**Stephen Lewis Foundation** 

# Impact Report 2022

Photo Credit: Artmaid Pictur



GRAND



## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear SLF Supporter,

I want to thank you for making health and human rights a part of your story and for showing up in such a generous and meaningful way to champion the work of community-led organizations in sub-Saharan Africa.

We share a commitment to create a world where equality for all is prioritized and justice for those living with HIV is realized. And just as Stephen did when he established the Stephen Lewis Foundation, we share the same desire to address the inequities and injustices that drive the disproportionate impact of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa.

This year, the Foundation proudly celebrates 20 years of solidarity with our partners, communityled organizations working at the frontlines of the HIV epidemic. We are grateful that you have chosen to be a powerful part of this movement. Your contribution is transforming the lives of those who are determined to shift power, while strengthening programs and support in communities to lessen the impact of the HIV epidemic. Thank you for choosing to make a lasting difference.

In keeping with our shared values, as we look to the years ahead, we promise to remain a progressive and feminist organization, rooted in the principles of social justice, international solidarity and substantive equality. In this report, we share with you triumphant stories of hope and resistance from our partners who continue to persevere in the face of the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, social and political discrimination, climate change and the global economic downturn.

We hope that you will be inspired to continue to move in solidarity with them and with us in our ongoing pursuit of a world free from AIDS.

In Solidarity,

**Meg French** Executive Director Stephen Lewis Foundation



## The SLF, our partners and you – Impact 2022

The Stephen Lewis Foundation's partners have deep connections to their communities. They understand the solutions required to support those most at risk of HIV transmission and those people already living with the virus. They adapt their approaches according to the unique context of the communities where they operate. They further personalize their services to ensure that everyone experiences a stigma-free, enabling environment, where they can be hopeful and optimistic about their future irrespective of their HIV status.

The work of these grassroots organizations focuses on improving capacity, increasing access and protecting the well-being, safety and autonomy of women and girls, children, grandmothers, LGBTIQ people and others affected by the HIV epidemic.

#### In 2022,

48% of partners On average, **32% The Stephen SLF** partners Lewis Foundation of SLF funds reported the SLF reached over supported 120 as the only or are allocated to **2 MILLION** community-led primary funder of core costs and individuals with their organizations their programs. overhead by highly responsive across 15 partners to support programs and countries in organizational services. sub-Saharan growth and stability. Africa.

# Improving Gender Equality and Access to Education to End AIDS

Girls' education is paramount to gender equality. It is vital to their ability to meaningfully demonstrate personal autonomy and to access opportunities, resources, and critical decision-making making spaces.

## The State of HIV<sup>1</sup>

- In sub-Saharan Africa HIV prevalence is more than **3 times** as high among adolescent girls as it is for their male peers.
- In 2022, approximately 160,000 adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 acquired HIV.
- Only **42%** of districts in sub-Saharan Africa are currently covered with dedicated prevention programs for adolescent girls and young women.

### **SLF Impact**

- 71% of SLF<sup>2</sup> partners work to support the education of children and young people in their communities.
- 85% of these partners work with female youth aged 13-18 and 81% work with girls 12 and under.
- Our partners working in girls' education supported **31,948 people** with improved knowledge of the importance of educating girls including the personal, familial, and societal benefits.
- 8,732 orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) completed primary or secondary education with 65% identifying as female.
- Gender-based violence contributes to the unbalanced impact of HIV on women and girls. **70%** of our partners work to end gender-based violence.

<sup>2</sup> All SLF Impact statistics in this report cover the period January to December 2022.

# **Christine's Story**

My mother and father passed on in the year 2010 and 2013 respectively. I lost direction since I was the eldest in a family of six children. I was in class 7 by then. My relatives scrambled for my parents' property and since we had no voice, we remained in the hands of my ailing grandmother who was also too weak to feed and care for us. I was forced to drop out of school to look for an alternate means of getting the basic needs for the family.

A purported well-wisher, who later turned out to be a monster in my life, took me to be a babysitter in his compound. I worked for him for nearly two and a half years. He was kind to me, welcoming, accommodating and gentle at the start.

