

Women at the Forefront of Transformational Change

Impact Report 2023



Stephen Lewis
Foundation





Letter from the Executive Director

Dear SLF Supporter,

The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) practices a different type of international development. From the very beginning, the principles on which this organization was founded were based on an unapologetic approach to centring the expertise and knowledge of community-led organizations leading programs to overcome the effects of HIV where they live and work. Stephen Lewis had seen that community leaders, many of them women, lacked the robust international support and funding that could help maximize their efforts. The SLF identified grassroots organizations in the countries hardest hit by the pandemic and championed a flexible, inclusive and anti-colonial model that is still at the heart of how we work with our partners today.

The SLF currently funds 98 partners in 14 countries in Africa that focus on holistic support and are the backbone of extended care in their communities. But unsurprisingly, even with progress being made in new HIV treatment and care, it is still largely women who carry the weight of the prolonged and broader impacts of the HIV epidemic.

Women leaders have emerged and seemingly out of their own grief, found ways to heal, empower and nurture resiliency for themselves and their communities. These women are building movements for change, advocating for their health and human rights, raising a new generation, and lighting a path toward a more just future.

Whether through a monthly donation, a single annual gift, supporting an event or leaving a legacy, SLF supporters help to make the incredible work of these women stronger. This report is only a snippet of the impact of our partners and what your commitment to solidarity translates to in communities affected by HIV. We hope that you will find it inspiring and that you will continue on this journey with us and our partners who challenge oppressive systems, advocate for policy change and touch so many lives every day through their work.

In solidarity,

Meg French
Executive Director
Stephen Lewis Foundation



Impact at a Glance

The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) partners with 98 community-led organizations across 14 African countries, providing flexible funding and holistic support. With strong community ties and expertise, these organizations transform lives through essential services in health, education, economic inclusion, and human rights. Women are at the forefront of these efforts, driving impactful, community-centred change.



Health and well-being

Last year, **over 650,000** individuals, many of them women and children, received health services including home-based care and mental health supports.



HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Over 2.1 million people accessed HIV prevention and SRHR services, improving health and education across communities.



Economic inclusion

More than 67,000 individuals, primarily women, gained income-generating and financial literacy skills, increasing economic well-being for their households and communities.



Education

Over 62,000 children and young people, with a focus on girls, received educational support, breaking cycles of poverty and expanding opportunities.



Protection from violence

Nearly 466,000 individuals, including survivors of gender-based violence, accessed protection services like safe spaces and legal support.



Human rights advocacy

More than 711,000 people were reached through programs advocating for the rights of LGBTIQ communities and other disadvantaged groups, advancing social justice.

Women are not just participants but leaders of these life-changing efforts. Drawing on their experiences and insight, women shape programs to address the distinct needs of their communities.



Advancing Health and Access to HIV Services

Across Africa, community-led organizations like **Mozambican Treatment Access Movement (MATRAM)** are transforming lives through improved access to HIV treatment and health services. Recently celebrating 20 years of impact, MATRAM has reached over **2.1 million people**, ensuring access to life-saving treatment and empowering individuals to manage their health.

Milestones in Maternal Care and Women's Health

One of MATRAM's major achievements is its campaign to end new cases of pediatric HIV, which has made life-saving Option B+ available in all health facilities. This has enabled pregnant women to receive comprehensive care to prevent perinatal HIV transmission. MATRAM also launched Mozambique's first treatment literacy program, which has equipped thousands of women with knowledge and tools to help them manage their health, advocate for their rights, and support others in their community.

Catarina's Story: Renewed Health and Purpose

Catarina Fabião Chilunguana, a 63-year-old woman from Malhazine, has experienced firsthand the impact of MATRAM's work. After pausing her HIV treatment to care for family, Catarina became weakened and unwell. Her health improved after MATRAM's Treatment Literacy Practitioners visited her community, sharing knowledge about advanced HIV disease and the importance of treatment. Inspired, Catarina sought their help, resumed her medication, and began to recover.

Today, Catarina is not only regaining her health but also mobilizing others as part of the Grandmothers Movement. She advocates for improved social services and rights for grandmothers like herself. ***"We want to stand and fight for our rights until those who have power listen to us."***



MATRAM empowers communities affected by HIV with accurate and relevant information about prevention, testing and treatment.

