

# Acronyms

**CUSP:** Community for Understanding Scaling Processes

**GST:** Good School Toolkit

**L8A:** Learning and Assessment

**LSHTM:** London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

**PBL/K:** Practice-Based Learning and Knowledge

**RRPs:** Regional Resource Persons

**SVRI:** Sexual Violence Research Initiative

**TA:** Technical Assistance

**VAC:** Violence Against Children

**VAW:** Violence Against Women

What Works 2: What Works to Prevent Violence Against

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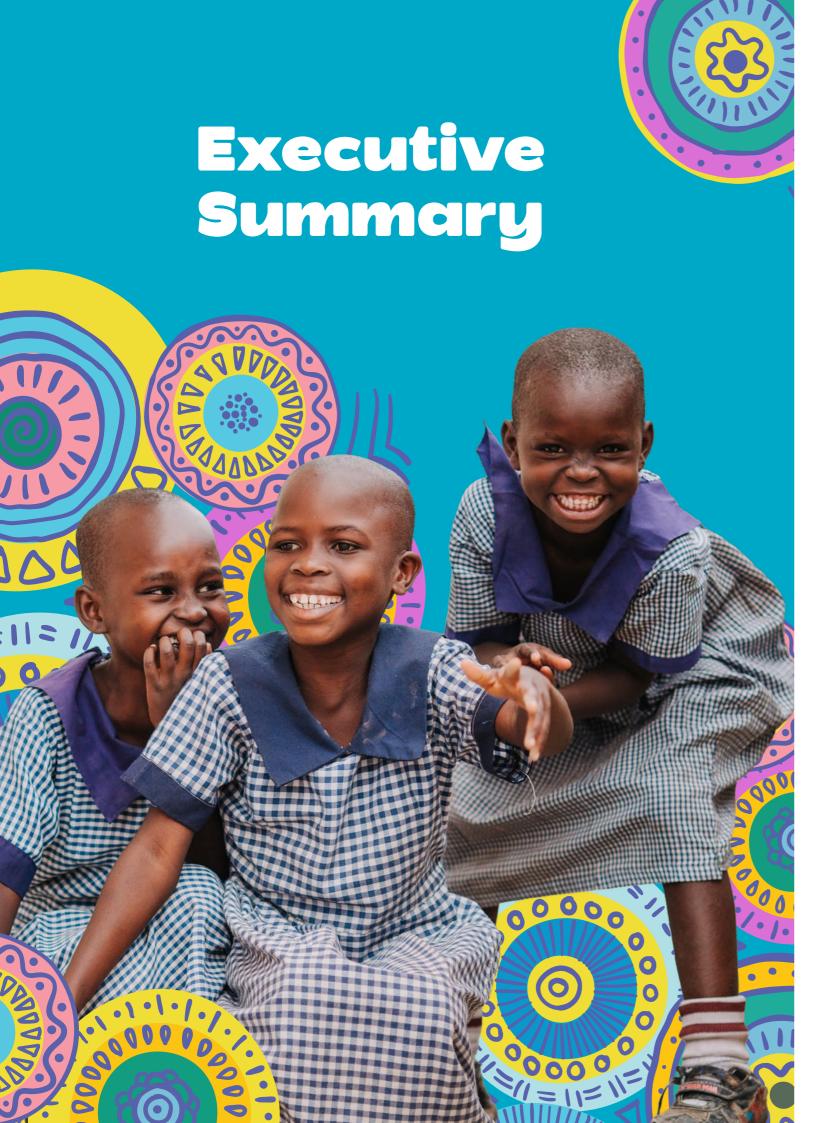
Women and Girls

**WRO:** Women's Rights Organization

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Each year at Raising Voices, we set out to build from strength to strength, refining our work, harnessing our collective power alongside key partners and seeking new opportunities to enhance the field of violence prevention. 2024 reflected another pivotal moment in our journey, as we moved decidedly into our current strategic planning period (2023-2027) and solidified the momentum built during the first year. This report aspires to share milestones as well as highlight the learning, partnerships and activism from which we drew our inspiration.

Across our **Violence Against Women (VAW) Prevention** area of work, key highlights include:

- 1. Practice: Standing alongside women's rights organizations (WROs) to support high-quality, feminist SASA! Together programming across the globe. Through both virtual and onsite technical assistance (TA), we engaged partners in creative processes and helped spark a vibrant community of practice. We also created new resources, adding to our Programming for Prevention Series—and launched two program tools: an exciting radio drama to enhance SASA! Together (called Together with Gloria!) and SASA! Ensemble (SASA! Together in French), setting the groundwork for scale in Francophone countries.
- 2. Learning: Identifying opportunities to act on our practice-based learning for VAW prevention. We formed a working group to rigorously revise SASA! Together's Community Assessment Survey in response to our partners' evolving needs and recent experiences. This process was enriched and validated by learning from an in-depth survey completed by 31 partners on their experiences with SASA! Together's learning and assessment (L&A). We wrapped up the "SASA! Together for Radio" study (featuring a pilot of Together with Gloria!) and launched a new learning collaboration with GBV Prevention Network members around movement-building in the Horn, East and Southern Africa.

3. Influencing: Building feminist movements and ecosystems. We leveraged our presence in large-scale investments and strategic platforms to strengthen effective, feminist VAW prevention. We continued to play a key role in the What Works 2 program, where we advocated for increased funding to WROs, and provided TA to those organizations in co-designing their programs. The Community for Scaling Processes (CUSP) further expanded its thought leadership with publications that unpacked intellectual property and open-source approaches in feminist work, and we embarked on a collaborative journey to identify pathways for building a healthy and sustainable VAW prevention ecosystem.

Across our **Violence Against Children (VAC) Prevention** area of work, key highlights include:

- 1. Practice: Making a strategic leap toward scale with the GST Agile adaptation. We celebrated the completion of the Good School Toolkit Agile adaptation, a lighter and scalable version of the original Toolkit that we developed in response to feedback and insights gained from years of implementation experience, research and learning. GST Agile maintains the core principles of preventing VAC while offering a more focused, flexible and resource-efficient approach for schools. This adaptation marks a strategic shift toward greater scalability and positions Raising Voices to reach our target of 5,000 schools in Uganda by 2027.
- **2.** Learning: Expanding our pilot studies and research partnerships for learning exchange and informed decision-making. In 2024, we completed two pilots—to assess the GST Mental Health module and the GST for secondary schools (GST-Secondary)—and kicked off a new pilot of GST Agile. These rigorous learning initiatives have enabled Raising Voices to make real-time adjustments to our content, pivot in our strategies and ultimately rise to meet the challenges of program expansion across Uganda.
- 3. Influencing: Influencing the education ecosystem through conversations, collective insights, engagement and connection. The highlight of our influencing work was Uganda's historic pledge to roll out the GST nationwide by 2030—a transformative milestone for children's safety and dignity. Announced at the 2024 Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children in Bogotá, the commitment reflects years of partnership with Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports. Our dynamic multimedia campaigns and the Coalition for Good Schools' leadership strengthened these efforts, which sparked nationwide conversations and helped sustain momentum toward violence-free

Raising Voices also played a key role in promoting cultures of care as a feminist practice by convening a discussion on the topic

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schools for every child.

