



ANNUAL REPORT

2023



WOMEN'S
GLOBAL NETWORK
FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

W G N R R
AFRICA

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The year 2023 has ended and we've started another year with our sights set on new horizons and possibilities. Part of any good forward-facing strategy involves looking back and reflecting on the full journey that brings us to this moment.

This report is a retrospective eye into 2023 that looks at how together we championed change, dismantled barriers, and worked toward a future where no one is left behind in the fulfillment of sexual and reproductive health rights and justice (SRHRJ).

We want to express our deepest gratitude for the unwavering support we got from different partners, stakeholders, and donors throughout 2023. Your commitment to our shared vision of an Africa where all people can fulfill their sexual and reproductive rights has created a ripple effect of positive change; and your generosity has indeed created a wave of impacts, touching lives in ways that resonate with our mission.

We share our excitement over new horizons, as we go back and reach forward in tandem, with anticipation for the journey ahead.

Thank you a million!

WGNRR AFRICA TEAM

This report describes briefly the key achievements of WGNRR Africa throughout the year 2023 starting from the administrative and management point of view to the program implementation. On one hand, it gives a full picture of the organizational development including the redesigning process, the movements of the board and staff members, and partnership among others. On the other hand, it describes the projects and related activities implemented during the year, their impact to the beneficiary's communities, challenges and lessons learned, and concludes with a number of recommendations for the year ahead.





It's known that WGNRR Africa has grown from a regional coordination office of WGNRR Foundation into a semi-autonomous and affiliated entity after securing its registration as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Tanzania since 2016. Such growth has prompted WGNRR Africa to seek more structure in governance and management vis-à-vis its parent organization, the WGNRR Foundation, in order to maximize its effectiveness and advance its agenda with a more contextualized African perspective. In 2023, WGNRR Africa continued working toward its intent of transforming into a semi-autonomous entity and yet keeping ties with WGNRR Foundation and staying faithful to its vision, mission and values.

Act 1. WGNRR Africa Landscape assessment

To achieve the organizational change that is focused on design and effectiveness, the organization went through an assessment of its landscape which consisted of documentary review and semi-structured interviews with selected members of WGNRR Boards (both Africa and global) and their top executives were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the systems, dynamics and experiences that underlie WGNRR Africa's organization's governance and management processes and see to what extent the different elements align with each other to inform its effectiveness. The assessment purposefully looked at 4 essential areas of the organization design: (i) Incorporation, (ii) Governance, (iii) Management, and (iv) Operations. Key observations and facts that transpired from the landscape assessment are detailed in the Landscape Assessment report accessible [here](#).

Act 2. Organizational Design (OD) process

The results of the landscape assessment revealed that WGNRR Africa has been moving into another stage of growth as it seeks to optimize its internal structure and processes and scale up. There has also been a fundamental change to its identity when it acquired its own legal entity in Tanzania moving away from just being the Africa regional coordination office of WGNRR Foundation. This brought the organization to initiate an organization design process to craft a corporate governance framework that is up to the task of delivering overall direction, supervision, effectiveness, and accountability to the organization. This process resulted into a new organization governance and management structure as described in the OD report accessible [here](#)

Also, the board managed to meet 3 times in their statutory meeting (2 ordinary and 1 extra-ordinary) while an organizational financial audit and an organizational Tax Health check were also conducted.

Act 4. Development of New Five-year Strategic plan 2023 - 2027 and Policies

In 2023, WGNRR Africa developed its new five-year strategic plan 2023 – 2027 focused on ensuring effective SRHR advocacy to advance SRHR in the Africa region via cross-movement and cross-national collaboration and learning. Through this strategic plan, WGNRR Africa will strengthen its work with grassroots, women and youth-focused, and community-based organizations, to lead SRHR actions at national, sub-regional, and regional levels in Africa to advance SRHR and justice. It seeks to increase dialogue among partners, allies, and stakeholders on SRHR challenges and provide solutions, while also consolidating the experiences, lessons, practices, and gains for shared learning. It also forms the basis for WGNRR Africa to grow into an agile, accountable, and effective regional organization.

Also, WGNRR Africa has hired a consultant who developed a number of the organization's policy documents which were submitted to the board for approval. These newly developed policies included the Gender Equality and Inclusion policy, the Environmental Integration policy, while many others which were revised include the Procurement policy, the Human resources policies and procedures Manual, the Board Policies and Procedures Manual, and the Sub-granting policy.