Women Leading Change

MATRAM exemplifies how the SLF's partners are transforming health services across Africa. Through their efforts, women like Catarina access essential care and emerge as leaders, driving change in their communities.

Breaking Barriers to Education

Education is a fundamental right, yet across Africa, millions of children — especially girls — face significant obstacles to accessing quality education. Economic hardship, gender-based violence, early marriage, and harmful norms often force girls out of school, jeopardizing their futures. Many families cannot afford school expenses. Caregiving responsibilities, particularly in households affected by HIV and AIDS, disproportionately fall on girls, further limiting their educational opportunities.

Despite these challenges, SLF partner organizations are breaking these barriers to ensure girls receive the education that is their right. These efforts not only transform individual lives but also reshape entire communities by helping to break the cycle of poverty and inspire future generations of women leaders.

Maasai Women Development Organization (MWEDO)



MWEDO plans to expand digital learning for students at its secondary school for girls.

Since 2005, MWEDO has **helped over 1,500 Maasai girls** in Tanzania continue their secondary education, overcoming traditional barriers like early marriage. MWEDO provides tuition, accommodation, meals, and health care to allow each girl to focus on her studies.

At MWEDO's secondary school for girls, students learn, build essential life skills and access sexual health information in a safe environment. Looking forward, MWEDO plans to **support 200 more girls** through secondary school and expand digital learning via a new Digital Centre, preparing Maasai girls to thrive in a technology-driven world.



Ndinini Kimesera Sikar, Executive Director and Co-Founder of MWEDO, with students.



Building Resilience in a Changing Climate

As climate change intensifies, communities across Africa face growing threats to their livelihoods, health and security. Recognizing the urgency, partners like the **Benevolent Integrated Development and Care Foundation (BIDCAF)** are leading efforts to address these challenges.

BIDCAF's **climate-smart village** approach empowers rural communities in Uganda to combat land degradation, enhance food security, and promote sustainable practices. By training community members in techniques like climate forecasting, agroforestry, and soil management, BIDCAF equips them with tools to adapt to changing conditions. BIDCAF also organizes farmers' clubs, where women connect, learn climate-smart strategies, and develop financial literacy and leadership skills.

These efforts are transforming both landscapes and lives, as seen in the stories of women like Kako Miria and Atereire Sicovia.



BIDCAF contributes to household well-being by providing energy-efficient cookstoves.

Kako's Story: A Mother's Time Regained

Kako Miria, a mother of three from the village of Ikumbya, recently replaced her traditional three-stone fireplace with an energy-efficient cookstove provided by BIDCAF. This simple but powerful change has brought multiple benefits. Kako can prepare meals faster and use less firewood. Now she has more time for other tasks and household priorities, and to support her children's education. The reduction in smoke has also improved the air quality in her home, which is better for her family's health.

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Now, girls have more time to focus on their schoolwork instead of gathering firewood. With just two pieces of firewood, a meal is prepared, freeing up hours for them to study.

— Jolly Luballe, Executive Director of BIDCAF



Drought-tolerant crops are part of BIDCAF's climate-smart agriculture program.

Atereire's Story: From Struggle to Sustainable Harvests

BIDCAF's climate-smart agriculture program, including growing drought-tolerant crops, has been life-changing for farmers like Atereire Sicovia in Busanda village. Atereire used to struggle with low crop yields due to unpredictable weather. With training and guidance from BIDCAF, she began planting drought-tolerant crops and optimizing her planting techniques. Today, Atereire not only enjoys improved harvests but also greater food security and a more stable income, which she reinvests into her family's future.

Community Engagement for Climate Justice

BIDCAF has learned the critical importance of community engagement in climate adaptation. By focusing on community-designed and community-led programs, BIDCAF ensures local ownership and alignment with residents' needs.

Looking ahead, BIDCAF is working to influence policymakers to prioritize climate justice and build partnerships with local and international organizations to amplify community voices.

Through BIDCAF's programs, women in Uganda are safeguarding their families' well-being and, in the face of a changing climate, securing sustainable futures for generations to come.



Championing LGBTIQ Rights and Well-Being

The Stephen Lewis Foundation **partners with 14 LGBTIQ-led organizations** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. These organizations advance the health, safety and human rights of LGBTIQ communities through essential programs. With support from SLF donors, these leaders — many of them women — champion dignity and hope amid growing threats.

