

ANNUAL REPORT

20
23



LIST OF

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

01

AGYWs

Adolescent Girls and Young Women

08

GBV

Gender-Based Violence

02

AWDF

African Women Development Fund

09

PWD

Persons With Disabilities

03

COMPE

Community Mobilization for Positive Empowerment

10

SDG

Sustainable Development Goal

04

COP 28

Conference of Parties (28th session)

11

SGBV

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

05

CRVPF

Children Rights and Violence Prevention Fund

12

SIMUN

Siaya Muungano Network

06

CSO

Civil Society Organization

13

SRHR

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

07

FLLoCA

Financing Locally-Led Climate Action

Executive Summary

In 2023, Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN) made remarkable strides in its mission to uplift adolescent girls, women, and youth in Siaya County, Kenya. Despite facing significant challenges such as shrinking civic space and economic hardships, SIMUN remained resilient and impactful. The organization successfully rolled out seven major projects that centered on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), climate action, economic empowerment, and the inclusion of persons with disabilities. These efforts not only expanded SIMUN's reach and visibility but also catalyzed organizational growth, marked by a strategic transition to a new office space and securing vital funding from the French Embassy to advance initiatives in SRHR and economic empowerment.

Among the standout projects were "Power to Youth," "Women Voices in Climate Action," and the "Adolescent Girls Power Program," each playing a critical role in driving SIMUN's advocacy and empowerment agenda. The organization's influence extended beyond local boundaries as it actively participated in national and international forums, including the Africa Climate Summit and COP28, contributing significantly to policy frameworks like the Siaya County Youth Development Policy. These achievements were underpinned by robust strategies that included deep community mobilization, targeted grassroots engagement, strategic advocacy, and forming partnerships that enhanced financial management, donor relations, and staff development.

SIMUN's work was meticulously aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 3, 5, 8, 10, and 13, reflecting a commitment to improving health services, promoting gender equality, fostering inclusive economic growth, reducing inequalities, and addressing climate action. However, the journey was not without its hurdles. The organization navigated the complexities of limited civic space and economic constraints, which posed significant challenges to community outreach and engagement. Yet, SIMUN's determination to foster positive change remained unwavering.

Looking ahead to 2024, SIMUN is poised to deepen its impact by strengthening resource mobilization efforts, expanding strategic partnerships, and refining its community engagement models. The organization will place a strong emphasis on leadership mentorship for young women, promote gender-transformative approaches through male involvement, and fully develop AGWs safe spaces into SRHR academies, offering comprehensive learning and life skills training. Additionally, SIMUN is committed to enhancing its governance and institutional capacity, bolstering knowledge management, and establishing psychological safety as a cornerstone of staff well-being. In the face of ongoing challenges, SIMUN's resolve to build a just society where adolescent girls, women, and youth can live with dignity, enjoy equal rights, and actively shape their communities remains as strong as ever.

FOREWORD

Message from the Board

We are pleased to share the SIMUN 2023 Annual Report. This report highlights our activities, key achievements, and inspiring transformations witnessed in 2023. Despite societal challenges, including pervasive injustices, gender disparities, and the exacerbating effects of climate change on existing inequalities, we have remained committed to systemic solutions. These initiatives target the fundamental disparities, challenge oppressive systems, and promote enduring change.

Our efforts last year were hindered by a reduction in civic freedoms. The suppression of free expression among human rights advocates in our operational regions poses a significant risk to our mission. Nonetheless, we persevere in our commitment to fostering a just society.

In 2023, the dedication and enthusiasm of our staff enabled us to expand our reach and visibility, which in turn spurred organizational growth and development. A notable accomplishment early in the year was our transition from the old offices to a new workspace. We also received significant funding from the French Embassy in Kenya supporting our initiatives in sexual and reproductive health rights and the economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women in Siaya.

We are grateful to our partners whose ongoing support has been instrumental in our efforts to realize our vision and mission. We recommit to building a society where adolescent girls, women, and youth are treated with dignity, enjoy equal rights, and actively participate in shaping the changes they wish to see in their lives and communities.

As we strive to meet our objectives, we acknowledge the need for enhanced efforts at the individual and collective levels to establish a society devoid of inequalities. By strengthening partnerships and seizing opportunities at county, national, regional, and international levels, SIMUN will continue to lead advocacy efforts for a sustainable and empowered community.

We anticipate further collaboration to advance the rights of adolescents, girls, women, and youth in Siaya.

Nancy Akoth
-Board Chair



Message from the Executive Director

In 2023 has been a year of many firsts and milestones that as Siaya Muungano Network we are so proud of. In this Annual Report we share our story from our perspective and the perspective of the community having maintained the rhythm of ensuring women and youth are able to live dignified lives and enjoy their equal rights.

Last year saw us successfully implement 7 projects that targeted young mothers, young women, youth, young women with disabilities and widows. Through these projects we have seen the transformative power of community led engagements and appreciated the embrace of the community towards owning and leading the implementation of these interventions which granted us great success.

Internally, our staff were able to be part of national and international spaces as they shared their expertise and perspective on different emerging issues in the national and global stages. We are proud to have been part of the Africa Youth Connect Summit, The Africa Climate Summit as well as The COP 28 which was held in Dubai. Through these platforms, SIMUN has been able to not only amplify the voices of the grassroots women, but also enhance its visibility.

As we move into 2024, we are more resilient and well positioned as a community based organization that is dependable and with the staff capacity to deliver in building a resilient and inclusive community.

This far we give a special appreciation to our staff, partners and funders for believing in our vision and consistently journeying with us as we work tirelessly to achieve it.

Shirleen Adhiambo



Message from the Head of Programs.



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The power of our work as a civil society organization in Siaya is in how closely we align with the needs and aspirations of the community. When people can see their own lives reflected in our programs, the impact becomes real and personal. Our work is not just about delivering projects or meeting goals; it's about becoming a part of the everyday story of the people we serve. In 2023, we focused on listening to the community and making sure that our efforts truly resonated with them. By addressing real challenges—whether it's through supporting women's voices, empowering youth, or promoting equal rights—we've helped build a sense of ownership and belonging. This approach makes our achievements not just visible, but also deeply felt across Siaya County.