Project 1. Strengthening and Sustaining SRHR for Young People in East Africa–YouCAN II (Grant Ref. #16941)

Summary

YouCAN II is a two years' initiative to scale up, strengthen and sustain the efforts of young people most impacted by systemic inequalities that resulted in stigma and discrimination in health and education systems in the East Africa Region. It aimed at challenging cultural, institutional and legal barriers mixed with relationships of power and control that prevent young people in their diversities from making informed and autonomous decisions about their bodies and lives. It focused on providing grassroots youth-led organizations and movements from the East Africa Community with skills, resources and technical support to advocate and campaign for the removal of barriers to young people's access to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), contraceptives (A2C) and safe abortion (A2SA) in our 3 countries, i.e. Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda

Key Achievements



Supporting partners to break barriers to young people's access to SRHR in East Africa

WGNRR Africa supported technically and financially 8 youth-led organizations from Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda namely; [Binti makini Foundation](#), [Bintisalha Foundation](#), [Youth Empowerment Movement Kenya](#), [Zamara Foundation](#), [Together Alive Health Initiative \(TAHI\)](#), [Sauti ya Wanawake Ukerewe \(SAWAU\)](#), [Wadada Solutions for Gender-Based Violence](#) and [Uganda Young Positives \(UYP\)](#) to implement advocacy campaign strategies aimed at dismantling barriers to young people's access to SRHR in their respective communities in the countries.

The supported partner organizations, using different mediums and platforms (Twitter spaces, offline dialogues, media engagement, and public meetings) **they reached a total of 8,729,765 people with stigma-free and youth-oriented advocacy messages that increased the community buy-in and support to SRHR of young people.**



Strengthening partners' Digital safety

Considering the safety of these brave SRHR activists working in a shrinking space where a well-organized and resourced SRHR opposition is on rise, WGNRR Africa has also strengthened their online security by providing skills and resources to enhance the online protection of their information and participants to their online spaces.

We also conducted a security audit to all 8 partners to assess possible risks and threats that might bring online security concerns. The outcomes from this audit informed the development of a cross-country digital safety policy/guide that helps partner organizations to activate their organizational and individual online defense mechanisms.

Also, we equipped them with knowledge and skills to proactively anticipate anomalies and potential threats before they occur and continuously monitor the trends. **Participating partners have reported increased capacity to strengthen and manage their digital security systems.**

“Before (the training and the policy), I was just doing business as usual and no one was cautious of the digital threats we were exposed to. Nowadays, things have changed, we are cautious and we monitor everything when engaging online.” Our computers are secured with strong password and genuine antivirus (Partner from Uganda)



Monitoring and Evaluation to YouCAN Partners

To make sure we are self-acquainted with the impact the YouCAN project was making in the implementing countries, a mid-term Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) visit was conducted by the WGNRR Africa MEL team in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda to meet the end user beneficiaries. This visit enlightened the changes happening on the ground due the YouCAN intervention.

The visit has not only fostered relationships and trust between WGNRR Africa and beneficiaries, but it also provided a platform for reflection and gathering of feedback from those who most lack social, economic, and political power. A comprehensive report on this evaluation visit can be accessed [here](#).

“As a Tanzanian and a service provider, I initially couldn’t understand the essence of providing SRH services to adolescents as I looked at them as minors who do not deserve this service. I was stigmatizing those who tried to put their noses at the facility I’m currently working at. But, thanks to VCAT exercises we were taken through as part of this project, I went through a profound transformation of attitudes regarding adolescents’ SRHR. Since, I offer stigma-free and youth friendly comprehensive SRH services to adolescents, including cPAC”.
(Health Care Provider at Temeke Hospital, Tanzania)



“Before joining the YouCAN project as a Youth SRHR Champion, I used to be shy, I couldn’t stand in public and speak about sexual and reproductive health matters. Nowadays, I’m confidently and effectively disseminating SRHR information among my peers and in the community I live in.” (Anti-Stigma Champion in Uganda)

Project 2. Strengthening Young people's Voice for Access to Integrated Comprehensive SRH Services (SYV project) in Tanzania (Grant Ref. ST2V-VT9K-AS).

Summary

The SYV project is a WGNRR – UMATI partnership initiative to increase the ability of young people to collectively demand the fulfillment of their SRHR free from discrimination and violence. The project aims at amplifying the voice of young people and their organizations to effectively advocate in a coordinated approach for access to integrated, quality, youth-friendly SRHR information and services. It connects young people and health workers to work together to remove social, legal, and institutional barriers to adolescent girls and young women's access to integrated SRH services and information. It uses different strategies, including joint advocacy campaigning, demand creation, service delivery; and mutual learning, sharing, and support to achieve this goal. During the past year, the project was implemented in 5 districts of 2 Regions, namely Morogoro Municipal Council (MC), Kilosa District Council (DC),

and Mlimba Council in Morogoro region; and Iringa MC and Kilolo DC in Iringa region.

