



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

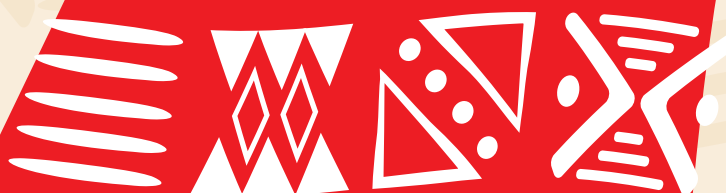


**We Lead to claim
our Sexual Reproductive
Health and Rights**



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1. Introduction

The year 2023 was a defining moment for we lead. Following some restructuring and reorganizations of roles and partnerships in 2022, the 2023 annual plan was anticipated to oversee and inspire several planned milestones thereby earning the title of we lead's take off plan. This annual report will therefore detail key milestones and achievements realized in the year. Having filled all the key positions that were vacant in 2022 (Global Programme Manager, Global, Finance Manager, Safety and Security Officer, Finance Officer in Mozambique), and consequently creating the position of Deputy Programme Manager, the team was much better organized and prepared to spearhead the annual plan implementation. At the governance level, the recruitment of three youth representatives in the steering committee was concluded which resulted in the replacement of the previous team whose term expired in March 2023. This was an important milestone in ensuring the continued representation of young women at the highest decision-making level.

Being the third year of implementation, all programme approaches, processes and procedures had become clear to programme partners, staff and stakeholders. For instance, in 2023, the global learning event provided an opportunity for showcase where countries outdid themselves in presenting innovations and key results that had begun to emerge from their in-country process thereby providing an opportunity for visioning and strategizing around the learning agenda.

Having learned from the first two years, 2023 also saw a reorganization of key processes such as grantmaking

which was revised to ensure seamless processes that minimized undue delays and ensured funds reached the partners in time. Thus, despite having a slow start, the grant-making component registered some improvements in the middle of the year that contributed to better performance compared to previous years. This resulted in the best budget performance yet whereby the programme closed at 95% budget depletion rate.

The biggest and most defining activity of 2023 was the Mid Term Review (MTR) process which ran for the better part of the year culminating into the annual planning process for 2024 that concluded in October. The MTR was a pivotal moment as it sought to assess and reflect the progress of the programme so far, with regards to changes in context, partnerships and collaboration and the governance structure. It was also meant to examine what changes in these areas mean for the programme's Theory of Change (ToC) and propose improvements for the remaining part of the programme.

The MTR involved a lot of coordination and collaboration with CoA members in all the countries, staff members in different consortium partner organizations, Rightsholders and interviews and engagements with the programme leadership at various levels. It also involved validation processes both at the country and global level to provide an opportunity for the implementers to internalize and validate the findings and recommendations.

Key findings and recommendations highlighted in the MTR indicate that both the overarching and country ToCs are still relevant. The annual ToC review and adaptive management has ensured that the ToCs remain relevant and responsive to the shifting context. However, changing contexts have increased risks faced by Rightsholders, partners and staff of the programme leading to major adaptations by countries on their ToCs in response.

On programme implementation, the MTR revealed progress in achievement of results in all the outcomes with young women being perceived as empowered and We Lead being cited as having made positive contributions in developing the local organizations.

The outcome of the MTR has defined the annual plan of 2024 and will continue to shape the work we lead for the remaining period.



2. Context Analysis

As projected at the beginning of 2023, the context in which we lead was implemented throughout the year can be described as erratic and constraining in most of the countries. Many challenges were experienced ranging from political instability, conflict, economic crisis and attacks of rights holders. Considering the rapid nature in which the context was shifting, 2023 could be described as one of the most difficult years for the programme with some countries experiencing multiple and deeper crises than the previous years.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) the political and economic situation was particularly deeper in **Lebanon** where a series of events left a profound impact on the nation's social fabric and political climate. The first half of the year began with further deterioration of the national currency from around 63,000LBP in January reaching a new low of 100,000LBP to the US Dollar in March 2023. This resulted in an increase in prices of all goods including the basic necessities. The situation was compounded by increased taxes resulting in workers paying much higher taxes while receiving no public services. The rise in taxes also affected civil society organizations including We Lead partners who now need to pay more taxes to the government than the previous years. Ironically these organizations don't receive any public services, not even protection from attacks. One of the We lead partners who was attacked in Tripoli received no protection from the government.

Lebanon was also impacted by the 7.8 Syria-Turkey Earthquake that occurred on 6 February 2023 affecting areas in the North such as Tripoli, causing food insecurity and shelter precarity. There were also raids and forced deportations of Syrian refugees in various areas in Lebanon, with a spike between April and May 2023. These significantly impacted the safety and security, mobility, and activity of Syrian refugees all over Lebanon. Many NGOs and grassroots organizations working with Syrian refugees halted their activities until the situation subsided.

The situation in **Jordan** was relatively similar to Lebanon, and the economic situation worsened due to inflation. The backlash against SRHR and LGBTQ has also been experienced in Jordan in 2023.

In October 2023, the war on Gaza commenced and as a result the South of Lebanon is also under continuous bombardment from Israel. People in Lebanon have been living in fear while anticipating the escalation of Israeli aggression unfolding in the neighboring city of Gaza. These events have paralyzed the country and the region, resulted in solidarity protests, strikes, and sit-ins in support of the Palestinian people and the people of the South. The main consequence that these security events had on the We Lead have been cancellation or postponement of activities, shifting the focus from regular programming to emergency response and relooking at the country's priorities to ensure the programme is responding to the immediate emerging needs. Communities of Action (CoAs) in Jordan are also facing challenges due to this war given that many of them are Palestinian and have family members living in occupied Palestine. These events have taken a huge toll on psychological, emotional and mental wellbeing of We lead CoAs, consortium partners, right holders and staff and have necessitated a rethinking of we lead's safety and security, wellness and wellbeing activities.

In the African region, the impact of political instability was felt most in Niger, where a coup d'état in July resulted in a nationwide curfew and closing of borders that resulted in restriction of travel and increased anxiety among, we lead partners and colleagues. This made it difficult to continue direct implementation forcing some partners to postpone some of the activities.

In Uganda, the passing of the anti-homosexuality Act (2023) made it difficult to continue implementation. With some of we lead partners both at the consortium and national level implementing activities and led by, [REDACTED], there was a need to carefully consider how not to increase partners' risk. It also heightened the anti-SRHR rhetoric with conservative voices taking advantage of the public discourse to oppose



The situation was not different in **Kenya** where despite the Supreme Court ruling that the NGO Board's [redacted] was discriminatory, there was strong opposition from evangelical churches and conservative politicians who continued to spread hate and criticize the judiciary for this ruling. A proposed Family Protection Bill which includes a ban on activities [redacted] was mooted throughout the year and is likely to be tabled in the national assembly any time for discussion.

Nigeria's presidential elections in February 2023 brought in a new government. It is not yet clear what their position on gender and rights will be. However, some attacks were witnessed on a We Lead partner [redacted] presenting one of the challenging safety and security issues in Nigeria.

In **Guatemala** the change of government represents the change of authorities in some institutions, which affects institutional action in favor of Rights Holders. In some regions there has been persecution, criminalization, and judicialization of young women activists or those who speak out against the oppressive system generating fear of getting involved in political advocacy processes. This makes it difficult for rights holders to engage in public participation processes.

Honduras experienced negative changes where some of the programme outcomes that were considered progressive in the recent past are now perceived as setbacks. A case in point is the comprehensive education law for the prevention of teenage pregnancy that was vetoed by the president. This represents a setback, as the efforts to pass the law again may not succeed. Meanwhile the issue of comprehensive sexuality education has become a topic of public debate with strong opposition from certain actors. Despite not representing the majority of the population, these actors wield significant influence in the country's political decisions making advocacy for We lead actors quite difficult.



3. Program Management

Having filled most of the vacant positions at the end of 2022, and having consolidated the programme structures, 2023 was a year of great intensity in execution with the programme operating almost at full capacity. However, in the second quarter there was transition after two Programme Officers (PO) left in Kenya and Mozambique. Drawing from the lessons of 2022, the management team quickly reorganized where by the PO tasks in Kenya and Mozambique were redistributed between different team members to ensure continuity and delivery on the set targets. Additionally, the recruitment process to replace the two position was initiated immediately.

By the beginning of the fourth quarter, the two positions had been replaced. In addition to the positions defined by the program, Hivos hired a Global Operations Program Manager who started with this function at the beginning of 2023 to support the Global Program Manager, to look into inward-facing issues, Host Organizations, Program Officers and budget depletion status. Only the DMEL position in the MENA region is still vacant, as it appears that accepting part-time jobs is uncommon in the region.

Unfortunately, during the last quarter of 2023, the safety and security officer left the programme. Considering the rapidly changing context and the myriad safety and security issues that the programme was experiencing, this transition created an extra challenge and many country teams had to continue working without support. Nevertheless, the programme tapped into the expertise and support of partners who had organized around emerging safety and security

We also tapped into the expertise of our strategic partners such the Thompson Reuters Foundation (TRF) who provided legal advice to both Hivos and CoA. Other partners, relied on the support of safety and security focal points in their countries as well as outsourced security advice that was engaged on consultancy basis and on a need's basis. Internally, we worked closely with our sister programme F2BM who after the departure of the safety and security officer and in view of the serious threats that the rights holders were experiencing engaged a consultant to plug in the gap. This consultant continued to advise both we lead and F2BM for the rest of the year.

In 2023, country ownership and the empowerment of Right holders (RHs) within the CoA organizations were more visible. Even in the midst of adversity, the CoAs did not stop working and supporting RHs in the processes. As we know that local ownership is not linear, each country advanced at its own pace and continued with capacity strengthening respecting contexts and partner readiness.

The CoA facilitators have proven to be an indispensable part of the structure of the CoAs, they lead and push the work so that the Action Plan is carried out, they assume responsibilities for promoting lobbying and advocacy, Capacity Building, security and protection and well-being. We Lead has provided the facilitators with personal growth, strengthening their skills and experience, this allowed four of them to obtain better jobs or scholarships abroad.