As we reflect on this year's journey, we see our initiatives woven into the fabric of the community's progress. Every step forward, no matter how small, is shared by the people we work with, and that's what makes our work meaningful and impactful.

Hillary Omondi

Head of Programs



ABOUT US

The spirit of SIMUN (Our Culture)

SIMUN embodies the spirit of positive change and stands as a beacon of hope and empowerment for adolescent girls, women and youth by advancing their rights and becoming a driving force for positive change. SIMUN adopts a holistic approach in its work by addressing the systemic issues that perpetuate inequality, transforming social norms and championing initiatives that break down the barriers to adolescent girls, women and youth inclusion and participation fostering a world where they can thrive

Vision

A society where young women and youth live in dignity to enjoy equal rights and influence decisions on the change they desire in their lives and community.

Mission

To amplify women and youth voices to promote social justice and challenge inequalities in our community.

Values

01

Equity and Justice

02

Transparency and accountability

03

Diversity and inclusion

04

Professionalism

05

Team work

06

Innovativeness

Our Board and staff



MRS. NANCY OMONDI
BOARD CHAIRPERSON



MILDRED ANDERE
ASST. BOARD
CHAIRPERSON



SHIRLEEN ADHIAMBO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MR. JAMES OUMA.
TREASURER.



MSS. JUDITH AJWALA
PWD REPRESENTATIVE



REV. GODFREY ADERA
YOUTH
REPRESENTATIVE



MS ACHIENG' YVONNE
LEGAL
REPRESENTATIVE



SHIRLEEN ADHIAMBO
Executive Director



HILLARY OMONDI
Programs Coordinator



JACKLINE AWUOR
Finance & Administration Officer



ROSE AKINYI
M & E Officer



FRANCIS NANDWA
Accountant



BONIFACE BUORO
Accountant



KEVIN WAMAYA
Communications Officer



FLORENCE OUMA
Project Officer - SRHR



BEATRICE ODUOR
Project Officer - Livelihoods



DINAH ODHIAMBO
Project Assistant - Climate Justice



JULIET ACHIENG
Office Assistant/ Community
Mobilizer



NANCY AKINYI
Community Mobilizer



@SiayaNetwork



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www.siayamuunganonetwork.org

Our thematic areas

1

Gender equality and empowerment

We promote full and effective participation of women in decision making at all levels and contribute to a society where structural barriers to the participation of women and girls are eliminated.



2

Good governance, budget accountability and public participation

We promote and advocate for openness and transparency in public resource utilization, effective and efficient service delivery for the people and respect of human rights.



3

Sexual and reproductive Health and Rights

We promote and advocate for access to sexual reproductive health and rights and services for young women, adolescent girls and boys.



4

Climate justice, Environment and Natural Resource Conservation

We promote and strengthen innovations that conserve the environment and amplify the voices of women and youth in climate change response in the realization of climate justice.



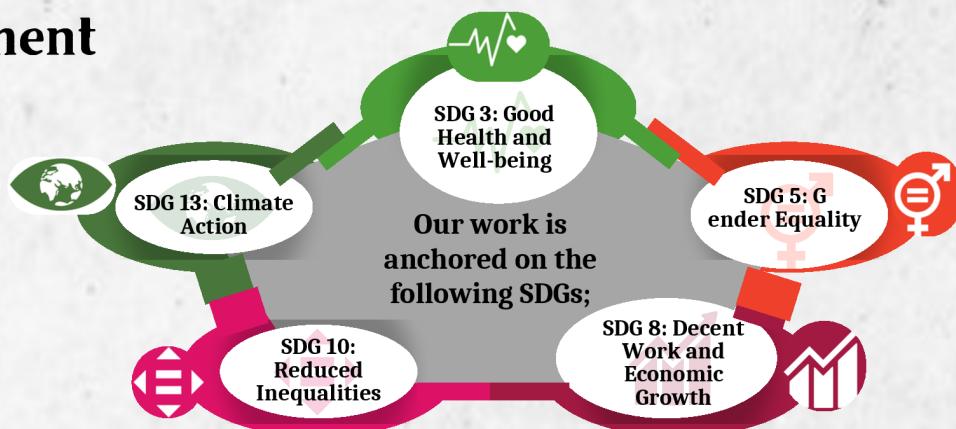
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Economic empowerment and livelihoods

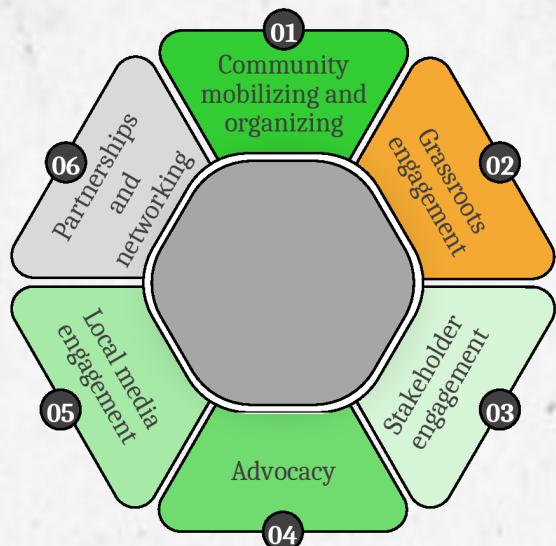
We equip women and youth with information, skills and capacity to harness opportunities for the attainment of socio-economic rights and realization of decent work