Things changed when one day his wife travelled for two weeks. He became abusive and threatening. I suffered in silence for fear of losing the job that was helping me to support my family. Eventually, I was ejected out of this job empty handed.

Nyakonya paralegal team learned about my experience from other reliable sources in the community and came to my aid. They provided counselling, and I was enrolled and offered private tuition to attend a program for children who had experienced irregular school enrollment or low attendance for various reasons. This allowed me to recapture the basic and foundational knowledge in education that I had missed while working. Although things were going well, my worst worry was how I was going to care for the unborn child I was carrying since I had learned that I was now pregnant by my abuser.

During one of the organization's Child Sharing outreach events, I voluntarily shared my experience. One of the District Education Officers gave our family a lending hand after hearing my story. She facilitated my reenrollment in school despite my age and circumstances. I am proud to share that I sat the Kenya National Examination Council (KCPE) which I passed with flying colours. Alongside my formal education, I was also enrolled in the school's health and psychosocial club in Kigoto Primary School where I benefitted a lot from the teachings of psychosocial life, life skills, sexual and reproductive health rights, child rights, communication, decision-making and stress management skills.

Nyakonya members continue to monitor the progress of my child and my brothers and sisters who are also continuing with their own education. I count myself blessed and grateful as I am on the path to continuing my education thanks to the support from Nyakonya Organization, the Stephen Lewis Foundation and its donors.

May God bless Nyakonya Organization, partners and well-wishers who made it possible for me to achieve my full potential.



Christine and her caretaker on the first day of school, February 2022.

## **Collective Action for a Future Free** From AIDS

Living in poverty challenges access to food and housing and is exasperated by gender inequality. Economic empowerment programs for women ensure that clients, like grandmothers, can be financially literate, self-sufficient and able to support themselves and the children in their care. Access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services is a human right and a cornerstone of gender equality.

### The State of HIV

Women and girls of all ages accounted for 63% of all new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa.

- SLF partners supported **3,938** grandmothers to be involved with local governance, community awareness and advocacy initiatives.
- **65%** of partners support economic empowerment work of which 93% work with grandmothers.
- **155,326** women and adolescent girls were educated about their sexual and reproductive health and rights.



# **Grandmothers Rising to New Possibilities**

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, grandmothers on the frontlines of HIV and AIDS activism are working to reclaim hope and regain ground that was lost in the communities where they live and work. Grandmothers are meeting with local and national community leaders to influence policy and drive systemic transformation – the only sustainable pathway for generational change and a future free from AIDS. They are also helping to reduce stigma and isolation for people affected by HIV and AIDS by educating community members. This work is both timely and necessary as the focus is to secure important rights for grandmothers, women and girls, and orphaned and vulnerable children to reclaim their autonomy, become selfsufficient and realize both social and economic power.

Uganda Grandmothers The Advocacv Consortium (GMC), established in 2015 to address issues affecting older women, is comprised of six SLF-funded organizations and fueled by an indomitable team of grandmothers who have remained steadfast in their resolve to empower citizens and community-led organizations to address the effects of the AIDS crisis. Together, grandmothers and these grassroots organizations advocate and lobby to change the complex landscape left behind by colonialism, the AIDS pandemic and widespread poverty. Grandmothers in the consortium, like thousands of others across sub-Saharan Africa, have borne the brunt of the HIV epidemic and take the responsibility of ushering their families through unimaginable loss, grief and pain very seriously.

Over the years since the movement began, there have been several policy wins including the Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons (SEGO), adopted in 2022, that provides incomegenerating activities for persons aged 60 to 79 years. The grandmothers of GMC have also been instrumental in advocating for more gender-specific accommodations to accessing geriatric health services and clinics and ensuring that health workers who specialize in

non-communicable diseases and other geriatric conditions are available during district health days. Grandmothers have been nominated to key technical working groups in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Expanding Social Protection Program. Grandmothers have ensured that their specific care and support issues are included in policy and budgets. As a result, the National Budget for 2022/23 has doubled the allocation to older persons through the Social Assistance Grants, National Council for Older Persons funding, the Older Person's Grant, and the ten percent allocation to older persons of the Parish Development Model Grants.

