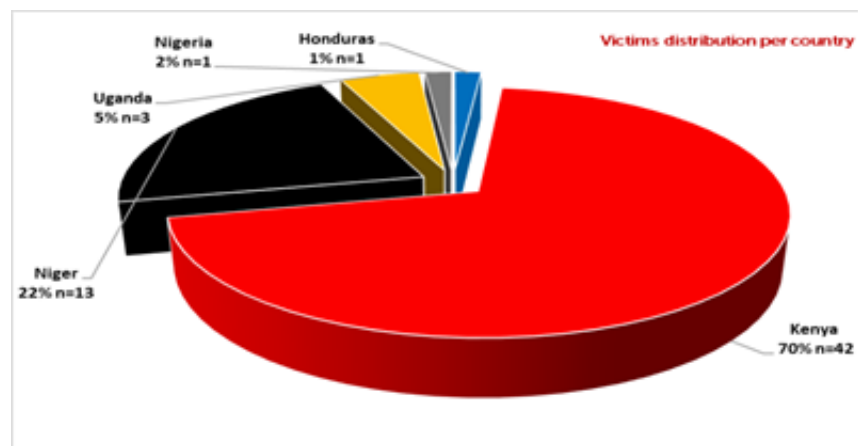
Safety and Security

In 2025, We Lead navigated, yet another year marked by severe and evolving safety and security challenges across the nine countries in which the program operates. These challenges were most starkly illustrated in Niger, where an unprecedented government crackdown dramatically reshaped the civic landscape almost overnight. In November, authorities published a list of only 133 NGOs authorized to operate nationally. Of the 14 We Lead Communities of Action (CoAs) in the country, only one was permitted to remain operational. Although the list was later expanded to 455 NGOs, just three CoAs regained their registration, leaving 11 youth-led groups effectively silenced. The process of regaining authorization now requires extensive government-approved financial audits and prohibitively high fees, placing extraordinary strain on already vulnerable organizations.

This rapid contraction of civic space, combined with growing hostility toward organizations working on SRH-R, set the tone for a year characterized by acute safety and security risks across all the countries. Yet, amid this volatility, the program safety and security systems which we have continuously strengthened proved both timely and effective. The number of reported, investigated, and documented incidents declined significantly, from 45 in 2024 to 24 in 2025, demonstrating the impact of proactive risk mitigation and preparedness measures. Niger alone accounted for more than half of these incidents, reflecting both the severity of the crackdown and intensified documentation of SRH-R violations (see Figure 1).



A total of 24 security incidents resulted in 60 documented victims, due to multiple victims in several cases. Kenya recorded the highest number of affected individuals, with 42 victims representing 70% of the total, largely linked to risks associated with the We Lead Global Close-Out Event (see Figure 2).



These figures underscore both the gravity of the threats faced by rights holders and partners and the resilience they demonstrated in continuing their advocacy under pressure.

Faced with an increasingly hostile and unpredictable operating environment, We Lead remained unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding CoAs, their staff, rights holders, consortium partners, host organizations, and all program stakeholders throughout 2025. Recognizing the escalating risks, the program implemented a suite of proactive, coordinated, and context-responsive measures to ensure protection during both implementation and close-out activities.

A key component of this response was capacity strengthening in digital security.

In May 2025, We Lead delivered one of its most impactful cybersecurity initiatives: the virtual training “Navigating the Digital World Safely: Protecting Yourself and Your Organization Online.” This skills-based training reached 119 rights holders and CoA staff across Honduras, Guatemala, Mozambique, Kenya, Nigeria, Niger, and Uganda. Moving beyond basic awareness, the training covered data privacy, online harassment, digital scams, and prevention strategies through interactive exercises and real-world case studies. Participants completed post-training assessments and received either a Certificate of Merit or a Certificate of Participation, reinforcing accountability and skill mastery. For many participants, this was their first exposure to structured, practical cybersecurity training that now directly protects activists whose digital presence increasingly exposes them to risk. The training was delivered in partnership with Moringa School Kenya.

HIVOS: We Lead Summary

Country	Graduating Students	Number of Students	Performance Average Score	Recommendation Score
Mozambique	5	17	98%	N/A
Guatemala & Honduras	19	22	87%	8.8/10
Kenya	14	15	96%	8.9/10
Nigeria	30	32	94%	8.9/10
Uganda	16	20	89%	9.7/10
Niger	N/A	13	N/A	N/A
Total/Average	84	119	93%	9.1/10

However, delivering virtual capacity building was not without challenges. In Niger, persistent internet disruptions prevented participation in the cybersecurity training, highlighting ongoing digital access barriers that continue to limit engagement in online learning and protection initiatives

In the same month, and in response to rising burnout, stress, and emotional fatigue among youth advocates, We Lead facilitated seven virtual sessions on “Building Sustainable Mechanisms for Collective Care, Self-Care, Wellbeing, and Wellness.” Led by an experienced psychology specialist, these sessions brought together rights holders and CoAs from Honduras, Guatemala, Mozambique, Kenya, Nigeria, Niger, and Uganda. Participants gained practical, culturally adaptable tools for managing stress, recognizing trauma responses, and strengthening mutual support systems. For young activists operating in hostile environments, these collective care mechanisms became essential to sustaining both personal well-being and long-term engagement.