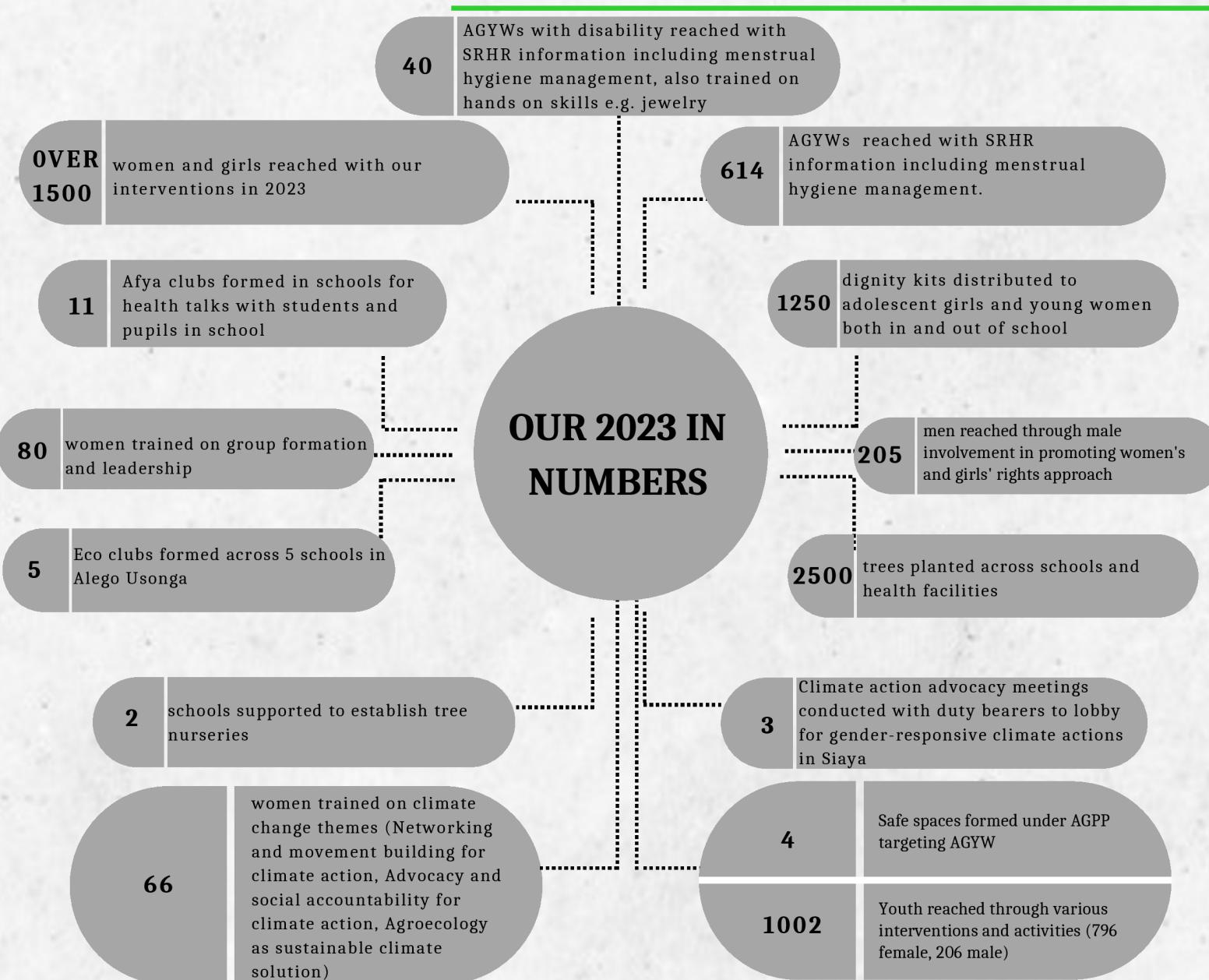
SDG Alignment



Strategies/Paths



Our Projects



OUR PROGRESS

Power to Youth



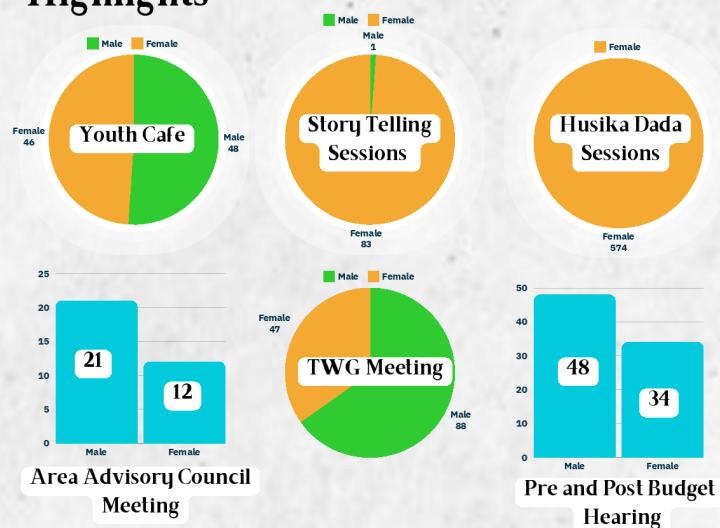
The Power to Youth project is a 5-year project that aims to empower and create space for Adolescent Girls and Young Women and Youth from underserved communities to be able to make informed choices, enjoy their rights free from harmful practices and have violence free societies.

Under the project, we continued to champion for the sexual reproductive health rights of adolescent girls and young people in Siaya and their right to meaningful participation in development processes including youth engagement in county government planning.

During the reporting period, we conducted 4 youth cafes to create strong youth agency for advocacy on GBV and unintended pregnancies reduction, 4 story telling sessions on promoting progressive social norms in communities in Siaya, 15 Husika Dada sessions to build more voice of AGYWs that challenge inequalities and reduction of SGBV cases from household to community level, 7 radio talk shows to generate community debates and promote support for AGYWs rights, convened 3 meetings for young people in Siaya for pre and post budget hearing on County

annual Development plan to analyze and develop recommendations around the County Annual Development plan for submission, , 5 Technical Working Group meetings and joined other stakeholders in marking 6 international days in Siaya. Under the project, we also supported the development of the Siaya county Youth development policy together with and other stakeholders, submitted a communique calling to action on the efforts and actions to prevent and respond to GBV in Siaya to the first lady, Siaya County, during the launch of the 16 days of activism in Siaya, and held one press statement to address issues of Governance in Siaya County

Highlights



Women Voices in Climate Action and Governance.