In Uganda, the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act has heightened risks and social exclusion for LGBTIQ individuals. At the forefront of the response is **Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG)**, an organization led by LBQ women. FARUG provides mental health support, HIV services and safe spaces where LBQ women can seek help and build connections.

After losing their drop-in centre due to the hostile legal environment, FARUG adapted by launching a “health on wheels” program. This mobile service provides essential care, including HIV testing, mental health counselling, and safe meeting spaces, ensuring continued support for LBQ women.

Lydia’s Story: Reclaiming Courage to Inspire Others

After the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act passed, Lydia faced intense fear and uncertainty, knowing that her identity put her at risk. FARUG’s wellness programs provided Lydia with a safe space and a dedicated counsellor who helped her regain confidence and hope. Through FARUG’s support, Lydia not only found personal healing but also developed the courage to inspire others in her community. Reflecting on her journey, Lydia shared, *“With FARUG’s support, I’ve found the strength to speak out and motivate others facing similar struggles.”*



Photo Credit: Jo Higgs

Biggie, Executive Director of FARUG

Through their commitment and courage, leaders like Biggie, Executive Director of FARUG, are helping LBQ women and trans men find strength and solidarity in an era of unprecedented hostility, and fortifying Uganda’s LGBTIQ communities.

Supporting Children and Young People

Many SLF partners support children and youth affected by HIV, trauma and poverty. In South Africa, **MusicWorks** and **dlalanathi** work together to help young people build resilience and connect with their communities. Their partnership shows how sharing knowledge can transform young lives.

MusicWorks: Creating Safe Spaces through Music

Based in Cape Town, MusicWorks supports children and young people through music therapy and creative programs. In communities affected by poverty, violence and instability, MusicWorks offers safe spaces where young people can process emotions and build resilience. Their Music for Life program **reached over 500 children** through after-school sessions, promoting self-esteem and belonging. Group music sessions help children develop skills in emotional regulation, social interaction and confidence. As one young participant shared, *"MusicWorks makes me happy — excited — and makes me feel safe to talk."*

dlalanathi: Holistic Support for Children and Families

Operating in KwaZulu-Natal, dlalanathi provides emotional and trauma-informed care to children and families, including those affected by HIV. Through family support groups and play-based therapy, dlalanathi reaches some of the country's most underserved communities. Dlalanathi's play-centred sessions benefitted hundreds of caregivers and children, helping to build nurturing relationships and meet critical mental health needs.

Collaborative Impact

The SLF helped facilitate a partnership between MusicWorks and dlalanathi that has expanded their reach and impact. MusicWorks trained dlalanathi practitioners to integrate music into their therapeutic practices to support early childhood development. This enriched its play-based programs, providing children with new ways to express emotions and connect.

Reflecting on this collaboration, Alexanne Tingley, Operations Director at MusicWorks, shared, *"The insight of the SLF to suggest a collaboration with dlalanathi is viewed as one of our fundamental turning points. We gained so much through our work with them, and the opportunity to train their Early Childhood Development practitioners has taken the process full circle."*

Women in both organizations are driving these transformative programs and building supportive communities where young people can thrive.



A young community member and Thabiso Mapalane, Principal Community Musician at MusicWorks.

Amplifying Grandmothers' Advocacy

In countries in Africa, HIV is sometimes called the "grandmothers' disease" because grandmothers have cared for millions of children orphaned by the epidemic. However, despite being the backbone of their communities, grandmothers often face gender and age discrimination and struggle to secure land and property rights. These obstacles can limit their ability to support their families.

The SLF partners with 98 community-led organizations and 60% are actively promoting and advocating for grandmothers' rights,

supporting health and well-being, and caring and parenting for the children in their communities. Grandmothers are at the forefront, leading initiatives in childcare, income generation, and justice while championing policies that uphold their rights.

A powerful example of this leadership is the **Grandmothers Consortium** in Uganda. Uniting six grassroots organizations, the Consortium strengthens grandmothers' voices across Uganda, championing their rights and enhancing their impact at the community level.



Photo Credit: Artmaid Pictures/Uganda

Grandmothers in Uganda continue to mobilize to claim their rights and advocate for policy change.

Grandmothers Consortium: Supporting Luwero's Grandmothers as Agents of Change

In Uganda's Luwero District, the Grandmothers Consortium supports a group of 10 grandmothers to drive change through grassroots advocacy. These women have long worked to secure health care, food and education for their community, however the rising cost of living and impact of climate change on crops have pushed them to take on greater advocacy roles.