Key Achievements



Tailored training materials to respond to the capacity needs of young people

A capacity needs assessment conducted among 105 young people aged 10 to 24 years old from diverse backgrounds revealed huge gaps in knowledge among young people on issues of post safe and abortion cares (29.6% only had some knowledge); comprehensive sexuality education, and policy advocacy and decision making processes (34% only).

Findings from the assessment informed the **tailored training materials that were used to train 30 Peer Educators (PEs) and 5 representatives of young and women-led Civil Society Organizations (Y&WLCs)** to increase their understanding of key SRHR and gender concepts, and improve their advocacy and campaigning skills to create demand for SRH services among adolescents and young people, dismantle social and cultural barriers that nurture stigma obstructing adolescents' and young people's access to integrated right-based SRH, and influence adolescents' and young people's participation in decision making on issues related to their SRH in their respective districts.



Mobilizing communities to increase demand for SRHR services and information in 5 districts of Tanzania

The trained 30 PEs under the supervision of the trained 5 Y&WLCs were financially and technically supported to **conduct a total of 340 awareness creation sessions** with their peers aged 10 to 24 years to increase their knowledge and awareness on different SRHR topics including

Youth and Reproductive Health, gender, puberty, family planning, traditions and customs affecting reproductive health for young people, post abortion care, Sexual Transmitted Infections and Diseases, HIV/AIDS for young people using the knowledge acquired during the training above mentioned and the MoH approved Youth SRHR toolkit.

These sessions were conducted in Morogoro MC, Mlimba Council, Kilosa DC, Iringa MC and Kilolo DC. In 2023 alone, **a total of 26,353 young people and adults were reached and capacitated with Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) sessions and stigma-free SRHR information.** Among these beneficiaries, 3,491 (1709 Female & 1782 male) were adolescents aged 10 to 19 years, 22,455 (11,036 Female, 11,419 male) were young people aged 20 - 24 years and 407 people (139 Female, 268 male) were above people 25 years old.

She had an unsafe abortion when I met her. She was in so much pain, after informing her about the availability of cPAC services in public facilities and her right to access these services with confidentiality, she agreed to go with me to the hospital. I took her to Mlimba Health Center where she received cPAC services" (Peer Educator from Mlimba DC).



Engaging decision-makers at all levels to listen to young people's voices

WGNRR Africa supported the trained PEs and Y&WLCs to engage local and national level decision-makers and gate keepers through advocacy activities to ensure that their SRHR needs and priorities are heard and taken into consideration in the health programming at all levels.

Through consultation with their peers, they identified SRHR issues affecting them most, developed SMART advocacy briefs that were delivered to decision makers and gate keepers through advocacy meetings with Ward Development Council (WDC) and Health committees in their respective districts.

Key asks of young people included but not limited to the establishment of a Youth day at ward level, participation of young people in the WDC meetings, allocation of convenient time for the provision of Youth Friendly Services (YFS) in the health facilities, and the participation of young people into Health Facilities Governing Committees' (HFGC) meetings in their respective districts

"She had an unsafe abortion when I met her. She was in so much pain, after informing her about the availability of cPAC services in public facilities and her right to access these services with confidentiality, she agreed to go with me to the hospital. I took her to Mlimba Health Center where she received cPAC services" (Peer Educator from Mlimba DC).

"We want the local authorities to know that we have our issues and we want to be part of their discussions during the WDC and HFGC meetings. I have delivered the SMART Asks at ward offices and requested for our participation at the WDC meeting, and the Ward Executive Officer (WEO) has granted me permission to be sitting in the next WDC meetings." (PE Mlimba DC).

“We want to have our day, a youth day at our ward with the coordination of Community Development Officer where we can discuss SRHR issues and all young people in our ward to get a platform to express their needs with regard to SRHR “PE from Mwembesongo ward.



Some successful achievements of young people's advocacy initiatives include: **At Mwembesongo ward, in Morogoro MC and Mlimba DC, Peer Educators were granted to be participating in the Ward Development Council meetings each quarter to not only submit the project progress report to be kept on record by the Ward Health Department but also present and discuss challenges faced by young people in accessing SRH services. In Iringa Municipal, young people were authorized to conduct SRHR information sessions during weekend clinics in public health facilities.**



Engaging decision-makers at all levels to listen to young people's voices

WGNRR Africa supported five Y&WLCs to organize semestrial regional and national level youth SRHR Technical Working Group meetings with **37 technical SRHR and Youth development experts, opinions leaders and other stakeholders** from Morogoro and Iringa regions at one hand, and **19 experts from the Ministry of Health (MoH), Prime Minister's Office - Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disability (PMO-LYED) and President-Office - Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG)** to discuss challenges and bottlenecks faced by young people in accessing SRHR information and services.