Due to the demands of the program, adverse contexts, difficulties with the Hosts or with the CoA organizations 2022 was particularly difficult for most of the COAFs. In 2023 we set out to improve their well-being with systematic support from Hivos Program Officers and benefit from individual coaching, emotional and psychological care. Although greater harmonization has been achieved among all We Lead actors, there are still challenges to be solved in 2024 with respect to work overload, especially in countries with more adverse contexts.

With regards to the programme structure, the Global Management Team (GMT) and the Global Coordination Team (GCT) continued to offer strategic guidance through the monthly meetings where the teams



shared success stories, challenges and innovations as well as undertook joint decision making. A major strategic decision that was taken was the decision to restructure the working groups. After the first two years of the programme, the structure of the working groups was becoming less responsive to the demands of a fully-fledged programme necessitating its rethinking. Through consultations with the Group Coordinators and the members of the GCT, some changes to the working groups were recommended to increase efficiency.

With regards to the Steering Committee (SC), three meetings were held in 2023 in February, July and December. In all meetings, an update was made on the technical, financial and contextual aspects of the programme. Some of the key decisions made by the steering committee include undertaking yearly evaluations of the Host Organizations (HOs,) in order to stay in touch, offer support and avert any challenges. It was also decided that the CoAFs need to be hired by the Host organizations and follow their policies, guidelines and salary scales. Finally, the SC agreed that We Lead needs to center wellness and collective care in the program and measures must be taken to ensure this is implemented.

as well as the coup in Niger and the conflict in MENA. Furthermore, the MTR process was discussed and taking its results into account to assess the possibility of making use of funds more flexible when these adverse contexts occur. The SC suggested using the Resilience Funds as emergency funds if necessary. The year closed on a high note after successfully recruiting the new team of youth representatives to the steering committee after the term of the previous team expired.

4. Lobby and Advocacy

Advocacy is a central element of the We Lead program; through changing hearts and minds of the general public, creating partnerships with health service providers and advocating for more progressive policies, we strive for the full realization of SRHR for young women and girls. Our advocacy efforts were perused with close linkage to the intermediate outcomes of the programme:

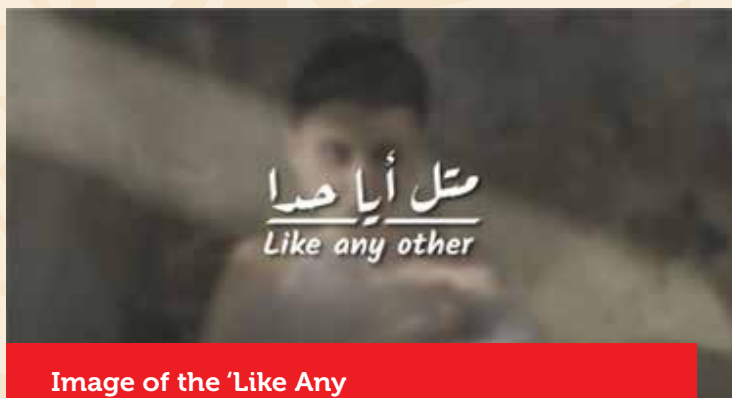


Image of the 'Like Any Other' campaign from Marsa

In line with **Intermediate Outcome 2: The general public increasingly acknowledges and supports young women's SRHR**, Marsa launched the "Like Any Other" campaign, a campaign that aims to dismantle preconceived notions surrounding disability and intimacy. Individuals with disabilities are often asexualized or fetishized in our societies. Marsa challenged these prejudices and sought to eradicate taboos by promoting a more inclusive view through a series of videos where individuals with different disabilities open up about their relationship with their bodies and their own sexuality. (<https://www.marsa.me/like-any-other>)

Related to the video campaign was an initiative spearheaded in Latin America (LATAM) by FCAM "Let's Put a Name to It" with the Community of Action of Guatemala, which is a campaign that aims to name the types of violence systematically exercised in the country by replicating systems of oppression. The Honduran CoA

organization Acción Joven carried out a communication campaign with crucial messages for the sexual and reproductive health of migrants to empower young migrant women. It's part of a strategy to disseminate the results of the report "Situation of the sexual and reproductive health of adolescent women and young Honduran migrants in transit," as well as the launch of the app called "MUNI" to provide information to women in transit about their sexual and reproductive rights, helplines and defense mechanisms.

In Guatemala, the exhibition "I am, we are" was coordinated between Mujeres con Capacidad de Soñar a Colores and La Revuelta Arte, which presented a dialogue between artists, with and without disabilities, around sexuality and disability in artistic co-creation. The exhibition was attended by 104 people, including 35 women with disabilities from the municipalities of Sololá, Quiché, Guatemala City, Chimaltenango, and Sacatepéquez.



Statues of the 'Informar es Cuidar' campaign in Honduras

Additionally, our lead technical partner M&C Saatchi supported and guided the Honduran CoA in the creation of a campaign on comprehensive sexuality education. With three statues, made by local artists, they visualized teenagers who expressed the need for sexuality education. The statues were covered in testimonies and data on how a lack of education has shaped their lives when facing STIs, teenage pregnancy, abuse and familial miscommunications. The exhibition 'Informar es Cuidar' (informing is caring), now tours around key cities in Honduras. There has been positive or neutral media coverage, 23% of which on TV.

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

Despite the escalating security situation in the South of Lebanon, Marsa implemented its annual Healthcare Providers' workshop in November 2023. The biggest workshop to date, where 47 participants attended in person, in addition to seven participants from Jordan who attended virtually. The workshop which brought together different health care professionals (midwives nurses, pharmacists, psychologists, and social workers) resulted in an increase in awareness (29%) regarding the availability of resources to support young people with disability with their menstruation without medical intervention to delay it. Other interesting findings include a 30% increase in post test that sex-ed does not increase young people's engagement in sexual activity which is among the main misconceptions perpetuated in conservative contexts.

In Latin America (LATAM), a CoA member the Artemisa Honduras Collective carried out two awareness-raising activities for health professionals on care with a differentiated approach based on sexual orientation and gender identity; this activity was carried out with medical and nursing staff from Valle de Ángeles, Cantarranas, and Talanga, reaching 35 health professionals. Additionally, an exchange of experiences and knowledge was carried out with the Ministry of Health of Guatemala and the Ministry of Health of Honduras. This provided a space for representatives of various networks on Prevention and Control of HIV-AIDS, to come together and exchange experiences.

Additionally, Positive Vibes (PV) conducted STLs in Guatemala where for the first time young RHs engaged directly with healthcare providers. Kenya, implemented Ma'Box and conducted a participatory data-analysis and interpretation exercise with RH and healthcare providers bringing them as equals to discuss quality improvement of access to services. PV also convened country-based planning meetings with Mozambique, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria and Guatemala, to prepare for the Health Systems Strengthening and Accountability (HSMA) work. The meetings resulted in signed MoUs with Healthcare facilities to facilitate the local CoA organizations monitoring the quality and access of SRHR services. PV also led the Setting the Levels dialogue process for community-led monitoring of health facilities in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.



Rights-holders in dialogue with healthcare providers during data analysis process in Kenya

In a bid to improve attitudes of health care providers, the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) conducted a Value Clarification and Attitude Transformation (VCAT) training on Unpacking Diversity and Rights Holder Friendly Service Provisions for Healthcare Providers in Kenya. The diverse participants in the training included clinicians, community health nurses, maternity professionals, and SRHR service providers. The training covered the change of attitude, values assessment, diversity, inclusion, and rights-holder-friendly service provision.

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

At the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 67**, Restless Development (RD) served as an official organizing partner for the CSW Youth Forum and Intergenerational Dialogue, playing a pivotal role in shaping the five key recommendations for inclusion in the Agreed Conclusions and the Youth Forum. This platform also facilitated connections for five youth advocates to numerous speaking engagements. Additionally, We Lead hosted a parallel event that brought together young feminist voices from the MENA region, Central America, and Africa, alongside representatives from the Malala Fund. This gathering provided a unique opportunity for participants to share their digital activism experiences with CSOs, funders, and other feminist organizers. Rights holders spoke in multiple sessions such as the Youth Forum, Young Feminist Caucus Launch, the feminist futures event by YP Foundation, Global Fund for Women, UN Women, Generation Equality among others. They also participated in the Dutch Feminist Policy Pub Quiz which gave them an opportunity to understand feminist foreign policy and how this affects the flow of funds to youth organizations.

One of the issues that featured in these conversations was the accessibility of the CSW, especially for organizations from the global south and young women. Despite being the largest space dedicated to advancing gender equality globally, many feminists, advocates for women's rights, and African girls and women are still not able to go to New York to participate. During the meetings, issues such as difficulties obtaining a USA visa and getting to New York were discussed. When considering the widening digital divide, virtual interactions may restrict women's access (costly internet connectivity, limited access to digital gadgets, irregular power interruptions, inconsistent bandwidth etc.)

In response to these challenges, FEMNET hosted the **AfricaDisruptCSW67** as a space, co-curated and co-designed to allow African women and girls in all their diversity to deep dive into the CSW67 theme, challenging the patriarchal and colonial underpinnings embedded in the design of digital technology and re-imagining solutions, for and by Africans. Over 500 distinguished delegates from 21 African countries including a rightsholder from Niger, under the We Lead project, convened virtually and in Lilongwe, Malawi. FEMNET curated, disseminated regular updates throughout the CSW67 period, including a position statement and the Lilongwe Declaration. This contributed to creating a bigger, stronger voice and positioning the African women and girls for the CSW 67. The position statement later informed advocacy at CSW67 in New York.

In April, Restless Development accompanied two CoA members, from Lebanon and Jordan, to attend the **Commission on Population and Development** at UN headquarters and moderated a session around comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and youth with disabilities. The side event was organized by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hivos, DCDD and the Right Here Right Now consortium. The event included a CoA member from Lebanon, the SRHR youth ambassador for the Netherlands, representative from the government of Australia, and medical doctor who is a focal point at UNFPA and was moderated by Restless Development.

During the **Women Deliver Conference**, Restless Development, Hivos and Marsa spearheaded and moderated an event at the UN Foundation Nest Hub. The interactive session, "Intersectionality in Practice - Building a Global SRHR Movement Serving Young Women in all their Diversity," featured CoA members from Lebanon and Honduras. Furthermore, We Lead facilitated rights holder participation throughout the main conference, where they contributed to a side event that highlighted feminist movements in their countries. Additionally, a Jordan CoA spoke at a side event titled "Strategies for Equality in the Arab Region," where she discussed the region's major challenges and proposed solutions as a young Jordanian woman.