Key highlights in strengthening our **organizational infrastructure** include:

- Deepening organizational leadership and collaboration.
   We began the year by returning to
  - We began the year by returning to a co-directorship model of leadership, welcoming Prossy Jonker Nakanjako and Natsnet Ghebrebrhan into the role. As a feminist organization, we are especially excited about the new leadership team, as it offers a powerful opportunity to make visible the leadership of women from the Global South.
- 2. Nurturing an organization-wide culture of learning. As a learning organization, we are constantly evolving our methods and processes—including our approach to learning itself! In 2024, we infused all-staff processes with fresh creativity, including gallery walks, talk shows and more. We also took our practice-based learning to the next level, creating an info-sheet, co-hosting a workshop at the SVRI Forum and presenting our experiences and practical ideas for creating and sharing practice-based learning to catalyze violence prevention.

Our hope is that this annual report provides space for celebration as well as an honest way to take stock of our critical learning as we maintain our steadfast focus on transformational programming to prevent violence. Across the following pages, we share the details of our 2024 experiences, an overview of our organizational and financial systems, and overall reflections that connect what we experienced to where we are headed in 2025.

# Current Strategy at a Glance

Raising Voices' 2023-2027 Strategy strives to animate bold aims and new directions in our efforts to prevent VAW and VAC as we expand our three core areas of work:

#### **Practice:**

Creating, adapting and supporting feminist programming to prevent VAW and VAC

#### Learning:

Generating. integrating and amplifying knowledge anchored in practice

#### **Influencing:**

Analyzing, engaging and connecting with others to shape the overall ecosystem

#### **Strategic Aims**



#### Practice

#### More dynamic, effective and supported SASA! Together/ SASA! Faith programming Increased VAW prevention

- programmatic innovation. tools and guidance.
- Stronger connections, synergy and community among activist organizations and movements.

programming.



#### Learning

#### O Greater prioritization of learning

- More supportive and connected VAW prevention ecosystem that integrated within programming, strengthening accountability to elevates and funds feminist
  - Stronger connections and shared analysis among VAW prevention activist organizations.

Influencing

- Enhanced recognition of the value and contributions of practice-based learning within the global knowledge base on VAW/VAC prevention.
- Increased investment in learning that unpacks the why and how behind effective VAW & VAC prevention
- Greater visibility of VAW/VAC prevention practitioners from the Global South in regional and global spaces.
- Improved access to learning tools that assess program fidelity and integrate learning for more tailored, responsive and impactful
- Increased integration of principles for safe, effective, and ethical VAC
- Strengthened ability of religious and cultural leaders, government institutions, media personalities and journalists in Uganda to speak out against VAC.

# Preventing Violence Against Women



#### **VAW Prevention Practice**

Our practice is rooted in accountable relationships with the communities and partners we serve. We are committed to developing knowledge, building skills and inspiring collective action to prevent VAW. The following highlights and learning emerged from 2024.

- 1. Establishing and sustaining partnerships with WROs and other organizations preventing VAW in their communities.
- **Deepening TA relationships.** We remained committed to delivering high-quality TA that supports impactful and sustainable *SASA!* programming. In 2024, our small team—working alongside external TA providers—supported 30 *SASA!* partners across 22 countries, including through nine in-person training courses, 12 webinars and 10 on-site visits. Many of these TA partnerships have been nurtured over several years, reflecting our long-term approach to building sustained and impactful *SASA!* programming.
- Celebrating positive feedback. Our partners consistently affirm the
  effectiveness of Raising Voices TA. In our annual TA feedback survey, 91%
  of respondents attested that our TA sessions were meaningfully engaging,
  and 89% felt confident applying the

content in their programming. In addition, 70% rated our facilitators' skills, knowledge and professionalism as "excellent."

• Balancing in-person and distance learning. Post-COVID, we intentionally prioritized in-person engagement, particularly site visits at the start of new partnerships. This approach has enabled us to better understand the organization, the context in which they operate and the quality of their programming. However, while we remain deeply committed to inperson engagement as an irreplaceable part of SASA! TA, we also remain committed to improving both in-person and virtual TA delivery modalities.

"The support we're receiving from Raising Voices is incredibly valuable. Each time we share our challenges and changes, they guide the conversation in such a way that helps us confidently find solutions. Their approach is truly amazing."

WRO REPRESENTATIVE

# 2. Creating, innovating and adapting new tools and materials to strengthen VAW prevention programming.

Investing in adaptations and in developing new tools that are relevant to our partners are critical to strengthening our programming. We share with excitement the following milestones that we reached in 2024:

- Celebrating new supplemental program tools. To better support SASA! partners, we developed and launched several new tools and resources. This includes completing the online SASA! Together courses, which are now fully available in Moodle and offer accessible, self-paced learning for partners worldwide. We also created short videos that demonstrate key programming concepts and skills in a more visual and practical manner. Additionally, we launched Together with Gloria!, a radio drama to enhance SASA! Together through edu-tainment and partnered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to produce a podcast offering insights on SASA! Together in action.
- Expanding SASA! Together to the Francophone region. We marked a major milestone with the online launch event of SASA! Ensemble (SASA! Together in French), organized in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee. This moment signaled a growing readiness and momentum for providing TA in Francophone regions. Our confidence in this expansion is boosted by the addition of a new Francophone staff member, who brings deep expertise in SASA! Together programming and TA delivery. This evolution was informed by a scoping mission to the Central Sahel region, including visits to Burkina Faso and Mali to assess the feasibility of establishing a Francophone cohort in 2025.
- Exploring and amplifying partner innovations. Within the global VAW prevention field, our areas of interest coincide with themes we hear in partner innovation. In 2025, we want to dive deeper into these themes and explore relevant partner innovations with SASA! Specifically, we will explore how partners live their values of intersectionality in the use of SASA!, how partners who complete a SASA! cycle in communities connect mobilized communities with the feminist and VAW prevention movements, and how organizations that previously focused on VAW response programming are being impacted by SASA!