The work of amplifying the voices of grandmothers in Uganda and other countries across Africa, requires a robust and dedicated movement with long-term, sustained financial backing. Thanks to donor support, GMC has continued to have substantial and tangible impact throughout Uganda and in individual communities. You are an essential part of this undertaking that makes space for grandmothers to present their priorities at national and international tables where decision makers are present. Thanks to you, grandmothers are adding an important voice in this critical social cause and doing their part to eliminate AIDS and address the social, political and economic inequalities that drive the HIV epidemic.



A grandmother speaks at a recent Grandmothers Gathering

# Perseverance in the Face of Growing Oppression

Stigma and discrimination against LGBTIQ communities create significant barriers to accessing health care and social services, with critical implications for HIV testing, care, and treatment and the safety of LGBTIQ individuals.

## The State of HIV

- In 2022, compared with adults in the general population (aged 15-49 years), HIV prevalence was 11 times higher among gay men and other men who have sex with men, and 14 times higher among transgender people.
- A recent 10-country study in sub-Saharan Africa showed that HIV prevalence among gay men and other men who have sex with men was 5 times higher in countries that criminalized same-sex relationships than in non-criminalized settings.

- 53.5% of our partners undertake programmatic work in support of human rights. They reached 1,019,491 people through their work in education, awareness raising and human rights-based initiatives.
- Stigma and discrimination directly prevent access to services and community engagement.
  83,718 community leaders and decision-makers were sensitized about human rights for people living with HIV, LGBTIQ individuals, or orphans and vulnerable children.



# Challenging Hate in the DRC

With mounting anti-LGBTIQ sentiment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, LGBTIQ people are increasingly discriminated against and ostracized. Robust movements to further displace and isolate LGBTIQ individuals have become highly politicized, with some political parties adopting an anti-rights approach and language aimed at bolstering support for the anti-homosexuality movement. With an election pending, tensions are even higher. In a recent report from SLF partner Rainbow Sunrise Mapambazuko (RSM), they noted that threats and intimidation of transgendered people in Bukavu, DRC have increased again, as they've been told that they'll be "hunted" during the election campaign. And, earlier this year, when registering to vote, 46 transgender individuals were unable to obtain their voter ID cards. Others were violently assaulted and sexually harassed, within eyesight of the police who did not act to protect them.

RSM's own Executive Director Jeremie Safari, faced prosecution for his advocacy work to prevent torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of LGBTIQ people and for providing education services to prevent discrimination and safeguard freedom of expression. Donor support allowed the SLF to help fund his legal defense and to provide assistance to the organization as it navigated this injustice. Despite very real and life-changing challenges and growing threats of violence and criminalization, RSM is working tirelessly to promote human and sexual health rights for LGBTIQ people.

In the last year, they have worked to break down barriers for people facing intersecting identities, such as being gay and living with HIV, who face significant human rights violations. RSM also continues to advocate for equitable access to discrimination-free health care for LGBTIQ people within the formal government-run and community health care facilities. Their proudest achievement during this period is the creation of a centre by and for LGBTIQ people, where they

can meet safely, discuss their lives, and learn about HIV and AIDS and STIs. The centre also provides access to free and safe health care services, including ARV services, in an environment free of judgment and prejudice.

This powerful and determined group of activists is undertaking vital advocacy and civic literacy. To that end, RSM organized a two-day advocacy workshop that brought together health care providers, community leaders and police officers to raise awareness and break the silence on the rights violations and inequalities that LGBTIQ people face in society through homophobic and transphobic violence. Equality for LGBTIQ people can only be achieved through a sustained and strategic approach to advocacy. The SLF is proud to partner with RSM and to amplify their essential work, thanks to donor support.



Jeremie Safari, Executive Director, RSM

# Responding to Emerging Needs in the Community

Climate change is a growing concern of many SLF partners. Increasing natural disasters such as droughts, cyclones and flooding, and unpredictable weather patters result in the displacement of homes, uncertain food yields through farming and fisheries, and reduced income generation for clients who are already living in poverty.

