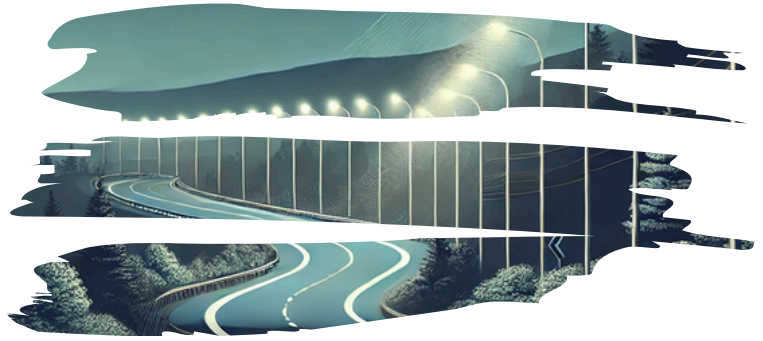






## GUIDING LIGHTS ON OUR ROUTE



### Message from the Board Chair



I am delighted to present our 2024 annual report, a testament to our unwavering dedication to the empowerment of adolescent girls, women and young people through diverse projects and initiatives. Reflecting on the past year fulfills us with pride as we recognize the significant strides we have taken in this noble pursuit. The relentless commitment of our staff, coupled with the invaluable support of our partners, has propelled us forward. Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones aligned with our strategic plan 2022-2026.

Our collective efforts have been nothing short of remarkable changes. The commitment of our staff, the invaluable support of our donors, partners, and the trust placed in us by the communities we serve have been key to our successes. Together, we have achieved major milestones that reflect our shared

vision for a world where girls, women, and young people can thrive and fully realize their potential. As we look to the future, we are encouraged by the progress we have made, but also mindful of the work that remains. We are more determined than ever to continue advancing our mission and creating opportunities for girls, women, and young people to thrive.

On behalf of the Board of Management, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our development partners, staff, national and county partners, and stakeholders for their tireless efforts and unwavering support. Together, we will continue to build on this foundation of success, driving positive change and to amplify women and youth voices to promote social justice and challenge inequalities in our community. Sincerely,

**Nancy Akoth Omondi, Board Chair.**

### Message from the Executive Director

2024 was a year of many firsts with rich milestones and lessons to move us forward. As we reflect, we are proud of the progress made towards creating a just society where girls, women, and young people can thrive. Guided by our strategic plan, we remain committed to advocating for inclusive and just societies, empowering girls, women, and young people to have a voice, exercise their choice, and gain power in shaping their futures.

To celebrate the International Day of the Girl Child, we launched the Girls Voices and Visions Assembly, a platform for adolescent girls and young women to engage with duty bearers on critical issues affecting their lives. More than 150 girls and young women from across Siaya came together to discuss challenges, offer solutions, and advocate for policies





and programs that reflect their needs and aspirations.

In November 2024, we launched the Duond Mine Forum, a groundbreaking platform for women to share their stories, achievements and contributions to climate action. The event highlighted the essential role women play as leaders and advocates in the fight against climate change, celebrating their leadership and commitment to creating sustainable change in their communities.

I marvel at the resilience and expertise of our staff who have gone above and beyond to drive positive change and create a lasting impact. My sincere gratitude to the team for their tireless efforts and commitment.

A special recognition to our friends, stakeholders and partners for their continued support and collaboration in our work. It has been exciting working with you and we are happy to have you on board.

To our Board of Management, your leadership and dedication in us building a strong and resilient community in Siaya County is unmatched.

In 2025, we remain focused on deepening our work and continuing to amplify the voices of those sidelined at the periphery. The journey toward a just and inclusive society is far from over, but with your continued support, we are confident that we will keep pushing for a more just and equitable society for all.

Thank you for being a part of our journey.

**Shirleen Adhiambo, Executive Director**

### **Message from the Programs Coordination unit**

As we reflect on 2024, I am proud of the remarkable progress we have made in implementing impactful programs that empower girls, women, and young people in Siaya County. At the core of our work is a commitment to delivering sustainable solutions that address the pressing challenges faced by our communities.

This year, our programs have created spaces for meaningful engagement and advocacy. The launch of the Girls Voices and Visions Assembly was a significant milestone, providing a platform for adolescent girls and young women to engage directly with duty bearers. Their voices, solutions, and demands for policy change reaffirm our mission to ensure inclusive participation in decision-making.

We also witnessed the birth of the Duond Mine Forum, a transformative space that amplified women's leadership in climate action. Through this initiative, we saw firsthand how women are championing climate resilience and shaping solutions for a sustainable future. Their stories inspire us to continue strengthening community-led responses to environmental and social justice issues.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication of our program teams, community partners, and stakeholders. Our work thrives on collaboration, and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to every individual and organization that has walked this journey with us. Your unwavering support has enabled us to implement initiatives that change lives and foster lasting impact.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on strengthening our programs, deepening community engagement, and ensuring that our interventions are responsive to the evolving needs of those we serve. We are more committed than ever to advancing a just and equitable society where every girl, woman, and young person can realize their full potential.

With continued dedication and partnership, I am confident that we will build on these successes and drive even greater transformation in the coming years.

Sincerely,

**Hillary Omondi, Programs Manager**





## WHO WE ARE

Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN) is a youth-led women rights community based organization committed to empowering women and girls to realize their full

potential, worth, and strength politically, socially and economically, through advocating for opportunities that explore their full potential, and dedicated to amplifying their voices in development, governance, and decision-making at all levels. Believing in the untapped potential of women and youth to address pressing community challenges, SIMUN advocates for their involvement in leadership and decision-making processes in the community, county and national level. Our systems change approach focuses on amplifying the voices of women, adolescent girls, and youth by creating opportunities for them to realize their economic and social rights. We empower these groups through their social networks, enhancing their capacity to challenge existing systems, engage in policy processes, access essential services, and seize opportunities for social and economic advancement.



## OUR DESTINATION & COMPASS

### 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.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- To promote women and youth entrepreneurship, create linkage with stakeholders and mobilize support for the young women and youth entrepreneurs.
  - To conduct civic education on human rights-based issues, gender related issues and governance in the community.
- To champion for the voice of women in decision making and leadership spaces in the community, county and national government level.
  - Work with the community especially women and youth to advocate for adoption of sustainable initiatives that contribute to environmental conservation and climate change mitigation and adaption.
  - To promote and build networks and linkages with organizations, government structures, private sectors and community groups that are working towards ensuring positive livelihoods of the community and strengthening spaces for young women and youths.
  - To advocate for access to reproductive health care rights and services for adolescent girls, boys and young women in the society.



## MEET THE CREW



### The Navigators & Map Readers



**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.

### The Road Crew



**SHIRLEEN ADHIAMBO**  
Executive Director



**HILLARY OMONDI**  
Programs Manager



**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



**DINNAH ODHIAMBO**  
Project Assistant - Climate Justice



**JULIET ACHIENG**  
Office Assistant/ Community  
Mobilizer



**NANCY AKINYI**  
Community Mobilizer



**JOHN WASIRA**  
Volunteer



**VANESSALINE AKOTH AROKA**  
Student on attachment



**PHENY MOSES**  
Student on attachment



**PURITY JANE**  
Student on attachment



**BELINDA WESONGA**  
Student on attachment



## PILLARS OF OUR HIGHWAY

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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

## OUR DRIVING TECHNIQUES

**1.Power analysis model;** modelling behavior change by understanding power and where power lies and mobilizing communities particularly those affected by social economic triggers to challenge power inequalities

**2.Movement building;** harnessing the power of being in collectives and coming together to challenge systems of inequalities

**3.Community led advocacy;** creating spaces for communities and particularly women and girls and young citizens to engage duty bearers on different social issues and services especially on issues of GBV, climate change, governance and budget accountability and other socio economic issues affecting them and also engage in monitoring and advocating for improved service delivery

**4.Husika dada Model;** Organizing adolescent girls and young women to debate on various social economic and political issues affecting their lives and provide solutions to these challenges.

**5.Leadership Mentorship;** Empowerment of girls and young women within our safe spaces with knowledge and skills to meaningfully participate in leadership and decision-making processes from community to county and national level.

**6.Economic empowerment and livelihoods:** Equipping women, girls and young people with information, skills and capacity to tap into various entrepreneurship opportunities and also create employment for themselves while also mobilizing and organizing them into the saving for Transformation S4T model and other Social enterprises for economic security and independence.