Together, these interventions went far beyond training. They reflected We Lead’s holistic approach to protection, recognizing that safety encompasses not only physical and digital security, but also mental and emotional resilience. In a year defined by volatility, investments in cybersecurity, psychosocial support, and emergency preparedness ensured that CoAs and rights holders were not left exposed, but rather equipped and supported to continue their work with confidence.

Complementing these efforts, We Lead conducted a global strategic field mission to Nigeria in February 2025. The mission focused on hands-on safety and security support, including in-depth audits across multiple CoAs. These assessments identified vulnerabilities, provided tailored recommendations, and strengthened internal protection systems. Similar monitoring visits were conducted by national teams in other countries, enabling early identification of risks and proactive mitigation at local level.

Significant attention was also given to ensuring the safety of national and global close-out events. A multi-layered planning structure was established, with country safety and security focal points embedded within national planning committees, and the project Safety and Security Officer actively engaged in the global close-out committee. Comprehensive security briefs, logistics notes, and contingency plans were developed ahead of each event.

These preparations proved critical. During the Global Close-Out Event, 37 participants including CoA staff, rights holders, and partners fell ill. Thanks to advance planning, including the presence of a certified paramedic and pre-approved contingency funds, immediate medical response was provided. Severe cases were referred to hospital, with all costs fully covered. This incident clearly demonstrated the value of foresight and investment in preparedness. Over the course of the year, all 24 recorded incidents were systematically assessed and addressed. Where risks escalated, We Lead convened investigation meetings, provided tailored safety guidance, and facilitated referrals to specialized protection partners, including Frontline Defenders and the Digital Defenders Partnership.

Across all its work in 2025, We Lead maintained a strong, structured, and forward-looking approach to safety and security. This commitment ensured that CoAs and rights holders remained protected, supported, and able to continue their vital advocacy in increasingly hostile contexts. We Lead’s safeguarding efforts remain unwavering, and we extend our deepest appreciation to our donors, whose continued support makes these life-preserving interventions possible.



Networking and collaboration (strategic partnering with local partners and local ownership)

Throughout the reporting period, the program strategically prioritized networking and collaboration as a core approach to strengthening local ownership, enhancing sustainability, and amplifying impact. Across all regions, partners worked closely with government institutions, civil society organizations, community networks, media actors, and international agencies to ensure that SRH-R interventions were coordinated, contextually grounded, and aligned with national and regional priorities as described below:

In **Guatemala**, the coordinated Community of Action (CoA) model enabled joint planning and implementation across territories. Through strengthened networks, partners jointly implemented health monitoring initiatives, established a legislative monitoring committee for collective advocacy, and deepened engagement with government institutions such as the National Youth Council, Presidential Secretariat for Women's Affairs, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. These collaborations supported the institutionalization of Comprehensive Sexuality Education, advanced transgender health strategies, and expanded youth representation, notably through support to the Petén Departmental Youth Council. Active participation in thematic networks, including the Quetzaltenango HIV Network, and collaboration with health facilities such as San Benito Hospital, further strengthened adolescent-friendly healthcare services and community-level accountability.

In **Honduras**, partnerships focused on advocacy, service delivery, and policy influence. The CoA actively contributed to national advocacy platforms, collaborated with UNFPA on joint health fairs, and formed strategic alliances with the National AIDS Forum, the National Human Rights Commissioner, and regional Ministry of Health structures.

Forum, the National Human Rights Commissioner, and regional Ministry of Health structures. Technical collaboration with Lawyers Without Borders, UN Women, and UNAIDS reinforced SRH-R policy development, while sustained engagement with municipalities, academic institutions, Ciudad Mujer, and social development bodies ensured locally embedded and cross-sectoral coordination.

Collectively, these partnerships enhanced legitimacy, expanded reach, and strengthened the political positioning of SRH-R agendas while ensuring culturally relevant, community-owned interventions.

In **Niger**, the CoA worked in close coordination with regional health directorates in Maradi, Tillabéri, and Dosso to ensure compliance with state priorities and official guidelines, a critical approach within an increasingly restrictive regulatory environment. Municipalities and governorates were actively engaged to reinforce ownership and long-term impact. Collaboration with security and protection institutions, including the Police and Gendarmerie units for Women and Minors Protection, enabled coordinated responses to gender-based violence. Partnerships with the National Commission for Refugee Eligibility supported interventions in refugee settings, leading to the establishment of a dedicated GBV committee in the Chadakori refugee camp. Beyond government actors, organizations strengthened advocacy through civil society networks and alliances with women's rights groups and disability organizations, while media partnerships amplified awareness and rights-based messaging through radio and community platforms.

In **Nigeria**, collaboration centered on advancing the rights of vulnerable populations and integrating SRH-R into humanitarian and governance frameworks across Lagos, Cross River, Nasarawa, and Anambra states. Partnerships with government institutions such as the Ministry of Health, NCFRMI, and the National Human Rights Commission strengthened policy integration, accountability, and legal protection. Civil society and international partnerships with UNFPA, IOM, UNHCR, OCHA, NEMA, and disability-led organizations ensured coordinated, rights-based responses in both development and humanitarian contexts. Media engagement including radio programming, social media campaigns, and national publications played a key role in extending outreach, particularly among youth and rural communities.

In **Jordan and Lebanon**, We Lead strengthened strategic collaboration and local ownership through high-level engagement, structured coordination, and collective reflection during the programme's final year.

National close-out conferences in Amman and Beirut served as key networking platforms, bringing together COAs, host organizations, government representatives, civil society actors, and donors. These events showcased program achievements, facilitated dialogue on sustainability, and connected partners to broader SRH-R and gender justice networks. Active participation from government entities and the Embassy of the Netherlands reinforced national recognition and cross-program alignment with other MoFA-funded initiatives.