3. Building connection and community among activist organizations using *SASA!* and other methodologies to prevent VAW.

In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, we continue to harness our collective power by building connections amongst activist organizations and creating momentum for social change. By fostering communities of practice and leveraging our combined negotiation strength, we can effectively influence change. Highlights from 2024 include:

- Launching three new SASA! communities of practice. Communities of practice offer a powerful platform for SASA! partners to connect, share experiences, exchange resources and strengthen collaboration. In 2024, we launched three new communities of practice in Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda, bringing together organizations using various iterations of SASA! These communities of practice have already demonstrated the value of peer learning to support high-quality SASA! implementation, networking, joint advocacy for policy influence and collaborative fundraising efforts. Each is co-led by Raising Voices and a SASA! partner organization, ensuring shared ownership and contextual relevance. We look forward to deepening these engagements through more in-person convenings in each country in 2025.
- Leveraging our influence to secure feminist funding for WROs. Strong WROs are pivotal to preventing VAW, although they remain chronically underfunded. In 2024, we continued our strategic advocacy with donors to secure long-term, core funding for WROs. Our efforts included supporting partners in negotiating with donors and engaging with their respective headquarters. We are encouraged to see these efforts bearing fruit, as several partners secured funding that enabled them to continue and expand their SASA! programming.



#### **VAW Prevention Learning**

Learning is foundational to our work, helping us experiment, innovate and reflect. Through our ongoing practice-based learning and research collaborations, we created several spaces in 2024 to analyze and critically reflect on emerging findings and strengthen our programming.

1. Prioritizing our practice-based learning and elevating learning with our activist partners.

In 2024, we deepened our practice-based learning through listening to feedback, critical reflection and action to strengthen L&A processes and support for partners.

- Reflecting critically on L&A through internal discussions. As part of our ongoing commitment to L&A, the Learning team facilitated two internal discussions with the Practice team. The first session focused on unpacking partner feedback, leading to concrete actions to address partners' TA needs. The second centered on refining our Community Assessment Survey tool. These collaborative discussions provided a space to document emerging issues, brainstorm solutions and strengthen L&A support for partners.
- Integrating our practice-based learning to revise our L&A tool. The Community Assessment Survey is a key component of SASA! Together's L&A strategy. In 2023, both our team and partners highlighted challenges to effectively applying the survey data, including potential social desirability bias and the need for more nuanced questions. As a result, we established an internal technical working group to refine the tool while maintaining its core purpose. Throughout 2024, the group revised, tested and validated changes with the team and community members. The updated Community Assessment Survey and guidance package will be finalized and launched for new partners in 2025.
- Inviting feedback from partners. In 2024, we delivered TA to 16 partners across 11 countries globally, focusing on L&A tools, databases and data interpretation. This TA supported our partners in effectively using data to track program progress and make informed, responsive decisions. In our TA feedback survey, most partners (83%) reported feeling confident

in using L&A tools, while 59% expressed confidence in using L&A databases. Encouragingly, 63% of the respondents were confident in analyzing and using data with guidance from Raising Voices. Many partners provided examples of using L&A data to inform their training and SASA! Together phase transitions.

- Learning from practice to strengthening movement-building.

  The GBV Prevention Network, together with the Learning team, are committed to strengthening our practice-based learning around movement-building for VAW prevention. In collaboration with members in Uganda, Botswana, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia, we will embark on this journey to foster movement-building in 2025. This effort is part of Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) to End Violence against Women in partnership with the UN Trust Fund.
- 2. Engaging in research collaborations to explore important questions arising from our work.
- Completing the "SASA! Together for Radio" study. A collaboration with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Peripheral Vision International (PVI) and the Uganda Network on Law, Ethics and HIV (UGANET), this study explored the extent to which a new radio component, Together with Gloria!, expands the reach, influence and resonance of SASA! Together ideas. In 2024, we documented findings and shared key lessons with partners. We found that Together with Gloria! engaged many members of the community (66% of randomly selected community members had heard of the show), it was well accepted, and listening was connected to greater participation in other SASA! Together activities. We also presented a poster at the SVRI Forum 2024, sharing about the partnership journey and lessons learned, including how values-aligned partners with complementary expertise worked together with flexibility and how that enriched the overall process.



"I got friends from SASA!, and they taught me that I should be listening to this drama very well so that violence can end in my household. Indeed, I kept on listening. ...Right now, there is peace in my home. I and my husband have peace, and there is no more conflicting."

- WOMAN COMMUNITY MEMBER

#### **VAW Prevention Influencing**

We continue to shape the discourse on VAW prevention at the national, regional and global levels. Our influencing efforts serve as a vital connective tissue linking activists and policymakers, researchers and funders, as they work towards ethical, evidence-based and feminist-informed approaches to VAW prevention.

1. Supporting collective activism by convening activists and collaborations at the national, regional and global levels.

#### **National level**

- Completing the fact-finding exercise. Raising Voices, in collaboration with members of the Accountability to Women Group, conducted an exploratory activity to understand the emergence of the Uganda Men Parliamentary Association and its impact on the country's feminist movement. This exercise involved a literature review, media scan, and 15 interviews with activists, members of the MenEngage Network and members of parliament. We found a misalignment between the association's written objectives and its verbally communicated goals, the promotion of a "competition" narrative within the gender equality movement and a growing divergence between women's rights activists and members of parliament on gender equality approaches. These preliminary findings were validated with 20 members of WROs, and the insights gained will inform the Accountability to Women Group strategy to strengthen accountability to women and girls in Uganda.
- Promoting care, healing and solidarity. We are proud to have co-convened the annual Feminist Healing Festival in Kampala, in collaboration with Akina Mama wa Afrika and Qweshunga. Under the theme "Reclaiming Feminist Joy," the festival brought together 150 activists for an energizing gathering. Participants applauded the event, recognizing its powerful impact in strengthening connections, sharing experiences, and fostering collective care and healing. Over time, this will lead to increased collective action and unity among participating organizations and individuals.



#### **Regional level**

With two decades in existence, the **GBV Prevention Network** is now joined by over 3,500 members (organizations and individuals) dedicated to generating momentum and activism for VAW prevention. In 2024, the Network celebrated several key milestones:

- Amplifying the 16 Days of Activism. The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence global campaign for 2024 was a powerful precursor to the Beijing +30 commemoration. Aligned with the global moment, our regional campaign theme was "Recommit! Be Accountable! Resource Prevention!" During the 16 Days campaign, Network members issued a strong call for a renewed commitment to ending VAW using a well-resourced accountability mechanism. To drive this call, we created an Action and Advocacy Kit that included creative advocacy materials. We disseminated hard copies to 150 members, and 606 members accessed copies online. This annual campaign continues to attest to our connectedness in pursuit of social justice.
- Leveraging digital platforms for activism. We launched three social media campaigns that focused on transformational VAW prevention in 2024. The campaigns encouraged reflection at the individual, organizational and collective levels through sharing memes, blogs and live online sessions. These efforts sparked active discussions and engaged 1,606 individuals across our social media platforms. In addition, building on insights from our experience in 2023, we produced a short, animated video highlighting the value of solidarity amidst multiple backlashes.



"We used the 16 Days of Activism poster to trigger conversations on how the government of Kenya should recommit to the laid-out commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action and follow up."

-WOMEN CONCERNS CENTRE (KENYA)

"The 16 Days of Activism Campaign Kits from Raising Voices provided invaluable resources that amplified our outreach efforts and strengthened our community partnerships."