## THE ROADS WE TRAVEL

In 2024, SIMUN engaged both at the national levels and at the county levels working closely with our partners to influence gender responsive policies and budgets related to climate change.

At the county levels, SIMUN's work was spread across various wards in Alego Usonga, Ugunja, Bondo, Rarieda, and Gem Sub-counties.



## THE ROUTES WE'VE TAKEN

1. Power to Youth Project supported by AMREF Health Africa
2. Women Voices in Climate Action and Governance supported by Akina Mama wa Afrika
3. For young Mothers for their wellbeing project supported by the Children Rights and Violence Prevention Fund (CRVPF)
4. Feeding Programme supported by We One Action Network



1. Rebuilding Widows Hope for Decent Employment in Siaya supported by Voice
2. She Deserves Her Rights and Skills project supporter by the French Embassy in Kenya
3. Uchumi Huru project supported by African Women Development Fund (AWDF)
4. PWD Inclusion and Empowerment project support by We are Purposeful
5. Women Voices in Leadership Program supported by Uraia Trust.



## CHECKPOINTS CROSSED



## ROAD CONDITIONS & TERRAIN

In 2024, Kenya's operating context was shaped by a mix of challenges and opportunities. The country faced an economic environment marked by rising taxes, inflation, and escalating commodity prices which significantly eroded the purchasing power of many citizens, with women, who manage household budgets and small businesses being disproportionately affected. This financial strain made it harder for people to access essential services such as healthcare and education, deepening the divide between different segments of society.

The economic situation and the government forcing the finance bill 2024 on Kenyans saw the eruption of protests countrywide primarily led by young people dubbed Gen Z movement. These protests called for the resignation of the president, citing unmet promises and making life hard for citizens. However, the government

responded with excessive force, leading to the deaths of over 50 young people, either through police shootings or from injuries sustained during police beatings. Despite the tragic toll, the protests highlighted a shift in civic engagement, with young people, often considered disengaged, using platforms like TikTok and twitter spaces to organize and voice their opposition to the Finance Bill. The protests led to the rejection of the finance bill 2024.

At the same time, violence against women, including the rampant killings and mutilations of women increased, remaining a pressing issue. Over 60 women were found murdered, dismembered, or butchered, prompting widespread protests from feminists and women rights organizations demanding government action. The crisis underscored the ongoing struggle against femicide and gender-based violence in the country. In response, the President set up The Technical Working Group on GBV including Femicide to assess, review and recommend measures to strengthen the policy, legal and institutional response to GBV including femicide in the country.

The government also implemented significant changes, such as transitioning from the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) to the Social Health Authority and Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF), which further increased financial burdens on workers and added to the population's economic strain. The shifting policy landscape, coupled with the general economic downturn, had a profound impact on citizens' quality of life.

On the local level where SIMUN operates, shrinking civic space became a growing concern, with human rights defenders facing increased surveillance and security threats. These challenges hindered our ability to operate effectively, limiting our advocacy work as our office gates had to remain locked most of the time to ensure security for our staff. Economic hardships coupled with the increased costs of transportation, further limited girls, women and young people's participation in critical forums, preventing them from influencing decisions on matters that directly affected their lives. The rising costs of living and inflation forced a reduction in activities, directly affecting our reach. Cultural norms and entrenched gender biases also continued to obstruct women's leadership, particularly in Siaya County, where resistance to addressing women's issues in governance remained strong. This reluctance to embrace gender equality in political decision-making stalled progress on both gender equality and climate action. Despite these setbacks, SIMUN remained steadfast in its commitment to fostering community engagement and advocating for responsive governance.



## MILEAGE TRACKER: OUR IMPACT



**39** AGYWs trained on entrepreneurship skills



**3** Widows groups enrolled on the saving for Transformation Model



**23** AGYWs enrolled into Vocational Training Centres



**2** SRHR policies and laws influenced



**45** girls acquired digital literacy skills through our digital dada campaign



**10** safe spaces strengthened and transformed to SRHR academies



**24** AGYWs enrolled for various apprenticeship programs



**25** AGYWs trained as SRHR champions



**8** girls in secondary schools supported with school fees through our girls' re-integration program



**365** dignity kits distributed to both in and out-of-school girls and young women



**42** kitchen gardens installed with **21** Married AGYWs benefitting from the kitchen garden initiatives.



**557** Community members including AGYWs reached with integrated health services during community outreaches.



**20** AGYWs received poultry chicks under our Kuku ni Mali Initiative.



**160** women reached with climate change information





**300** trees planted in community spaces and 170 tree seedlings distributed to women



**200** water filters distributed



**10** schools supported with 1500 tree seedlings



**40** Men reached through our male engagement program



**124** grafted mango seedlings distributed to women groups



**15,000L** water tank and a water tower installed at Nina School for the Deaf, ensuring clean water supply and improved sanitation.

## DRIVING THROUGH THE YEAR

### PAVING THE ROAD FOR GENDER EQUALITY

In 2024, we continued our commitment to promoting gender equality by empowering women and girls and ensuring their full participation in decision-making processes at all levels. Through our safe space programs, we supported the leadership development of girls and women by offering mentorship, information sharing,

and skill-building opportunities. These efforts aimed to help them challenge and break down the structural barriers that prevent their involvement in key decisions. Since January 2024, we were able to engage over 300 adolescent girls and young women across 10 community safe spaces. In addition, we engaged male champions using a gender-transformative approach to serve as allies in promoting the rights of girls and women in the fight for gender equality.

We also placed significant focus on advocating for the rights of widows through our "Rebuilding Widows' Hope for Decent Employment" project. This project was designed to empower widows by equipping them with the tools and knowledge necessary to assert their rights and combat gender-based violence (GBV) within their communities and also be economically empowered. Nine widows were identified and trained in critical areas such as human rights advocacy and paralegal skills. This training enabled them not only to understand their legal rights but also to actively support other widows by providing guidance and





advocacy. Equipped with these skills, the widow advocates became agents of change in their local communities, raising awareness about the rights of widows and the importance of addressing GBV. They also acted as a vital link between widows and local authorities, offering referral services for GBV cases. By utilizing existing community structures like widow groups and chief barazas, they provided civic education on widows' rights and mobilized community support. As a result, the advocates successfully referred 5 cases of GBV to NGAO, ensuring the victims received the necessary support and the cases were addressed through appropriate legal and social channels.

Additionally, we conducted three legal aid clinics for widows, reaching a total of 137 widows and providing them with legal and rights protection awareness to prevent economic abuse and disinheritance. We also joined the Free Pentecostal Fellowship of Kenya (FPFK), Siaya, in several



campaigns to raise awareness about the rights of widows and promote a culture of dignity and respect in the community.

In August 2024, we mobilized 53 women from six sub-counties in Siaya to participate in the public forum for the Annual Development Plan (ADP) 2025/2026, where they were able to voice their priorities for county planning and budgeting. In the same month, we organized a youth forum on the Siaya County ADP 2025/2026 and a separate session in November for young people to provide feedback on the Youth Bill 2024, presenting a memorandum to the secretariat in Kisumu.

Our initiatives also included facilitating exchange programs for adolescent girls and young women (AGYWs) in Kisumu and for female persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Kitale, providing them with platforms to share experiences, knowledge, and strategies for overcoming gender-based challenges. These platforms also allowed them to meet role models who have overcome gender barriers in various fields, such as business, arts, and education.



Additionally, we supported the education of girls by enabling eight of them to return to school through our school reintegration program. We also supported AGYWs in attending key national and international events, such as International Women's Day and the Youth Devolution Conference.

In addressing the gender gap in technology, we partnered with Stawisha Africa Initiative and Awepon under the "She Deserves Her Rights and Skills" project to train 45 AGYWs in digital literacy. In September 2024, we celebrated the graduation of our first digital literacy cohort, with several graduates pursuing further related courses or securing employment in local cyber cafés.