### The State of HIV<sup>3</sup>

- A survey of 21 countries in sub-Saharan Africa showed that HIV transmissions and STI infections increase with each year of heavy rain. As people migrate as a result of extreme weather, the number of sexual partners increases as does the risk for HIV transmission.
- One study on drought and HIV burden reported that, for every recent drought, HIV prevalence in HIV-endemic areas increases by 11%.

- 26.4% of partners see the impact of climate change on their work and their beneficiaries.
- 18.8% of partners are working on climate change adaptation programs.
- SLF partners have reached **11,250** people through this work. **7,805** of them are female and **5,019** are grandmothers.



<sup>3</sup> Analysis of Heavy Rainfall in Sub-Saharan Africa and HIV Transmission Risk, HIV Prevalence, and Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2005-2017 by Jason M. Nagata, et al. https://www. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9459663/#zoi220857r7 Accessed November 27, 2023.

## Farming for the Future

Memory Vaiya is a garden beneficiary from Ward 10, in Charumbina area in Zimbabwe. She has been trained on agro-ecology, natural pest control methods, as well as water conservation by SLF partner Hope Tariro Trust (HTT). HTT has long been dedicated to improving the lives of grandmothers and the vulnerable children in their care, specifically by ensuring access to food and income security. In 2022, as the economy worsened and extreme climate disasters continued to impact communities, HTT began training residents in agro-ecology as a way of mitigating the effects of climate change such as drought. The also focused on the use of locally available, inexpensive seeds and integrated the use of a small incubators for hatching chicks to further diversify the types of foods available to the community and to promote self-sufficiency for their beneficiaries, like Memory.

HTT is also building community by fostering a spirit of sharing and connectedness through seed fairs where farmers come together and exchange local seeds such as maize, millets, groundnuts and legumes. This, as well as the use of natural farming methods, environmentally sound techniques to harvest water, and discouraging the use of chemicals have all gone a long way in lessening the impacts of climate change in the area and improving the lives of Memory and others in the community. She is now able to harvest enough vegetables to feed her family and to sell which allows her to afford school fees and supplies for the children in her care.

Proper nutrition and consistent access to healthy food is important for ARV adherence and for overall health and well-being. Grandmothers such as Pain Musasa (55), Netsai Fukai (61) and Venah Gonese (66) all speak about how much their grandchildren like the variety of vegetables they can now enjoy and how it has improved their health. One of the aspects of HTT they appreciate the most is how its program promotes the power of peer-to-peer learning among its participants to extend the

program's reach and the sustainability of the change. It provides space for grandmothers to share their newfound skills but also to discuss the challenges they face caring for their grandchildren. This holistic approach means that the community is poised to address and overcome food insecurity for years to come while also strengthening vital social connections for the women through their common experiences. Venah is a granny and garden club member who this past year attended a grandmothers' retreat where women shared experiences, including the expertise required to care for orphaned and vulnerable children. Some of the issues they discussed were children's rights, the importance of regular school attendance, access to medical services, and finding solutions to support each other as they raise their grandchildren. Now, she and others are stewards of the work to change the lives of their grandchildren and their communities.

HTT is a small organization which has demonstrated a steady impact over the years. The SLF and its donors have been a critical lifeline, standing in solidarity through all of the organization's strides, and helping to provide stability during difficult times.



Memory Vaiya preparing the land.

# Holistic Support for People Living with HIV

SLF partners working in comprehensive HIV and AIDS education, adherence to ARVs, and sexual health and reproductive services are building knowledge in healthy practices that have the power to transform lives. Health and well-being support like home-based care, psychosocial support, nutrition and mental health program and services are critical to ensuring that people living with HIV have access to comprehensive health services.

## The State of HIV

• In sub-Saharan Africa in 2022, about 4.5 million people living with HIV were not receiving HIV treatment and about 1.8 million people were getting treatment but were not virally suppressed.

• Despite the progress made on treatment and prevention, AIDS claimed a life every minute in 2022, and it remains the fourth-leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa.