In parallel, We Lead supported the launch and consolidation of national SRH-R Knowledge Hubs in both countries. Developed collaboratively with local partners, these hubs serve as sustainable, locally owned platforms for sharing tools, policy resources, evidence, and multimedia outputs, strengthening long-term knowledge exchange and sectoral collaboration. In Lebanon, Marsa contributed to the development of an SRHR curriculum for caretakers, in collaboration with the Department of Continuing Education at the University of Saint Joseph in Lebanon.

The module aims to equip community caregivers and educators with clear, rights-based and age-appropriate information on adolescent health, consent, and healthy relationships.

Regional collaboration was further reinforced through a joint anti-gender baseline study conducted with Hivos' Free to Be Me program. This cross-program effort brought together partners across Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia to generate shared evidence on anti-gender backlash, align advocacy strategies, and strengthen movement-building and protection planning beyond the programme's closure.

In **Uganda**, the CoA partnered with district and national government structures, health teams, and community platforms to co-host close-out meetings, conduct joint service monitoring, strengthen referral systems, and secure in-kind support such as office space and youth-friendly corners at health facilities. Collaboration with national and regional advocacy networks, UN agencies, private sector actors, and youth media hubs supported digital inclusion, research dissemination, legal empowerment, and storytelling. At community level, partnerships with protection networks and legal aid providers enable safe mobilization, emergency response, and coordinated advocacy for marginalized groups in restrictive contexts.

In **Kenya**, the CoA worked closely with county and sub-county government structures to advance youth-friendly SRH-R services, community-based monitoring, and policy advocacy. National civil society and movement-based partnerships expanded platforms for SRH-R, GBV prevention, stigma reduction, and disability inclusion. Media and communications coalitions, including the Safisha Rada Campaign, mobilized national dialogue through coordinated social media, radio, and television engagement. Grassroots collaboration with community-based organizations, survivor networks, and livelihood

groups ensured locally grounded advocacy, referral pathways, and economic empowerment linked to SRH-R outcomes.

Overall, networking and collaboration across regions strengthened collective action, enhanced legitimacy, and ensured that SRH-R initiatives remained locally driven, politically informed, and sustainable. By embedding partnerships at community, national, and regional levels, the program reinforced shared ownership and positioned local actors to carry forward its impact beyond the reporting period.



Programming Shifts

Continuous political and contextual shifts across countries required ongoing adaptation by all We Lead stakeholders and significantly shaped how achievements and challenges were framed in the ETE. Safety and security remained a central concern throughout the program, as several countries experienced varying forms of threats and instability. In response, training and capacity-strengthening activities were prioritized as key strategies to support partner organizations and build the resilience of rights-holder groups.

To mitigate risks, rights holders in sensitive contexts such as Jordan, Niger, and Uganda were not explicitly named during trainings or public engagements. Instead, partners adopted more inclusive framing, operating under the broader banner of women and girls. Even in countries where civic space remained relatively open, deliberate caution was exercised to avoid actions that could expose partners to harm. In Lebanon, for example, public messaging was carefully managed, including decisions around what content could be shared through the Knowledge Hubs. The growing prevalence of anti-gender narratives further documented through the joint anti-gender baseline study conducted with Free to Be Me also shaped advocacy approaches and required additional contextualization in program reporting.

In Lebanon and Jordan, ongoing insecurity continued to disrupt program operations and necessitated adaptive shifts. Building on adjustments made in the last quarter of 2024, when budgets were reallocated to respond to war and humanitarian crises, CoA organizations sustained feminist principles while adapting to diverse emergency response needs across different geographic contexts. This demonstrated how feminist organizations can respond effectively to crises while safeguarding core values and long-term objectives.

With regard to safety and security capacity, CoAs demonstrated exceptional adaptability by developing contextualized, location-specific approaches. These combined formal training with deep contextual knowledge and proved more effective than

standardized protocols alone. In Lebanon where context was particularly volatile and violent, this adaptability enabled the program to address one of the most pressing consequences of insecurity: the deterioration of mental health and well-being among rights holders and We Lead staff. Through the Resilience Fund, mental health services were made available to CoA rights holders and country teams, removing financial barriers and ensuring access to quality care in a setting where such services are often unaffordable.

Across Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon, and Jordan, programmatic shifts in 2025 were informed by evolving contexts as well as lessons learned during implementation. A key lesson was the critical importance of sustained capacity building and accompaniment of rights holders. This approach emerged as a powerful accelerator of impact, not only building confidence but also helping to sustain program outcomes beyond project cycles. Flexibility in programming proved essential for responding to shrinking civic space, sudden policy changes, and emerging risks, ensuring continued relevance and effectiveness.

In addition, the program underscored the value of building strong coalitions and cross-movement alliances. Partnerships amplified advocacy outcomes by creating collective leverage that no single actor could achieve alone. These insights informed strategic adjustments, including a stronger focus on establishing sustainable youth-led accountability platforms, aligning advocacy efforts with government planning cycles, and investing in documentation and evidence generation to strengthen the case for SRH-R.

Reflection on the results framework and basket indicators indicates that while many output-level targets such as the number of rights holders trained and advocacy engagements conducted were exceeded, outcome-level changes, including the institutionalization of youth participation in policy processes and increased budget allocations for p SRH-R, require more systemic and long-term strategies.