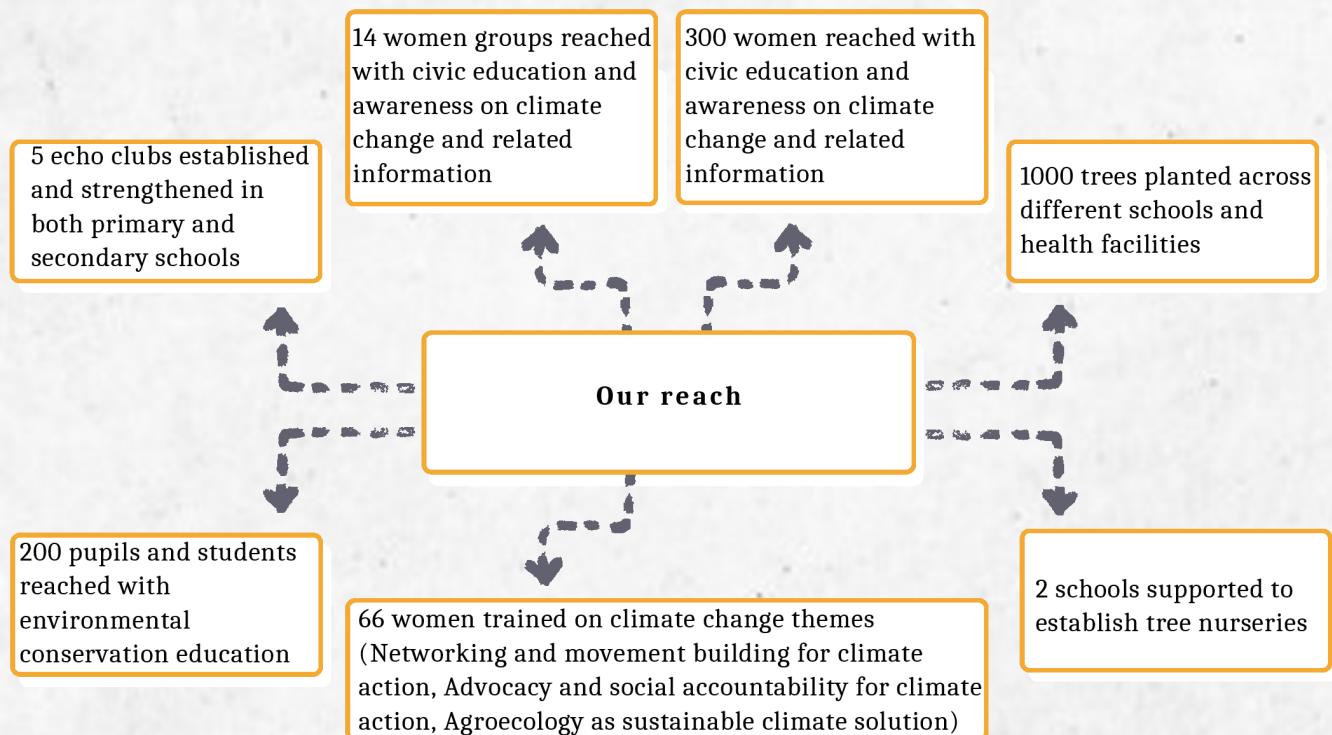


The project aims at strengthening the voices of women in Siaya to claim their rights, address inequalities and advocate for their inclusion in climate actions and environmental governance. During the period under review, we focused our advocacy efforts both at the county and national level. At the national level, we partnered with Lamu Women Alliance in Lamu, Community Advocacy and Awareness Trust in Nairobi, Women Empowerment Link in Homabay for joint advocacy towards promoting women participation and inclusion in climate action and decision making in the realization of climate justice. Together we developed two reports on gender analysis of climate change policies and legal frameworks in Kenya and gender assessment of FLLoCA as a financial mechanism to deliver locally led climate actions. The two reports informed our advocacy objectives for 2023 at the national level.

At the county level, we held consultative meetings with duty bearers and policy makers in Siaya for discussions on improving climate change governance in Siaya including gender inclusion in climate actions and contributed to the development of the Siaya County climate Change Action Plan for 2023-2028. To

strengthen the capacity of women in climate action, we supported 3 trainings for women champions advocacy and social accountability for climate action, networking and movement building and agro ecology as a sustainable agricultural practice. Through the trainings, the women acquired useful skills of advocating for sustainable climate solutions. We also continued to promote environmental conservation and climate adaptation initiatives through tree planting initiatives where we supported and strengthened five(5) Echo clubs in identified Schools in Siaya as platforms for engaging young people in schools to increase their awareness on environmentalism, environmental conservation and climate change reaching a total of 200 pupils and students in both primary and secondary schools. Our staff also took part in climate change discussions both at the national and International levels as spaces for advancing our work on climate justice i.e African climate summit and week held in Nairobi in September 2023 and the Conference of Parties(COP 28) held in Dubai in December 2023. At the African Climate week, we participated in a side event titled empowering Kenya and Africa: Unveiling the intersections of gender and climate change event hosted by our partner Community Advocacy and awareness Trust (Crawn Trust).

Highlights



Uchumi Huru Project



This project targets women small-scale traders in Alego Usongo Constituency, Siaya County, aiming to promote the realization of their economic rights. *Uchumi Huru* empowers these women by providing essential resources, training, and support to enhance their financial stability and business acumen. By addressing barriers such as limited access to capital and markets, the project fosters a more inclusive economic environment. Ultimately, *Uchumi Huru* strives to uplift women entrepreneurs, enabling them to achieve financial independence and contribute meaningfully to the local economy.



Adolescent girls power program



In 2023, the Siaya Cluster, comprising the Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN), Stawisha Africa Initiative (SAI), and the Siaya Young Women Alliance (SYWA), implemented impactful activities under the Adolescent Girl Power Program (AGPP). Our efforts focused on building strong relationships within the cluster, mapping and supporting adolescent mothers, and fostering sustainable community-led solutions.

We organized 7 cluster rotational meetings and 4 exchange and learning forums, which strengthened our partnerships and shared best practices in program management, safeguarding, and governance. This collaboration led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, creating a robust framework for our long-term engagement and effective monitoring of the project.