- 86% of SLF partners are working directly in HIV prevention, response, and sexual and reproductive health and rights and they reached 593,437 people through programs and services.
- 89.7% of our partners support health and well-being work with clients and reached 1,071,402 people.
- 61,163 community members accessed voluntary counselling and testing services provided by partners. 60% of those people identified as female.



## Care for the Whole Family

Amidst continued social stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV and AIDS, Elizabeth Wanjiru and her grandmother Mary are among hundreds of community residents supported this year by SLF partner Kiambu People Living with HIV/ AIDS (KIPEWA) in Kenya. Elizabeth is part of one of eight support groups for adolescents and young adults that the organization runs to help empower young people with knowledge about HIV and its prevention, as well as how to live positively.

When Elizabeth first joined, she struggled with internal stigma and felt like she was the only young person in the world living with HIV. Now, she no longer feels alone because her support group has provided her with a community of young people just like her who are bravely overcoming social stigma and isolation. The support groups give youth like Elizabeth the opportunity to forge friendships, share their stories and learn from one another, while receiving mentorship to help them grow into adulthood. Just as importantly, they also play games and have fun together, a focus stressed by KIPEWA as these young people face the harsh realities of living with HIV.

In the three years leading up to and including 2022, 1,567 adolescents and young adults attended support group meetings organized by KIPEWA. This was an especially challenging period as COVID-19 meant that groups had to meet in smaller numbers. Ultimately, however, this resulted in a quicker and stronger bonding process for members in these close-knit groups, contributing to increased confidence and selfesteem. For Elizabeth in particular, this structure and the support she received for her school fees propelled her to excel in her education and complete high school. She is currently studying to be a beautician in order to help contribute to the household that she shares with her grandmother, Mary.

Mary also receives specialized assistance from KIPEWA such as food, clothing, and psychosocial support. The monthly support groups for caregivers that Mary attends, provide a space for grandmothers, other relatives and neighbours who are helping to care for orphaned and vulnerable children, like Elizabeth, to share what is going on in their lives and provide support for one another. Over the past three years, a total of 971 caregivers attended support group meetings. According to Mary, being in the group has greatly helped her and grandmothers like her with their mental health and the many stresses that come with living with HIV or caring for grandchildren who are living with HIV.

The KIPEWA team has stressed its appreciation for SLF's openness and responsiveness to the changing needs in their community which could not happen without donor support.



Elizabeth Wanjiru

# Commemorating 20 Years of Championing Health and Human Rights to End AIDS

## A look back at the SLF journey

#### 2003

The Stephen Lewis Foundation is founded from a simple dream around a kitchen table - that community-led organizations would have the resources they needed to fight HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. The initial goal was to raise \$250,000.

#### 2005

Stephen gives the Massey lectures - a powerful and moving series that exposes the plight of people affected by AIDS in Africa. SLF funds 100 projects.

2007

Grandmothers solidarity march is held in Ottawa.

2009 Dare to Remember Campaign is launched along with the first Dare to Wear Love event to commemorate the lives of those lost to AIDS. The campaign raises \$1 million.

Hope Rising Concert is held at the Sony Centre in Toronto to support and celebrate grassroots organizations. The audience enjoys performances by Alicia Keys, K'naan, Angelique Kidjo and Rufus Wainwright.

#### 2013

2011

The African Grandmothers Tribunal takes place in Vancouver, Canada. Grandmothers from across sub-Saharan Africa present their personal testimonies, and leaders of community-based organizations share their expertise. In response, the Tribunal's judges speak powerfully and with great urgency about what remedies are needed in response to the testimony they heard.

#### 2004

SLF quickly expands to support 60 community-led programs in countries most impacted by the HIV pandemic and raises over \$3 million. The first Give a Day campaign is held with donations by medical professionals across the country.

#### 2006

The Grandmothers to Grandmother campaign is launched in response to the emerging crisis faced by grandmothers in Africa as they struggled to raise millions of children orphaned by AIDS.

The SLF became one of seven charities receiving support from Aeroplan's Beyond Miles Programme and continues to receive millions of donated Aeroplan miles to this day.