Overall, the program generated valuable insights into how inclusive, feminist, and rights-based approaches can drive meaningful change, while also highlighting the need for sustained investment, adaptive management, and stronger linkages between grassroots voices and policy spaces.

Cross cutting themes

The program integrated a set of cross-cutting themes that fundamentally shaped implementation and outcomes across countries. These themes were embedded throughout strategies, activities, and partnerships, enabling a holistic, feminist, and transformative approach that responded to complex and shifting contexts.

Gender Equality and Intersectionality

We Lead adopted a feminist and intersectional approach to gender equality, recognizing that gender-based discrimination is experienced differently depending on age, ethnicity, disability, migration status, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background. In Guatemala, this meant creating spaces where women's voices were centered, autonomy was respected, and adult-centric structures and discriminatory narratives were actively challenged. In Honduras, the intersectional approach addressed the structural inequalities faced by migrant and returned women, strengthening their leadership and participation in community and political spaces.

Climate change/adaptation and resilience

Climate change emerged as a growing concern affecting health, livelihoods, and mobility, inspiring youth-led advocacy and research that linked environmental resilience with reproductive health and wellbeing. For example, findings from Restless Development's Youth Researcher Academy research on Livelihoods and Sexual reproductive health emphasized the urgent need for climate-responsive and sustainable livelihood solutions, which not only support economic resilience but also promote better reproductive health outcomes and overall wellbeing for youth which established an urgent need for integrated approaches that address environmental justice and health equity simultaneously.

Human Rights–Based Approach

All programme activities were grounded in a human rights framework. Women and young people were recognized not merely as beneficiaries, but as rights holders with the agency and capacity to demand responsive public policies. This approach informed both capacity strengthening and advocacy strategies, empowering participants to claim and defend their SRH-R.

Youth-Centric Programming promotes local ownership and sustainability

With the leadership of RD, We Lead adopted a strong youth lens that informed all programme actions. Peer-to-peer methodologies were prioritized, and adult-centric approaches were deliberately challenged to enable young people to lead the development of collective agendas and claim political and community advocacy spaces. This was particularly evident in youth-led initiatives in Guatemala and Uganda and across other programme contexts. Empowering young women to lead, rather than simply participate in research, advocacy, and accountability processes was noted to strengthen long-term ownership and sustainability. When youth set priorities, generate evidence, and engage directly with policymakers, as demonstrated by CoA organizations such as [REDACTED], [REDACTED] interventions extend beyond project timelines and grow into locally owned movements that continue to shape service delivery and drive policy reform.

Related to this is the continuous mentorship and peer learning which strengthened youth leadership resilience. Regular accompaniment, reflection spaces such as the Leadership Bootcamp, and peer-to-peer exchanges have been essential for sustaining Community of Action Facilitators' motivation, emotional well-being, and effectiveness.

The trust-based, flexible support model used with the Community of Action Facilitators (CoAFs) shows that when young leaders have safe spaces to reflect, connect, and share experiences, they build stronger leadership capacity, confidence, and adaptability which are key ingredients for long-term impact.

For me, seeing myself reflected in my peers and listening to their stories, learning from their contexts, has been an incredible experience. The fact that we come from different parts of the world (Africa, the Middle East, and Central America) has made us more sensitive and receptive toward ourselves."

Guatemala CoAF

Mental and Emotional Health and Collective Care

Mental and emotional health were intentionally integrated as core programme considerations, particularly within the Communities of Action (CoAs). Recognizing the psychological impacts of structural violence, criminalization, displacement, and migration, the programme embedded psychosocial support, wellness practices, and collective care mechanisms across activities. Given the ongoing political and social instability in some of the countries especially Lebanon and the greater MENA region, mental health and well-being were prioritized as integral to feminist organizing. Trauma-informed facilitation, oral-history documentation, and regular well-being check-ins were integrated into all convening spaces to help sustain emotional resilience and strengthen collective care.

Addressing Structural and Digital Violence

We Lead actively confronted multiple forms of structural violence, including digital violence, surveillance, and disinformation campaigns targeting feminist and SRH-R actors. Protective strategies included the development of safety and security protocols, secure communication channels, and collective care mechanisms to ensure safe participation in programme activities.

Art, Culture, and Creative Expression

Artistic and cultural expressions were leveraged as powerful tools for social change, political education, identity building, and visibility of rights-based demands. Creative methodologies opened new avenues for participation, narrative change, and public engagement, particularly for young women and marginalized groups.

Emerging Themes: Open Data and Climate Justice

While not central to the programme design, emerging themes such as open data and climate justice gained relevance during implementation. Open data approaches were introduced to strengthen knowledge production and advocacy, while growing evidence of climate-related vulnerability among trans and youth communities highlighted the need for future integration of gender-responsive environmental justice perspectives.

Collectively, these cross-cutting themes enabled We Lead to respond holistically to diverse realities, ensuring that interventions remained contextually grounded, inclusive, and transformative.

Regional and Country-Specific Cross-Cutting Priorities

MENA Region: Jordan and Lebanon

In Jordan and Lebanon, cross-cutting issues were deeply shaped by rapidly changing political, social, and security contexts. Continuous adaptation was required throughout implementation and influenced how achievements and challenges were framed in the ETE. Safety and security remained central: rights holder groups in Jordan were never explicitly named, while partners in Lebanon exercised caution in public messaging and in determining content published on Knowledge Hubs.