On October 31, the day before the **Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference (SFFP)**, Hivos co-hosted the FFP Community Festival in The Hague. In a wide variety of sessions, civil society actors got a platform to share their input and perspectives on what feminist foreign policy should look like.

While Hivos attended the SFFP, Restless Development participated virtually, due to travel security limitations. Both organizations collaborated and virtually participated in the pre-conference in a session titled "The future is now: the road to meaningful & inclusive youth participation as a core principle in FFP," discussing principles and tools for engaging youth effectively.

ICASA 2023 was organized by the Society for AIDS in Africa in partnership with the government of Zimbabwe. In too many countries and for too many communities, there is a rising trend in the number of new HIV and STI infections. During ICASA three rights holders were supported to attend the conference, from Kenya, Uganda and Mozambique. At the youth corner, the three rights holders convened and spearheaded young peer to peer sessions using different modes such as theater, songs, and traditional exhibition across communities. They mobilized young people across the continent to access and benefit from cross learning initiatives. Approximately 300 young people were reached with SRHR, diversity and inclusivity messages led by our rights holders. The participant from Mozambique shared her experience as a young person living with HIV. She shared her struggles accessing services including the medication ARVs. Her experience sparked conversations around young people's access to comprehensive sexuality education.



As a result of two regional learning visits conducted in by PV in Guatemala and Uganda, rightsholders affected by displacement participated in dialogue with UNHCR in Guatemala and Office of the Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees in Uganda – highlighting the SRHR realities of women affected by displacement. This introduction of CoA organizations to agencies working with displaced populations aims to yield a pathway for direct advocacy to influence policies that relate to women affected by displacement. In partnership with Nile Girls Forum (a Ugandan CoA organization) a focus group discussion was held with rightsholder representatives from the African We Lead countries, and refugees living in the Urban Refugee camp in Uganda. These processes generated many lessons and resulted in the development of a new methodology by PV thereby demonstrating the principle adaptive programming.

Strengthening public and political support in The Netherlands

Prior to the Dutch national elections, Hivos co-organized the SRHR election debate. The event facilitated a dialogue between Dutch politicians and activists from the Global South on the importance of SRHR as a policy priority of the Netherlands. With participation from D66, GroenLinks-PvdA and Volt, political parties made commitments to protect the rights of (young) women, girls and the LGBTIQ+ community worldwide.

Hivos is an active member of WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform, Dutch Human Rights Platform (BMO) and the SRHR lobby platform. The latter is a cohort of organizations vocally supporting SRHR as a policy priority for the Dutch government. The platform works with Members of Parliament in the Multi Party Initiative on SRHR including HIV and Aids.

In June, Hivos joined a WO=MEN breakfast meeting with newly instated members of the Dutch Senate to deliver a pitch

Partnering with artists and festivals

In a collaboration with the Royal Academy of Arts (KABK), Master students exhibited the results of their interactions with activists from We Lead, Free to be Me and Voices for Just Climate Action. The CoA Facilitator from Niger attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition, held in The Hague in April 2023.

In 2023, Hivos was a sponsoring partner of the Pink Film Days in Amsterdam and the Queer Film Festival Utrecht. Hivos is committed to involving Dutch audiences in women's and queer stories from around the world and creating a sense of global solidarity among (young) feminist and queer audiences.

musicians and professionals came together to discuss inclusion in the music industry. The global advocacy officer gave a TED-talk style presentation on the rise of the global anti-rights movement.



5. Communications

In a bid to improve and deepen country level communication, Hivos redesigned and started the implementation of a multi-stranded communications and publicity intervention that is People-centered, aimed at reducing power imbalances, focusing on young women rights holders in the driver's seat and with direct involvement of an expanded network of partners, rightsholders, and Communities of Actions. This is aimed at movement building within the feminist and young women spaces. Moving from a focus on sharing and promoting and profile raising to influencing.

Aligning to relevant national and international events, such as the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, Hivos supported media activities on Radio and television. To amplify the voices of the youth on SRHR the regional Radio Talk Show was conducted in partnership with Vybze radio and digital TV in December. Two young COA members led the live discussions focusing on what young people need to know about SRH-R and SGBV. The radio and digital TV format focus on a discussion with the presenters with an opportunity for listeners to call in with questions for the presenters. Vybez Radio is the number one reggae station that targets the youth aged 15-24 as a primary audience with an estimated reach of over 2 million youths.

Media attention

In March 2023, We Lead's global advocacy officer joined the Dutch national broadcast 'Koffietijd'. In this live morning show (160,000 viewers), they spoke about the new

partners are doing to support the safety of the community.

Additionally, Hivos supported a COA member on a prime TV show, in partnership with TV 47, a regional TV station based in Nairobi with a regional audience of about 15 million TV viewers across East Africa. The TV discussion focused on young women and girls, their SRH-R rights, and SGBV within the We Lead program and the success and challenges so far.

Hivos has continued to enhance We Lead's online presence, through regular amplification of WE Lead events, activities, and engagements with targeted audiences, and effectively communicating We Lead's work.

Hivos partnered with HUMAN, a Dutch broadcaster, to support the television program 'Metropolis'. In this program, local reporters share stories about topics like menstruation, sexuality education and



Cover of Winq Magazine featuring Gracie Brendah Nanyunja, May 2023



On May 10, Minister Schleiermacher handed out the first Hivos International Activist Award to Gracie Brendah Nanyunja from Uganda. This moment was realized through a partnership between Hivos and Winq Magazine, a media platform. Gracie was featured in an online video, on the cover of Winq Magazine and in an article on HUMAN. She spoke about the intersections of being a young person with a disability.

6. Capacity Strengthening, Linking and Learning

The Programme continued to implement its capacity strengthening strategy pushing for empowered and resilient rights holders and CoAFs; stronger and inclusive CSOs, and enhanced political alliances within and across CoAs and with movements to advance rights holders SRHR. Different consortium partners reported progress made towards achieving the We Lead goal of supporting leadership of diverse resilient young women and inclusive organizations in promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRH-R) through various interventions:

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

Positive Vibes (PV) interventions have shown significant progress in empowering young women, promoting inclusive health services, and advocating for policies supporting SRH-R. PV, in collaboration with local CoAs, transferred and contextualized Looking in Looking Out (LILO) Women and LILO Inclusion methodologies in Central America and Africa. The adopted approach to local ownership and contextualization of manuals emphasized the importance of disability inclusion for all individuals. The accompaniment and technical support led to successful roll-out of LILO workshops resulting in improved psychosocial well-being, self-awareness, and self-confidence among participants. Some examples of change which women experienced from participating in LILO Women are shared below:

"Lilo Women empowered me as a woman, it made me take risks in both my career and personal life. It has also made me realize that I am a privileged woman who can use my voice and position in society to advocate for those who are vulnerable." (Woman rightsholder)

"The experience allowed me to enhance my self-awareness, address issues in my personal history and journey that affected how I showed up as a woman." (Woman rightsholder)

"We lead Lilo workshop was a start changing for me personal. It boosted my personality [I] was really shy before [a]nd now am bold and confident serving my community...and yeah today I can look back and see the positive impact it enhanced in my life. Thank you." (Displaced woman rightsholder)

Restless Development (RD) has made significant progress in empowering youth, amplifying their voices, conducting research, and advocating for meaningful youth engagement in various regions through collaborative efforts and leadership development initiatives. Efforts made in capacity strengthening of the COA was through initiatives like Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) and Youth-led accountability (YLA). 38 COA members were trained on MYE and YLA in Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria, leading to the development of national action plans and the integration of MYE principles. In Kenya, organizations like Action for Sustainability Initiative (AFOSI) and Positive Young Women Voices (PYWV) plan to cascade MYE training to their rights holders; Dream Achievers Youth Organization (DAYO) plan to sensitize duty bearers in Kilifi County on MYE while Nyimine Community based organization-NYECBO plan on supporting rights holders to participate in the budget-making process in Siaya County.

During the bi-national COA gathering in Honduras in July 2023, 25 rights holders from Guatemala (10) and Honduras (15) received training in Meaningful Youth Engagement and Youth Led Accountability. As a result, the COA developed their national youth led accountability model, which they will implement in 2024-2025, placing rights holders at the forefront of advocacy implementation and overcoming traditional barriers to conducting advocacy

Youth-led Research (YLR) training sessions were conducted in Nigeria, Lebanon, and Jordan resulting in increased knowledge of youth-led research methodology. This has resulted in collaborations with UNFPA and Ministry of Health for national-level research. Research topics include Adolescent Health and Development, sexual and gender-based violence, and reproductive health. Examples include a virtual training in September 2023 for seven COA rightsholders in Nigeria, collaborating



with UNFPA and the Ministry of Health on national-level research on Adolescent Health and Development. In Lebanon, 12 COA members were trained in May 2023 on youth-led research, resulting in a 55% knowledge increase in the methodology. In June 2023, a YLR training was conducted in Jordan for 23 COA members, sharing youth led research tools, how to produce reports, and how to launch impactful advocacy campaigns. As a result, Hikaya Center for Civil Society Development are concluding on their study for 2024 titled "Assessment of knowledge, attitudes and practices related to SRHR for married and ever married couples in Jordan". In Nigeria, Great Women Initiative for Health and Rights is also concluding a research on discriminatory practices experienced by sex workers accessing SRHR services, while in Uganda Fem Alliance did an **Jinja.**

Resilience Action International (RAI) a CoA member in Kenya, transitioned to a much easier and accessible form of data management and collection tool - Kobo Collect - for community and beneficiary surveys, scorecards, and tracking in Kakuma Refugee camp and Kalobeyei settlement scheme. The same tool was equally adopted by the Inuka Success Organization. In line with research, RD published the **"State of Youth Civil Society Report"** titled "Young, Feminist, and Fearless - Holding the Line," exploring youth civil society's dynamics and the critical role of feminist movements globally. The findings were shared at international forums like Women Deliver Conference in Rwanda, the CPD and CSW 67. The Youth Collective Feminist Network will be launched during the International Women's Day in March 2024 for continued solidarity.