-FAMILY SUPPORT TRUST (ZIMBABWE)

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- Deepening knowledge on feminist scale. CUSP continued its thought
  leadership by exploring key ingredients of feminist scale. Following extensive
  reflection on open-source principles and intellectual property, the group
  published a policy and practice article on in Frontiers and developed a
  supplemental blog to share insights via the SVRI website. In addition, the
  group reflected on feminist partnerships, unpacking both the conceptual
  and practical aspects; the product of these reflections will be shared in 2025.
- Building the VAW prevention field. In recent decades, VAW prevention has gained increased attention through legislation, policy, programming, research and investment. These collective efforts have contributed to the emergence of the violence prevention field, which remains in its early stages. Recognizing this stage as an opportunity for leadership and growth, we have been participating in several initiatives aimed at fostering a healthy and resilient VAW prevention ecosystem. In 2024, we co-convened two processes in collaboration with SVRI, the Prevention Collaborative and the Accelerator for GBV Prevention that brought together leaders in the field to reflect on the state of the field and identify shared priorities. The first convening was held in The Hague, with the outcome documented in the report Strengthening the VAWG Prevention Ecosystem. The second process was held at the SVRI Forum in Cape Town, where participants solidified priorities through broader engagement with additional colleagues.
- 2. Influencing and sustaining thought, practice and funding for VAW prevention through participation in global consortiums, advisory committees and critical document reviews.

2024 marked the fourth year of partnership within the UK-supported **What Works 2** program, aiming to build evidence through learning how to take effective VAW prevention programs to scale and testing new and innovative approaches.

Centering accountable programming. As co-leads of the Accountability Pillar within the implementation consortium, we are committed to fostering a shared feminist analysis and practices for transformative VAW prevention programming. In 2024, we rolled out the third-annual Reflection Card process, a tool that enables members to reflect, celebrate progress and identify areas for growth through actionable planning. Additionally, we finalized the Grantee Reflection Card, designed to guide partners through assessing their accountability practices. We also played a key role in promoting cultures of care as a feminist practice by convening a discussion on the topic and curating virtual and in-person spaces for rest, reflection and practicing collective care.





- Increasing the visibility and leadership of WROs. As the What Works 2 program continues its grantee selection process, we are encouraged by the presence and strength of WROs in the pipeline. We anticipate that 10 out of 14 funded programs will be led by WROs by early 2025, an exciting strategic development. This shift represents a significant step toward amplifying the leadership and visibility of WROs in the critical work of VAW prevention. In addition, we are providing effective TA for innovation, supporting three WRO-led innovative programs in Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa in codesigning and implementing programs.
- Participating in forums. We participated in a range of in-person and virtual consultations and forums in 2024, contributing to critical conversations on policy, funding and strategy directions. We were part of a high-level panel that addressed the newly elected UK Labour government during the inaugural session of ministers. In our address, we emphasized the importance of feminist-informed foreign policies, articulating how such an approach aligns with the UK's evolving realism agenda. In addition, we engaged in a series of regional and global processes convened by ACT to End Violence Against Women, which focused on movement-building and feminist-informed funding mechanisms to drive transformative change.



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# Preventing Violence Against Children



#### **VAC Prevention Practice**

2024 was a turning point, not just for Raising Voices but for everyone committed to ending VAC. At the historic ministerial conference in Bogotá, we witnessed a powerful moment as over 100 countries, including Uganda, pledged to take action. For us, it was the culmination of years of hard work and persistence. After a decade of advocating for the GST, the Ugandan government officially committed to rolling the Toolkit out across the country.

This was more than a promise—it was a victory for every child and a huge leap forward in our quest to transform schools into safe, nurturing spaces. And now, with 1,500 schools already using the GST, we are in full swing and on course to meet our commitment to rolling out to 5,000 schools by the end of our current strategic plan (2023-2027). We have completed the adaptation of GST Agile, a more versatile and less resource-intensive version of Toolkit, making it easy to roll out at scale. And in addition to our practice-based learning, we are in advanced negotiations with research institutions to support scientific studies regarding efficacy as we roll out at scale to further support our advocacy efforts.

- 1. Supporting and deepening the impact of GST implementation at scale.
- Enrolling 400 secondary schools. Building on the momentum of earlier cohorts, 2024 marked a significant step forward for GST-Secondary implementation. A second cohort of 400 secondary schools enrolled, bringing total implementation to 1,500 schools. By year-end, 90% of the schools had reached the sustainability phase, having completed at least five of six modules and demonstrating internal capacity for sustaining the GST's ideas. These schools reported improvements in peer relationships, teacher-student collaboration and the use of positive discipline approaches. The schools are in 28 districts across Uganda, with efforts underway to strengthen district-level mechanisms for long-term integration and oversight of GST practices.
- Supporting GST-Secondary implementation at scale. We facilitated implementation through a structured technical support model, with 25 regional resource persons (RRPs) providing direct assistance to 400 secondary schools and each RRP supporting an average of 16 schools, while concurrently consolidating gains across an initial cohort of 1,100

schools. These RRPs have played a central role in guiding schools through the GST process, offering on-site mentorship, co-facilitating activities, and supporting school-level actors to internalize and apply the principles of violence prevention and positive discipline.

- Strengthening the Peer Learning Network. Our efforts have also strengthened the Peer Learning Network, further amplifying the GST's impact. We conducted activities such as teachers' and learners' writing competitions, which fostered creativity and critical thinking. Additionally, we conducted SMS campaigns across schools in various districts to disseminate GST ideas and updates, ensuring continuous engagement and communication. For example, we reached 3,756 teachers through SMS campaigns. These initiatives have not only strengthened the collaboration among schools but also encouraged a culture of shared learning and support. Through these networks, schools have been able to exchange best practices, resources and experiences, significantly enhancing the overall effectiveness of GST implementation.
- Strengthening partnerships with district/local governments. In 2024, we established formal partnerships with district education offices and other local government structures in 28 districts to embed GST-Secondary implementation within existing education systems. These partnerships created clear pathways for joint planning, monitoring and accountability, enabling districts to take an active role in supporting the schools. District officials participated in technical review meetings, school visits and capacity-strengthening sessions, fostering shared ownership of violence prevention efforts. As a result, schools benefited from more consistent oversight, stronger local leadership and improved alignment between school-level activities and district priorities, contributing to a more supportive and responsive school climate.
- Conducting district transition meetings and introducing GST Agile. As we concluded the year, we conducted district-level engagements across 34 districts as part of the transition from Cohort 2 to Cohort 3 of GST implementation. These meetings aimed to communicate the 2023–2027 scaling strategy, strengthen partnerships and introduce GST Agile and RRPs. Structured as two-hour sessions, the meetings brought together district education officers, inspectors of schools and political leaders to review progress in existing schools, collaboratively select new intervention schools and co-develop transition plans. We also made courtesy visits to chief administrative officers, local council chairpersons and resident district commissioners to build political goodwill and initiate planning

for district-wide rollout. These engagements marked a critical step in operationalizing the District Enhance Approach, ensuring deeper district integration and sustained support for scaling up the GST to 5,000 schools.