#### 2008

The Roundtable on Orphan Care gives partners a platform to discuss how best to reach and care for vulnerable children.

#### 2010

Over 500 grandmothers from 13 African countries and 42 Canadian grandmother delegates travel to Manzini, Eswatini (Swaziland), for the historic African Grandmothers' Gathering. The Gathering culminates with 2,000 grandmothers marching in solidarity.

Over 65 days, the AfriGrand Caravan travels to over 40 communities across Canada - from St. John's, Newfoundland to Victoria, BC, blazing a trail of hope.

### 2012

The African Institute for Integrated Responses (AIR) to Violence Against Women & Girls & HIV/AIDS is launched following a seminal meeting in Toronto of African feminist leaders hosted by the SLF.

#### 2014

The Tribunal film is shown at the International AIDS Conference in Australia and at a Global Fund meeting in Geneva and at several film festivals including in Los Angeles and Chicago. Members of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign visit SLF partners in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and South Africa

#### 2016

The South Africa Grandmothers Gathering was held in Durban, alongside the International AIDS Conference giving rise to the collaborative organization, Grandmothers Movement in Africa.

The SLF provides its largest grant ever, \$1 million, to the Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa.

#### 2018

The book, Powered by Love: A Grandmothers' Movement to End AIDS in Africa, is launched in 25 cities with 20 African grandmothers featured in the book speaking across Canada.

The Tanzania Grandmothers Gathering is held in Arusha.

#### 2020

Launch of the film Youth Championing Youth, a powerful documentary from young people defying the odds and reclaiming hope in the face of HIV.

With the onset of COVID-19 and resulting lockdowns, the SLF hosts its first Pride Talks a webinar-based panel discussion that brings together SLF partners to share their stories.

#### 2022

The launch of the Grandmothers Quilt Project brings in contributions from grandmothers across Canada and six countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### 2015

The inaugural Ask Her Talks: African women on philanthropy, change and power, brought remarkable women from the continent to speak to Canadian audiences, and the Ugandan Grandmothers gathering was held in Entebbe and launching the Uganda Grandmothers Advocacy Consortium.

#### 2017

The LGBTIQ Africa Initiative, the precursor to Partners in Pride, is launched at the Dare to Wear Love Gala.

#### 2019

The Partners in Pride Campaign is launched to ensure dedicated funding for 14 LGBTIQ organizations in 6 countries.

#### 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic continues and SLF partners are supported with additional funds to address the impact of two pandemics.

Grandmothers across Canada, the UK, the US and Australia, come together for a virtual celebration of the 15th Anniversary of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. The campaign raises an amazing \$40 million over the first 15 years.



The SLF celebrates its 20th anniversary. The International Grandmothers Gathering is held in 11 countries bringing together hundreds of grandmothers and grandothers to advance the rights of older women.

We are grateful to all of the community-led organizations who have allowed us to join in solidarity with them in their journeys over the last 20 years.

As we mark this major milestone, we cannot overstate how important the allyship and funds from SLF donors are in ensuring that resources needed by the experts on the frontlines of the HIV epidemic remain accessible and consistent for the long-term.

# **Financial Overview**

We are deeply committed to supporting the community-led organizations with which we work. From July 2022 to June 2023, SLF raised \$9.3 million in support of 119 organizations working in 15 countries. SLF's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. For a copy of the Foundation's full audited financial statements and the link to our annual Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) charity returns, please visit our website.



Since 2003, the SLF has raised more than \$192 million in support of grassroots organizations working on the frontlines of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

| Expenditures      |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Programs          | 75%  |
| Funds Development | 18 % |
| Administration    | 7%   |

This graph is based on a three-year average of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's annual financial statements of expenditures (2021-2023).



The SLF is proud to be accredited by the Imagine Canada Standards Program. Accredited organizations demonstrate excellence and leadership in five key areas: board governance, financial accountability and transparency, fundraising, staff management, and volunteer involvement.

## Championing health and human rights to end AIDS.





**Stephen Lewis** Foundation



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