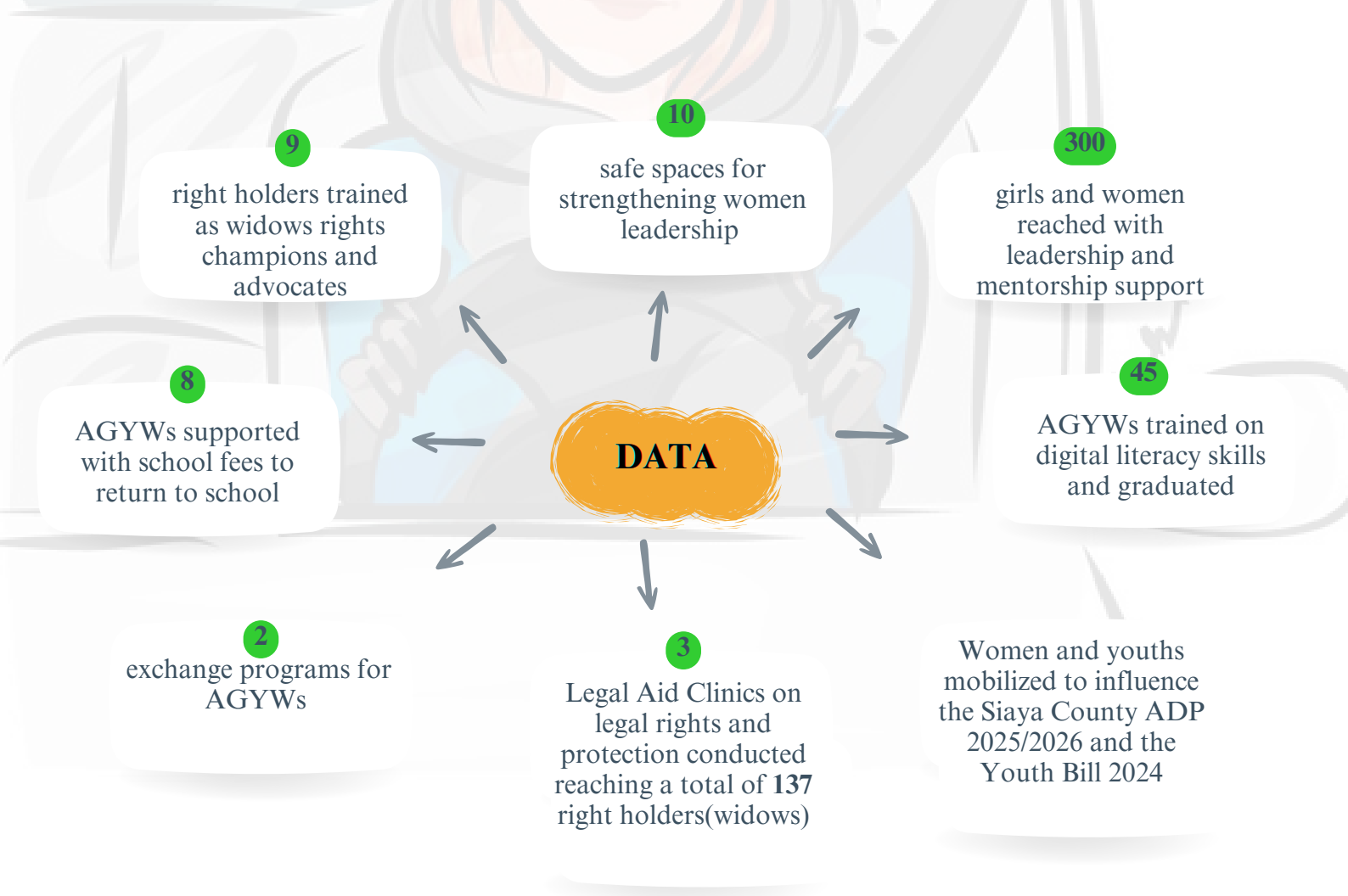
Lastly, we proudly launched the Siaya Girls Voices and Visions Assembly, a groundbreaking platform designed to



amplify the voices of girls in social, economic, and political development. The primary goal of the assembly was to provide AGYWs with a space to engage directly with key duty bearers, such as government officials and local leaders, to discuss their challenges and propose actionable solutions. The forum focused on advocating for the inclusion of gender-sensitive policies and programs within Siaya County to ensure that the unique needs and perspectives of girls were considered in policy-making and development agendas. Over 150 AGYWs from across Siaya participated in the forum, voicing their concerns on critical issues like education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and protection against GBV. The forum also allowed them to suggest improvements and called for more opportunities for their growth and development. Key duty bearers, including the CECM for Agriculture, the Director of Gender, and the Honorable Member of the



County Assembly for South East Ward, attended the forum, listening to the concerns raised and offering their support for the proposed initiatives. Through the assembly, we established an ongoing mechanism for girls' participation in shaping the future of their communities, ensuring their voices continue to be heard in the decision-making processes that impact their lives.





## FOSTERING GOOD GOVERNANCE, BUDGET ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

SIMUN firmly believes that good governance is the cornerstone of building a fair and just society. It is essential for ensuring that public resources are used efficiently, that all individuals have access to opportunities, and that citizens are actively involved in shaping the policies and decisions that affect their lives. Throughout 2024, we remained committed

to advocating for good governance practices in Siaya County. We worked tirelessly to ensure that effective service delivery was a priority for the County Government of Siaya, with a specific focus on improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to community needs. Our commitment to strengthening governance in Siaya was demonstrated through the creation of multiple accountability platforms that brought together key stakeholders to discuss service delivery challenges across various sectors. These discussions were aimed at identifying solutions and charting a clear path forward for improving service delivery and fostering greater accountability within the public sector.

In September 2024, we partnered with Uraia Trust to host the Kagua Huduma Forums, a series of three key events that brought together County Executive Members from all departments in Siaya, alongside department directors, community leaders, and other key stakeholders, including Siaya County citizens. These forums served as an important platform for fostering dialogue on accountability and transparency in public services, enabling citizens to demand improved service delivery from their county government. The Kagua Huduma Forums were held across two sub-counties, offering a direct space for community members to engage with public officials and discuss issues impacting their daily lives. One notable forum, conducted in North Alego Ward and focused on the provision of water services, following a survey done on water projects in the ward in August 2024, saw leaders pledge to reinstate the stalled water projects in the ward to ensure that citizens had access to water. True to their commitment, these stalled projects were promptly addressed, and today the residents now have a reliable supply of water.



To promote economic justice for women and particularly small scale traders in Siaya, we conducted a survey in Alego Usonga Sub-county to assess the participation and experiences of women traders in revenue collection planning processes and impact of revenue collection exercise on their small scale businesses, in 14 selected markets, focusing on the

participation of women small-scale traders, who make up the majority of market traders. This survey also examined their involvement in the taxation process and public participation in the development of the finance bill and other development agenda. 891 women small scale traders were interviewed in the survey. The results revealed the minimum participation of women in public participation processes, limited knowledge on public participation, and lack of women involvement in the taxation policy processes. The survey also revealed the pathetic status of the markets including poor sanitation. The report was validated with stakeholder including those from the county trade and Municipal departments and members of County Assembly attending the exercise. Through the efforts, we saw the drilling and equipping of a water borehole in Siaya Modern Market, one of the markets highlighted in the assessment exercise, and continue to see efforts being made to address the identified gaps in the report.

In November 2024, we conducted a public expenditure tracking survey for water projects in six wards across Siaya, including West Alego, North Sakwa, West Ugenya, North Gem, West Uyoma, and Sidindi. These surveys and reports revealed the poor status of water projects in the ward despite the huge budgets allocated for the water projects. The report served as

critical tool in our advocacy efforts to ensure more efficient and accountable service delivery in the water sector for Siaya citizens.

To ensure that the voices of women and young people continue to be amplified in governance processes, SIMUN organized several other forums aimed at empowering young people and women to influence



governance in Siaya County. These forums enabled the participants to track budget implementation and engage directly with duty bearers, ensuring that their concerns were addressed in key decision-making processes. We remain committed to making governance more inclusive by providing platforms for marginalized groups to actively participate in shaping their communities. Additionally, SIMUN deepened its collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, media outlets, and government duty bearers. This collaborative approach ensured that our advocacy efforts were well coordinated and helped strengthen the relationships necessary for creating lasting change in governance. We also leveraged on media platforms to enhance our advocacy efforts. Through radio conversations, we also provided the public with information, disseminating the findings of the assessment study conducted on markets to the community and duty bearers, championing for the involvement of women in development agenda and the promotion of their economic rights and tax justice in Siaya.

## DATA

Public expenditure tracking for water projects done in 6 wards

3

Stakeholder engagement forums to advocate for effective governance and service delivery.

3

radio talk shows to champion for women inclusion and participation in tax policy processes and the betterment of their working environments,

891

women participated in assessment exercise on the status of women participation in tax policy processes and the impact of taxation on their businesses.