With support from the Consortium, the Luwero grandmothers organized a roundtable with local leaders, including health, agricultural, and police officials. They presented real-life examples of community struggles and proposed practical solutions.

Their advocacy paid off — leaders agreed to establish health care access with shorter wait times for older persons, a dedicated care day for grandmothers, better community policing, and increased access to farming supplies to improve local food security. Grandmother Nabunjo Ritah reflected, *"This meeting has been very productive; we have met all relevant leaders and had most of our issues addressed positively. We ask that this support continues."*

Through the Grandmothers Consortium, women are not just addressing immediate challenges, but building a foundation for stronger and healthier communities.



Photo Credit: Artmaid Pictures/Uganda

The Grandmothers Consortium is building a foundation for strong and healthy communities.



Delivering Holistic Home-Based Care

Home-based care is a lifeline for families impacted by HIV and AIDS, especially in communities with limited access to health care. The SLF supports community-led organizations like Zambia's **Twavwane Home-Based Care Initiative (Twavwane)**, which delivers medical assistance and psychosocial support, education and nutrition support — offering families the resources they need for health and well-being.

Expanding Holistic Care

Twavwane supported over 160 children and nearly 300 adults through regular check-ins and services that extend far beyond health care. By partnering with local health facilities, Twavwane improved adherence to antiretroviral treatment (ART), enabling better health outcomes. They also supported financial literacy, child protection and education, building a foundation for families and communities to flourish. As Jameston Mando, Twavwane's School Coordinator, explains, *“Home-based care is not only about medicine, but also economic strengthening and psychosocial support, because people want to stand on their own.”*

Mr. Albert's Story: From Hardship to Hope

Mr. Albert is a father of four living with HIV and a mobility disability. He is unable to walk and faced overwhelming hardship after the loss of his wife. Without access to a steady income, he struggled to provide for his children. Three of them are also living with HIV.

Twavwane's volunteers identified Mr. Albert's household needs and responded with comprehensive support. They provided medical and nutritional assistance and enrolled the children in school. They also connected Mr. Albert with a volunteer who provided shoe repair tools so that he could work and earn an income. Twavwane also secured a safe, rent-free home for the family. Today, Mr. Albert's children are in school, and he is rebuilding his life with Twavwane's ongoing support.

Caregivers as Community Leaders

Twavwane's caregivers are often local women who have faced similar challenges, which enables them to connect deeply with the individuals they serve. *“When you go to their household, they feel comfortable,”* shares Jameston. *“They have that space and time to tell you how they feel and how they want to be supported.”* With support from the SLF, Twavwane equips caregivers to act as mentors and role models, promoting health and well-being within their communities.



Photo Credit: Twavwane Home-Based Care Initiative/Zambia

Twavwane empowers caregivers as mentors to promote health and well-being within their own communities.



Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive crisis that threatens health, safety and equality. For women and girls, it increases vulnerability to HIV, limits access to justice and restricts opportunities for support. Addressing GBV is essential to building safe communities and advancing gender equality.

In Botswana, SLF partners **Stepping Stones International (SSI)** and **Women Against Rape (WAR)**, are leading efforts to end GBV through survivor-centred approaches and community advocacy.

Stepping Stones International (SSI)

Based in Mochudi, SSI empowers youth, grandmothers, and caregivers to break cycles of violence. Through life-skills training, leadership development and psychosocial support, SSI addresses GBV's root causes while providing survivors with essential support to heal.

Programs like Coaching Boys into Men train young men to be GBV prevention allies,

while grandmothers serve as community advocates, shifting norms and creating safer, more supportive environments. This year, hundreds benefitted from SSI's initiatives, with one grandmother reflecting, *“Learning about conflict resolution has significantly impacted my family. My grandchildren are growing up in a more peaceful and loving environment.”*



Photo Credit: DeLore Kwagala/SSI/Botswana

SSI addresses the root causes of gender-based violence through life-skills training, leadership development and psychosocial support.

Women Against Rape (WAR)

Located in Maun, WAR provides safe housing and counselling services to survivors, including at the Chibuya Safe House, a critical refuge in a region with limited shelter options. WAR also promotes financial independence through skills training in baking and sewing, empowering survivors to rebuild their lives with dignity.