The meeting provided also a genuine platform for Peer Educators to share the short-term positive outcomes of their awareness and demand creation campaign in improving their health outcome:

“I met an adolescent aged 16, who got pregnant and went through unsafe abortion. After the abortion, her boyfriend advised her to be practicing anal sex to avoid another pregnancy; she accepted and they have been practicing anal sex as their family planning method for months. After hearing her story, I provided her with comprehensive information on Family planning. I provided a referral and escorted her to Mwembesongo health center where she got further information about modern FP methods and counseling. She accepted to use contraceptives and renounced to not be practicing anal sex as means of family planning any more.” (PE from Morogoro MC)

The outcome of this meeting include unanimous agreement by the health management committees and experts to - create more spaces for meaningful participation of young people in health decision making bodies at both district and regional levels; - Increase efforts to transform community negative perception toward youth SRHR by engaging gatekeepers and health care providers; - increase community support to PEs awareness and demand creation efforts; and - create opportunities for young people to engage national level policy and decision makers for issues beyond the local government's attributions

Project 3. Options 10 project (Grant Ref. R-POC-OPT-2207-54667)

Summary

Options 10 is an innovative initiative piloted in Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania with the aim of increasing access to SRHR information and services through an end-to-end encrypted mobile application using Android and iOS software to connect users to access SRHR information and refer users to local qualified healthcare providers for SRH services. The application provides general sexual and reproductive health information and referrals, such as pregnancy, post-abortion care, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases/ infections, cervical cancer and menstrual health.

Key Achievements



Development of MimiCare Mobile Application

WGNRR Africa has **recruited and trained 20 Community Based Mobilisers**, (18 female, 2 male) **7 App administrators** (2 male, 5 female) and

Health facilities (both private and public facilities) AND 17 Healthcare providers (6 female, 11 male) on the use and management of the application and support users to enroll and access SRHR information on the application and how to chat with available health care providers.

A total of **6,135 users were enrolled in the application**, **495 users chatted anonymously with healthcare providers**, **397 users were referred to 11 partner health facilities of which 255 successfully received services.**

More than **10,500 community members were engaged** by Community Based Mobilisers to increase awareness on the existence of the application and the necessity to download the application on the mobile phones to access SRHR information that can improve one's health outcomes.

Project 4. Collective Action to Protect and Advance Reproductive Rights in Tanzania-CAPART (Grant Ref. GLPGENE-100)

Summary

CAPART is a movement building and advocacy initiative bringing organizations and individuals from different fields of work, experiences and backgrounds to work together toward the protection and advancement of reproductive rights in Tanzania. It aims at setting progressive and harmonized legal and policy standards for the protection of sexual and reproductive rights to increase access to SRH services and seek justice for victims and survivors of reproductive rights abuses.

Key Achievements



Fostered strategic partnership committed to advancing reproductive rights and justice

Using intersectional approach, WGNRR Africa connected more than 15 organizations and 25 individuals from different background to establish partnerships and co-create a common agenda, shared vision, strategy and joint action plan for advancing reproductive rights, especially the rights to access safe abortion services within the limit of existing legal framework for victims of rape, incest and sexual assault in Tanzania. This partnership has fostered collaboration and increased solidarity among participating organizations and individuals; and has provided a cohesive framework for collective actions toward advancing reproductive rights and justice in the country.



Collective documentation of evidence to support advocacy strategies

More than 25 cases of sexual violence against adolescent girls (rape, incest, sexual assault) and unsafe abortions were identified and documented to highlight the magnitude of sexual violence and unsafe abortion and its impact on adolescents' health and education outcomes. This evidence is being used to support collective advocacy strategies to influence the setting of progressive and harmonized legal and policy standards and to shape public debate for the protection and advancement of reproductive rights in Tanzania.


OTHER MOVEMENT STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

Summary

Throughout the year 2023 WGNRR Africa kept strengthening local activism by building momentum among grassroots partners and allies to stand and raise their voices against abuse of women's health rights; and bringing individuals and organizations together to rally around women's health rights and advocate for change; and to form a community of partners and allies who work collaboratively on sexual and reproductive rights and justice.