RD also supported the Linking and learning for the COAs, including physical and virtual leadership labs, workshops, and conferences aimed at enhancing the capacity of youth CSOs. 3 physical leadership labs in MENA and CA reached 29 CSOs while 3 virtual leadership labs reached out to 102 youth CSO's. Specific events include the FloreSer Art and Healing, an innovated and collaborative workshop, between RD and PV, in Guatemala which contributed to increased exposure of the CoAs. In December 2023, RD collaborated with Marsa in a Leadership Lab led by COA members Haki Nasawi and Gharsah, focusing on "Standing in Solidarity: Feminism and Colonialism." Their discussion ignited significant conversations and strengthened connections among the 10 organizations that participated in the Lab session. Three virtual leadership lab sessions were conducted on gender equality, climate justice, and violence against women in politics. The first session, held in June, titled **"Gender Equality More than just buzzwords"** for 80 youth civil society organizations. The other two Leadership Labs were held in collaboration with Democracy Moves, titled **"Empowering Youth For Climate Justice"** and **"Strategic Advocacy for Gender Equality Investment: Addressing Violence Against Women in Politics"**. These led to informed advocacy and action among the next generation of leaders.

RD continued with the accompaniment of 9 Community of Action Facilitators (COAFs), supporting them to enhance their leadership skills and empower them to lead change within their respective communities. 28 one-on-one calls were conducted with COAFs for leadership development. The regional and global calls provided opportunities for exchanging experiences. The COAFs were also trained on social media storytelling. There is continued emphasis on the importance of continuous learning, mentorship, and networking for the COAFs. The following are testimonials from COAFs expressing how the accompaniment plan has contributed to their personal and professional growth. The Accompaniment Plan has indeed been very instrumental in my personal leadership development journey. It has helped me refine my managerial skills and gain valuable insights on people management. I've been provided with support and guidance which has increased my confidence, mental wellbeing and effectiveness. Through continuous learning and self-reflection I've become more adaptable and open to change which is enabling me navigate complex CoA challenges and lead with resilience. **Martha Clara Nakato- Uganda COAF.**

"1:1s are a good place to find solutions that I wouldn't usually find on my own, it's also a good space to think about what I'd like to improve. In this sense, I think they are very functional. Regarding the global calls, they are a great space to connect with the other facilitators, to know what everyone is doing, since we don't see each other that often." Ligia DeStephen, COAF from Honduras

"The way in which I've been able to multiply leaders is by sending them opportunities to enhance their knowledge and understanding on critical topics and also how they can effectively engage in advocacy spaces. Another thing is that I offer mentorship and support to young women where I provide guidance and support to young activists, and I've been able to help them in real world experiences and also build a valuable network." Fisayo Owoyemi, former COA Facilitator from Nigeria.

In supporting young women rights holders to feel empowered to fulfill leadership roles, RD recruited and oriented a **new team of rights holders** to join the steering committee. A We Lead powershifting model was documented and devised with two critical learning questions at its core; firstly, how do Restless Development and other key stakeholders involved in the We Lead program define powershifting? Secondly, in practical terms, how and to what extent is power shifting realized within the We Lead program? The detailed findings from this inquiry were disseminated across the consortium and some of the key insights gleaned around the following: Local ownership initiatives as core strategies of power shifting in the programme were overall positively appraised by rights holders and are perceived to facilitate implementation; rights holders expressed appreciation for activities designed to strengthen local COA organizations especially participatory grant making; and prioritizing safety and happiness require a bit more concerted effort and attention.

Following up on the regional advocacy training that took place in 2022, FEMNET organized in-country advocacy training sessions. One of the main outcomes of the training was improved advocacy capacities to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) obligations and commitments within the Ugandan contexts. With enhanced capacities, RH are more confident to navigate advocacy issues and

paces, positioning themselves to defend and promote their rights. FEMNET strengthened the capacity of rights holders from Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Niger and Nigeria on Evidence for impact Advocacy, Opposition Monitoring, Safety, and Security. In Kenya, the training was held in September 2023, bringing together 13(F11/M1/1GNC) participants from 10 COAs. Following this training, COA representative from Inuka Youth Success in Kisumu, joined the Monitoring and Evaluation Technical working group under the department of health in Kisumu County. Two other rights holders represent the rights holders in the Technical Working Group. The County M&E technical working group is the custodian of all health data and as such is essential for data driven and evidence-based advocacy. The two participants can now access Kenya Health Information System (KHIS) data and use it for advocacy at the county level because of the training that was supported by the project.

The Central America Women's Fund (FCAM) supported a binational meeting in Tegucigalpa bringing together seven organizations from Guatemala and nine from Honduras to enhance the knowledge of rights holders on relevant SRH-R issues. The workshops focused on supporting youth participation in critical thinking spaces for SRH-R. There was emphasis on using popular, community, and diverse pedagogy in memory development. The programme highlighted the importance of intergenerational dialogues and improving institutional capacities of grantees. In addition, FCAM conducted monitoring visits and exchanges to provide feedback and support to grantee partners in both Guatemala and Honduras. FCAM provided training for the presentation of reports with quality and clarity, emphasizing the work of partner organizations.

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

In ensuring the rights holders have tools and strategies to implement activities to influence public opinion on SRHR, RD supported rights holder voices in global advocacy spaces: 5 rights holders were supported to

participate in three global conferences; the CSW67, Women Deliver, and CPD56. Parallel events were also conducted attracting 30+ participants from youth civil society, donors, and We Lead COAs. We Lead directly influenced the five recommendations to be reflected in the **Agreed Conclusions** on the role of technology, innovation, and education in the digital age in accelerating gender equality. These events served as a space to reflect on advocacy strategies in light of the feminist foreign policy and its impact on funding opportunities. In addition, the events ensured that young women's agency and voices were heard, showcasing their innovations in addressing sexual and gender injustice in their communities. The State of Youth Civil Society Report which emphasizes the crucial contributions of feminist movements in promoting equity, safety, and freedom globally was launched at the Women Deliver (with 3 rights holders on a panel), CPD and CSW conferences underlining the empowerment of rights holders with tools and strategies for public influence on sexual and reproductive health rights (SRH-R), highlighting the importance of equipping rights holders to lead impactful advocacy efforts.

Marsa on the other hand, run a video campaign to inform and raise awareness on Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), very prevalent in the MENA region, but remains highly under-diagnosed. The aim of the video campaign was to raise awareness and highlight the importance of medical follow-up when it comes to our sexual health. The video was launched on June 22 and it reached more than 5,800 accounts to date. The video was complemented with a series of social media posts detailing key information about PCOS including diagnosis and treatment. Link to the video: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cs3pRrANUPW/?igshid=YTUzYTFiZD-MwYg%3D%3D> Link to post: https://www.instagram.com/p/CtyXX9WNWJo/?igsh=MWx6bjl-wc3l6NHJzNg%3D%3D&img_index=1 Through the PCOS awareness campaign, more people are more informed and aware of the condition, the symptoms and the importance of medical follow-ups when it comes to our sexual and reproductive health. <https://www.marsa.me/like-any-other>

Marsa also developed an online platform that serves as a reference for inclusive and non-stigmatizing information and resources on SRHR for Arabic speaking people as well as the rest of the world in English and possibly French. Among the resources of this platform are several topics, including sexuality, pleasure, and other taboo topics that cannot be freely shared on social media platforms, especially community in the region. The website offers a safer and freer platform to be able to share more inclusive and comprehensive content. The platform was finalized in December 2023 however it was launched in February 2024 due to the situation in Gaza (www.marsa.me)

FEMNET conducted Media Training with rights holders from Mozambique, Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda to amplify advocacy efforts. The training covered topics like social media use, working with influencers, and creating campaigns around SRH-R dialogues. Safety and security concerns, especially for marginalized groups individuals, were emphasized. FEMNET also utilized mainstream and social media platforms to raise public awareness on SRHR issues. They used platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to amplify conversations using the hashtag #SRHRDialogues. On average, 970,700 people saw #SRHRDialogues on Facebook, and 77,200 people were reached on Twitter. The accessibility of the CSW for organizations from the global south and young women was highlighted as a major issue.

Through the support of the organization Reportar Sin Miedo as an alternative digital media, FCAM consolidated space on its website to promote the activities of we lead in Honduras (<https://reportarsinmiedo.org/?s=We%20Lead>); the space allows organizations to increase the visibility of their political stakes as a collective and as part of the joint initiative. The organization Acción Joven carried out a communication campaign with crucial messages for the sexual and reproductive health of migrants to empower young migrant women. The launch of the app called "MUNI" provides



information to women in transit about their sexual and reproductive rights, helplines and defense mechanisms. (<https://accionjovenhn.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SS-RR-y-Migracion-Honduras-Accion-Joven.pdf>).

The exhibition "I am, we are" coordinated between Mujeres con Capacidad de Soñar a Colores and La Revuelta Arte, presented a dialogue between artists, with and without disabilities, around sexuality and disability in artistic co-creation. The exhibition was attended by 104 people, including 35 women with disabilities from the municipalities of Sololá, Quiché, Guatemala City, Chimaltenango, and Sacatepéquez. Additionally, with the work carried out through the sensitization of journalists, social communicators, influencers, and opinion generators, multiple communication products and articles aimed at the progression of SRHR in the Central American region were created. As part of the Reportar Sin Miedo training school process, people from the CoA organizations and rights holders participated and a second training process was developed for content creators.

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

PV conducted the Setting the Levels dialogue process in Mozambique, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, and Guatemala, leading to signed MoUs with healthcare facilities. As a result, community-led monitoring processes saw improved relationships between health service providers and community organizations, leading to tangible changes in service provision. Examples include the successful implementation of the STL process in Guatemala and Nigeria, resulting in improved dialogue between rights holders and healthcare providers. The success of the STL process in Nigeria was to begin a conversation and build relationship between rights holders and healthcare providers as commented by one of the rights holders who participated in the process,

"It gets everyone into the room and gives a chance for them, communities and healthcare workers, to personalize the issues. It's also a chance to make the divide between health facilities and communities smaller, to change perspectives, to impact some people so they get to the point of saying '...okay, I see what you're saying'". As a follow-up to the sexual health education workshop held in 2022, Marsa conducted on-site coaching visits to 3 of the CoAs in Jordan (Forearms of Change; Takatoat, and Bushra). The objective was to have one-on-one discussions with CoAs that provide sexual health services in order to share Marsa's vast experience in inclusive and engaging sexual health service delivery. Marsa also visited 2 of the newly joined CoAs, Hikaya, and the working Women Association, to establish a more meaningful relationship and offer support. Through the coaching visits, the COAs providing services were able to benefit from Marsa's extensive experience in providing friendly and non-stigmatizing SRHR services. The visits allowed both Marsa's team and the COAs to share good practices to improve accessibility to the services provided.