A recent success story highlights WAR's life-changing impact: two young sisters, aged 10 and five, arrived at WAR after experiencing neglect and abuse. The elder sister initially struggled with basic self-care

and communication due to trauma. With intensive counselling and educational support, both girls began to heal, regaining confidence, improving academically and envisioning a hopeful future. WAR also provided counselling to their mother, helping the family rebuild bonds in a safe environment.

SSI and WAR demonstrate the power of community-led initiatives to address GBV's root causes while providing vital support to survivors, creating lasting change across generations.



Photo Credit: De Lovie Kwagala / WAR/Botswana

WAR supports survivors of gender-based violence and demonstrates the power of community-led initiatives to address its root causes.

Enhancing Health Access for People with Disabilities

In Kenya, **LVCT Health** is breaking barriers to health care for people with disabilities, a group often marginalized within the health system. Challenges such as inaccessible facilities, communication challenges and stigma prevent many from accessing essential services like sexual and reproductive health (SRH), HIV prevention and mental health care. For example, the lack of Sign language-trained health workers remains a significant obstacle for the Deaf community.

LVCT Health's programs are transforming health access. One standout initiative is their adaptation of the OKY app, a menstrual health tracker for the Deaf community. LVCT Health involved young women with disabilities in the app's development. Rose, a 24-year-old from Kibera, Nairobi, contributed her insights to make the app more accessible. She now serves as an OKY ambassador, encouraging more members of the Deaf community to benefit from its resources.



Rose Sure with Portia Kienja, a psychologist for LVCT Health's digital hotline for young people to learn about HIV, sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence.



Hellen Mumia, a client at LVCT Health, and her caregiver Quinter Muga.

Beyond digital tools, LVCT Health ensures people with disabilities can access care in safe, inclusive spaces. Through community events and partnerships, they offer HIV testing, SRH education and mental health support tailored to the specific needs of individuals with disabilities. This approach has increased access to essential services while fostering an environment where people with disabilities feel valued and respected.

By supporting women like Rose to inspire their peers and challenge perceptions of disability, LVCT Health is building an inclusive health system that ensures accessible, quality care for all.

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What motivates us the most is witnessing the transformative impact our programs have on the lives of people with disabilities. Seeing individuals who were once marginalized become confident, empowered advocates for their health and rights keeps us committed to the cause. Our work contributes to a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone, regardless of ability, can access the health services they need and deserve.

— Joseph Baraza,
LVCT staff member who is deaf



Leading Change: Peninah's Fight for Women's Rights in Kenya



Peninah Mwangi, Executive Director and Co-Founder of BHESP

Peninah Mwangi, Executive Director of the **Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Programme (BHESP)**, has dedicated over two decades to championing the rights, health and economic empowerment of Kenya's most marginalized women, including sex workers and bar hostesses.

Peninah's journey began in the 1990s when Kenya was facing high unemployment rates and severe impacts from HIV and AIDS. While managing a bar after university, she witnessed firsthand the violence, discrimination and health challenges faced by women in the sex trade, many of whom were dying from AIDS-related illnesses before the epidemic was declared a national disaster. In response, Peninah and her peers organized to address these crises, founding BHESP in 1998.

What began as a small HIV prevention initiative has grown into a leading organization advocating for women's rights and safety. Today, BHESP provides health services, legal support and economic programs to thousands.

For Peninah, leadership is rooted in empathy and connection. ***"You have to humble yourself, get your hands dirty and know the people you are working with,"*** she explains. This hands-on approach has made her a trusted advocate, whether mentoring young women, mobilizing resources or driving policy change.

Under her leadership, BHESP has achieved key victories, including holding police accountable for violence against sex workers and increasing legal protections for women facing abuse. Peninah has also helped shape national policies, contributing to Kenya's National AIDS and STI Control Programme (NASCOP) and co-founding the African Sex Workers Alliance to unite sex workers across Africa in advocating for their rights.



BHESP has grown into a leading organization advocating for women's rights and safety.

Peninah's impact is evident in the personal stories of women whose lives have been transformed. Women who once struggled are now building homes, sending their children to university and pursuing careers in fields like engineering and computer programming.

Looking ahead, Peninah plans to focus on decriminalizing sex work in Kenya and documenting BHESP's journey. She hopes to be remembered as a leader who empowered women to achieve economic independence and drove policies to reduce marginalization.