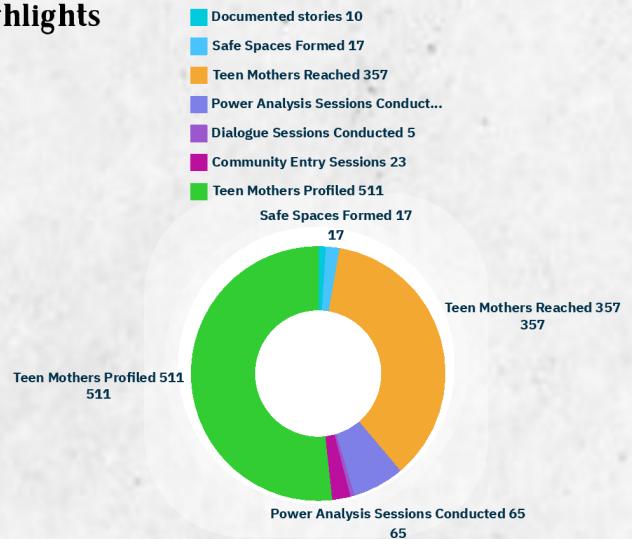
Our community mapping exercise reached 4,492 girls under 24 years across 2,262 households in Bar Agulu and Olwa sub-locations. This initiative identified critical gaps, such as educational vulnerabilities and health service access, which highlighted the need for targeted interventions(FINAL SIAYA CLUSTER TEC...). Through a series of power analysis sessions with 357 adolescent mothers, we deepened our understanding of the challenges they face and co-created sustainable solutions. The sessions fostered the formation of 13 cohorts, ensuring ongoing support and peer-to-peer

mentorship for these young mothers.

We established community referral pathways, enabling seamless access to healthcare, legal, and educational services. These pathways strengthened our visibility and partnerships at both the community and county levels. We also developed a database of 357 teen mothers, supporting future linkages and continuous engagement.

The Siaya Cluster's commitment to socio-economic empowerment for young mothers is reflected in our efforts to address extreme vulnerabilities and provide immediate, personalized support where needed. We also launched a powerful documentary that showcases the voices of adolescent mothers, advocating for long-term interventions to enhance their lives and those of their children.

Highlights



PWD Inclusion and Empowerment



The project is implemented under our Husika Dada model with the overall goal of empowering adolescent girls and young women by providing them with information on SRHR including menstrual hygiene and incorporating economic empowerment through training and linkages. During the period under review, we supported 2 trainings for adolescent girls and young women with disabilities; 20 AGYWs with disability were trained on SRHR advocacy and launched as champions of SRHR for persons with disability while 14 were trained on hands on skills in making jewelry and supported with the materials required to start their business. We also held information dissemination sessions to 40 AGYWs with disability providing them with information about menstrual hygiene management, reproductive health and GBV related issues. Mentorship sessions on life skills were also conducted with them creating a safe space for them to learn various issues that affect their lives. 40 AGYWs with disability targeted in the project received dignity kits to help them maintain their dignity during menstruation.

During the 2023 international Women's Day, we also supported them to showcase their products as a way of marketing their products.

Highlights

20

AGYWs with disability trained and launched as SRHR advocacy champions

14

AGYWs with disability trained on jewelry making

40

AGYWs with disability reached with menstrual hygiene management information

40

dignity kits distributed



She Deserves Her Rights and Skills Project



This project aims at increasing adolescent girls and young women's knowledge of SRHR and related life skills to prevent gender-based violence against women and girls. In November 2023, we rolled out a mapping exercise to identify adolescent girls and young women out of school to be enrolled in the project in Rangala and Simenya sub-locations in Sidindi ward, Ugunja, Asayi and Sirembe Sub-locations in North West Gem in Gem Sub-county and Umala, Nyalgunga and Nyamila in North Alego in Alego Usonga. A total of 273 adolescent girls and young women were reached as beneficiaries of the project. Community entry sessions were conducted with the listed AGYWAs in the project to provide them with the information about the project and clarify their roles in the project. 14 safe spaces were established in all the project implementation areas as spaces of engagement and conversations between the adolescent girls and young women including sharing of experiences and supporting one another. Through awareness sessions and economic empowerment initiatives, the safe spaces

served to break the circle of violence and foster a culture of resilience among the AGYWAs. The safe spaces were also utilized as community SRHR academies for strengthening the capacity of the AGYWAs with SRHR information to increase their knowledge and awareness on SRHR.

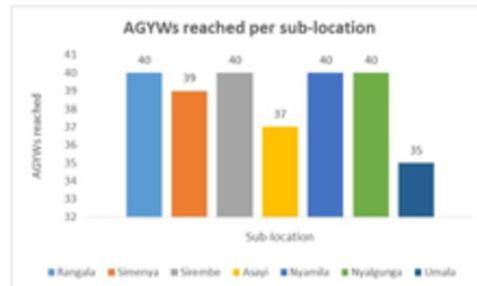
Highlights

5

273
AGYWAs out
of school
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14
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established