The rise of anti-gender narratives further documented through the joint anti-gender baseline study with Free to Be Me (F2BM) significantly shaped advocacy approaches and required additional contextualization in programme reporting. Inclusion was also a key cross-cutting priority, reflected in engagement with the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Jordan and efforts in both countries to ensure accessible materials, inclusive spaces, and participatory processes. These dynamics influenced timelines, visibility, and implementation strategies during We Lead's final year.

East Africa: Kenya and Uganda

Across Kenya and Uganda, cross-cutting themes significantly shaped programme approaches, particularly in relation to intersectionality, safety, and rights-based advocacy.

Uganda

Programming in Uganda centered on intersectional feminism, prioritizing [REDACTED] women, young women with disabilities (GYWDs), young women living with HIV, and displaced young women experiencing layered stigma related to sexuality, gender identity, disability, and poverty. Disability inclusion was prioritized through accessible facilitation methods and co-leadership roles for rights holders, contributing to inclusive policy outcomes such as the Kamuli PWD SRHR Ordinance and inputs into UNFPA's global Menstrual Health Management (MHM) guidelines for GYWDs.

Healing justice and mental health were integrated through wellness check-ins, healing circles, and safe spaces, responding to widespread trauma linked to criminalization, threats, and violence. Climate justice and livelihoods were also incorporated, linking SRHR to eco-livelihood initiatives and resilience-building activities such as climate-smart horticulture and income generation, particularly for GYWD groups.

Kenya

In Kenya, cross-cutting work focused strongly on gender equality, body autonomy, and accountability. The programme addressed femicide, gender-based violence (GBV), unsafe abortion criminalization, SRH-R stigma, and youth exclusion through rights-based advocacy and community mobilization.

Disability inclusion informed Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) programming, ensuring safe spaces, inclusive documentation, and accessible dialogue platforms for young women with disabilities within youth clubs and advocacy spaces. Digital and narrative justice emerged as key priorities through campaigns such as Safisha Rada, which challenged misogyny and harmful masculinity online using influencers and youth-led digital platforms to shift social norms around GBV and men's accountability. Wellness and psychosocial safety were also prioritized through grassroots safe spaces and survivor support systems, responding to the mental health impacts of violence and economic stress faced by Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW).

This structured integration of cross-cutting themes strengthened We Lead's ability to respond to complex, evolving realities while advancing feminist, youth-led, and rights-based approaches across regions and countries.

Sustainability

The program embedded sustainability at the core of its design and implementation, prioritizing long-term impact beyond the project cycle through institutional strengthening, community empowerment, knowledge transfer, and strategic partnerships. Although the strategy had to be adjusted due to contextual changes and after the Midterm Review, across regions, these mechanisms collectively continued to foster durable structures, locally owned leadership, and embedded practices that will continue advancing SRH-R agendas independently.

Institutional Sustainability

At the institutional level, the program focused on integrating SRH-R priorities into policies, systems, and formal governance structures. In **Guatemala** for instance, strategic alliances with state institutions including the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Development, and the Presidential Secretariat for Women created permanent dialogue spaces and established policy advocacy precedents. Formal agreements with municipal governments further committed local authorities to incorporating young women's rights into local action plans. In **Honduras**, sustainability was reinforced through the establishment of the Women in Movement Network as a permanent advocacy structure and by embedding programme activities into institutional strategic plans.

In **Jordan and Lebanon**, sustainability was advanced through deep collaboration with host organizations ANHRE in Jordan and CRTDA/Marsa in Lebanon which integrated We Lead methodologies and approaches into their broader institutional mandates. In 2025, host organizations and CoAs jointly developed comprehensive sustainability plans outlining how SRH-R advocacy, youth leadership, and community engagement would continue beyond programme closure. These plans were grounded in long-term organizational strategies and reflected realistic pathways for maintaining services, networks, and advocacy priorities.

In **Kenya and Uganda**, institutional sustainability was pursued through integration within government and administrative systems. Memoranda of Understanding, district and county-level partnerships, Youth Advisory Committees, health and referral platforms, and participation in planning and budget consultation processes ensured that youth and gender-responsive SRHR priorities remained embedded within public systems.

Community-Led Structures

We Lead invested heavily in community-led structures to ensure continuity of leadership, advocacy, and service delivery. In **Guatemala**, autonomous networks such as the Petén Young Women's Network and the Embajadoras Disidentes volunteer group were consolidated and continue operating independently. Across contexts, capacity building for community communicators, health monitors, and peer educators ensured sustained local expertise in rights-based approaches.

In **Uganda**, community sustainability was further reinforced through social enterprise and livelihoods models, including savings groups, participation in the Parish Development Model, and youth-led enterprises such as Esonga Investments Ltd and reusable sanitary pad cooperatives. Similarly, in Kenya, savings and loan groups, entrepreneurship support, and linkages to vocational and enterprise initiatives strengthened the economic resilience of adolescent girls and young women, enabling continued civic engagement and advocacy.

Community club and safe space models in Kenya embedded SRH-R education, psychosocial support, and youth-led advocacy within existing grassroots networks, ensuring that programme gains remained locally owned and accessible.

Knowledge, Skills, and Methodology Transfer

A key sustainability strategy was the transfer of knowledge, methodologies, and tools to partners and communities. Technical capacities established through the programme such as annual social audits of public SRH-R spending and community health monitoring systems continue through local partnerships. Training methodologies, including PV's LILO methodologies and We Lead's theory of change approaches, are being applied by organizations using alternative funding sources, extending the programme's influence.

