

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

*Championing Sexual and
Reproductive Health and
Rights from the Grassroots in
Africa during Covid Pandemic*



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Message from the Team

“Championing SRHR for all from the grassroots Regardless the Covid-19 Pandemic”

The year 2020 has come to an end. It was a tough and exhausting year that will be remembered for not only the erosion and reverse of the hard-won gains on sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality across the African continent, but also for the steadfast efforts of grassroots advocates to position, promote, and keep SRHR on the health policy agenda in a context where multiple priorities were competing and resources were reallocated.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 exposed and exacerbated pre-existing systemic inequalities, normalized injustices and structural discrimination, and increased the risks for women and girls living in intersecting vulnerabilities, particularly those in contexts with fragile economic and health systems. As a result, the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, whose voices have been systematically silenced and whose interests are hardly ever served, have not only been left behind but also pushed further into extreme poverty. The pandemic exposed glaring gaps in contraception, comprehensive sexuality education, weak health delivery systems and insufficient social protection measures and systems. We end the year with more girls not expected to return to school due to teen pregnancies, we saw and heard about more girls than ever undergoing gender-based violence in their own homes, a system that is supposed to protect them.

However, in all these challenges, efforts to champion sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), including the fight against gender-based violence, has been high on the WGNRR Africa agenda.

Grassroots SRHR advocates kept working hard in their communities to ensure that SRH services and commodities are not overlooked in this time of the global health crisis and that the provision of sexual and reproductive health, including safe abortion, and gender-based violence related services be central to ensuring the health, rights, and well-being of women and girls. This has been, and remains, an essential component of the work that WGNRR Africa and partners did in 2020 and continue to do nowadays.

In 2020, WGNRR Africa and its grassroots members, partners and allies stood up, demonstrated commitments, connected national efforts and global solidarity with other feminists, took opportunities to reach further and have their voices heard in local, national, regional and global platforms like never before to influence policies, practices, attitudes, processes and outcomes in the best way we could.

Another year has passed with collective and satisfying achievements involving our members, partners and allies. Our work did not and will no longer stop because of the pandemic; it will continue with new speed and energy as the Covid-19 related challenges have made us more energized and more creative in what we do.

We are grateful to our members, partners, allies and donors for all the support they have provided in 2020. Let's join hands again in 2021 and onward for the health, rights, and well-being of women and girls in Africa. Together we will champion SRHR for all from the grassroots regardless the Covid pandemic.

WGNRR Africa Team

About Us



Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights Africa (WGNRR Africa) is a grassroots-led feminist network that connects and strengthens movements for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and justice. We work to ensure SRHR are respected and fulfilled as universal and indivisible human rights of all people, with an emphasis on the most marginalized communities.

Vision

WGNRR Africa envisages an Africa where all people can exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights and fulfill their needs.

Mission

We connect and strengthen movements for SRHR and justice. Through critical analysis and strategic actions, we connect partners and allies, build knowledge and skills for coordinated advocacy and campaign actions, promote networking and alliance building, and share resources for the advancement of SRHR and justice for all. We believe achieving this goal requires transformative social change.



Our Values

We work within rights, justice, and feminist frameworks.

Our guiding principles are non-discrimination, respect, equality, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. We are committed to equality for all genders and we value diversity.

We are self-reflective and independent from political, governmental, and religious institutions.

2020 – 2022 Strategic Plan at Glance

Introduction

The year 2020 was the launch of the first ever strategic plan of WGNRR Africa as a separate entity. Building on the work of the WGNRR Global Strategic Plan 2014-2016 and its Addendum 2017 – 2018, we have undertaken a review of our mission and vision which resulted into a new strategic direction and work plan for 2020 – 2022 adapted to the African context.

The new plan has enabled us to become more focused and more strategic about the goals we wish to achieve, and the activities we will carry out to achieve those goals.

Goals & Objectives

Our strategic goal is to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for all people as central to sustainable development.

Our overall objectives are;

- to enhance the capacity of members, partners and stakeholders to promote SRHR as a human right,
- to advocate for access to information, education and services needed by women and young people to achieve good sexual health and gender equality

- to reduce preventable maternal deaths and highlight denial of SRHR services as human right violation.