Community
entry
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conducted

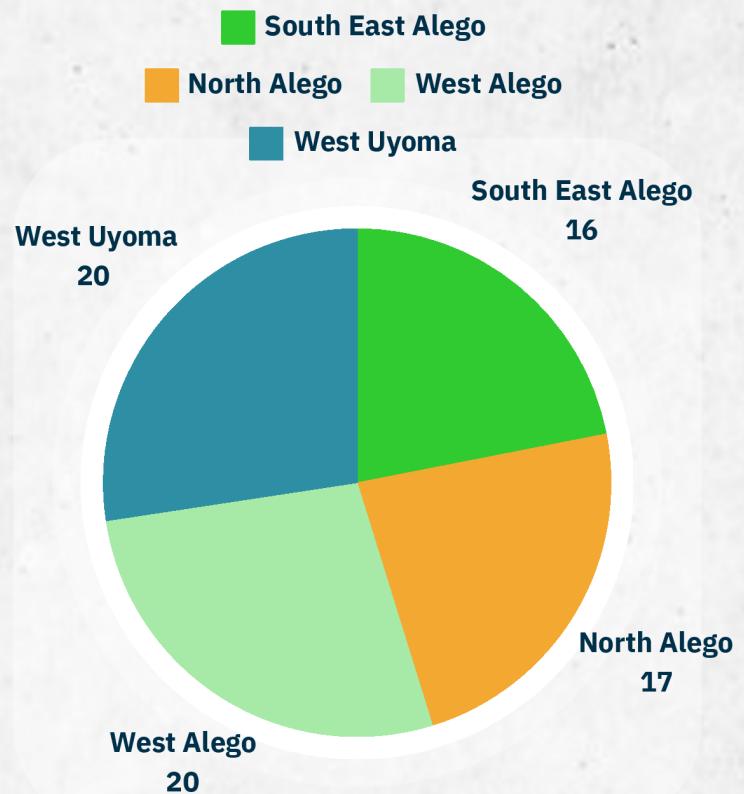


Rebuilding widows hope for decent employment in Siaua



The project targets young widows in Alego Usonga and Rarieda sub-counties with the aim of strengthening their bargaining power to be able to challenge existing inequalities and human rights violations that they undergo in the community. The project provides them with the opportunity to understand their rights, mechanisms to address rights violations and explore opportunities for economic empowerment and income generation to support their households. In June 2023, we rolled out the project in North Alego, West Alego and South East Alego in Alego Usonga sub-county and West Uyoma in Rarieda Sub-county and enrolled 73 widows below 40 years, as beneficiaries of the project interventions in the subsequent year.

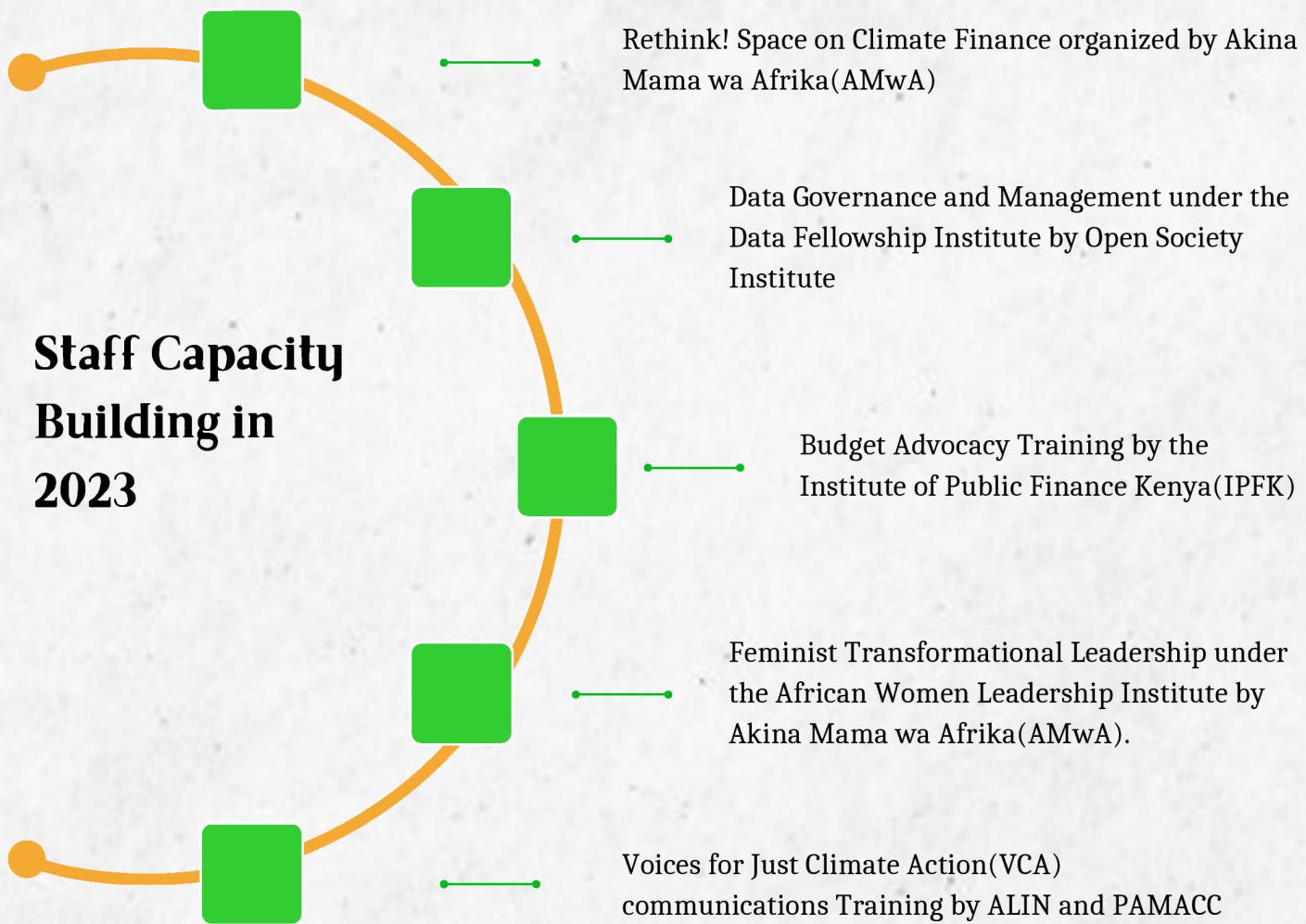
Highlights



WHAT WE ARE CARRYING WITH US IN 2024 (KEY LEARNINGS)



Staff Capacity Building in 2023



SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

Enhanced Participation of Women in Decision-Making

- Promoted the full and effective participation of women at all levels, including decision-making processes, by advocating for their inclusion in leadership and governance structures. This has contributed to breaking structural barriers that often limit women's voices in public and community matters.

Amplified Advocacy for Transparent Governance

- Strengthened governance and budget accountability through continuous advocacy for openness and transparency in the utilization of public resources. This effort has ensured more efficient and equitable service delivery, particularly benefiting marginalized communities and promoting respect for human rights within governance structures.

Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) with Disabilities

- Empowered AGYW with disabilities by creating inclusive safe spaces and offering mentorship programs that provided information on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and economic empowerment. These efforts reduced vulnerabilities and enhanced the autonomy of young women with disabilities.

Gender-Responsive Policy Advocacy in SRHR

- Advanced gender-responsive policies through targeted advocacy and community engagement, significantly enhancing the reach and impact of SRHR initiatives. Through forming safe spaces for teenage mothers and facilitating dialogue with policymakers, the organization has supported a healthier, more empowered future for young women.

Strengthened Women's Voices in Climate Action

- Amplified the voices of women and youth in climate change response initiatives, actively advocating for gender inclusion in climate action policies. By participating in national and international platforms like the African Climate Summit and COP 28, the organization has positioned women at the forefront of climate justice conversations.

Empowerment of Young Widows through Economic Initiatives

- Enhanced the economic empowerment of young widows by providing them with the necessary skills and tools to challenge inequalities and human rights violations. Through tailored training and support, these women have gained the confidence to advocate for their rights, contributing to their socio-economic resilience.

Institutional Growth and Strengthened Partnerships

- Bolstered institutional capacity by expanding partnerships, networks, and financial resources. The organization has grown through strategic collaborations at both local and international levels, strengthening its ability to implement impactful programs and advocate for gender equality, SRHR, and climate justice.

WHAT KEPT US AWAKE IN 2023 (CHALLENGES AND EMERGING ISSUES)

1

Shrinking resource envelope – the organization has not been able to scale up its interventions due to limited resources

2

Shrinking civic space impacting on our civic organizing work.

3

Limitation of community structures in some project areas to facilitate timely GBV reporting and referral hindering access to justice and psychosocial support for the GBV survivors.

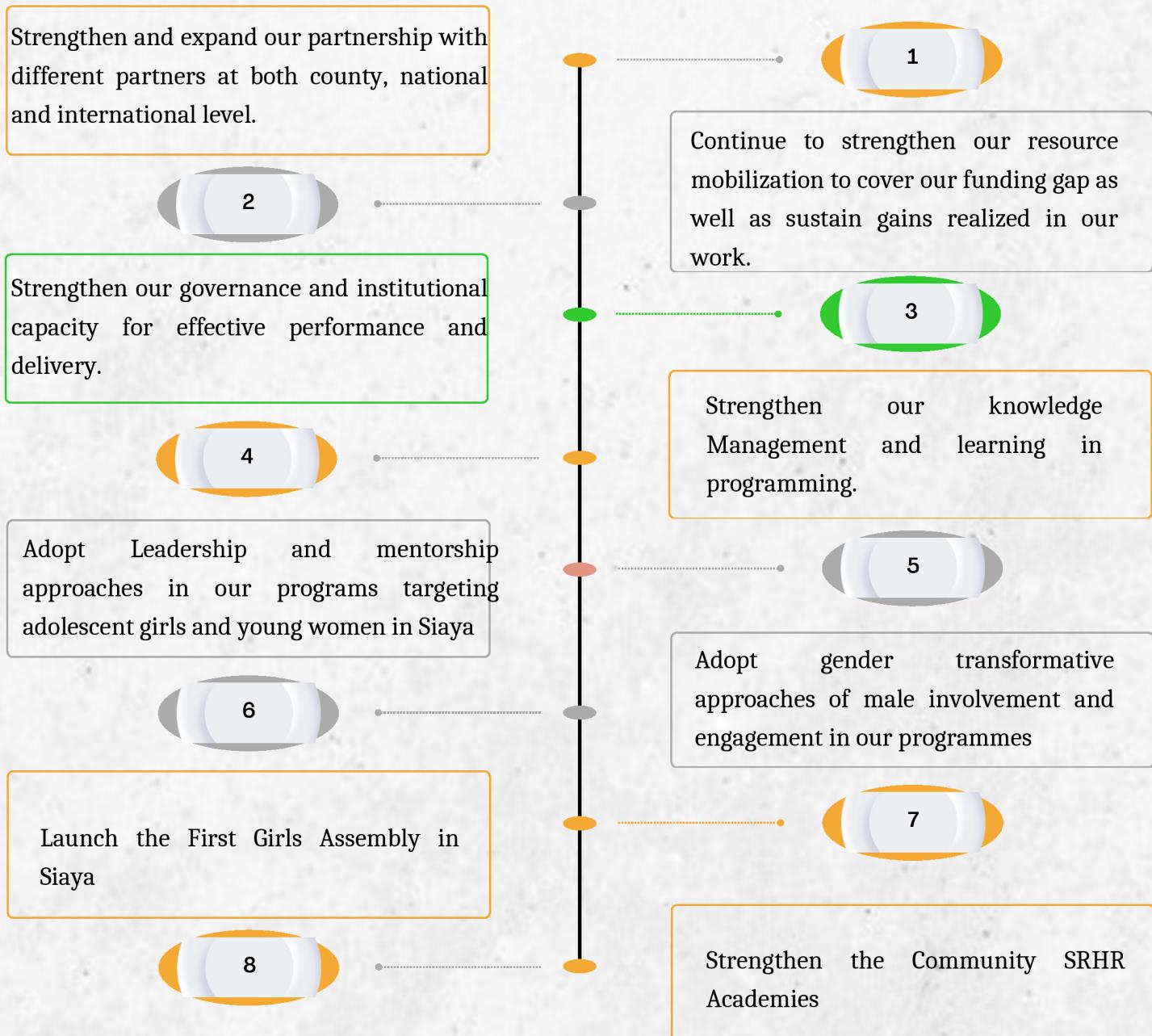
4

Loopholes in the county feedback mechanisms; the delay in providing information or withholding and concealing of some vital information by duty bearers

5

Civic awareness and engagement for the youth in Siaya is still a journey that calls for stronger collaborations, commitment and concerted efforts by the youth led and youth serving CSO's to bridge the gap.

PLANS FOR 2024



CHANGE STORIES

Woman sparking change in her village.