3

kagua Huduma Forums conducted reaching a total of 170 community members and 40 leaders



## ADVANCING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

In 2024, we remained committed to advancing the sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) of girls, women, and young people. Our efforts focused on engaging adolescent girls, young women, and youth through various platforms, such as youth cafes, Husika Dada sessions and debates, storytelling sessions, and webinars which opened up conversations



on various issues around GBV and unintended pregnancy including the importance of male involvement and engagement in preventing Sexual and Gender Based Violence and the role of parental consent in contraception.

We held ward based forums on mental health, sexual and gender based violence and menstrual hygiene management bringing together different community stakeholders, and fostering a supporting environment that promotes the wellbeing of adolescent girls and young women in accessing their SRHR rights while preventing and responding to GBV. We also held community dialogues to mobilize more support from the community in enhancing the wellbeing of young mothers as well as reducing teenage pregnancies and violation of young girls' rights. To localize and promote the uptake of SRHR information and services for AGYWs, we leveraged on theatre as a tool to raise awareness thereby establishing the Mega Minds Arts theatre group to support and localize the message. Through arts performances, the group was able to perform in 3 different markets in Siaya while also appearing in other community outreaches and key events. Through the performances, they were able to encourage positive behavior change while challenging harmful norms, stereotypes and practices.

In February 2024, 25 Adolescent girls and young women drawn from Alego, Gem and Ugunja sub-counties in Siaya County, were identified and trained as community SRHR champions. The 25 AGYWs were to support in disseminating SRHR information in their communities, and provide referral and linkages in an attempt to prevent and respond to SGBV in their communities. After the training, these champions successfully reached out to 3 schools,



providing critical SRHR education to their peers in the schools.

In addition, we continued to conduct awareness campaigns on menstrual hygiene management, family planning, and contraceptive use within our SRHR academies. Through the safe space model, we enabled 200 girls and young women to access essential SRHR information and

services. To address period poverty and stigma, we distributed sanitary towels and dignity kits to both boys and girls, both in and out of school reaching a total of 40 boys and 325 AGYWs. Furthermore, we referred 30 adolescent girls and young women to reproductive health services at various health facilities and also referred 3 GBV survivors for psychosocial support and services to relevant institutions. Furthermore, we supported girls' participation in key events, such as World Contraceptive Day in September 2024 as a strategic approach to amplify their voices and raise awareness about the importance of sexual and reproductive health.

3 integrated community forums were conducted in Kaluo, Simenya primary and Sirembe Chief's camp in Alego Usonga, Ugunja and Gem Sub-counties respectively, offering essential services to both the community and AGYWs. During the community forum, AGYWs, along with other community members, accessed a range of services provided by the Department of Health in Siaya. These services included general medical treatment, family planning, HIV counseling and testing, and child immunization. The outreaches not only facilitated access to critical health resources but also promoted awareness and education around reproductive

health, empowering AGYWs to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. As a result, 18 AGYWs received family planning services, 40 were screened for cervical cancer, and 39 accessed HIV testing and counseling services.

On 11th October 2024, we pioneered our first Girls' Voices and Visions Assembly in Siaya, a forum that brought together 150



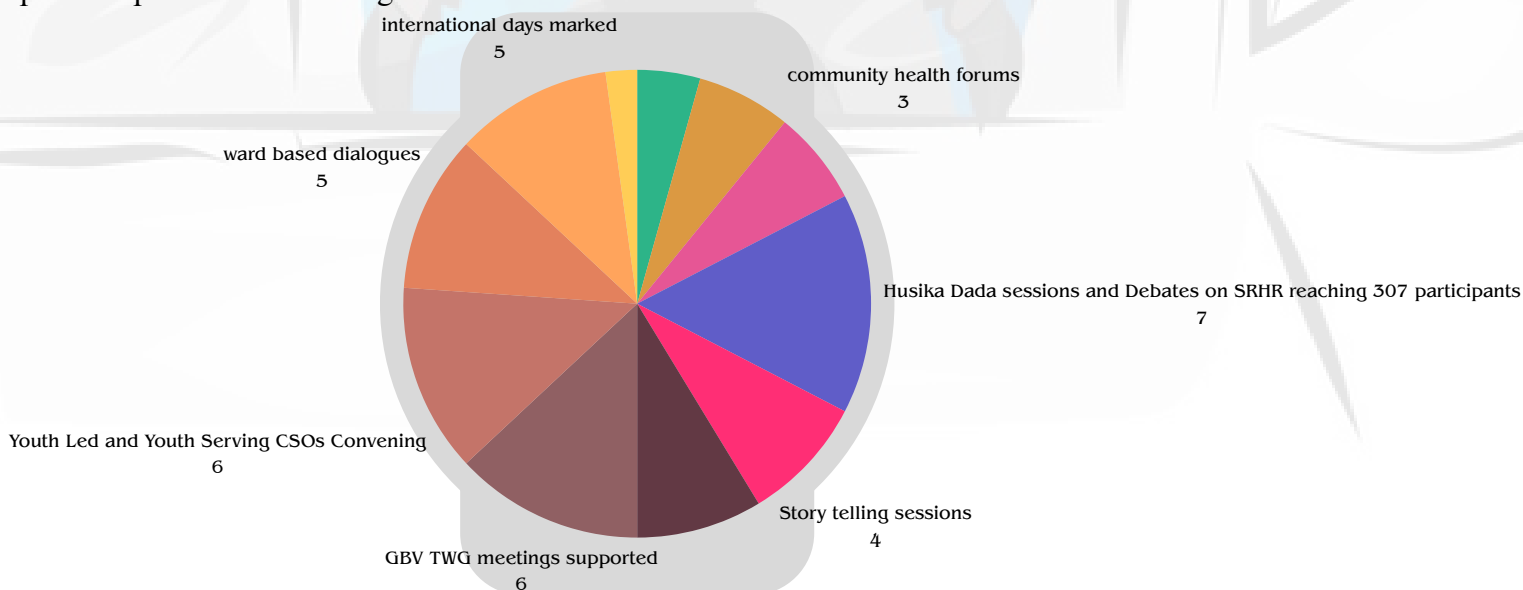
adolescent girls and young women to talk about the issues that affect their lives including reproductive health issues while urging the government to prioritize reproductive health in their budgets. This forum played a crucial role in highlighting the importance of enhancing SRHR for AGYWs.

SIMUN continued to contribute to an improved policy environment supporting different convening on SRHR to discuss SRHR policy priorities. Our engagement extended to consultative meetings with stakeholders, including the Technical Working Groups on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), to address sexual health and GBV issues in Siaya County. These collaborations aimed to strengthen our efforts in ending GBV and teenage pregnancy in Siaya County. We also played key roles in influencing for policies and budgets that address SRHR, contributing to the development and review of the RAMCAH Bill, which was approved at the Siaya County Assembly and launched by County Governor, His Excellency James Orengo on 29th January 2025, and the development of the Siaya County Adolescent Young People action plan for 2024-2027.

Lastly, we participated in the 7th Adolescents and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights conference held in Mombasa and Organized by RHNK, where we presented an abstract titled “A model of community transformation- Case study of Community SRHR Academies in Siaya County,” which is a model being implemented by SIMUN to increase access to SRHR information for adolescent girls and young women in the rural communities of Siaya.

## DATA

\*Girls Voices and Visions Assembly in Siaya Launched bringing together 225 participants including 150 AGYWs





## LIGHTING THE PATH TOWARDS A MORE RESILIENT AND CLIMATE JUST WORLD

In 2024, we continued raising awareness about the specific impacts of climate change on women, especially those from the rural areas, and to equip women and women groups with the tools needed to lead local-level discussions and advocacy efforts. This included building their capacity to understand their rights, mobilize their communities, and advocate

for gender-responsive climate policies. We also focused on documenting and supporting women's climate action proposals, helping them secure available funding for their projects.

Under our civic engagement of women and women-led groups to become climate movement leaders and to promote sustainable climate solutions, we were able to reach 160 women, building their agency to stimulate dialogues to help scale up transformative actions towards advancing women's participation in climate action, and gender-responsive climate and environmental actions.

During the year, we convened multiple stakeholder engagement workshops and engaged with both the county Assembly of Siaya, the Department of Environment and Climate Change, and Civil Society Organizations to influence effective climate change governance and prioritization of gender issues including women inclusion in the climate change agenda, working closely with PACJA and Action Aid, where we highlighted the critical gaps in the implementation of the Siaya County Climate Change Act 2021 and the utilization of the FLLoCA funding, calling for transparency and accountability and ensuring it is locally led and beneficial to all including women and young people. As a result of these collaborative efforts, significant progress has been made in improving climate governance structures. Notably, the Siaya County Climate Change Planning Committee and the steering committee have been activated, with members receiving appointment letters and being inaugurated. Furthermore, the department has made



efforts to communicate its activities related to the FLLoCA process, ensuring that CSOs and the community are informed about ongoing developments.