Priorities

- Effectively promote equality in matters of Sexuality and Gender Relations & increase responsible sexual behaviour.
- Enhance Leadership of Young People in driving SRHR Agenda.
- Reduce causes of Preventable Maternal Deaths

Meet our Team



Board Members



Martha Jerome
Tanzania



Easter Mwanjesa
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Eunice Maringo
Tanzania



Jeanette Sloodbeek
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Elina Queenity
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Staff Team



Nondo Ejano
Africa Regional
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Catherine Swai
Finance
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Devotha Sanga
Operations
Officer



Mageda Esolyo
Campaigns and
Networking
Officer



Matilda Deus
Youth SRHR
Officer



Numbilya Kiseko
Advocacy
Programme
Associate

Activities

in 2020

Activities conducted in 2020 aimed at contributing to our strategic goal of achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for all people as central to sustainable development goal via four program Areas:

Sexuality & Gender Relations

Young people's Leadership in SRHR

Preventable Maternal Death

Internal Capacity Strengthening

In a nutshell, in 2020 we:

- enhanced capacity and ability of 13 grassroots-based members and partners organizations to influence availability and access to SRHR information and services;



- enhanced the ability of 137 grassroots advocates/activists to counter stigma and rollback toward youth SRHR;
- increased the leadership of young people to drive their SRHR Agenda in their communities;
- strengthened national and cross-national partnerships and alliances among SRHR CSOs in Tanzania, Kenya and Malawi;
- influenced the implementation of pregnancy prevention and harm reduction approaches to reduce unwanted pregnancies and consequences of unsafe abortion among women and girls; and
- strengthened WGNRR Africa visibility in Tanzania and in the region.

Achievements

under strategic priority areas

Priority Area 1: Effective Promotion of Equality in matter of Sexuality and Gender Relations & increased responsible sexual behavior

Utilizing a combination of virtual and offline spaces, WGNRR Africa continued to mobilize and provide safe spaces for grassroots SRHR and Gender advocates from the African region, to discuss, plan and implement joint strategies to advance gender equality on matters of sexuality and promote positive masculinity.

We provided the financial resources to 7 youth organizations and 2 organizations of people with disabilities (OPDs) in Tanzania, and 4 SRHR orgs in Kenya and 1 network in Uganda to increase awareness of more than 25,000 people on SRHR issues of women, PwD and Youths through campaigning activities.



In the midst of the Covid pandemic, we continued working closely with grassroots organizations to foster cross-sectoral and cross-border collaboration and partnership through digital linking and learning spaces to advance sexual and reproductive health for All in the Africa region.

Using inclusive approach and digital medium we have created platforms that enabled collective action around a common agenda at country and across-country levels. In the midst of the Covid pandemic, we continued working closely with grassroots organizations to foster cross-sectoral and cross-border collaboration and partnership through digital linking and learning spaces to advance sexual and reproductive health for All in the Africa region.

In Tanzania we established and strengthened an alliance with Organizationis of People with Disabilities, Lawyers Associations, women CSOs, and the government to influence an enabling policy environment for the advancement and fulfillment of SRHR of Women with Disabilities (ASWOD). The Alliance has successfully developed and submitted to the Ministry of Labor, Youth, Employment and Disabled (MoLYED) the first-ever draft of a disability-inclusive code of ethics on health care for PWDs for approval



We also collaborated with MenEngage Africa to develop and implement strategies to promote positive masculinity for SRHR for all.

Together with MenEngage and WGNRR Africa champions from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, DR Congo and Mali, we have developed and implemented a comprehensive regional Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Strategy to enhance men and boys' support for women's SRHR.

This SBCC tool is a legacy to be used by both WGNRR and MenEngage champions and the large audience of SRHR activists to enhance men and boys' responsibility in supporting women's sexuality and reproductive health right in Africa.

Using messages from the SBCC tool, 137 grassroots advocates/activists (including men and boys) from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, DRC, Mali and Botswana were able to counter stigma and rollback toward abortion, menstrual health and sexual right.

We also created a regional SHEACTs portal (<https://community.sheacts.org>) through which we mobilized, connected and empowered grassroots through the SHE ACT portal to counter social and legal boundaries or restrictions of talking openly about abortion, menstruation, Gender and sexuality issues.

Priority Area 2. Enhanced Leadership of Young People in driving SRHR Agenda.



While observing strict Covid-prevention protocols, we equipped 137 representatives from grassroots organizations in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda with a range of skills that enhanced their ability to address issues of sexuality

In the East Africa Community, WGNRR Africa continued its work with 13 grassroots partners to increase knowledge on issues affecting young people's health outcomes. While observing strict Covid-prevention protocols, we equipped 137 representatives from the 13 grassroots organizations in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda with a range of skills that enhanced their ability to address issues of sexuality, abortion, menstrual health and intersecting stigma.

These grassroots-level Youth Activists for SRHR (YAS) acquired a range of skills, including right-based advocacy, policy analysis, Values Clarification and Attitudes Transformation (VCAT) facilitation, and intersectionality between disability, sexuality and reproductive rights.