The dominance of patriarchy in Siaya County still manifests itself at large. Majority of women continue to experience exclusion in decision making and economic activity. Monica Okumu from Barding village in South East ward Siaya County is among women who have been sidelined for a longer period of time. She is among women who have been hit hard by the impacts of climate change. However, she had no idea that it is the responsibility of the County Governments to implement climate change interventions that cushion communities from the impacts of climate change. For her, she had never imagined of sitting in any community forum to discuss issues of climate change or engage with the local leaders to influence programs that can benefit her and other women in her community. To her, this was a men's agenda and probably women who are well educated. Monica's Maendeleo Women group, is among the women groups profiled by Siaya Muungano Network. Monica as the leader of the group, was taken through various training and capacity strengthening sessions which have equipped her with knowledge and skills to effectively participate and engage with leaders at the local level. Further, through the civic engagement sessions, she was able to understand the importance of women being at the center of climate action. Monica is currently organizing and mobilizing women at her community to participate in community forums and voice their concerns to their leaders and also hold their leaders accountable. She also holds meetings in her village to sensitize the members on climate change issues and sustainable environmental

conservation. She has supported the formation of a women accountability cell at her village to hold their leaders accountable on gender responsive climate change projects. She leads in following up with leaders to ensure they are accountable to their needs as women of Bar Agulu in Barding. "Sahi, tuko na sauti, tunaweza ongea na tusikike ingawa bado hatuja sikizwa sana lakini tunaungana na kuenda kwa public participation na tunaongea na sauti bila kuogopa na pia tuna follow up kwa vitu wamesema," says Monica loosely translated to 'right now we have the power to speak although we still have a long way to go. We can unite and attend public participation and raise our issues without fear. We also follow up with our leaders.'

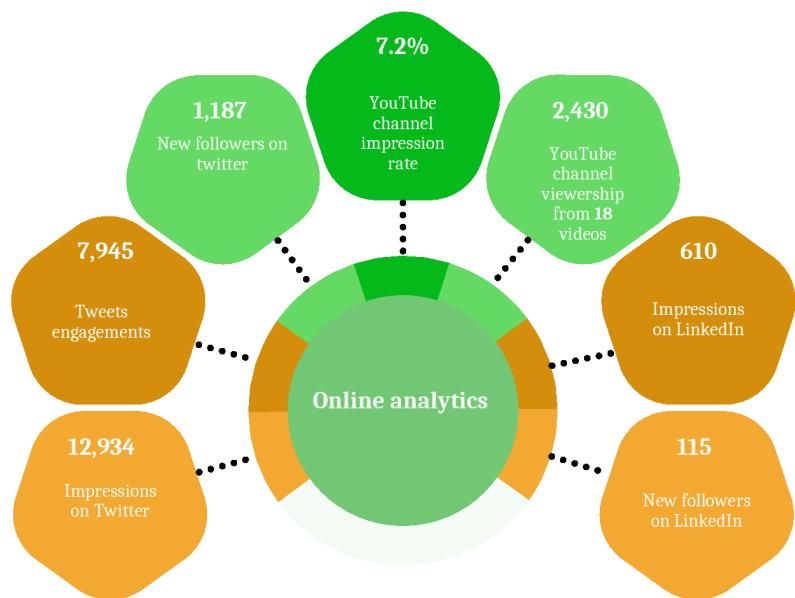
Opportunities beyond borders



Since 2022, Chanukeni Youth Group has been engaged in sustained civic education, Sexual reproductive health and rights advocacy as well as sharing and linkage to opportunities for capacity strengthening. With a diverse group of youth with some having dropped out of school due to economic

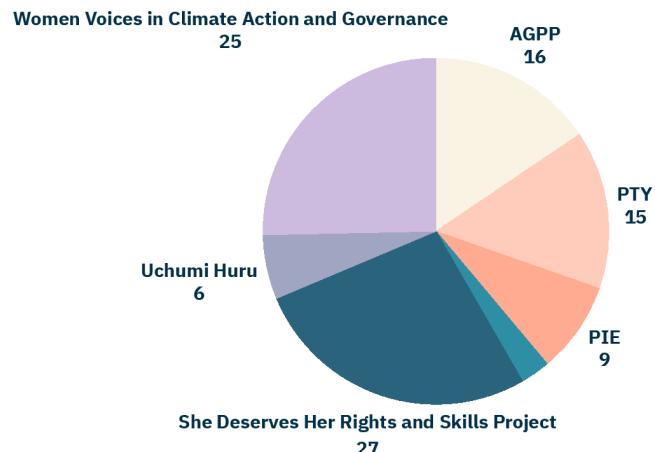
factors, access to employment has not been easy. It is therefore in this line that the group members resolved that there is a need for them to start a savings scheme to enable them sustain and empower themselves. With support from Power to Youth Project Community mobilizers who have continuously engaged the group through civic education, provided linkage and referral for them in different spaces and opportunities enabling the group to grow its savings and members are able to access loans under low interest rates which has enabled them sustain themselves. Recently when an opportunity to refer a group for support came up, we did not hesitate to mention Chanukeni Youth Group which has currently received capacity strengthening and mentorship on bee keeping with an additional 6 bee hives. In addition, the group was able to receive a grant of Kshs 70,000 from Villanova University after recommendation from Siaya Muungano Network. "Since we began engaging with Siaya Muungano Network, we have had access to several opportunities of learning that have transformed my outlook of the governance process, in addition i am now able to sustain myself with my kid unlike in the past when i had to put up with violence just for my needs to be met, said Sharon Tago a member of the group.

SIMUN WAS HERE (ONLINE FOOTPRINTS)



FINANCIAL REPORT

SIMUN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR 2023 (COMPRISING ALL THE PROJECTS) in %



PARTNERS AND DONORS



Uraia
Kenya's National Civic Education Programme



VCA VOICES FOR JUST CLIMATE ACTION



Decid'Her



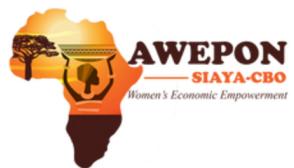
**WITH
AND
FOR
GIRLS**



jhr | Mobilizing media. Changing lives.



AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND





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