In partnership with AMwA partners in Kenya, we held two webinars on women inclusion in COP ahead of COP 29 in Baku Arzebeirjan and the state of food systems and food sovereignty in Kenya. The two

webinars presented an opportunity to explore how women can be more effectively included in decision-making processes at COP 29, ensuring that their voices are heard in global climate negotiations. Additionally, the discussions on food systems and food sovereignty highlighted the challenges and opportunities that communities face in securing sustainable, nutritious food sources and how we can collectively work together to shape discussions around food sovereignty and reclaim and seeds and strengthen food systems for more resilient and equitable communities.

In August 2024, we held two sensitization meeting for a total of 67 participants including 41 females and 26 males on the composition and functions of the ward climate change planning committees as well as created an interactive platform where women and Ward Climate Change Planning Committee members engaged on meaningful discussions about gender-responsive climate actions at the ward level. Through the meetings, the women were able to understand and engage with the ward Climate Change planning committees well especially in coming up with bankable proposals under the Financing Locally Led Climate Actions (FLLoCA) program.



Between November and December 2024, we organized two capacity-building workshops focused on the integration of gender into climate action and finance. These workshops brought together 150 participants, including 29 males and 121 females, consisting of government officials, civil society organizations (CSOs), and women community champions. The primary goal was to



strengthen the participants' ability to advocate for climate justice and push for gender-responsive policies. Additionally, the workshops provided the tools and knowledge needed to develop gender-responsive climate proposals for funding, ensuring that future climate initiatives consider both gender equality and environmental sustainability.

In collaboration with partners under AMwA in Kenya, we successfully hosted a three-day learning space focused on feminist transformative climate justice for the VCA alliance and partner members. This learning space took place in Machakos County and drew a diverse group of 40 participants, comprising 13 males and 27 females. During the learning space, participants had the opportunity to explore the intersection of gender justice and climate justice, discussing how climate change disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, particularly women. The sessions emphasized the importance of applying a feminist lens to understand and address the complexities of the climate crisis. Participants engaged in discussions that challenged traditional narratives and explored alternative approaches rooted in equity and inclusivity. We also jointly held two online validation meetings and one physical meeting in Siaya for the gender assessment of FLLoCA and the gender analysis of climate change legal policies and frameworks in Kenya and select counties, which were conducted in the previous year. A diverse group of participants, including policymakers, gender experts, community representatives, and climate advocates, joined the discussions. The primary objective of these meetings was to gather feedback and insights from stakeholders on the two assessment study's findings. The insights and feedback gathered from the stakeholders enhanced the relevance of the findings of the two reports.



In November 2024, we pioneered a women dialogue and exhibition forum dubbed “Duond Mine Forum; Cultivating Change, Celebrating the Role of Women in Climate Action,” which provided a platform for 150 women from the different parts of Siaya to showcase their climate change initiatives, share their stories of resilience, and advocate for increased support for women-led climate actions. The Chief Guest at the event was the County Executive Member (CECM) for Water, Irrigation,

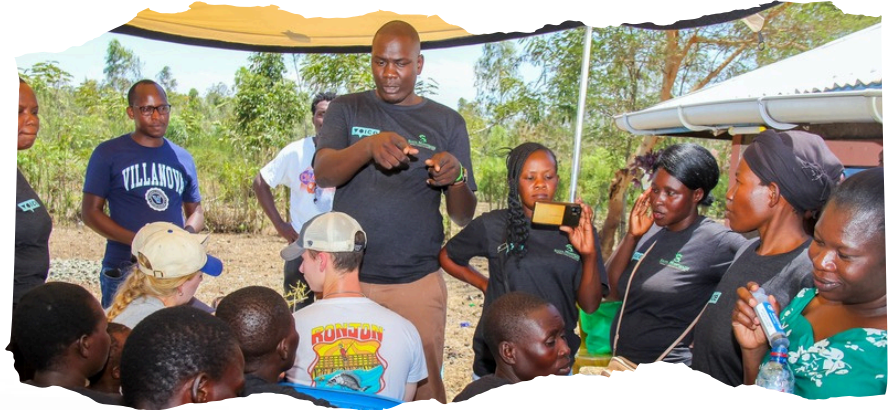
Climate Change, Environment, and Natural Resource Conservation, Professor Jackline Oduol and was accompanied by women leaders from the County Assembly of Siaya. During the event, they committed to pushing for more inclusive finance for women and youth climate actions.

Together with Komboa Jamii Initiative, one of the VCA NLGF beneficiaries, we engaged 180 young people in West Alego on climate change, providing them the space to share their experiences and challenges on how they are impacted with climate change and provide solutions to some of the problems while encouraging them to venture into various agricultural



opportunities available to change their lives. The youth were able to gain a deeper understanding of the climate crisis, brainstorm practical solutions, and explore potential agricultural ventures that could create economic opportunities and contribute to sustainable development.

In partnership with Villanova University and Start with one Kenya



(Uzima Water Filter), we distributed water filters to over 200 households in Usonga and West Uyoma wards in Siaya. This initiative aimed to ensure access to clean and safe drinking water, significantly reducing cases of waterborne diseases in the two areas. Through the partnership, we were also able to support a water tank installation and solar pump in Nina School for the Deaf in North Alego Ward. This has promoted access to water for the students, allowing to enjoy a reliable and sustainable water supply.

Towards the end of the year, SIMUN reached a greater milestone by being granted the observer status by the United Nations environment program (UNEP). This was a significant milestone to the organization since it will provide the organization an opportunity to participate in high-level global environmental discussions, increasing its visibility on the international stage and also enhancing its credibility and influence in advancing women agenda in environmental and climate change policy, advocating for gender-sensitive policies that address the specific environmental and climate change challenges faced by women and girls.

Through our efforts, we supported and assisted women and youth groups across Siaya County to successfully secure funding from the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) Next Level Grant Facility (NLGF). These grants enabled grassroots organizations to implement climate-resilient and environmentally focused projects tailored to their community needs between 2023 and 2024.

Here are some of the notable beneficiaries:

- **SIFA CBO** (North-West Gem, Gem Sub County) – Received KES 100,000 to establish a tree nursery with 3,000 seedlings, conduct training on climate change mitigation and early warning signs, open culverts, and desilt Kodenyo stream.
- **Green World CBO** (West Uyoma, Rarieda) – Awarded KES 500,000 to scale their tree nursery, create green spaces in schools, and carry out community sensitization.
- **Barding Maendeleo Women Group** (North-East Alego, Alego Usonga) – Granted KES 200,000 to upscale tree planting by setting up a nursery bed, seed raising, and sensitizing the community.
- **Centre for Rights Education, Governance and Development (CREDG)** (West Ugenya, Ugenya) – Received KES 400,000 to strengthen community resilience against the impacts of artisanal mining on agriculture and rural livelihoods.
- **Apate CBO (West Alego, Alego Usonga)** – Benefited from KES 450,000 to promote drought-resistant crops like cassava and sweet potatoes across three acres and provide training on good agricultural practices.
- **Kambare Youth Intervention Group (South Gem, Gem)** – Got KES 200,000 for the installation of a solar water pump and reservoir tank to enhance community access to water and boost agriculture.
- **Masala Community Driven Development Committee (North Uyoma, Rarieda)** – Supported with KES 300,000 to expand tree nurseries using water harvesting tanks, desilt community water pathways, plant 300 bamboos along Ndati River, and train 30 environment champions.
- **Omboye Janen Farmers Group (West Asembo, Rarieda)** – Awarded KES 250,000 to scale climate-smart agriculture through African leafy vegetable farming, a solar-powered egg incubator, and seed capital for a village saving scheme.
- **Majango Zone Asembo Kochieng Self Help Group** (East & West Asembo, Rarieda) – Granted KES 300,000 to support tree production and reclamation of River Akech's riparian zone through organized tree planting.

## DATA

3 capacity building workshops on gender mainstreaming in climate action and finance reaching a total of **150** participants including **121** females

Influenced the activation of the Siaya County Climate Change planning and steering committees

Pushed for the nomination of two CSO Network members (1 male and one female) into the Siaya County Climate Change Steering committee and Climate Change planning Committee.