Key Achievements

A Galvanized collective

 **commitment to dismantle barriers to SRHR for ALL at the Women Deliver**

Conference 2023

WGNRR Africa supported its grassroots partners [Utetezi Rural Africa/Kenya](#), [Women Spaces Africa/kenya](#), [Zamara Foundation/Kenya](#), [Uganda Young Positives/Uganda](#), and [Bintimakini Foundation/Tanzania](#) to attend the [Women Deliver Conference 2023](#) in Kigali Rwanda where they voiced out discriminatory laws and practices nurturing gender inequality in accessing SRHR services and information,

and to call upon rethinking reproductive rights of marginalised communities in Africa. **This call galvanized a collective commitment, sparking actionable initiatives and fostering alliances that are poised to dismantle barriers to SRHR for all.**



Fostered solidarity and collaboration among partners and allies

[May 28 – International day of action for women's health](#) and [September 28 – Global safe abortion day](#) were successfully celebrated across Africa with the involvement of grassroots partners and allies from more than 11 African countries. Partner and allies implemented collectively diverse actions aimed at challenging restrictive laws, policies, and cultural norms surrounding women and girls' reproductive autonomy, while promoting inclusive positive narratives and dialogue that acknowledge abortion rights as fundamental human rights for all.

At Sandali Ward of Temeke district in Tanzania, WGNRR Africa's partners (Binti Salah and Binti Makini Foundations) collaborated with the Ward Councilor to collectively organize a dialogue with gatekeepers and health care providers to create awareness and discuss SRHR and gender issues (unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortion and early marriage) affecting adolescent girls in the Sandali Ward. A total of 150 reflector vests with stigma-free SRHR messages were distributed to 150 Bodaboda (motorcycle riders) of the Sandali Ward to ignite stigma-free conversations around SRHR in several corners of the whole Dar-es-salaam.

May 28 and September 28 campaigns have **fostered collaboration and solidarity among grassroots organizations and individual activists, community leaders, and affected populations to stand up for SRHR** as an indivisible and inalienable part of human rights.



CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Key Challenges



Legal and policy constraints, social and cultural taboos

Navigating legal frameworks societal norms and cultural taboos surrounding sexuality and reproductive health in Tanzania and other African countries was not an easy task for both WGNRR Africa and its partners and allies. We faced legal and social barriers in providing information and influencing access to services. The prevailing stigma prevented individuals, especially marginalized groups from seeking care or disclosing their needs.



Limited funding and resources

Navigating legal frameworks societal norms and cultural taboos surrounding sexuality and reproductive health in Tanzania and other African countries was not an easy task for both WGNRR Africa and its partners and allies.

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Security risks and SRHR Opposition

The opposition from conservative religious groups, political leaders and other influential entities manifested as threats to the safety of both WGNRR Africa, partners, allies and beneficiaries. It created fear among partners, deterring others from touching on most sensitive SRHR issues such as abortion and sexual minorities.

Lessons Learned

- Advocacy efforts focused on legal reform and policy change to ensure that laws align with int'l human rights standards have to go hand in hand with community engagement and culturally sensitive efforts that address stigma and foster acceptance of diverse sexualities and reproductive choices
 - Diversifying funding sources and building long-term partnerships with donors and local stakeholders, including the private sector, are crucial strategies for overcoming resource limitation and ensuring the resilience of our efforts.
 - Implementing security protocols and building alliances with supportive stakeholders at country, regional and international levels, and employing strategic communication tactics are essential for mitigating risks and countering opposition.
 - Adopting an intersectional approach ensures that interventions are responsive to the complex and intersecting barriers faced by marginalized communities, leading to more equitable outcomes.
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As we reflect on the accomplishments of WGNRR Africa over the past year, we are deeply grateful for the unwavering support and collaboration of our diverse network of partners, allies, donors' community, government agencies, and the entire SRHR movement.

It is through the collective dedication and commitment of these stakeholders that we have been able to achieve meaningful progress in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. Our partners and allies have provided invaluable expertise, resources, and advocacy efforts, amplifying our impact and extending our reach to communities in need.

The generosity and solidarity of our donors' community have fueled our programs, enabling us to deliver essential knowledge and resources and implement innovative initiatives.

We also extend our gratitude to government agencies for their collaboration and commitment to advancing SRHR policies and programs. Finally, we recognize the tireless efforts of activists, advocates, and individuals within the SRHR movement whose passion and perseverance continue to drive positive change and inspire us all.

Together, we celebrate our collective achievements and reaffirm our shared commitment to realizing a world where everyone can exercise their sexual and reproductive rights with dignity and autonomy.



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