Marsa also conducted an annual healthcare providers' workshop in November 2023 at the University of St-Joseph in Beirut, despite the escalating security situation in south Lebanon. The biggest workshop to date, forty-seven participants attended in person, in addition to seven participants from Jordan who attended virtually. Many of the participants were midwives and other front liners, working in remote areas across all of Lebanon, this significantly contributes to the decentralization of SRHR services and improves access to non-stigmatizing and holistic care. They expressed a new sense of motivation to promote SRHR in their practice. The results of the pre-tests and post-tests show a significant increase in correct responses.

In LATAM, FCAM worked with the Artemisa Honduras Collective to conduct awareness-raising activities for health professionals on care with a differentiated approach based on sexual orientation and gender identity; the activities which were carried out with medical and nursing staff from Valle de Ángeles, Cantarranas, and Talanga, reached 35 health



professionals. Additionally, through CEPROSAF, an exchange of experiences and knowledge was carried out with the Ministry of Health of Guatemala and the Ministry of Health of Honduras. Eleven representatives of the National Program for the Prevention and Control of HIV-AIDS, two of the Guatemalan Network of Positive Women in Action, two of Women in Overcoming, and six representatives of the Friends Against AIDS Collective participated in the exchange experiences. These activities led to visits to other organizations working on the same issues. CAPRODI also installed a monitoring system for the implementation of protocols for health care and sexual and reproductive rights of women with disabilities in public health care centers and justice operator centers. Three of the most critical public health centers in the municipality of El Progreso currently are implementing care protocols and monitoring systems for sexual and reproductive health rights. In addition, CAPRODI promotes training in differentiated care protocols for access to sexual and reproductive rights for women with disabilities aimed at health officials, justice operators, and municipal officials, reaching thirty-three professionals from various lines of care strategically selected for replication in health services.

Intermediate outcome 4: Duty-bearers increasingly design, adopt and implement laws and policies that respect and protect the SRH-R of young women from right holder groups

PV piloted innovative methodologies such as Art for Healing in Kenya (in partnership with Dream Achievers Youth Organization (DAYO)) and Guatemala (in partnership with Incidejoven and La Ruevelta, with support from Restless Development and HIVOS), and the Seen and Heard methodology for displaced populations (to be piloted in 2024 which aims to, through a therapeutic process, provide an opportunity for people affected by displacement to make visible and vocalize their lived realities). The engagement with UNHCR in Guatemala and the Office of the Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees in Uganda, and other agencies aimed to influence policies affecting women affected by displacement. The creation of a short documentary by displaced women through an online film making workshop highlighted their SRH-R realities, which can be watched here. Progress was also noted in supporting diverse women to engage in advocacy through art-based processes, with initiatives planned for 2024 to further enhance advocacy outcomes.

7. Linking and Learning

Linking and learning has remained a fundamental component of the programme with different consortium members and other programme stakeholders making efforts to support learning initiatives. In 2023, the learning agenda was developed and approved for implementation. The learning trajectory is both intentional and emergent. At the Program, regional and country level we are intentional in identifying learning questions from our contextualized Theories of Change through our DMEL section. We create evidence through research and provide opportunities for sharing good practices and lessons learned including learning from others such as MOFA learning events.

We also capitalize on emergent learning as a continuous process and ensure we learn from our activities as well as activities with others. During annual reflection meetings, the team proactively identify learning topics (both intentional and emergent) as well as approaches to guide the learning agenda, leaving room for dynamism. Key thematic areas identified include local ownership; diversity and inclusion; innovation and digitization; mutual capacity strengthening; and wellness, well-being and power dynamics.

The year began with a global Linking & Learning event in Mozambique in February 2023 where the team reviewed the performance of the program and created space to share regional reflections and learnings around different interventions. The team also reflected globally across countries and based on the learnings, identified strategies and focus areas for 2023.



Learning extended to global advocacy platforms such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 67) where RD served as an official organizing partner for the CSW Youth Forum and Intergenerational Dialogue, playing a pivotal role in shaping the five key recommendations for inclusion in the Agreed Conclusions and the Youth Forum Program. This platform also facilitated connections for five youth advocates to numerous speaking engagements.

In April 2023, We Lead through RD accompanied two CoA members, from Lebanon and Jordan, to attend the Commission on Population and Development CPD56 at UN headquarters and moderated a session around comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and youth with disabilities. The side event was organized by Hivos and other CSOs and provided an opportunity for the RH to link with young women from other countries in an international advocacy platform and represent their perspectives in CSE and disabilities.

During the Women Deliver conference in Rwanda, We Lead spearheaded and moderated an event at the UN Foundation Nest Hub. The interactive session, "Intersectionality in Practice - Building a Global SRH-R Movement Serving Young Women in all their Diversity," featured CoA members from Lebanon and Honduras. The programme further facilitated rights holders' participation to a side event launching the SOYCS report and highlighted feminist movements in their countries; Jordan CoA member spoke at a side event titled "Strategies for Equality in the Arab Region," where she discussed the region's major challenges and proposed solutions as a young Jordanian woman.

In the MENA region, We Lead collaborated with the consortium partners and the Jordan host organization, ANHRE, to hold the Linking and Learning Conference in Jordan. The conference brought together CoAs from Jordan with government representatives to strategize on how to advance SRH-R for young women. RD shared key practice tips on MYE and how to accompany rights holders in global advocacy events. Since it was unsafe to bring the Jordanian COAs to Lebanon for a MENA convention, a smaller 2-day convention with the COAs in Lebanon was

conducted. Gharsa, Haki Nasawi, and the COAF each led conversations during the convention.

In August 2023, the programme held its first Webinar on Local Ownership, bringing together all the 9 countries, COAs, and consortium partners. The webinar was designed to explore the context in which local ownership happens within We Lead Program; learn what it means putting rights holders at the driver's seat; establish ways in which Host Organization engagement can be strengthened as an enabler of local ownership; and to establish how participatory grant making embed local ownership and sustainability of programs.

We Lead, through RD collaborated on and virtually participated in the pre-conference during the Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference, in a session titled "The future is now: the road to meaningful & inclusive youth participation as a core principle in FFP," discussing principles and tools for engaging youth effectively.

The program also linked the CoAFs to multiple opportunities to strengthen their leadership skills and to enable them to share their expertise with other young feminists, enhancing their motivation and leadership expertise. Key highlights include the participation of two CoAFs, Nour Nahhas from Lebanon and Fisayo Owoyemi from Nigeria who were main speakers in the Leadership Lab that focused on gender and social inclusion in programs, where they shared their expertise and experience to more than 80 youth civil society organizations.

Mujeres con Capacidad de Soñar a Colores from Guatemala participated in the 16th Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, where they addressed the issue of the sexual and reproductive rights of women with various types of disabilities. Muñecas de Arcoiris conducted advocacy actions with the Trans Women's Diaspora in the US.



8. DMEL and Research

Engagement and equipping of Country DMEL focal points:

Capacity strengthening in Monitoring and evaluation was identified as a significant capacity gap during the capacity assessment exercise conducted across all 111 COA. In response, Hivos designed a five-part series capacity strengthening session for the country DMEL focal points and some COAFs. The aim was to equip the DMEL focal points with skills to enhance their capacity to implement M&E activities. The sessions included topics such as Annual Reporting, expectations from the Mid-Term Review, data capture and management, basket indicators and outcome harvesting. For example, the session on data capture and management was structured as a cross-learning opportunity, where DMEL focal points that are managing their data well shared their tools and approaches with others. An instance of this was when the DMEL focal point from Guatemala shared their data management tools and approaches with the other DMEL focal points

Research

Local ownership: The programme commissioned research on local ownership to establish how CoAs can facilitate local ownership in rights-based programming. The research aimed to provide answers to the following questions: following key questions

1. What is the understanding of local ownership in our alliances and CoA organizations? What are the implications (or risks) for local ownership for rights holders and local partners?
2. What roles do rights holders play in CoAs, both directly and indirectly?
3. How were COAs set up, structured, and designed over the first year based on lessons regarding influencing local ownership for rights holders? What are the implications for foreseen roles and changes therein for local organizations?
4. What can be said about the role of Hivos in CoAs and the resulting implications for local ownership?
5. What challenges emerge and what ways of addressing these can be identified?

Data collection was concluded in 2023, documentation findings and dissemination of the same will be done in 2024 to inform the local ownership approach within We Lead

Meaningful Youth Engagement -

Youth-led research: Over the past three years, 3 years, restless development has equipped rights holders with the skills to conduct their research and advocacy, influencing community decision-makers within their communities. This has empowered them to conduct their research and use the evidence generated to advocate and influence decision-makers in their communities. As a result, Rights holders in We Lead countries like Jordan, Uganda, and Nigeria have initiated their research, including contributions to the State of Youth Civil Society Report" report published by Restless Development. Restless development-supported countries develop accompaniment plans for the COAs as follow-ups to ensure all actions from the training are operationalized.

This has contributed to the credibility and sustainability of COAs having their generated evidence to support advocacy on their sexual reproductive health and rights.

In Nigeria, Restless Development conducted virtual training for seven COA following physical research training. This led to a collaboration between UNFPA and the Ministry of Health on a national level research on Adolescent Health and Development (AHD) in Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Health. Additionally, a CoA (Stand with a Girl Initiative) plan to lead research on Knowledge, Perception, and Experience on Sexual and Gender-based Violence in WASSA Internal Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp applying the youth-led research skills they learned.

In Lebanon, 12 COA members were trained on youth-led research methodology. The team plans to utilize the knowledge to conduct research exploring the impact of the economic crisis on women with disabilities.



In Jordan, 23 COA members, were trained on how to use youth-led research tools, produce reports, and launch impactful advocacy campaigns. As a result, the Hikaya Center for Civil Society Development; is concluding on a titled "Assessment of knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to the sexual and reproductive health of married and ever-married couples in Jordan: a mixed qualitative and quantitative study".