#### 2. Adapting and innovating the GST and delivery models.

- Launching the GST Agile pilot. In preparation for large-scale implementation, we successfully finalized all GST Agile materials and began implementing the pilot in five schools in Mukono, central Uganda. This innovative adaptation aims to be highly scalable, enabling schools to implement the methodology with minimal external support. During this pilot phase, we are gathering valuable insights and feedback, which will be used to refine GST Agile. Our goal is to ensure GST Agile is robust and user-friendly, making it ready for broader deployment.
- Expanding GST implementation in other countries. We have extended our efforts beyond Uganda by supporting the GST's adaptation by regional and global partners. For instance, we partnered with the Amani Girls Organization in Tanzania, providing initial training sessions and working together on translations to ensure the Toolkit's relevance and effectiveness in their context. Similarly, Right to Play in Pakistan has begun adapting elements of the GST—specifically, the Good School Committees—to fit their local needs. These partnerships have been instrumental in promoting the GST principles on a broader scale, fostering safe and supportive learning environments across different regions.
- Developing the Mental Health module. We developed a Mental Health module for the GST to enhance conversations about mental health in schools. Recognizing that childhood experiences of violence are a leading cause of mental health challenges and other poor life outcomes, we focused on supporting teachers and learners in destigmatizing mental health, giving it language and building basic skills to identify mental health challenges among learners and teachers.





1. Prioritizing our practice-based learning and elevating learning with our activist partners.

Through fit-for-purpose, internally driven practice-based learning, we piloted new innovations and refined our approaches based on emerging insights. Additionally, we worked in close collaboration with RRPs, supporting them to conduct routine L&A as they took the GST to a cohort of 400 secondary schools. Key highlights include:

- Completing a pilot of the new Mental Health module. We conducted a six-month pilot of the Mental Health module in four schools, with the aim of equipping teachers and students with essential mental health skills. Our findings showed strong engagement among both teachers and students, leading to improved self-care practices, better teacher-student relationships and greater confidence in addressing mental health issues. Programmatic challenges included the need for clearer facilitator guidance, student-friendly language and better integration of referral services. We refined the module based on this learning and will implement it at scale in 2025.
- Capturing nuanced feedback from the GST Agile pilot. As we pilot GST Agile in five schools, with a strong emphasis on practice-based learning, we have been using L&A tools such as scorecards, debrief notes and qualitative focus group discussions to capture important feedback from students and teachers. A mid-pilot review in late 2024 suggested high levels of acceptance for GST Agile. The pilot will be completed in mid-2025, informing programmatic revisions and scaling of GST Agile.
- Using knowledge gained from RRPs to make learning-informed decisions. RRPs conducted school visits each term, collected data and engaged in reflection sessions to track GST trends in 400 schools. Data analysis and discussions informed the programmatic focus for the next term, ensuring continuous improvement based on emerging experiences. L&A data indicated that 90% of the schools had reached steps 4, 5 and 6 of the GST by the final implementation term. Further, we saw promising trends compared to the first term, such as a 27% improvement in teacher-student relationships, a 29% reduction in corporal punishment, increased use of positive discipline by teachers, girls' greater involvement in leadership roles and girls' more proactive participation in co-curricular activities compared to boys.

2. Engaging in research collaborations to explore important questions arising from our VAC prevention work.

We continued advancing knowledge by exploring key research questions emerging from our VAC prevention work. Several studies made significant progress, and we disseminated findings in both global and local spaces:

- "Good School Toolkit for Secondary Schools Pilot." This collaboration with LSHTM and AfriChild assessed the feasibility and resonance of GST ideas and materials adapted for secondary schools. Findings indicate that the program was acceptable and understandable to students and staff and that it was delivered with fidelity. Qualitative data reflected positive changes in schools, including a reduction in physical discipline and peer violence, improvements in students' confidence, increased awareness of violence and GST ideas, and positive shifts in gender norms and attitudes among students and teachers. In 2024, we synthesized and disseminated the study findings internally with the VAC team, presented a poster sharing key findings at the SVRI Forum 2024 and shared results at the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) Congress 2024. Most importantly, we shared findings with teachers and students who were part of the study, who validated the findings and confirmed that they resonated with them. Preliminary findings from another study with LSHTM and AfriChild assessing our RRP modality for scaling the GST were also shared at the SVRI Forum 2024. The analysis for this study is ongoing and will be finalized in 2025.
- "Adolescent Mental Health and COVID-19 in Uganda." Conducted
  in partnership with the University of Alabama, this qualitative study
  examined the impact of school closures on adolescents. In 2024, we
  documented and shared key findings from this study in a learning paper.
  The findings also informed revisions to the GST Mental Health module.



"I have a child in my class who is weak in mathematics. Even for simple numeral work such as 1+1, she will write 11. I had written her off. But having learnt about emotional violence, I went back home and reflected on this child. Going forward, I want to focus on helping this child."

 IMAM AND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN MWERERWE-WAKISO • "Navigating the Challenges of Violence, Gender and Disability: A Mixed Methods Longitudinal Study With Young People in Uganda." Launched in 2024, this mixed-methods study builds on the CoVAC (Contexts of Violence in Adolescence Cohort) Study (2017–2023) to explore how violence, gender and disability intersect and shape the life chances of young people with disabilities in Uganda. Conducted in partnership with University College London, LSHTM, the National Union for Persons with Disabilities and the University of Oxford, the study aims to fill critical knowledge gaps. In 2024, Raising Voices team members participated in inception meetings and guided the study's direction, while analysis from CoVAC continues. For CoVAC, we contributed to several submitted publications and plan to develop practice and policy briefs in 2025 to ensure the evidence informs broader discussions.



#### **VAC Prevention Influencing**

Overall, our VAC prevention influencing work focused on cultivating fertile ground for the principles of VAC prevention and enabling key Good School ideas to take root at the national, regional and global levels. We aimed to build an opinion infrastructure around the issue of preventing VAC to gain wider acceptance of VAC prevention ideas among the diverse stakeholders who engage with schools. Building on our previous work, our influencing has involved two key strands: 1) expanding our long-term communications work through implementing an annual multi-media communications campaign, and 2) leading and engaging in national, regional and global communities of practice and coalitions.