**67** participants sensitized on the composition and functions of the ward climate change planning committee

**4** stakeholder workshops on climate change and finance

Established a Climate Change CSO Network In Siaya bringing together more than **20** organizations

**3** groups composed of 1 women group and **2** youth groups received funding from NLGF for climate action initiatives

Installation of a water tank and solar pump in Nina school for the Deaf

Duond Mine Forum, a forum to celebrate remarkable women contributions to climate change conducted bringing together **173** women from all over Siaya

**200** Water filters distributed in Usonga and West Uyoma

SIMUN granted observer status by UNEP



## CULTIVATING CHANGE; STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOODS FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

SIMUN envisions economic empowerment that enables girls, women and young people to transform their lives and communities through access to decent jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities. In 2024, we continued to empower women and girls at the household level to be economically empowered and boost their livelihoods. To enhance women's economic empowerment, the Rebuilding



Widows Hope project identified 3 widow groups (60 widows) in North Alego, West Alego, and West Uyoma as beneficiaries. Through the project, 53 widows were trained on IGA selection, planning, and management, equipping them with skills to start and sustain businesses. Additionally, 65 widows received hands-on skills training, further diversifying their economic opportunities. This not only promote their financial independence but also created community solidarity through movement building, empowering the right holders(widows) to advocate for their rights and create sustainable livelihoods.

Through Our Saving for Transformation Model, we continued to support savings-led microfinance approach that provides safe place for poor households especially women and young people to save and borrow money to address their economic and livelihoods issues. The 3 widow groups were trained on saving for transformation model and supported with seed capital under our revolving fund arrangement to boost their savings initiative. This was after conducting household visioning and planning with them to support them develop their household roadmaps. The funds enabled their financial resilience, improved decision making at household and community level and enhanced their participation in economic processes.





To enhance the ability of young women to adapt to climate variability and anchor food security and nutrition at their household level, we supported 21 young women from Sirembe in North West Gem, Rangala and Simenya in Ugunja and Umala Nyamila and Karemo in Alego by training them on how to establish and maintain kitchen gardens. We then gave each two cone gardens and supported them to establish and plant a variety of vegetables in the cone gardens. Through this training, the young married women gained practical skills to grow fresh, nutritious food, improving their family's diet and reducing dependence on external food sources.



The initiative has enhanced food security at the young women's household level and also empowered the young women contributing to their economic independence as they have been able to sell the surplus produce creating additional income for themselves. Furthermore, 20 AGYWs benefited from the Kuku ni Mali initiative, where they were able to raise poultry and earn income by selling the birds. This income allowed them to meet their basic needs, thereby reducing the poverty and dependency that often contribute to GBV.

Under our PWD inclusion and empowerment program, we continued to enhance the capacity of AGYWs with disability by connecting them to various opportunities for growth, development, and independence. We not only provided access to skill-building resources but also focused on marketing their products across different platforms, allowing them reach a broader audience and gain recognition for their work.

With support from We One Action Network, we supported a modest feeding programme at Umala Vocational Training Centre where we provided food supplies and essential academic materials/equipment, helping keep students, particularly young mothers, in school. This collaboration ensured that the students focused on their education without worrying about basic needs, empowering them to reach their full potential.

To improve the social lives of adolescent girls and young women (AGYWs), we facilitated access to birth certificates for both AGYWs and children, issuing 20 birth certificates through the Department of Registration in Siaya County. Additionally, we supported the acquisition of



National Health Insurance Covers (NHIF) for 20 widows. These efforts were carried out during our community outreach programs, bringing essential services closer to these groups and reducing the burdens associated with traveling long distances to access social protection services.



## DATA

3 Widow Groups enrolled into the S4T model

21 young married women supported to establish kitchen gardens

53 right holders (widows) trained on IGA selection, planning and management

65 right holders trained on hand on skills including soap making, weaving and pottery

20 birth certificates issued to young mothers and their children

10 widows supported to enroll for NHIF.

Feeding programme in Umala VTC launched

20 AGYWs with disability supported to market their businesses

## OUR WORK IN SCHOOLS

We expanded our mentorship and leadership programmes in schools to reach 300 pupils and students. We partnered with 5 schools where we continued to strengthen our Afya Clubs, conducting dialogues with students on different topics around sexual and reproductive health and menstrual hygiene management. Through this initiative, we were able to distribute 365 dignity kits to both boys and girls to manage their health with dignity.



Our Climate literacy programmes in schools also expanded where we continued to educate students in our Echo Clubs on climate change and environmental conservation, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to take meaningful actions against the climate crises. Through interactive engagements, tree planting and





practical activities, the students engaged in schools actively addressed climate change by planting trees in schools and in their homes. Additionally, one of our school engagement programs was visited by the Council of Governors knowledge management Unit to document best practices in climate adaptation and mitigation in the school. The team toured the tree nursery in Umala Vocational



Training Centre and also interacted with the student members of the echo club.

Additionally, we supported 8 girls from the community safe spaces who received support for school fees for both secondary and university education as an approach to improve their retention in the schools.



## MALE ENGAGEMENT IN 2024.

During the year, we intensified our engagement with men as community champions for the promotion of gender equality. Our programs continued to engage men as allies, to be support systems for women and girls' empowerment. The year presented a great opportunity for sustaining our engagement with men to challenge patriarchy and its manifestations. To deepen the conversation of power shifts from the



household level up to community and county level, we strengthened our gender transformative approach GTA model, reaching a total of 40 males. As a result of this engagement, we have seen an increase in the number of men championing for women and girls rights, advocating for women leadership and reporting gender based violence against women and girls.



## REDUCING INEQUALITIES

### NINA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Access to clean water remains a challenge for many schools, particularly for learners with disabilities. At Nina Special School for the Deaf in Siaya County, inadequate water access had long been a barrier to a conducive learning environment. To bridge this gap and promote inclusivity, we partnered with Villanova University and Start With One Kenya to install a solar-powered pump and a 15,000-litre water tank, ensuring a sustainable and reliable water supply. This initiative not only improves sanitation and hygiene for the pupils but also enhances their overall well-being, affirming that no child should be left behind due to unequal access to basic needs



### JOKINDA QUEENS GROUP

A small group of young women in Ugunja Sub County, Siaya County initiated the Jokinda Queens Group while seeking methods to improve their life circumstances. The young women united during an Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) cycle while experiencing multiple difficulties particularly related to economic opportunities. Their situation began to transform after they completed training sessions on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and financial literacy by Siaya Muungano Network. Through these training sessions they acquired valuable skills which enabled them to start developing plans for mutual growth.



The registration of their group became one of the most significant milestones in their journey. Registration of their group enabled them to access resources and opportunities more easily. Through their savings program members were able to combine their resources to provide small loans for each other as required. Eventually they began experimenting with creating beadwork and crochet products and constructing baskets from basic materials such as beads and wires. The initial small idea eventually developed into an income-generating endeavor for them.

The group's objective goes beyond generating profits. The organization established a robust support network that enables the women to motivate each other. The group enabled many members to establish small businesses while saving money and increasing their contribution to their homes and communities. The women have started participating more actively in local meetings and discussions which enables them to express their opinions about decisions that influence their lives.

## GIVING BACK THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS



### Partnership with Villanova University



Over 200 households in Usonga and West Uyoma wards now have access to clean and safe drinking water. This was made possible through our partnership with **Start With One Kenya**, **Uzima Water Filters**, and **Villanova University**. We distributed water filters to help reduce cases of waterborne diseases in the two areas. This support is part of our ongoing work to improve the lives of people in our community through simple and practical solutions.



In another partnership with **Villanova University** and **Start With One Kenya**, we installed a solar-powered water pump and a 15,000-litre tank at Nina Special School for the Deaf. This helped the school get a steady and clean water supply, which is key for hygiene, health, and a better learning environment. We also upgraded dormitories at the school to improve comfort and safety for the pupils, many of whom live on campus. These efforts supported better living and learning conditions for learners with disabilities.

### Partnership with We One Action Network



To help improve retention and increase enrollment of young mothers at Umala Vocational Training Centre, we partnered with **We one Action Network** and supported a small feeding program. The program focused on young mothers and their children, helping create a better learning environment. As a result, more young mothers joined the institution, and their performance improved.

### Partnership with Uraia Trust



We partnered with **Uraia Trust** to host the Kagua Huduma Forums—a series of three events that brought together County Executive Members, department directors, community leaders, and Siaya County citizens. The forums were held in two sub-counties and gave citizens a chance to directly engage with public officials, raise concerns, and call for better service delivery. These forums helped promote accountability and transparency in how public services are managed. We also worked with Uraia Trust to train Human Rights Defenders in Siaya. The training helped build their knowledge and skills to protect rights and support justice in their communities.