Resilience Action International (RAI) a CoA member in Kenya who received a Youth Led Research training has transitioned from internet-dependent Google Forms to Kobo Collect; an offline, user-friendly and accessible data collection and management tool. The tool is used for community and beneficiary surveys, scorecards, and tracking in Kakuma Refugee camp and Kalobeyei settlement scheme. After the training on data collection and management, they were able to simplify their data management and analysis systems and trained their teams on how to use Kobo collect. The same tool was equally adopted by the Inuka Success Organization.

Health Systems Monitoring and Accountability: Positive vibes rolled out the health systems Monitoring and Accountability. An innovative and comprehensive model specifically designed for Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) participation in health facility monitoring, strengthening and accountability. The model aims to improve user experience, increases demand for services, and reduce barriers to access. The approach ensures community participation in health facility data collection and research, while also engaging the health facility in interaction and dialogue with local SGM communities, working together towards strengthening systems for health. The model is distinctive is that it bridges the divide between users and service providers through creative and interactive dialogues allowing for stakeholders to connect, talk and think together using the methodology. Ma 'Box is a virtual suggestion box where service users provide feedback on their experiences. The data analysis step allows communities to engage with their data and reflect collectively.

Mid Term Review

The We Lead Mid Term review (MTR) for the period Jan 2021 to June 2023 was conducted between March to September 2023 in all the nine We Lead countries. The MTR aimed at to enable We Lead Consortium and the Ministry to review the program's progress, reflect on changes in context and to learn and consider what this means for the Theory of Change at regional and global programme level between 2021 and mid-2023 to make improvements and course correct where necessary for 2024- 2025. The review focused on four main objectives: Programmatic assessment where the review focuses on how the regional and global programs have adapted to context (the Theory of Change (overarching and in-country ToCs), and includes risk analysis (SEAH, fraud and corruption). Partnership and collaboration assessment where the review should focus on leading from the south, partnership with the consortium partners, Ministry and the Embassies, lessons learned and good practices. Program and governance structures assessment, highlighting gaps and possible areas of strengthening. Based on the findings, propose recommendations for improvement, course correction and adjustment of direction and outcome targets, strategies and/or interventions and sustainability and ownership

At the onset of commissioning the MTR, Hivos engaged a reference group comprising of representatives from the consortium partners. Their role was to oversee the evaluation and assure evaluation quality and independence. The group reviewed the Terms of Reference, participated in the selection of evaluators, the elaborated methodology (inception report), and the draft evaluation report. Additionally, all processes at the country level were facilitated by the COA Facilitator and DMEL focal points.

Participatory and inclusive Country validation meetings were organized at a country and global level to validate the MTR findings and recommendations. The validation meetings were attended by rights holders, COA organizations, the host organization, and consortium



members' representatives. Feedback shared during the validation meetings was used to improve the country's MTR report.

Global Validation Workshop: Hivos organized a participatory and inclusive virtual global validation workshop which had an attendance of 67 representatives from consortium, host organizations and COAs and provided simultaneous translation was in Arabic, Spanish, French and Portuguese. The purpose of the Global validation workshop was to present the key global findings from the review, to provide a space for all stakeholders to give their opinion on the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the findings, to provide their recommendations for areas that can be improved with the report. The workshop also provided a space for all stakeholders to collectively discuss the implications of the findings and recommendations for the work of We Lead and to strategize on ways forward to address the key emerging themes.

Findings and recommendations from the MTR were incorporated into the annual plans and budget for implementation in year 2024 and 2025.



9. Safety and Security

Threats to safety and security of rights holders, staff and partners remained a constant concern throughout 2023

. Across the border in Kenya, a wave of politically instigated violence where picketing by citizens who were protesting oppressive taxation policies, inflation and high cost of living were met with police brutality resulting in many deaths, injuries and destruction of property.

In Niger, a military coup took place where a democratically elected president was deposed and the commander of the presidential guard declared himself leader. This resulted in a nationwide curfew, and the closing of borders making it impossible to move in and out of Niger. This adversely impacted we lead implementation and led to cancellation of many activities both by consortium partners and the COAs.

In the MENA region, in both Lebanon and Jordan specifically targeting feminist activists in Jordan which was re-ignited by a female former member of the parliament. Her views were supported by other MPs, politicians, social media influencers and even news platforms, which is extremely disappointing and urges us to be more aware of safety and security issues by avoiding mentioning any term or wording that includes or implies gender identity or sexual orientation.

Additionally, a we lead consortium partner (Marsa) was directly impacted by this and SRHR when it's clinic in Tripoli (a conservative city in the North of Lebanon) was attacked by a group of conservative individuals who manage a Facebook page and a WhatsApp group and who chase after sensationalized stories for the sake of gaining more followers and interactions on their platforms. These individuals forced the hospital administration, where Marsa's small clinic was based, to allow them into our clinic and they rummaged through our things while filming live on Facebook claiming that Marsa clinic performs "sex change" activities! The video is refer-

enced in the incident report. Marsa's team was not present that day and necessary safety and security measures were taken to ensure no physical harm to any of our employees or beneficiaries.

This included halting the services in Tripoli, closing the center in Beirut for a few days, and relocating to a safer location in Beirut. Through the safety and security component of our We Lead project, Marsa got approval from the Program Manager to utilize some of the budget for the relocation to a safe place. The weeks following that attack were incredibly stressful and garnered a lot of public opinion. Thankfully the majority of the general public spoke against this attack and stated that Marsa's services are essential given the level of ignorance these attackers showed with regards to SRHR. The backlash from this incident gradually decreased and has now completely stopped.

As if the situation in MENA was not bad enough, things rapidly deteriorated in October 2023 when the war in Gaza commenced. As a result, the South of Lebanon is also under continuous bombardment from Israel. People in Lebanon have been living in fear while anticipating the escalation of Israeli aggression as they witness a genocide unfolding in neighboring city of Gaza. As a result of the war, the regional conference on HIV that Marsa was co-hosting in November was postponed until February 2024 and was converted into an online conference. This had significant budgetary consequences as Marsa was working on hosting many right holders from across the MENA region, especially Jordan, during the conference as it presented an excellent opportunity to engage with HIV activists from the region. The war also impacted the convention activity that was to take place in December.

Further afield in **Guatemala**, threats and state violence have been visualized within the framework of the elections, which hinders maintaining clear advocacy strategies that could benefit sexual and reproductive rights. There has also been high-level cyber-attacks that have resulted in the loss of confidential information from organizations and have affected the mental health of CoA members.



Most organizations and collectives faced insecurity as they are located in rented physical spaces (offices) in insecure areas (assaults, inaccessible transportation, violence, harassment, etc.). This is due to the cost of rent. CoA organizations have faced different types of attacks, both physical and digital. These attacks have resulted in the loss of confidential information from organizations and have affected the mental health of CoA members.

In **Honduras**, [redacted] activated disinformation campaigns against CSE. They collected signatures and continue to hold events to prevent CSE from being implemented in the country. Insecurity also happened in the form of heavy rains putting certain areas of the country at risk, something that happens every year and causes power outages, endangers the lives of the population, and in some cases, rights holders must seek temporary places of protection.

The security situation in most countries gravely impacted. We lead work with some countries experiencing more severe impact. In Uganda the situation is still too hostile to allow for direct engagement with the districts on SRHR advocacy, [redacted] women in Uganda are largely impacted by the [redacted] uality bill and some of the CoA organizations have had to vacate offices due to threats of violence and sexual assault towards staff [redacted]

Evictions have also been witnessed in some regions such as Gulu while an increase in gender-based violence have been reported and [redacted] have been forced into marriage by families, or trapped in marriages by husbands who threaten to use the new legislation as cause to remove them from their children. Security agencies have been reported to abduct [redacted] people off the streets in Gulu and then disappearing them to farms where they are subjected to forced hard labour and torture. The NGO Bureau has commenced a systematic investigation – with in-person visits – of organizations to affect additional closures. Contracts that Resilience had with service organizations or through the district have been nullified, and have needed to be renegotiated (following authorization from the Ministry of Health in a recent circular).

Through the safety and security mechanisms and processes in place, the programme responded to some of the security issues outlined above. However, due to the erratic nature of the changing context, the response was not always adequate and we had to tap into other resources such as the Bessy Ferrera fund, and the Digital Defenders programme for support in rolling our emergency response. Additionally, we

had to align with like-minded strategic partners who came together to respond to some of the issues for support, cross learning and joint planning. In Uganda for instance, we tapped into the networks such as Convening for Equality (CCEF) which is a legal committee formed to analyze the act and its impact on the right holders which was leading the legal processes challenging the Act. We lead also aligned with like-minded actors such as frontline defenders and tapped into the expertise of our strategic partners such as the Thompson Reuters Foundation for legal advice and support to the COAs. At the country level the host organization rallied the COA members under the different convenings including the one led by the embassy of the Netherlands in Uganda for solidarity and joint planning.

In Niger, we lead joined the country level convenings spearheaded by the embassy in Niamey with likeminded INGOs for information sharing, solidarity and joint planning.

<https://www.digitaldefenders.org/bessy-ferrera-fund/>





In Lebanon, Marsa made budget shifts to enable them tap into expertise within the country for support. Through this support, they were able to evacuate their staff, and undertake some emergency response needed to guarantee the safety of the rights holders, staff and their facilities.

In Nigeria, we lead worked collaboratively with our sister programme F2BM who also supported the partner in question and had laid out a rapid response plan. That enabled a timely response and prevented parallel activities.

Besides responding to specific cases at the country level we began a process of reviewing safety and security documents including manuals, policies and tools and began working with the country teams to undertake country specific security analysis. This process has been continuous in response to emerging issues and will inform our workplan for 2024.

Beyond the physical and emotional harm occasioned by the numerous security incidents, psychological safety has been a big concern with some of the programme participants reporting being triggered by some processes in the programme resulting in psychological insecurity, and potentially retraumatizing by some events. In response to this, we lead engaged a strategic partner in the fourth quarter of the year to provide additional support to the safety and security team to ensure timely and contextualized response. This strategic partner will also support in thinking through and rolling out a wellness and wellbeing strategy to address the psychological, mental and emotional issues being experienced by teams in different countries.