- 1. Expanding our long-term communications work through an annual multi-media communications campaign.
- Sustaining our commitment to the national dialogue on VAC prevention. We continued to facilitate a national dialogue on VAC prevention, mainly through three initiatives: (1) a communications campaign that involved a three-month radio campaign augmented by social media engagement (see below); (2) developing and disseminating engaging communication materials; and (3) maintaining the VAC prevention dialogue in media through our established community of journalists. We strove to deepen conversations on VAC prevention in order to create awareness and engagement among the broader communities around schools.
- Implementing an intensive three-month radio campaign with complementary social media engagement. The radio campaign ran on 15 radio stations spread across central, northern, eastern and western Uganda under the unifying theme "My Violence-Free School, My Future!" We used multiple channels to engage on this theme:
  - 30-second public service announcements that aired 6,300 times across the 15 stations
  - 10-minute prerecorded stories of children's experiences of VAC
  - 10 thematic talks that guided one-hour live talk-show discussions
  - 100+ engaging social media messages

- 75 live talk-show discussions on understanding VAC and unpacking the intersections between violence (including emotional violence, sexual violence, bullying and online violence) and gender and mental health. These live shows also helped to differentiate between positive discipline and corporal punishment, as well as to distill the concept of power as the root cause of VAC.
- Accelerating improvements and refining content. Through our
  Microsoft forms tracking feedback from the live talk shows, we learned
  that our audience needed more information on mental health; online
  violence; the power that peers, parents and teachers hold, and how
  this leads to violence against children; and what constitutes violence
  when it comes to disciplining children. This learning is informing our
  content development for 2025 to continue deepening conversations.
- Developing and disseminating engaging communication materials. Reprinting our communication materials and developing new ones helped us to create wider awareness of VAC. During our engagements with various coalitions and religious and cultural leaders, we disseminated over 1,000 VAC prevention stickers, frequently asked questions on VAC, info-sheets on VAC, VAC prevention booklets, copies of VAC prevention principles, and posters on preventing VAC in homes and schools. Our audiences have consistently appreciated these materials, indicating that they help simplify the VAC-related concepts for easier consumption. In addition, we developed and printed 3,000 postcards—a new communications idea that features common stories of VAC in school and home, with a series of questions to spark discussion. We plan to pilot and learn from this new modality in 2025.
- Engaging our established community of journalists. To complement
  the radio and social media campaign, we conducted two workshops
  with 25 journalists and collaborated with 16 to publish 33 feature stories
  online, on TV, on the radio and in print. These include, for example,
  a news segment on online violence and articles on the mental
  health crisis in schools, using social media to prevent violence
  against children and the power of supporting teenage mothers to
  stay in school. These were augmented by 10 stories that journalists
  documented independently and for which they sought interviews with
  Raising Voices.





"My ears and eyes can't miss a VAC case now because I have become more aware of VAC."

- NEW VISION JOURNALIST
- 2. Leading and engaging in national, regional and global communities of practice and coalitions.

In 2024, we influenced strategic conversations on VAC prevention across multiple levels. At the national level, we primarily engaged with two line ministries—the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development—as Raising Voices and through our coalitions. Regionally, we channeled our efforts through the **Coalition for Good Schools** Sub-Saharan Africa Hub, and globally, we contributed to the VAC prevention discourse through key platforms such as the SVRI Forum, the global ministerial conference on VAC in Bogotá and several global engagements through the Coalition for Good Schools.



#### **National level**

- Celebrating a milestone in government support for the GST. The
  Government of Uganda announced a commitment to roll out the GST
  nationwide by 2030 during the ministerial meeting on VAC prevention
  in Bogotá. Moving forward, we are strategizing on working with both the
  Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and
  Social Development to realize this commitment.
- Developing a national guide for alternatives to corporal punishment. Together with the Positive Discipline Coalition and the gender technical team at the Ministry of Education and Sports, we developed a national guide for schools on alternatives to corporal punishment. The ministry's Inter-Sectoral Committee reviewed the alternatives, and the guide now awaits approval by the ministry's monitoring and evaluation technical team before it is signed off for dissemination in all schools.
- Contributing to think tank conversations on promoting girls' education in Uganda. We influenced initial conversations that are shaping the think tank for the Ministry of Education and Sports on promoting girls' education. We plan to actively participate in this space in 2025 to contribute to this agenda. Additionally, we participated in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development think tank for planning and preparing for the ministerial meeting on VAC prevention in Bogotá. Our technical input focused on telling Uganda's story of VAC prevention and shaping the direction we want to take as a country.
- Facilitating dialogues on VAC prevention. These included two dialogues with Busoga Kingdom convening 85 participants in two chiefdoms, as well as a two-day dialogue with 44 religious leaders in Wakiso and Kampala districts. Working with key gatekeepers through casual meetings and conversations helped us to identify pathways for engaging the two groups. In 2025, we are getting clearer on the structures and plan to implement at a more strategic level for easier engagement.
- Influencing education policy documents. Raising Voices convened GST implementing teachers, RRPs and other education stakeholders to help revise the Gender in Education and VAC strategy review process and strategy plan. The ideas were drawn from GST concepts, including gender fairness and VAC prevention. The validation meeting for the strategy plan resulted in a recommendation to develop robust systems to monitor, evaluate and report on how strategies impact gender equity and VAC in schools to track progress and accountability.

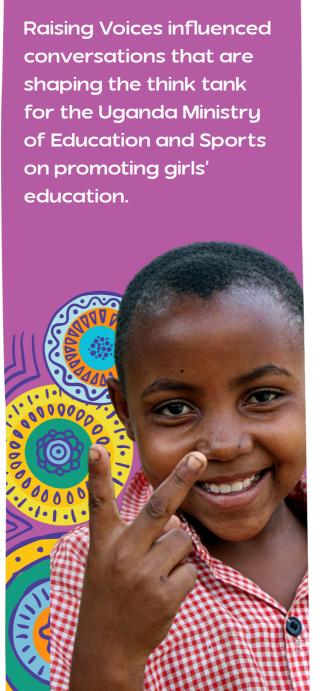
#### **Regional level**

- Influencing the theme of the 2024 Day of the African Child. The theme of the 2024 Day of the African Child initially centered around budgeting. Together with the Coalition for Good Schools, we successfully advocated to reframe the theme. "Education for All Children in Africa: The Time Is Now" provided a stronger entry point for VAC prevention through schoollevel approaches and helped the coalition's Sub-Saharan Africa Hub collaborate with Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) staff from 34 countries to conduct national engagements on the theme.
- Creating two knowledge products.
   The Coalition for Good Schools Sub-Saharan Africa Hub completed two knowledge products, including the continental policy landscape analysis and evidence review on VAC prevention in Africa. The two products were used for engagement at the 2024 SVRI Forum and with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and they will also inform future engagements.

#### **Global level**

 Making strategic contributions to influential spaces. At the SVRI Forum in Cape Town and the global ministerial conference in Bogotá, we gave presentations and participated in conversations on how to further our work.





# Organizational Infrastructure





#### **Organizational Learning**

In 2024, we demonstrated thought leadership in practice-based learning, working both internally and externally to prioritize a culture of learning in organizations working to prevent violence against women and children. We consistently engaged our teams and partners in collective reflection, bringing staff together to explore research and concepts related to our work. Together, we asked critical questions that informed actions and innovations to strengthen our impact.