In **Honduras**, the development of durable resources including SRH-R toolkits, LESH language materials, and the Mumi app for migrant women created lasting reference points for advocacy and service delivery. Publicly accessible campaign materials and research outputs, such as studies on HPV among lesbian and bisexual women, provide foundations for future interventions across regions.

In the **MENA region**, the launch of national SRH-R Knowledge Hubs in Jordan and Lebanon represents one of the programme's most visible and enduring legacies. These locally owned digital platforms host toolkits, training manuals, advocacy guides, oral histories, podcasts, and multimedia resources that partners and rights holders can continue to use, adapt, and expand.

Strategic Partnerships and Movement Continuity

Sustainability was further strengthened through sustained partnerships and coalition building. Alliances with women's movements, feminist organizations, youth networks, disability rights groups, and emerging partners expanded advocacy reach and ensured continuity of leadership. An intentional intergenerational approach supported the transition of youth leaders into long-term movement roles within organizations and networks.

In **Guatemala**, collaboration with midwives and ancestral knowledge holders bridged traditional practices with contemporary feminist and SRH-R advocacy, embedding cultural relevance and community legitimacy. In **Kenya**, coalition advocacy and movement-building platforms facilitated continued engagement in national and county-level SRH-R policy processes, contributing to the long-term institutionalization of youth- and gender-responsive priorities.

Evidence, Learning, and Narrative Legacy

Finally, sustainability was reinforced through documentation, learning, and evidence generation. The ETE, country-level success stories, policy briefs, research outputs, documentaries, and the joint anti-gender baseline study conducted with Free to Be Me provide partners with credible tools to inform future programming, fundraising, protection strategies, and policy engagement.

Narrative and communications legacies such as Kenya's Safisha Rada campaign demonstrated scalable, youth-led digital and media advocacy models that can be sustained beyond We Lead to mobilize public dialogue and policy attention on GBV, femicide, and SRH-D. Documentation of change stories and production of knowledge products such as the feminist leadership guidelines, the safety and security brief and M&E briefing document also remain valuable knowledge products that will aid continuous and innovative programming beyond this program cycle.



Good Practices

Across the nine countries, the identification and application of good practices were central to ensuring that program interventions remained relevant, effective, and rights based. These practices emerged from continuous learning, close collaboration with rights holders, and sustained reflection on what worked best in diverse and often challenging contexts. In Guatemala, Honduras, and Nigeria, partners demonstrated how participatory, feminist, and context-responsive approaches can strengthen program quality, deepen ownership, and enhance advocacy outcomes. The good practices outlined below highlight practical methodologies and strategies that proved particularly effective in advancing SRH-R, supporting collective care, and generating credible evidence to inform policy and programming.

Participatory Methodologies

The programme implemented feminist and decolonial approaches centered on participants' experiences, incorporated artistic, playful, and experiential elements for meaningful learning and adapted methodologies to local contexts through collaboration with community allies like midwives

Safe Spaces & Collective Care

We Lead prioritized emotional well-being through trust-building and active listening, established peer support groups and psychosocial support mechanisms, and implemented emotional self-care strategies for teams, rights-holders, and volunteers. One of the key activities undertaken on collective care in 2024 was the "Seen and Heard", a trauma-informed, people-centered methodology that is creative, authentic and engaging by PV. In 2025, the [REDACTED] Forum got a refresher for on the module and raised funds to continue its implementation in 2025. By January 2026, they were still implementing this approach beyond the program funding period which is a testament to the sustainability of the approach and successful skills transfer.

Contextualized Support

The program provided flexible technical and political assistance adapted to organizational rhythms, maintained ongoing context analyses to inform CoA activities and used hybrid workshops to expand territorial reach and adaptability

Collaborative Advocacy

We Lead developed collective work within CoAs beyond joint activities, strengthened coordination between countries and built intersectoral alliances with strategic platforms and government actors.

Innovative Communication

The program developed dynamic formats including podcasts and illustrated materials, utilized metrics reporting tools to measure social media impact, and created accessible resources in multiple languages and formats.

Evidence based advocacy

A key success was the participatory approach adopted in conducting key in-depth interviews (KIs) with rightsholders. By giving rightsholders the space to share their own experiences and lessons learned from the We Lead project, the CoA was able to generate authentic evidence that directly informs programming.

Centering Local Ownership and Leadership

The programme's emphasis on local ownership, particularly through the leadership of CoAs and rightsholders in advocacy spaces, strengthened relevance and legitimacy. Supporting RHs and CoAs to participate in national, regional, and global forums ensured that advocacy remained grounded in community realities while building long-term leadership pathways. This practice enhanced sustainability and reinforced feminist principles of participation and power-sharing.

Rights-Holder-Centered Accountability in Health Systems Engagement;

The use of outcome assessments, scorecards, and structured feedback from rightsholder groups proved effective in strengthening accountability within health systems. By grounding discussions with healthcare providers in lived experiences and evidence, the programme facilitated more meaningful reflection, attitudinal change, and problem-solving. This participatory accountability approach enhanced trust between CSOs, rightsholders, and service providers and can be replicated in other service delivery contexts.

Mainstreaming Media and Narrative Change

Mainstreaming media engagement across all activities, rather than treating communications as a separate workstream, is strategic. Related to this is Strategic engagement with journalists and media practitioners combined with webinars, dialogues, social media, and creative advocacy, which significantly amplified SRHR messaging. This approach improved efficiency by leveraging each activity to broaden its public impact and helped normalize SRHR discourse in mainstream media and public spaces.