10. Networking and collaboration

Networking and collaboration with local and strategic partners have been key priorities within which we lead collaborated with specific partners including coordination with the embassies. In 2023, We worked closely with the Netherlands embassy in Niger to set up a platform for the various stakeholders who also benefit from MOFA's SRHR fund. As a result, a coalition of 5 organizations (Oxfam, Save the Children, Hivos, Songes and Plan International) was set up in April 2023 with the aim of improving collaboration between these organizations by conducting joint advocacy actions. Unfortunately, the coup d'état in July 2023 prevented the platform from achieving its objectives.

Additionally, COA organizations collaborated with the project's supervisory ministry, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Affairs, as well as with its various branches in the country (regional directorates). The aim of this collaboration was to keep the Ministry informed of their activities, but also to enable the technical departments to facilitate the advocacy roundtables, and to provide technical support in the development of certain tools.

Collaboration with other NGOs, in particular local NGOs, took the form of a platform for advocacy and awareness-raising on women's rights which was set up with the Ligue Nigérienne pour le droit des femmes.

In Nigeria, 2023 saw the program's first physical interaction with the Embassy of the Netherlands. The meeting in July provided an opportunity to present the program, the progress made and the challenges faced by the local organizations. One of the key points of the visit was to explore the support that the embassy could provide in accessing local decision-makers with whom these organizations could carry out advocacy.

On a more general level CoA organizations were supported by the strategic partner, Network of National Human Rights

Institutions (NANHRI) who facilitated the collaboration between CoA organizations with the National Human Rights Institutions as part of their advocacy and awareness-raising activities on the rights of people living with disabilities. A major success in terms of collaboration with the government was the activity by the Girl's Power Initiatives (GPI) which, thanks to its advocacy activities, has developed advocacy tools based on the results of a context analysis, in partnership with CSOs/youth-led organizations, ministerial departments and government agencies. Following this, they carried out advocacy actions that led to the construction of access ramps at certain health centers.

In Uganda, the project maintained strong collaborations with local government bodies like the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, as well as agencies such as the Uganda AIDS Commission and District Health Officers. These collaborations ensured ongoing advocacy efforts to improve service delivery, safety, security, and the distribution of medical supplies. Additionally, the project engaged with community structures, including local community members, leaders, and grassroots organizations, to customize interventions, promote local ownership, and enhance trust and participation. Besides, strategic partnerships with fellow Dutch-funded initiatives, such as RHU teaming up with Power to Youth in Busia and Stand Up in Terego and Arua, and IDIWA collaborating with Lillian fons and Afri-pads, have enabled the prevention of redundant efforts, the exchange of successful methods, and the optimization of outcomes concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for young women.

This includes research endeavors addressing menstrual hygiene and management among girls and young women with disabilities. Through these collaborations and partnerships, the We Lead team in Uganda was able to utilize resources, expertise, and networks beyond its original scope. This approach facilitated a comprehensive and enduring strategy for advocating and safeguarding the rights of young women across diverse communities amidst



The program has forged robust partnerships in Kenya with key government bodies such as the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the Implementation Coordination Committee, facilitating the participation of rights holders in drafting the Intersex Persons Bill, 2023. As a result, we lead submitted a Memorandum on the Additionally, collaborations with organizations like Jinsiangu and the Kenya Human Rights Commission have supported initiatives focusing on the sexual and reproductive health

The program also collaborated with the Kenya Medical Association to organize national sensitization workshops, where SRH-R legal and policy frameworks were incorporated into healthcare provider training, aligning with the project's objectives of capacity building and raising awareness. Additionally, partnering with the Midwifery Association of Kenya facilitated constructive dialogue, sensitization, and a shift in attitude among healthcare providers towards Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights as well as Maternal and Newborn Health services for Rights Holders. On the other hand,

Advocacy efforts have extended to engagement with Ministry of Health stakeholders and professional health associations, amplifying the diverse needs of young women in SRH care. Joined forces with MOFA-funded programs like She Leads and Make Way, particularly in Mombasa County, enhanced engagement with duty bearers. Members of these consortia also played a pivotal role in amplifying rights holders' voices through joint social media campaigns and organizing a joint one-week physical Girls Summit during the 2023 16 days of activism, which successfully engaged the Dutch MOFA team who were in the country. Within the refugee camps, the program collaborated with the Refugee Affairs Secretariat to facilitate movement permits for rights holders provided field operations support, and coordinated partners.

The Kenya Red Cross offered training, dignity kits, and community engagement support, while the Danish Refugee Consortium, authorized by UNHCR, addressed Gender-Based Violence by training champions and enhancing community referral pathways in the camps. Through UNHCR camp authorization, we accessed health facilities and collaborated with health implementing partners. All through the floods, UNHASS flights facilitated the transportation of rights holders from the camp to Garissa/Nairobi for project activities like capacity strengthening. Lastly the program's participation in consortia like Our Voices Count further enhances partnership profiles and promotes cross-learning among sexual minority organizations.



11. Programming Shifts

The biggest programming shifts in 2023 happened in Uganda, Niger and Lebanon.

the operating context became too hostile for the right holders necessitating a change of strategy due to insecurity.

in Uganda were impacted by this law which necessitated evacuation and vacating office premises by some organizations due to threats of violence

Offices were broken into, evictions increased and some community members in Gulu were beaten up. Increases in gender-based violence was reported

women were being forced into marriage by families, or trapped in marriages by husbands who threatened to use the new legislation as cause to remove them from their children. Security agencies were suspected of

then disappearing them to farms where they subjected to forced hard labour and torture.

At the same time the NGO Bureau has commenced a systematic investigation – with in-person visits of organisations with a view towards effecting additional closures.

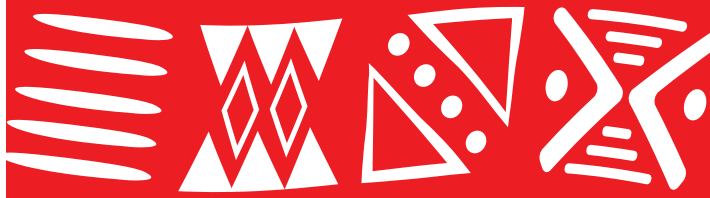
the COA had with service organisations or through the district have been nullified, and have needed to be renegotiated (following authorization from the Ministry of Health in a recent circular). This situation resulted in some activities such as trainings and advocacy planning meetings being shifted to online space as it was not possible to have in-person convenings.

In instances where it was not effective to hold virtual processes, more effort had to be made. For example, during the in-country advocacy training by FEMNET, it was clear that the training could neither be held virtually nor within Uganda due to safety and security concerns. A decision was made to convene the right holders in Nairobi for the training. This came with logistical and budget shifts as the cost of transporting people out of the country was higher than originally

budgeted. In instances where this was not possible, activities had to be postponed or cancelled altogether. Consortium and strategic partners had to revise their plans to reflect these changes while COAs had to rework their plans and priorities to reflect the reality in the country.

In Niger, the coup d'etat that happened in July made it impossible to conduct any in-country gatherings. Many meetings were done online. However, these meetings changed significantly in structure in the sense that they were mainly meant to express solidarity to the partners and right holders as opposed to implementation of activities. During the meetings, it became clear that despite the challenges in continuing the implementation, the programme was more needed at the time than any other time due to the nature of SRHR issues young women and girls were facing as a result of the coup and the state of emergency that followed. At the same time, it was not clear if continuing to disburse funds was tenable considering the change of guard and the rules of operation. Hivos adopted a drip financing approach where disbursements were made in very small tranches based on very clear and specific workplans. This ensured that the partners were able to continue intervening on various issues despite the uncertainty that was there.

In **Lebanon**, following the outbreak of the war in Gaza, a regional conference on HIV that Marsa was co-hosting in November was postponed until February 2024 and was converted into an online conference. This had significant budgetary consequences as Marsa was working on hosting many RHs from across the MENA region, especially Jordan, during the conference as it presented an excellent opportunity to engage with HIV activists from the region. The war also impacted the convention activity that was to take place in December. The situation in Jordan is relatively similar, and the economic situation is getting worse due to inflation. The backlash against SRHR has also taken place in Jordan. COAs in Jordan are also facing challenges due to the war in Gaza given that many of them are Palestinian and have family members living in occupied Palestine.



12. Cross cutting themes

In Honduras changes in the country's context risked reversing past gains realized in the programme. The comprehensive education law for the prevention of teenage pregnancy was vetoed by the president. This represents a setback, as the efforts to pass the law again must be tripled, and the issue of comprehensive sexual education has become a topic of public debate with strong opposition from certain actors. Despite not representing the majority of the population, these actors wield significant influence in the country's political decisions.

Despite this context of rights violations and religious conservatism affecting the guarantee of rights, the CoA has managed to maintain training activities for rights holders, as well as sensitizing a sector of health-care providers on SDSR (Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights), forging alliances with public institutions to advance SDSR work. The implementation of the "Informar Es Cuidar" campaign has been well received by a large part of the population, allowing comprehensive sexual education to be demystified among close actors, family members, caregivers, and the general population with whom rights holders interact.

Gender mainstreaming is one of the key cross cutting issues in we lead. Through the various interventions both at the global and country level, we lead has made efforts to ensure gender responsive and transformative interventions are applied at every stage of implementation. These include broad approaches that promote gender responsiveness as well as what may be considered minor interventions which impact the whole programme approach. For instance, in MENA, Marsa has made efforts to use gender neutral language within the program interventions including social media campaigns. This is crucial considering Arabic is a very gendered language, however Arabic is still very relevant in the context of ensuring inclusion of all stakeholders. As such, these efforts contribute to the normalization of neutral non-gendered language which promotes inclusivity and improves access and reach.

Understanding and engaging gendered power dynamics remains at the heart of the We Lead programme. Partners such as PV maximizes the use of its approaches such as LILO Women to allow participants, partner organisations and PV to collectively examine these power dynamics starting from the personal. The use of art for advocacy with diverse groups of women also extended this thinking and practice. Additionally, the practice of accompaniment and the contextualization of methodologies have been adopted. These interventions coupled with the power shifting principles that RD employs in its work have been defining bottom-up approaches that are embedded in local ownership and community leadership which have been applied in We lead and have boosted right holder leadership efforts.