## INTERNAL LEARNINGS FROM THE JOURNEY

We held several learning sessions on different topics including monitoring and evaluation, report writing, and data collection using online platforms. Internally, we held debates on various topics that are at the centre of our work. We also reviewed our M&E strategy aligning it with our strategic plan 2022-2026.

We documented our learning journeys and stories of change[S1] in our various projects to demonstrate the impact of our work and developed knowledge products for shared learning and to fuel our advocacy efforts.

We leveraged tools such as radio talk shows, video production and sharing of updates across our different social media platforms such as x and Facebook. As a result, our online presence grew during the year by 18%.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2024

Girls Voices and Visions Assembly



Duond Mine Forum



Special Recognition for our dedication to retain AGYWs in school by We One Action Network



## KEY EVENTS/CONFERENCES ATTENDED



Conference of Parties  
COP 29 in Baku  
Azerbaijan



Youth Unite for SRHR  
under the Make Way  
Program



7th Adolescent and  
Youth Sexual and  
Reproductive Health  
and Rights scientific  
conference by RHNK  
conference 2024

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United Nations 69th  
Civil Society  
Conference in Nairobi

Africa Regional  
Climate and Gender  
Convening in Nairobi.

VCA Journey of W  
Campaign that was  
held in Kisumu, Nandi  
and Vihiga counties

Devolution  
conference

## KEY DAYS CELEBRATED



World Aids Day

Day of the African  
Child

International Women's 16 Days of activism  
against GBV

Katiba Day

International day  
of the Girl Child

World Disability  
Day

Menstrual  
Hygiene  
Management Day

World  
Contraceptives  
Day



## OPPORTUNITIES SEIZED

1. APHRC impact Evaluation Workshop
2. Capacity strengthening of WRO by Uraia Trust in Naivasha
3. Linking and Learning opportunity by VOICE
4. Capacity strengthening training on human rights group by Uraia Trust
5. Celebrating the past, shaping the Future Forum by GIZ under the Agri-jobs 4 youth



## OUR TESTS OF RESILIENCE

1. The shrinking civic space was a significant challenge in 2024, with some of our staff being closely monitored by unknown individuals after highlighting critical governance issues and speaking out against them. This surveillance was a direct consequence of our efforts to advocate for transparency, accountability, and the protection of civic rights. Despite this increased scrutiny, we remained committed to our mission, understanding that raising awareness about these critical issues is essential for creating a more just and open society.
2. We also faced the challenge of operating within a limited resource envelope, which often struggled to meet the huge expectations of the communities we serve. Despite the great demand for our support and interventions, our resources were constrained, making it difficult to fully address the needs and aspirations of the community. However, we remained committed to maximizing the impact of every resource available, working tirelessly to prioritize key initiatives and advocate for increased support to meet the growing demands for sustainable change.
3. The countrywide protests also disrupted our work, forcing us to halt implementation for a period to allow peace to resume. During this time, we focused on ensuring the safety and well-being of our staff and communities while closely monitoring the situation. Once normalcy returned, we resumed our efforts with renewed determination, understanding the importance of resilience in the face of such challenges and staying committed to our mission.
4. Through these challenges, we gained a deeper understanding of the importance of staying grounded in the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve. The immense demand for support, coupled with limited resources, reminded us of the necessity of a community centered approach, ensuring that our work remains relevant and impactful despite external limitations.

## OUR KEY TAKE AWAY IN 2024.

- Communities are more likely to identify with advocacy efforts when they see tangible benefits in their lives. While advocacy plays a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting their rights, it is the concrete services and resources that truly resonate with them and foster their engagement. This therefore, calls for more integration of advocacy and service delivery in our work.
- Despite setbacks in advancing women's inclusion in climate change policies and legal frameworks, we learned that changing our strategy is crucial and that persistence is key. For example, the involvement of women Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) in advocating for the women's agenda on climate change has been vital. By adapting our approach, we have discovered new pathways to engage stakeholders to gender-responsive actions.
- To ensure persistence despite challenges in securing resources for sustainability, we learned the importance of diversifying our funding sources and strategies. We cultivated relationships with individual donors to build a sustainable donor base while also partnering with other organizations to pool resources and share funding opportunities.
- Resource Mobilization takes up dynamic approaches with an ever shifting landscape, its success requires continuous updates and understanding the needs of prospective partners, target population and providing evidence based results

## SUCCESS STORIES

### Community SRHR Spaces Brings Hope, Creates Healing Platforms for SGBV Survivors in Siaya” Case study of a 20-year- old SGBV Survivor from Bar-Agulu Sub- location

For many survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Siaya County, finding a safe space to heal remains a challenge. In Bar-Agulu Sub-location, South East Alego ward—one of the areas reporting high cases of SGBV—a 20-year-old survivor struggled with the burden of her experience. She saw her peers suffer in silence, some falling into depression, others running away from home, and many making desperate choices with nowhere to turn for support.

Determined not to let trauma define her, she longed for a space where she could share, heal, and regain her confidence. That opportunity came in 2023 when Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN) and partners, under the “She Deserves Her Rights and Skills” project supported by the French Embassy in Kenya (PISCCA DECID’HER project), introduced community safe spaces—peer-led platforms where Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) could access SGBV support, psychosocial care, and SRHR information.

Through the project’s community mobilization efforts, she was identified and welcomed into Karemo Community Safe Space by a Community Health Promoter.



At first, she listened more than she spoke, but as she engaged in peer-to-peer discussions, her confidence grew. The safe space became more than just a meeting point—it became a lifeline, a place where she and other girls could share their stories, find encouragement, and reclaim their power.

Today, she is a peer leader in the safe space, using her voice to uplift others. She also benefited from the Digital Dada Initiative, where she gained digital literacy skills, and participated in the Power Analysis Model, which helped build her self-confidence and advocacy skills.

“Meeting under the tree with my colleagues gives me hope. We all have unique stories, and through sharing, we heal. Being in this space has given me the courage to know that nothing is impossible—we still have a life to live with dignity,” she says.

## **A Path to a Greener Future: Barding Maendeleo Women Group's Journey to Climate Action Funding**

Securing a grant as a community women group can often feel like an almost impossible task, especially when the group lacks the necessary structures and systems in place. Many funders require clear organizational frameworks, transparent financial management, and well-developed project plans, which can be overwhelming for smaller, grassroots groups. This becomes even more challenging when the leaders of these groups have not undergone formal education as the groups may struggle to present their ideas in a way that meets the expectations of grantors. For women, particularly those in rural or marginalized communities, the challenge is even more pronounced. Cultural and social barriers often prevent women from accessing education, leaving them with limited skills and knowledge especially it comes to navigating complex grant application processes. Barding Maendeleo Women Group is a prime example of resilience and determination in the face of the challenges that grassroots women groups undergo to secure funding. Despite the hurdles posed by their lack of formal education and limited access to resources, the 14 women in the group have turned adversity into an opportunity for empowerment, both for themselves and their community. Their journey towards securing funding began with a small loan from Equity Bank in 2023, which helped them establish a village savings and loaning initiative. This loan laid the groundwork for their broader climate-focused projects. In 2024, the group also received another loan from Uwezo Fund to support their poultry and kitchen garden initiatives, which significantly boosted their income as individuals and as a group. However, they didn't stop there. Motivated by their early successes, the group set their eyes on expanding their climate action efforts this round doing major projects but access to further funding proved difficult. Banks and government funding opportunities typically favored larger, more established organizations, leaving small groups like theirs at a disadvantage of only accessing up to a maximum of Ksh 50,000. Undeterred, the group, having heard about the Next Level Grant Facility under the Voices for Just Climate Action Program, they submitted a proposal for funding in 2023, but unfortunately, they were not successful. In 2024, they were once again encouraged to apply, this time with support from Siaya Muungano Network community facilitator. The group was ready to give it another try. With an idea in mind to create a tree nursery and conduct community awareness on climate change, the women sought assistance in developing a strong proposal which they were able to submit. Their motivation stemmed from the alarming rate of tree cutting in their area, which they recognized as a significant environmental issue. Their persistence paid off. In November 2024, they received the exciting news that their proposal had been accepted for funding. After undergoing a thorough assessment of their group's capacity to manage the funds effectively, they were notified in December 2024 that they had been awarded KShs. 200,000. This grant will be used to establish a tree nursery, raise awareness on the impacts of climate change, and strengthen the group's ability to adapt to climate change. The news of the grant brought immense joy to the group as Seline, the group leader, shared, "We are so happy about this. We never imagined getting such an amount that is not a loan but a grant. We are hopeful that we will implement well to get more funds under VCA."