Learned skills enhanced their ability to influence young people and women's access to youth-friendly SRHR information and services, and challenge taboos, stigma and misconceptions associated to young people's sexuality and their right to SRH through a multi-pronged approach. Partner organizations were also equipped with skills to assess their security and develop protection mechanisms.

Technically and financially supported by WGNRR Africa, the trained youth SRHR champions developed and implemented advocacy and campaigning strategies that influenced the availability of youth friendly SRHR information and services in their respective communities and countries.



In Tanzania, 60 Youth Activists for SRHR (YAS) have been able to influence the availability of improved menstrual health management facilities and commodities (such as Incinerators, Sanitary Pads- changing rooms, washrooms, sanitary pads, and emergency pants and piece of Khanga (clothes) in 6 schools in Mwanza, Kigoma and Dodoma; the launch of SRHR youth corners in 18 health centres of Dodoma municipal and Kigoma-Ujiji municipality; and the launch of Youth SRHR manifesto for politicians.

In Kenya and Uganda, the trained SRHR champions implemented SRHR destigmatizing strategies that consisted in collecting and busting myths surrounding SRHR issues,

namely abortion, menstruation and sexuality in the East Africa Community. The debunked myths were compiled in a myths debunking booklet.

Together with many other May 28 and September 28 campaign materials, the myths debunking booklet was used by grassroots advocates to address stigma associated to SRHR of young people in the East Africa Community and, to mobilize different actors (gatekeepers, policy/decision makers, parents, men and boys) to support the SRHR agenda of young people in their communities.

Also, the supported CSOs have integrated abortion VCAT in their routine right-based SRH work.



Together with the 13 partner organizations, WGNRR Africa has developed and shared with our large audience a significant number of resources (myths booklet, SBCC, youth SRHR toolkit, Adolescents comic book, Guide for Right-based messaging) used by grassroots SRHR activists to address social and legal barriers affecting negatively young people's sexuality, menstruation and access to safe abortion.

Priority Area 3. Reduced causes of Preventable Maternal Deaths

Before the closure of airports and the cancelation of flights, the Africa Regional Coordinator Nondo Ejano attended the INROADS Global Gathering in Mombasa, Kenya in February 2020. This global gathering brought together 122 people from across the world (of which the large proportion was coming from Africa) to discuss issues and specificities of abortion stigma.

Around May 28 – International day of Action for Women's Health and September 28 – International Safe Abortion day, WGNRR Africa has coordinated digital intersectional activism between members of MenEngage Alliance in Africa and the SHEACTs Alliance to promote equality and male involvement in access to SRHR for all.

This coordinated grassroots mobilization and digital activism had reached 32,481 people (for May 28) and 273,294 people (for Sept 28).



Together with SHEActs Africa, WGNRR Africa collaborated with WGNRR Global to conduct South to South learning exchanges on SRHR, such as on systemic and global obstetric violence against minority communities most impacted by HIV. Participants to these learning exchanges shared and learned advocacy that is being done around the world around systemic violence against key minority communities.

A 3-part online discussion series on Young People, Reproductive Justice, and Abortion Rights was conducted with gathered young people from Indonesia, India, Kenya, Tanzania, and the Philippines. The "LEARNING WHY: Safe Abortion and Post-abortion Care, a South to South conversation" was also held with healthcare practitioners and students, and SRHR advocates under the facilitation of experts from Kenya and Malaysia to discuss the importance of integrating rights-based curriculum in medical schools when teaching abortion.

Taking Action during May 28 – International day of Action for women's health



Together with campaign partners, we jointly developed the May 28 Inter Call for Action, "Women's Health STILL Matters: Women's access to essential SRHR information and services remains critical in responding to COVID-19."

As SRHR activists, feminists, and allies the world over uncovered stories and experiences of women who had been placed in precarious, even fatal situations, because of reallocation of resources and priorities to respond to the pandemic, the call to ensure SRHR in COVID-19 response became critical.

The May 28 Campaign finds itself against the backdrop of a public health crisis that directly impacts women's and girls' health, and, particularly, their sexual and reproductive health.

Together with campaign partners, i.e WGNRR Global, the Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW), MenEngage Alliance, Strong, Harmonized and Empowered Advocacy Actions in Africa (SHE ACTS Alliance), Safe Abortion Advocacy Initiative Global South Engagement (SAIGE), Philippine Safe Abortion Advocacy Network (PINSAN), South Asia Reproductive Justice, Accountability Initiative (SARJAI), Ipas Africa Alliance, and International Campaign for Women's Rights to Safe Abortion, we jointly developed the May 28 Inter Call for Action, "Women's Health STILL Matters: Women's access to essential SRHR information and services remains critical in responding to COVID-19."