Lessons Learned

The final year of the program created key moments for reflection and stock taking particularly during the national and global closing events. In those moments key lessons were documented by the CoAs and the rightsholders as captured below:

Intersectionality and Inclusion

- Working in an intersectional manner requires intentional planning that helps different populations understand and connect with the issues faced by other rights holders, as awareness is not automatic even within unequal contexts.
- Actively engaging diverse rightsholders (young women living with HIV, young women with disabilities, youth, and caregivers) is critical in ensuring interventions were inclusive and relevant.
- Intersectional engagement reduces self-stigma, builds confidence, and improves health-seeking behaviors.
- Intersectionality has become a guiding principle for program design, implementation, and monitoring.
- Ensuring accessibility is critical: the absence of interpreters excluded rightsholders with low literacy or disabilities. Future programs must provide translated IEC materials and interpreters to guarantee full participation.

Participation, Empowerment, and Capacity Strengthening

- Sustained participation of rightsholders requires continuous training, accompaniment, and support, rather than one-off engagements.
- Investing in capacity building and accompaniment proved to be a key accelerator, building confidence and ensuring program impact extended beyond project cycles.
- Discussing CoA organizations' activities before and during implementation enabled targeted technical support, strengthened institutional capacity, and provided valuable external perspectives.
- To ease the CoAs workload, it is important to remove the burden of outcome harvesting by providing hands-on DMEL support that enables them to extract outcomes through conversations and everyday interactions rather than lengthy workshops. This results in improved learning and documentation.

Legal Empowerment and Rights-Based Advocacy

- Training rightsholders as paralegals enables them to navigate systems, scale activism, and in some cases establish their own organizations.
- Short training durations revealed limitations; sustainable legal empowerment requires extended curricula (minimum three weeks), mentorship, and certification pathways.
- Legal empowerment emerged as a viable advocacy pathway when paired with long-term investment.

Advocacy, Coalitions, and Policy Influence

- Strengthening political advocacy depends on coordination within organizational networks, particularly for international advocacy, where initial support was essential for meaningful participation.
- Building strong coalitions and cross-movement alliances amplified advocacy outcomes, creating leverage unattainable by individual actors.
- Partnerships with county actors and networks anchored advocacy within systems, influencing laws, budgets, and institutional practices (e.g., engagement with the Kilifi Disability Network embedding inclusion in policy and budgets).
- Policy engagement through structured dialogue, such as the Joint Kabake dialogues [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] increased credibility with duty bearers and led to tangible outcomes, including the upgrading of Ome Health Centre II to Health Centre III.
- Inhibitors included resource constraints at sub-national levels and socio-cultural resistance to SRHR advocacy, which weakened institutional memory and slowed progress.
- The integration of activism, particularly feminist concept of photography and visual exhibitions, during the 16 Days of Activism demonstrated a strong impact in engaging diverse audiences, including policymakers, partners, and the public. Creative advocacy proved effective in humanizing complex issues such as digital violence and bodily autonomy, stimulating dialogue, and sustaining attention beyond traditional advocacy formats. This approach offers a practical and adaptable model for advocacy in politically sensitive contexts.

Media, Evidence, and Narrative Change

- Media platforms—radio and digital storytelling—served as powerful catalysts for systemic change by shifting narratives and triggering improvements in infrastructure, policy, and service delivery.
- Media engagement proved most effective when combined with facility-level improvements to convert awareness into concrete outcomes.
- Evidence generation through community-led research, peer dialogues, and storytelling influenced stakeholder perspectives and policy inclusion, such as rights holders' testimonies leading to integration into government programs like the Parish Development Model.

Safety, Protection, and Wellness

- Safety, protection, and well-being were identified as core enablers of organizational functioning and participation, not optional add-ons.
- Psychosocial support and security planning allowed rightsholders and staff to remain engaged despite insecurity, trauma, or burnout.
- When initiating empowerment and emotional well-being processes, psychosocial follow-up for both rightsholders and technical teams was essential.
- From 2022–2025, [REDACTED] rightsholder groups demonstrated that healing is political: trauma undermines advocacy participation, while wellness workshops strengthened peer bonds, confidence, and sustained engagement.

Livelihoods and Economic Resilience

- Economic insecurity limited the ability of many rightsholders to sustain advocacy efforts.
- Integrating advocacy with savings schemes and livelihood initiatives enabled rightsholders to combine SRHR advocacy with economic resilience, strengthening long-term engagement.

Flexibility, Risk Management, and Adaptive Programming

- Flexibility in programming allowed timely adaptation to changing political and social contexts, including shrinking civic space and sudden policy shifts.
- The importance of contingency planning emerged strongly: dedicated emergency funds and budget margins—used ad hoc during the 2024 war—should be systematically incorporated during project design and budgeting by both HO and CoA organizations.



Budget management

Below is an overview of the budget implementation in 2025. A more detailed Consolidated Year 5 Financial Progress Report will be submitted as an annex.