Peninah envisions a future where sex workers are treated with dignity, have access to education and achieve financial independence. With the SLF's support, Peninah Mwangi will continue to open doors for women to claim their rights and build brighter futures across Kenya.



BHESP has achieved an increase in legal protections for women facing abuse.

Field Representative Voices: Winnie Sseruma

The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) takes an anti-colonial approach to partnership, centred on building trust and long-term relationships with community-led organizations rather than establishing field offices or funding short-term projects. Field Representatives like **Winnie Sseruma** are key to this model, working closely with partners to understand their evolving needs, witness their progress and build lasting connections.

For Winnie, her role as a Field Representative is a “dream job” that allows her to give back to the continent she loves and her ancestral home. She finds joy in witnessing community transformation and sharing stories of individuals who have rebuilt their lives, started businesses and continue to support their families.

With nearly a decade of experience, Winnie has seen the SLF’s impact in areas including sexual health, grandmothers’ advocacy and education for vulnerable children. She praises the SLF’s long-term commitment, which enables our partners to grow sustainably and attract further support — something rare in traditional funding circles.

“Most SLF partners have been receiving funding for more than ten years, because change in communities takes time. I don’t know any other funder who works in such a compassionate and empathetic way. It is the true meaning of partnership,” Winnie says.

Winnie’s work also involves reshaping narratives about Africa’s challenges for audiences beyond the continent. When asked, “Are things really changing in Africa?” she confidently responds, “Yes!” She shares examples of SLF partners who achieve extraordinary impact with limited resources. Winnie is passionate about amplifying these often-overlooked stories of resilience and hope.

Winnie thinks one of the SLF’s most powerful contributions is supporting women leaders, especially those affected by HIV and AIDS. Many of these women, once resigned to dying from AIDS-related illnesses, have regained their health and risen as community leaders thanks to the SLF’s long-term support.

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Access to treatment for people living with HIV in Africa has helped reduce stigma and rebuild the lives of millions, especially women who have been disproportionately affected ... It keeps me hopeful about how lives can be transformed when people are listened to and supported in the right way, and when that support is sustained.

— Winnie Sseruma, SLF Field Representative



SLF Field Representative Winnie Sseruma with staff members at Twavwane, including Director Vera Chintu, Program Manager Enala Mumba and Finance Manager Winfrida Chanda.

Winnie's experience reinforces the SLF's belief that lasting change stems from respect, mutual learning and genuine collaboration with the communities most impacted by the challenges we seek to address. Through field representatives like Winnie, the SLF redefines effective partnerships to help strengthen communities, advance women's leadership and build a future where everyone can thrive.

Who are Field Representatives?

SLF Field Representatives are committed and experienced individuals who provide a crucial link between the SLF and our partners. As seasoned independent professionals with years of expertise, they share information, feedback and recommendations from partners to our SLF team in Canada. The recommendations and analysis provided by our Field Representatives assist us in supporting the ongoing growth and development of our partners. While they do not make funding decisions, their insights strengthen the relationships between the SLF and our partners, enabling us to make a greater impact together.



Celebrating Our Donors and Supporters

The SLF is grateful for the donors and supporters who fuel our mission. From individuals to unions to grassroots community groups, each contribution strengthens community-led organizations across Africa working to address the impacts of the HIV epidemic. This year, we are proud to highlight two outstanding supporters: Ujamaa Grandmas and the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

Supporting Education Across Borders: ETFO



The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has been a steadfast partner of the SLF since the early days, embodying a strong dedication to educational and humanitarian support that reaches beyond Canada's borders.

Through the **ETFO Humanity Fund** — a unique initiative funded by voluntary contributions from ETFO's **83,000 members** — ETFO supports children, their education, and their teachers worldwide. For over 20 years, ETFO has given generously to the SLF, donating over **\$2.1 million** to support community-led organizations across Africa that are addressing the impacts of HIV and AIDS.

ETFO's contributions, through its members, have supported grassroots initiatives to provide essential educational and health services to children and families in need. By making a voluntary commitment to the Humanity Fund, ETFO members play an important role in expanding access to education and support services where they are needed most. Their partnership demonstrates the remarkable impact of collective action and solidarity, creating lasting change for communities across Africa.