## Journey to Hope Restoration

Emily Atieno, a widow from West Uyoma Ward in Rarieda Sub-county, is a woman with big dreams. Life was not easy for her, but she never gave up. When she joined Precious Widows Group, she found hope.

Through Siaya Muungano Network, Emily and her group were trained on Savings for Transformation (S4T). They learned how to save money, plan for their homes, and work towards a better future. Emily took the training seriously. She started saving little by little. Soon, she was able to buy two goats.

But she didn't stop there. With her savings, she is now buying iron sheets to build a kitchen and a shed for her goats. Her next goal is to buy barbed wire and fence her home for security.

When Siaya Muungano Network's Program Coordinator visited her, he was happy to see her progress. He said, "These are the stories that make us proud. When we help women-led households grow, we feel encouraged to do even more for our community."



## The Strength in Savings

Elizabeth Awuor Ouma, the secretary of Hekima Widows Group, has come a long way. Life as a widow was full of challenges, but ever since she got to know Siaya Muungano Network, she feels empowered and strong. "Nobody can trespass on my property anymore," she says with confidence.

Before, Elizabeth did not have a clear plan for her money. But in 2024, she joined the Savings for Transformation (S4T) training. For the first time, she set a savings goal—Ksh 15,000. Though she managed to save Ksh 11,800, she was proud of herself. "I may not have reached my target, but this is money I never thought I could save," she says with a smile.

With her savings, Elizabeth plans to fence her home and improve security for herself and her family. "I now know the importance of saving. Even small amounts add up and can change a person's life," she says.

She encourages other widows to take control of their future. "Organize yourselves in groups and start saving. When you save, you become independent, and your voice is heard. Nobody can push you around," she advises.

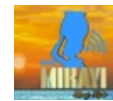




## OUR PARTNERS AND DONORS.

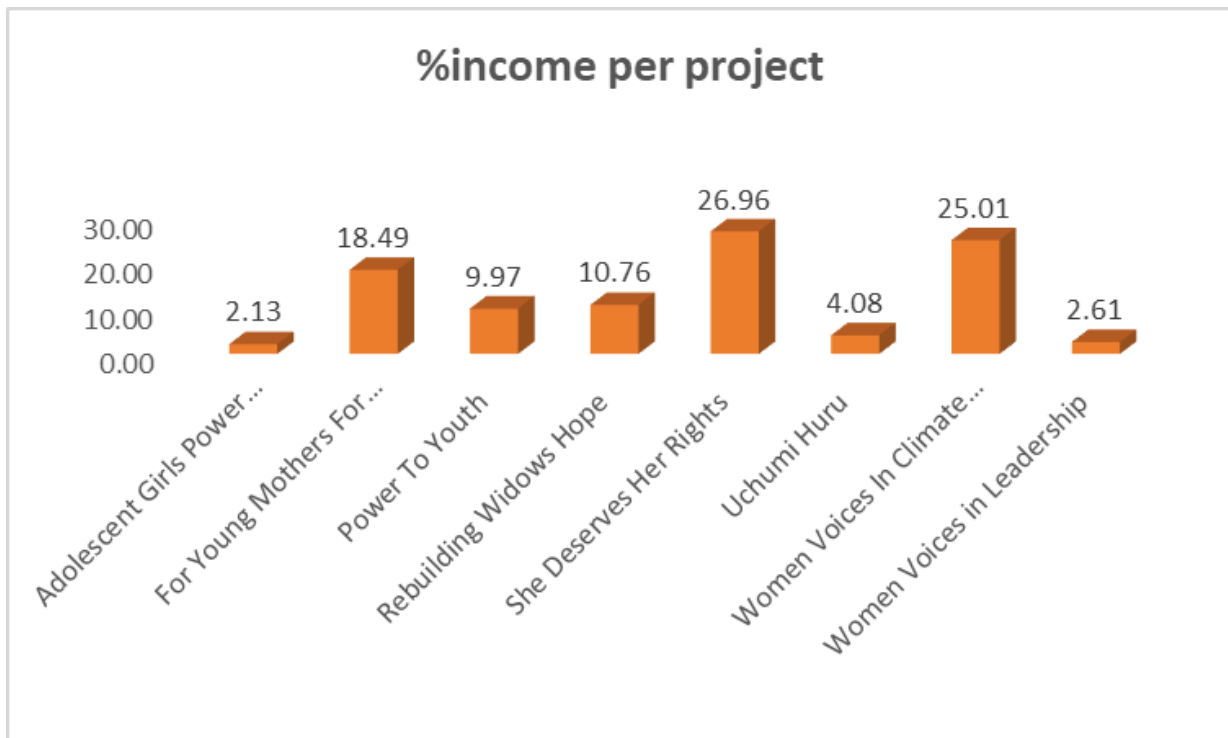


**Uraia**  
Kenya's National Civic Education Programme

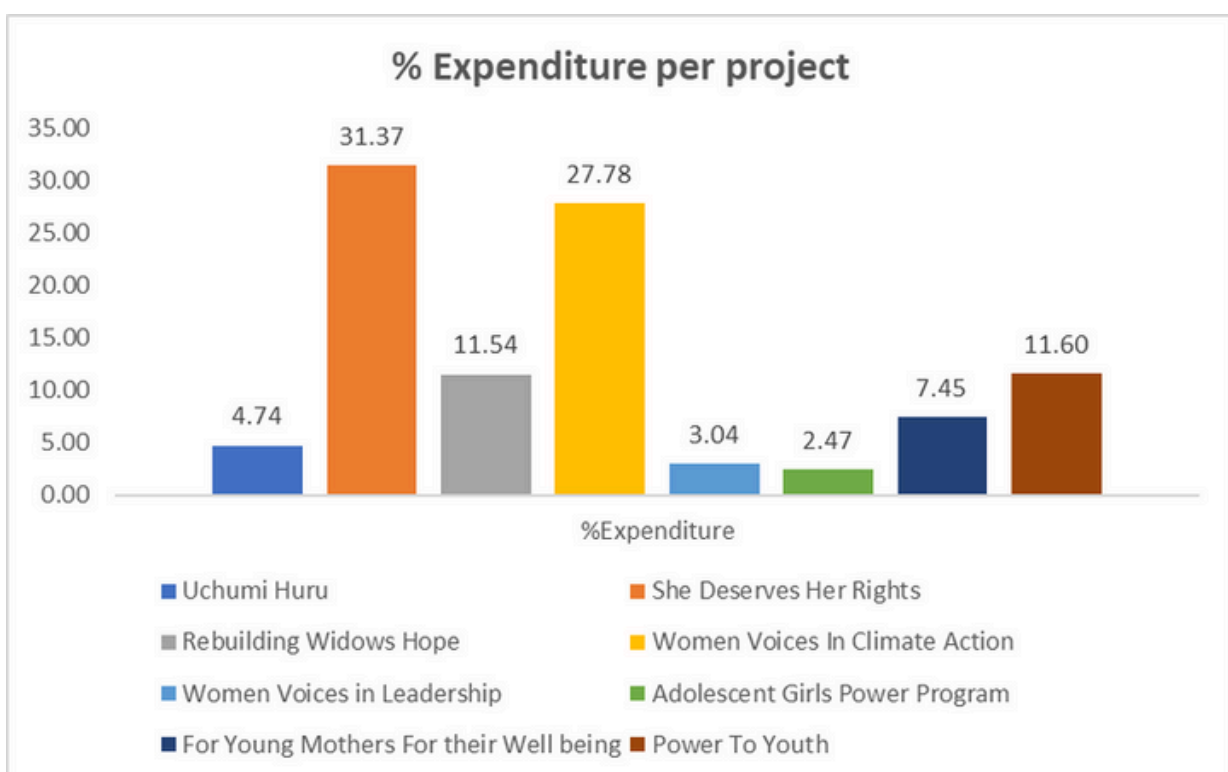


## 2024 FINANCIALS

### TOTAL INCOME PERCENTAGE



### TOTAL EXPENDITURE PERCENTAGE





# SNAPSHOTS FROM THE JOURNEY



## THE JOURNEY 2024: OUR YEAR ON WHEELS

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