Funding for SRHR is often the first to be cut when governments or humanitarian responses cut their budgets. The resources for SRHR are therefore always at risk of being depleted even though they are already low. The effects of this are still eminent owing to the global covid 19 crises political instability and conflict that was witnessed in a number of We lead countries in 2023. All these factors significantly reversed SRHR gains in most countries. They brought to the fore the nexus between SRHR, Climate Justice, conflict and Economic Justice and the urgent need to integrate them in the activities going forward.



Inclusion is another key cross cutting issue which is of critical importance to we lead. Considering the diversity of our rights holders, ensuring meaningful inclusion has always been a concern. Although we have not fully succeeded in attaining meaningful inclusion of all rights holders some of the efforts made have been bearing some fruits. Additionally, we see efforts to progressively include groups of people who are still not visible such as young persons in the promoted spaces. Some of the we lead partners have begun to analyze all forms of violence and prejudices surrounding trans women and support inclusion actions for trans women sex workers with low formal schooling and in situations of dependency due to economic violence and other types of aggression.

Another area in which partners are making efforts in programming is in understanding issues and appropriate approaches for reaching young women with intellectual disabilities who have participated in activities promoted by FCAM, such as the Binational Meeting. This coupled with measures to ensure accessibility during events and in social media posts and campaigns to ensure inclusivity (ex: image description where applicable, digital options for brochures and printed materials so that visually impaired individuals can have access to information) are key steps towards learning more and beginning to make accommodation of this group of rights holders.

Another cross-cutting issue is **conflict** which has manifested in a number of countries and number of ways in the past year, adversely affecting we lead work. In MENA, conflict resulted in disruption of activities where some had to be postponed or cancelled all together. Additionally, the coup in Niger presented a different dynamic in managing safety and security that we lead had not anticipated. In Kenya, political violence almost paralyzed the country resulting in disruptions of the activities. When conflict happens the SRHR needs of women and girls always tend to increase due to disruption of services and inadequate information on the same. The lesson from all these events is that despite having a risk analysis and contextualized risk mitigation plans as part of annual planning, unexpected events could still present and change the structure of the programme. As such, openness and flexibility are still required to ensure the risk mitigation is always up to date and responsive to the emerging realities. It also calls for proactiveness in reaching out to like-minded partners for cross learning and continuous planning and improvement. This is one of the strategies that we lead applied in Niger and MENA. Working collaboratively with other actors, we ensured there was continuous sharing of information and that the COAs were able to receive funding to continue supporting the Right holders in need.

Youth leadership: Through the leadership of Restless Development and the various youth led activities that we lead has supported in 2023, it was clear that building feminist youth leadership is one of the strategies to build and sustain youth leadership. The state of the civil society 2023 report which focused on young women under the title "Young, Feminist and Fearless: Holding the Line" spotlights the creative strategies and resistance from feminist youth movements, and how young people are pushing back against harmful ideologies and the shrinking civic space. We lead countries were showcased in the report and young feminist researchers from the COAs played an important role in the research.

13. Sustainability

Skills transfer

Having entered year three of implementation of we lead, all the programme participants, actors and partners were in agreement that there is need to start thinking about sustainability of results and all the change emanating from their work. Thus, every partner and right holder was deliberate in tracking some of the sustainability efforts. Being a capacity strengthening programme, skills transfer and accompaniment were among the key approaches adopted by the partners. For instance, RD begun the integration of a Trainer of Trainer approach to the Capacity strengthening initiatives, and begun to develop step-by-step guides that provide comprehensive tools to integrate the methodologies in their work. COAS were also encouraged to seek virtual support to further develop these approaches more cost-effectively.

Additionally, PV has built a Training of Facilitators (ToF) component in all its methodologies to facilitate skill transfer to ensure that the CoAs can use these as their own in future implementation and beyond the We Lead programme. PV also began the integration of regular debriefing into partnership relationships and within the CoP. Focus has been given to augmenting the skills of existing in-country facilitators for sustainability, and for addressing concerns about psychological safety.

For advocacy, FEMNET has conducted trainings with the RH and COAs in the 4 implementation countries. The skills gained from these sessions will enable them to continue their advocacy beyond the project lifetime. Further, FEMNET has continued to promote the peer learning model of we Lead to ensure the cascading of information, knowledge and skills from advocacy platforms to all the constituents of COAs thereby creating a domino effect that increases the likelihood of sustaining the change beyond the project life. Furthermore, participating in joint advocacy spaces has provided the COAs and RH with an opportunity to expand their social and professional networks and collaborate in different ways which is hoped to go beyond the project period.

Capacity strengthening

In addition to skills transfer, we lead partners have explored different approaches to capacity strengthening among the COAs and RH that are aimed at expanding the skills beyond the project. For example, Marsa has rolled out a new educational platform that improves access to inclusive and evidence-based sexual and reproductive health information contextualized to the MENA region. This website allows individuals from across the region to access the information for free and enjoy an engaging visual experience. The website will remain accessible even after the end of the program and as such is sustainably improving access to contextualized and inclusive SRHR knowledge. Additionally, they have continued to strengthen the capacity of healthcare providers in Lebanon, where they have contributed to a more robust and inclusive healthcare system.

Collaboration among CoA organizations and other consortium partners:

In a bid to strengthen relationships and partnerships among the we lead actors, efforts have been made to encourage COA organizations to work with each other to encourage the splitting of budget for activities among them as well as to work with other consortium partners and other programs to ensure they can continue using approaches and methodologies that have been rolled out without requiring the participation of lead organizations. Based on identified priorities under each programme, consortium partners such as PV have gone further to undertake an analysis of the COAs to determine their strengths and which partners could do what and where they could add most value in achieving lasting impact. This is a big step towards sustaining movements. Cultivating closer working relationships with these partners, mobilizing resources and complementing each other is a key strategy to continue the work beyond the programme period.

Resourcing the work

As a feminist grant maker in LATAM, FCAM has continued to mobilize funding from different flexible and mid-term sources, strengthening the relation with current and future donors, to ensure the financing to grantee partners. The organizations that are part of We Lead, can be supported with additional flexible funding for their organizational strengthening and overall work. The partners are also provided with information, knowledge, relations and skills to help them access other funding sources, diversify their funding base, and increase their internal capacities for the development, implementation and monitoring of their own plans and strategies.



14. Good Practices

To achieve impactful advocacy, it is crucial to leverage key moments that bring together policymakers and high-level decision-makers. This provides an opportunity for Rights holders and COA organizations to engage in activities that can be game changers in their advocacy for example, In July 2023, hundreds of individuals and organizations led by the Africa Union met in Nairobi to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Maputo protocol. FEMNET strategically identified this time to have the We Lead training on Advocacy and opposition monitoring. Advocacy and influencing involve connecting with the right people and networking in the right spaces, as such we provided a unique opportunity for the RH to engage with officials from the AU gender and youth directorate, policymakers from the continent, other women rights organization and organizations working in advancing the rights of women in all their diversities. The RH reported that in addition to benefiting from the training, they benefitted from expanding their networks and connecting with powerful allies.

In sensitive contexts, the identification of non-conventional safe spaces that would normally not be on the country's internal security radar to hold meetings e.g., private universities reduce anxiety among the Rights Holders. This was a best practice shared from Lebanon.

Collaboration with CoA organizations and Consortium partners is more efficient and allows for the sharing of expertise. Acting jointly as a consortium and with CoA organizations improves sustainability as knowledge is shared and co-created.

15. Lessons Learned

Collaborative planning and delivery, involving partnerships between the Community of Action Organizations, Host Organizations and other partners have led to more efficient use of time, reduced CoAF burnout and enhanced benefits for CoAs. Entrusting HOs with logistical coordination and in-country payments and safety and security issues has not only streamlined activity delivery and improved implementation times but also proved cost-effective by minimizing delays associated with foreign transactions and safety and security issues. This approach underscores the importance of shared responsibility and the positive impact of leveraging local expertise in project execution.

It is critical to agree with the CoAF on the CoA capacity strengthening priorities for each country to ensure smooth implementation. This will provide sufficient time to finalize in-country logistics and prepare adequately for inclusion in cases where translation or interpretation for rightsholders with disabilities is necessary. In-country CoAF and Host Organization's should be involved in making country-specific decisions as they have local knowledge of their contexts. Finding local facilitators of capacity strengthening activities is also important.

Positive masculinity promotes gender equality and We lead partners are providing a spaces where SRHR can be discussed in highly patriarchal high-level spaces such as AU.

16. Budget management

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



We Lead -Financial Report by Year- 2023 (Year 3)				
	Revenue/ Budget	Actual Expenditures	Variance / Actual Rollover to Year 4	Burn Rate
Revenue	€	€	€	%
Grant Received	€ 12 164 903			
Interest Earned/Accrued				
Total Revenue	€ 12 164 903			
Expenditure				
I. Direct staff costs				
A. Staff costs	€ 997 015	€ 907 309	€ 89 706	91%
B. Local staff costs	€ 587 907	€ 570 231	€ 17 676	97%
C. Consultants and advisers	€ 17 452	€ 16 558	€ 894	95%
Subtotal I	€ 1 602 374	€ 1 494 097	€ 108 277	93%
II. Other direct programme costs				
A. Activity costs	€ 1 622 683	€ 1 299 676	€ 323 006	80%
B. Costs of consortium partners and local NGOs	€ 6 930 943	€ 6 312 071	€ 618 872	91%
C. Activity-related travel costs	€ 397 294	€ 338 605	€ 58 689	85%
D. Project office costs (if applicable)	€ 39 838	€ 33 246	€ 6 592	83%
E. Equipment and investments	€ 5 338	€ 2 414	€ 2 924	45%
F. Monitoring, evaluation and auditing	€ 126 442	€ 131 115	€ (4 673)	104%
Subtotal II	€ 9 122 538	€ 8 117 128	€ 1 005 410	89%
Total of I and II	€ 10 724 911	€ 9 611 224	€ 1 113 687	90%
III. Overheads / indirect costs				
A. Costs of support staff			€ -	
B. Not directly allocable administrative costs			€ -	
C. Other non-allocable costs	€ 1 439 992	€ 1 288 974	€ 151 018	90%
Contingencies (max. 5 %)	€ -	€ -	€ -	
TOTAL	€ 12 164 903	€ 10 900 198	€ 1 264 705	90%



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



**We Lead to claim
our Sexual Reproductive
Health and Rights**