Good Energy, Big Impact: Ujamaa Grandmas

For 20 years, the Ujamaa Grandmas have been building a grandmother-led social justice movement in Calgary. Their work began before the official launch of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign when one of their founders, Ellen Monaghan, decided to make and sell purses to raise funds for the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Two decades later, the group's major events — a fabric and yarn sale and the Bags, Babies and Beyond artisan handcraft sale — have become legendary. Shoppers book time off work to be at the sales, and group members and volunteers look forward to them with the same anticipation as major holidays. The volume of fabric and yarn that is donated to the Ujamaa Grandmas for their sale now requires a warehouse-sized venue for the event.

Like all groups within the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, the Ujamaa Grandmas are unwavering in their solidarity with African grandmothers. They understand the profound impact African grandmothers' advocacy and leadership has had in their communities and families and are compelled to continue their work together.

Through their tireless efforts, the Ujamaa Grandmas not only raise significant funds but also inspire others to get involved. Their story is one of compassion, creativity and community — a testament to the power of collective action. Yvonne Way, a member and past chair of the group, reflects on what makes the group so strong. *“There is a real sense of trust and peace when we are together. At the same time, we work hard to make new members feel welcome and a part of our team. It goes back to the energy. We like to work together and look forward to our events because of the energy created when we are together.”*



Photo Credit: Ujamaa Grandmas

For 20 years, the Ujamaa Grandmas have been building a grandmother-led social justice movement in Calgary, Canada.

Solidarity in Action

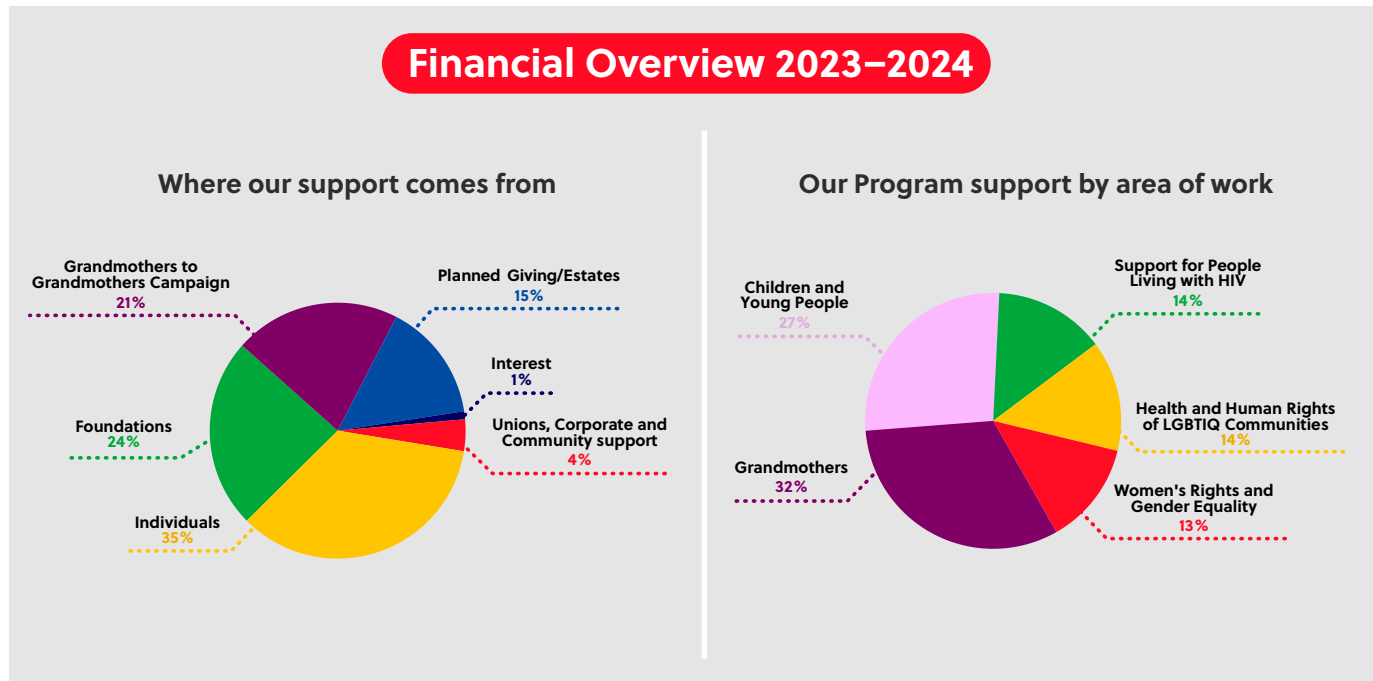
Whether through the inspiring creativity of the Ujamaa Grandmas or the steadfast commitment of ETFO, the SLF's supporters are essential to our mission. We thank all of our donors for their generosity, energy and dedication, which is fuelling transformative change across Africa.