1. Deepening internal reflection for collective discovery and action. Throughout the year, we consistently prioritized internal reflection. We held two staff development sessions, one focusing on unpacking power and the second on positive discipline, two key concepts in our work on preventing violence. We revisited and launched a learning circle on feminism, which was first introduced in 2020 and left incomplete due to changes in priorities amid COVID-19. We conducted two lively sessions in 2024, which focused on unpacking feminism and creating a safe space; these sessions were rated highly in staff feedback surveys and demonstrated dynamic staff engagement.



"I am more intentional about how I use my power, making sure I use it thoughtfully to help others and create positive change."

- STAFF DEVELOPMENT SESSION PARTICIPANT

"As a feminist, I now communicate with intention, knowing my words can uplift and support those around me, both at work and at home. By choosing my language thoughtfully, it inspires meaningful change and builds deeper connections in feminist spaces."

- LEARNING CIRCLE PARTICIPANT

We also went beyond our typical learning sessions by exploring creative formats. For example, we held two talk shows for staff focused on practice-based learning, where invited guests (staff members) answered various questions on the topic. These interactive sessions helped clarify the concept of practice-based learning, dispelled misconceptions and supported staff in applying the approach in their daily work.

Additionally, team-level sessions unpacked ongoing research findings from our collaborations, including preliminary results from the "SASA! Together for Radio" and "Good School Toolkit for Secondary Schools Pilot" studies. A critical takeaway was that unpacking research findings at the organizational level, rather than solely within individual teams, is important to foster collective understanding and strengthen our external presentations.

We also formed a time-bound thematic working group comprising members from the VAW Prevention, VAC Prevention and Learning teams to explore intersections between VAW and VAC, a key strategic goal. The thematic working group facilitated several reflective sessions building on our previous work around the intersections of VAW and VAC, as well as discussed key ongoing debates and learning in the field. The group will continue into 2025 and provide recommendations for integrated VAW-VAC programmatic innovations led by Raising Voices.

### 2. Engaging with the violence prevention field for knowledge exchange and influence.

We extended our thought leadership on learning beyond Raising Voices, championing practice-based learning and feminist learning principles within the field. Key milestones included:

- Launching the Info-sheet Unpacking Practice-Based Learning for Practitioners and Activists Preventing Violence Against Women and Children. This short and practical resource challenged common misconceptions, reinforced the value of practice-based learning and offered concrete ways to elevate it.
- Co-organizing a workshop at the SVRI Forum 2024 on practice-based learning and knowledge (PBL/K). A collaboration with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and What Works 2, "Practice-Based Learning and Knowledge for Women's and Feminist Movements to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Co-creating an Agenda" enabled practitioners, activists, researchers and donors to learn about PBL/K and its importance and value in violence prevention work, as well as share insights on how to elevate PBL/K and maximize its uptake in policy, research and practice. We are inspired by the 89 participants who signed up to take part in continuing conversations on collective actions and outcomes post-workshop.



- Partnering with the Foundation for Integrated Rural Development (FIRD) Uganda and the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP). This partnership aims to articulate the application of feminist learning principles from the perspective of feminist activist organizations based in Uganda. Our paper is currently under review, and we hope to publish in 2025!
- Offering expertise upon request. On eight separate occasions, we responded to requests to share our experience on practice-based learning, feminist principles of learning, and decolonizing knowledge in preventing violence against women and girls.

Collectively, these engagements reinforced our position as a leading voice in PBL/K and deepened our collaborative efforts across the field.



"I need to cultivate a learning culture in my organization and identify the ways in which PBL/K is already happening even if we don't name it that way currently."

- SVRI PBL/K WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

# 3. Fully operationalizing our organizational learning frameworks.

In 2024, all teams continued to use Raising Voices' innovative L&A "journals" to document key lessons and milestones as guided by their learning frameworks. We conducted two rounds of teamlevel and organizational Reflect and Act sessions to discuss emerging trends and enter action data into the journals. In 2024, for the first time, we dedicated a full day to an offsite Reflect and Act with all staff, including a gallery walk through displays of team innovations, creating more space for cross-team exchange, enabling deeper learning and helping to break down silos. These sessions were action-oriented, directly shaping our 2025 work plans and ensuring that our learning would drive future programming and strategy.

We also formed a time-bound thematic working group comprising members from the VAW Prevention, VAC Prevention and Learning teams to explore intersections between VAW and VAC, a key strategic goal.

#### **Organizational Strengthening**

#### Leadership

We continued to iterate with the right balance of collective leadership and streamlined decision-making to ensure full strength for Raising Voices going forward. After careful deliberation, in January 2024, Raising Voices returned to the co-director model, which the organization, Board of Directors and partners all felt has helped make our leadership so effective for so many years. This approach has two co-directors (with a VAC and VAW technical focus, respectively) sharing executive oversight and working closely with the operations and finance, VAC, VAW and Learning coordinators. Raising Voices continues to strengthen the co-leadership model through executive coaching and mentoring from the Board of Directors.

#### **Human resources**

We fully rolled out our integrated human resource systems, SYSMIC, which has enabled us to automate key functions such as payroll, leave management, recruitment and performance tracking. This centralized employee data management system has improved accuracy, security and accessibility for both staff and management. Raising Voices currently has 40 staff and consultants, and investments in staff welfare initiatives like Zumba and aerobics classes boosted staff bonding and morale.

#### Information technology

In 2024, Raising Voices fully rolled out the new cloud-based accounting system, Dynamics 365 Business Central. This digital transformation enhanced our capacity around risk management, maintaining and enhancing basic information technology infrastructure and utilities, and optimizing the use of our investments.





#### **Financial Overview**

In 2024, we received generous contributions from 16 donors, each playing a vital role in advancing our mission. Notably, seven key donors provided 86% of our total income, underscoring the importance of sustained, strategic partnerships in supporting our long-term goals. The remaining 14% of funding came from nine targeted grants, each designated for specific projects and initiatives. This balanced support structure reflects both deep engagement from major donors and a growing base of program-specific funders. We are deeply grateful for the trust and commitment shown by our donor community, whose collective generosity ensures the continued impact of our work.