During the day of action, we participated in actions such as webinars and discussions with campaign partners. Among these is the South-to-south discussion on reproductive justice and abortion rights with the Safe Abortion Advocacy Initiative (SAIGE), the Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition (SRJC) and the Strong, Harmonized and Empowered Advocacy Actions (SHE ACT) Alliance members. To ensure that our members are supported during the campaign we co-organized a webinar on "Strategic Collaboration on SRHR campaigning for May 28" together with MenEngage Africa Alliance



Priority Area 5. Strengthening organizational capacity and sustainability

Development and launch of first ever separate strategic plan 2020

Our strategic plan contributes to national, regional and global efforts to achieve SRHR for all.

At the start of 2020, we finalized and launched the first-ever WGNRRR Africa Strategic plan 2020-2022. The strategic document is a collective effort of staff, board members and WGNRR Africa's active constituency.



It sets out our priority programme areas, the objectives and strategies and tactics for each thematic area, clarifies the structure of the WGNRR Africa as a separate entity committed to the same vision and principles of WGNRR Global (as a mother organization), and establishes an indirect relationship with WGNRR Global coordination office that provides technical advice and support. We believe that the work planned in the strategic document will meet the core issues and needs of our partners and will contribute to national, regional and global efforts to achieve SRHR for all.

Feasibility Study

WGNRR Africa commissioned a feasibility study to assess the current and projected conditions that affect the operation and direction of its work in Africa from the Tanzania. The outcomes of the feasibility study set a footprint on the materialization of WGNRR Africa autonomy. It identified key external and internal organizational strengths, opportunities, challenges, resources and capacity; and provided concrete suggestions on the legalities and processes for WGNRR Africa's organizational viability in the next few years.



The study validated WGNRR Africa's presence in the region as a strong champion of the right-based approach on SRH, including right to abortion; connecting, strengthening capacity and supporting local organizations working at community level to implement strategies to advance SRH and rights; influencing policy change for SRH and rights of marginalized communities such as people with disabilities; amplifying the voice of grassroots organizations in regional and international policy platforms.



KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The key challenges encountered during in 2020 were related to:

The outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic

Covid outbreak has affected the delivery capacity of staff, delaying thus the implementation of activities and shifting the work from offline to online working model.

The mobility restriction and confinement approach that was applied by most government in the region had affected negatively the achievement of annual strategic goals and objectives.

However, we have mitigated this challenge by continuing with the mix approach of working both online and offline by observing strict Covid related safety measures. The Covid outbreak has also shifted some donors' attention from SRHR to Covid contingency.

Through calls for action and solidarity statements, WGNRR continued to call upon different actors, including donors to not sideline SRHR amidst Covid 19.

Staff turnover limited the organization delivery capacity

In the second quarter of 2020, 3 of our projects phased out ending thus 4 contracts of our programme staff out of 6.

This had a negative impact on the organization's delivery capacity and has created uncertainty of the survival of the organization.

To mitigate this challenge, WGNRR Africa has set an emergency operational objective of improving the financial landscape of the organization in 2020 - 2021, committing thus many efforts on fundraising from the 2 last quarters of 2020 onward.

By the end of the same 2020, the organization was able to secure two new grants from Global Fund for Women & Hivos Southern Africa for its work on youth SRHR and capacity strengthening.

Tanzania political landscape and its impact on SRHR (see feasibility study)



Politicians and religious leaders perceive contraception, right to abortion and sexual orientation as western' agenda to control our population growth and mislead our youngest generation.they spark this perception among community members and make it difficult to address these issues in communities

(respondent to the feasibility study)

Tanzanian political and social environment was hostile for the right based approach in addressing abortion and sexuality issues. Most regressive speeches by politicians about contraceptives, unwanted pregnancies, abortion and sexual orientation associated to the lack of knowledge of the existing laws and policies among community members sparked misinformation and fueled social stigma which all not only complicated the implementation of our programs in 2020, but also has shifted donors' interest to invest in Tanzania.

This has created a fearsome working environment and shrinking funding landscape for CSOs, especially those working in the SRHR field. We mitigated this challenge by strictly complying with regulations governing CSOs to not give a room to unnecessary attention and prosecution by government agencies.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Note	2020 TZS
Grant utilized	5	521,918,972
Other income	6a	13,800,000
Total Funds Available		535,718,972
EXPENSES		
Project implementation costs	7	(250,864,669)
Wages, salaries and employees benefits	8	(205,332,091)
General and administrative expenses	9	(75,586,579)
Depreciation and amortization	10	(3,935,633)
Finance cost		-
Total Expenses		(535,718,972)
Surplus/(Deficit) Before Tax		-
Tax	16	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Period		-
Other Comprehensive Incomes		
Foreign exchange translation gain		1,888,314
Total Comprehensive Incomes		1,888,314





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