We Lead -Financial Report by Year- 2025 (Year 5)				
	Revenue/ Budget	Actual Expenditures	Variance	Burn Rate
Revenue	€	€	€	%
Grant Received	€ 6 658 294			
Interest Earned/Accrued				
Total Revenue	€ 6 658 294			
Expenditure				
I. Direct staff costs				
A. Staff costs	€ 1 219 350	€ 1 286 500	€ (67 150)	106%
B. Local staff costs	€ 670 758	€ 698 964	€ (28 207)	104%
C. Consultants and advisers	€ 16 680	€ 15 139	€ 1 541	91%
Subtotal I	€ 1 906 787	€ 2 000 604	€ (93 817)	105%
II. Other direct programme costs				
A. Activity costs	€ 711 752	€ 647 053	€ 64 699	91%
B. Costs of consortium partners and local NGOs	€ 2 761 592	€ 2 754 080	€ 7 511	100%
C. Activity-related travel costs	€ 179 384	€ 230 720	€ (51 336)	129%
D. Project office costs (if applicable)	€ 29 982	€ 12 182	€ 17 800	41%
E. Equipment and investments	€ -	€ -	€ -	0%
F. Monitoring, evaluation and auditing	€ 262 377	€ 307 920	€ (45 542)	117%
Subtotal II	€ 3 945 087	€ 3 951 955	€ (6 868)	100%
Total of I and II	€ 5 851 874	€ 5 952 559	€ (100 685)	102%
III. Overheads / indirect costs				
A. Costs of support staff	€ -		€ -	
B. Not directly allocable administrative costs	€ -		€ -	
C. Other non-allocable costs	€ 806 420	€ 839 256	€ (32 836)	104%
Contingencies (max. 5 %)	€ -	€ -	€ -	
TOTAL	€ 6 658 294	€ 6 791 814	€ (133 521)	102%

Below, there is also an overview of the overall budget implementation in 2021-2025. A more detailed Consolidated Year 1-5 Financial Final Report will be submitted as an annex.

We Lead -Financial Report by Year- 2021-2025										
	Budget Approved in the Proposal €	Actual €					Variance €	Burn Rate %		
Revenue	€	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total	€	%	
Grant Received	€ 40 726 040	€ 6 224 373	€ 9 946 690	€ 9 574 883	€ 9 265 823	€ 5 107 011	€ 40 118 780	€ 607 260	99%	
Interest Earned/Accrued	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ 777	€ -	€ 777	€ (777)	0%	
Total Revenue	€ 40 726 040	€ 6 224 373	€ 9 946 690	€ 9 574 883	€ 9 266 600	€ 5 107 011	€ 40 119 557	€ 606 483	99%	
Expenditure										
I. Direct staff costs										
A. Staff costs	€ 3 727 664	€ 619 819	€ 772 400	€ 907 307	€ 1 035 079	€ 1 286 500	€ 4 621 106	€ (893 442)	124%	
B. Local staff costs	€ 2 385 760	€ 327 782	€ 500 045	€ 570 231	€ 600 663	€ 698 964	€ 2 697 684	€ (311 925)	113%	
C. Consultants and advisers	€ 179 638	€ 61 201	€ 21 998	€ 16 558	€ 16 773	€ 15 139	€ 131 669	€ 47 969	73%	
Subtotal I	€ 6 293 062	€ 1 008 801	€ 1 294 442	€ 1 494 096	€ 1 652 516	€ 2 000 604	€ 7 450 459	€ (1 157 398)	118%	
II. Other direct programme costs										
A. Activity costs	€ 5 466 375	€ 262 788	€ 1 487 864	€ 1 299 677	€ 860 912	€ 647 053	€ 4 558 293	€ 908 081	83%	
B. Costs of consortium partners and local NGOs	€ 22 011 585	€ 1 070 466	€ 5 046 126	€ 6 312 071	€ 6 314 878	€ 2 754 080	€ 21 497 621	€ 513 964	98%	
C. Activity-related travel costs	€ 1 249 791	€ 60 284	€ 445 706	€ 338 605	€ 343 143	€ 230 720	€ 1 418 458	€ (168 666)	113%	
D. Project office costs (if applicable)	€ 222 892	€ 14 441	€ 33 493	€ 33 246	€ 25 110	€ 12 182	€ 118 472	€ 104 420	53%	
E. Equipment and investments	€ 52 500	€ 7 936	€ 7 893	€ 2 415	€ 6 474	€ -	€ 24 717	€ 27 783	47%	
F. Monitoring, evaluation and auditing	€ 466 695	€ 16 731	€ 115 713	€ 131 115	€ 93 397	€ 307 920	€ 664 876	€ (198 181)	142%	
Subtotal II	€ 29 469 838	€ 1 432 646	€ 7 136 794	€ 8 117 128	€ 7 643 915	€ 3 951 955	€ 28 282 437	€ 1 187 401	96%	
Total of I and II	€ 35 762 900	€ 2 441 447	€ 8 431 237	€ 9 611 224	€ 9 296 431	€ 5 952 559	€ 35 732 897	€ 30 003	100%	
III. Overheads / Indirect costs										
A. Costs of support staff	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	0%	
B. Not directly allocable administrative costs	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	0%	
C. Other non-allocable costs	€ 4 963 140	€ 314 120	€ 1 149 106	€ 1 288 974	€ 1 315 803	€ 839 256	€ 4 907 258	€ 55 882	99%	
Contingencies (max. 5 %)	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	0%	
TOTAL	€ 40 726 040	€ 2 755 567	€ 9 580 343	€ 10 900 197	€ 10 612 234	€ 6 791 814	€ 40 640 155	€ 85 885	100%	

Annexes:

Annex 1: Risk Assessment Annex 2: Results Framework

Annex 3: Basket Indicators Results

Annex 4: IATI Report