#### **Summary of Expenditure per Thematic Area**

Practice

852,137

Total

Learning

216,260

Influencing 640,852

Operations **564,792** 

2,274,040





6

Tools and guidance notes created to strengthen SASA! programming and 1 full SASA! Together adaptation complete

7

**GST partner organizations**supported
across 2
countries

30

SASA! partner organizations supported across 22 countries

1,500

Primary and secondary schools in Uganda currently implementing the GST

10,877

Learners, teachers and parents directly engaged with the GST 94%

of our SASA!
partners
surveyed who
believe
Raising Voices
TA upholds
feminist
principles



3

Organizations
collaborated with
us to share
experiences in
applying feminist
principles of
learning

5

Research collaborations and 2 program learning initiatives completed 5

Organizational learning spaces created for staff to deepen reflections on power, positive discipline, feminism and practice-based learning 8

presentations
delivered to elevate
practice-based
learning and share
our research
(engaging nearly
2000 total
participants)

**12** 

"Reflect and Act" spaces facilitated foster knowledge exchange and identify practical actions

**26**L&A

**L&A trainings**held to
support
SASA! and
GST partners



2

Memorandums

of understanding
signed with
Ugandan
government
ministries to
support VAC
prevention

**25** 

Members
engaged in
national-level
coalitions on
positive
discipline and
sexual violence
against
children

27

Ugandan journalists trained and supported to strengthen VAC-related coverage 203

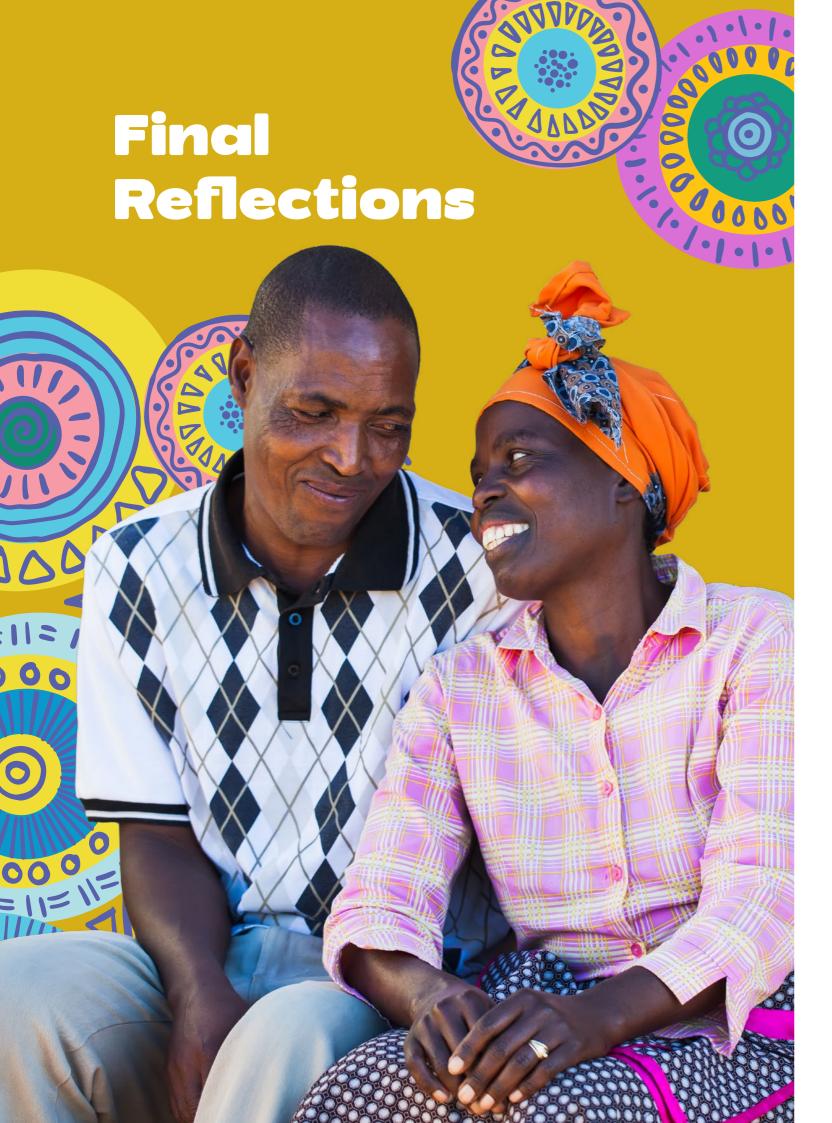
Participants
engaged in
the Coalition
for Good
Schools
Sub-Saharan
Africa Hub
activities

150

"16 Days of
Activism to
Prevent VAW"
kits distributed
to GBV
Prevention
Network
members

1,290

New members welcomed to our networks: 1,200 for the GBV Prevention Network and 90 for the Coalition for Good Schools



2024 stands out as a time of reaching new heights, woven with intricate complexities and soaring moments of triumph. It was a year that demanded presence and resilience, and one that fostered growth at every level. We began the year by returning to a co-directorship model of leadership, welcoming Prossy Jonker Nakanjako and Natsnet Ghebrebrhan into these positions. We extend deep gratitude to Devin Faris and Titus Mucheru, who transitioned after holding the line of leadership with strength and care in the previous year.

As a feminist organization, we are especially excited about the new leadership team, as it offers a powerful opportunity to make visible the leadership of women from the Global South. Mid-year, we conducted a temperature check, inviting all staff members to share feedback on their experiences with the new leadership. This feedback has been instrumental in helping the co-directors identify priorities and develop action plans that now guide their leadership journey.

The year also brought unexpected challenges that tested our resilience. The sudden passing of our colleague Aggrey Akim during a time of many transitions deeply affected us. We grieved his loss and continue to cherish the beautiful memories he left behind. His love for life and unwavering commitment to violence prevention remain in our hearts.

Our aspiration to play a catalytic role in the ecosystem of violence prevention builds on our identity as an innovative and learning organization. The launches of *Together with Gloria!* and GST Agile in 2024 attest to this, with both contributing to our journey of scaling violence prevention. Our exploration of feminist scaling of *SASA! Together* in the Central Sahel region was also critical, as evidence-based VAW prevention is still emerging in the region. All these efforts are emboldening us with new possibilities. Our collective initiatives to build a healthy ecosystem have elevated our potential to be truly catalytic.

In 2024, we established two new funding relationships. We received a substantial gift from MacKenzie Scott through Yield Giving to drive our mission, and the Irene M. Staehelin Foundation supported us in preparing the ground for feminist scale-up in the Central Sahel region. These partnerships, layered with support from our long-term funders, signal the deep trust placed in Raising Voices and our work. We feel both the responsibility and the courage to continue discovering new edges in our mission.





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# **Our Funders**

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**Coalition for Good Schools** 

**Echidna Giving** 

Ford Foundation

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)/IRC

Imago Dei Fund

Irene M. Staehelin Foundation

**Irish Aid** 

**New Venture Fund** 

**NoVo Foundation** 

**Oak Foundation** 

**Sigrid Rausing Trust** 

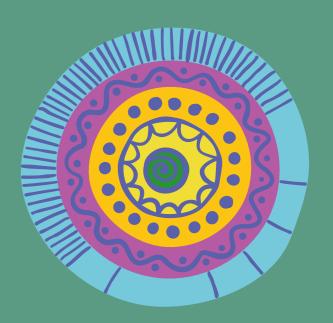
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**Yield Giving** 

Anonymous





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