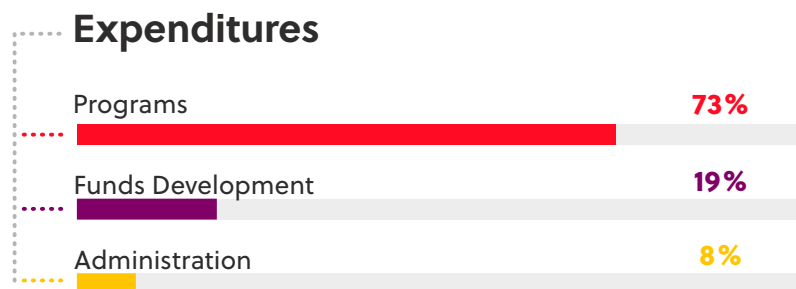


Financial Overview

We are deeply committed to supporting the community-led organizations with which we work. From July 2023 to June 2024, the SLF raised \$9 million in support of 98 organizations working in 14 countries. The 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 \$200 million in support of grassroots organizations working on the frontlines of HIV and AIDS in Africa.



This graph is based on a three-year average of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's annual financial statements of expenditures (2022–2024).



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.



Looking Ahead



Students at RISE Malawi.

In 2025, the Stephen Lewis Foundation's partners will continue providing essential services and leadership within their communities. The systems of support these organizations have established give families the stability they need to build toward healthy and self-determined futures. As illustrated in this report, many factors threaten this stability, including economic shocks, climate change and social injustice. Through challenges, crises and upheaval, families look to community-led organizations for additional support on the path forward.

To make sure our partners have the resources they need, the SLF will continue to mobilize as much funding as possible. However, not all funding is effective. To have the intended impact, funding must be flexible, responsive and respect community expertise. As a feminist and anti-colonial funder, the SLF will spend the year ahead working to shift funding paradigms. We are a member of several coalitions, including Funders Concerned About AIDS and Global Affairs Canada's Civil Society Policy Advisory Group, and have a platform to champion partnership models that respect communities' autonomy and expertise.

The coming year also brings a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the solidarity between grandmothers and *grandothers* across continents. This spring, SLF staff and members of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign will travel to South Africa and Eswatini to connect with leaders of the grandmothers' movements in both countries. For nearly two decades, grandmothers in African countries, Canada, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom have been united in solidarity. Gathering in person will deepen our understanding of community-led responses to the HIV epidemic and highlight the ongoing urgency of their work.

We are excited to continue working alongside our inspiring SLF community to continue expanding initiatives like Give a Day, Give a Night, Partners in Pride and Stride to Turn the Tide. The fundraising and awareness efforts organized by grandmothers groups and SLF champions will play a crucial role in mobilizing resources for our partners, making a lasting impact in the communities we serve.



Thank You

This year's Impact Report highlights the extraordinary work of our partners and the vital role women play in leading transformative change throughout their communities. From advancing sexual health and education to addressing gender-based violence and strengthening economic opportunities, women are at the heart of solutions to some of the most pressing challenges. Their leadership, resilience and vision are creating lasting change for families and communities across Africa. We are grateful to our partners for the work they do and for their trust in the SLF.

None of this would be possible without the generosity and solidarity of our supporters. Your commitment fuels the work of community-led organizations and amplifies the voices of women driving progress. Together, we are building a future rooted in equity, justice and opportunity.

As we look to the year ahead, we are deeply grateful to stand alongside our partners and supporters in this shared mission. Thank you for your trust, generosity and dedication, which enable the Stephen Lewis Foundation to continue supporting women-led and community-led movements in Africa for a healthier, more just world.



RISE programs are committed to the empowerment of women and girls as well as their communities.

Championing health and human rights to end AIDS.



Photo Credit: DeLovie Kwagala/SSI/Botswana



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