

*10* Raising Voices

# Annual Report 2025



*Raising Voices*

**25**

*Years*

of preventing  
violence against  
women and children



# Acronyms

ACT	Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action
ADEP	Association D'appui et d'Eveil Pugsada
AGO	Amani Girls Organization
APSEF	Association pour la Promotion des Droits et le Bien-être de la Famille
AVSI	Association of Volunteers for the International Service
CERFODES	Center for Research, Studies, and Training for Social and Economic Development
CDF	Children's Dignity Forum
CHEVS	Centre for Health Education and Vulnerable Support
CUSP	Community for Understanding Scaling Processes
DEO	District Education Officers
FAWE-U	Forum for African Women Educationalists-Uganda Chapter
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office
FEDE	Femmes et Développement
HaRT	Healing and Resilience after Trauma
IPBF	Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISPCAN	International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)
L&A	Learning and Assessment
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NAVIGENDI	Navigating the challenges of violence, gender and disability
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
PBL	Practice Based Learning
R&A	Reflect & Act
R&R	Rethink & Re-energize
RRPs	Regional Resource Persons
RWN	Rwanda Women's Network
SVRI	Sexual Violence Research Initiative
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAR	Women Against Rape
WiLDAF	Women in Law and Development Africa
WRO	Women's Rights Organization
What Works 2	What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association

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# Executive Summary



In 2025, Raising Voices marked 25 years of feminist leadership, activism and innovation in preventing violence against women and children in Uganda and globally. At the same time, we reached the midpoint of our 2023-2027 **Strategy**. Together, these two milestones offered a critical moment for us to pause and reflect on both the depth of our journey and the possibilities ahead. A midterm review of our Strategy revealed strong progress, with 69% of planned milestones achieved and the remaining 31% firmly on track. Across all areas of our work, we strengthened the quality and reach of our programming, deepened practice-based learning, and influenced policy, practice and feminist discourse at national, regional and global levels. Amid an increasingly complex global landscape, we remained rooted in our values, energized by collective action and committed to building a world where women and children can live free from violence.



# Violence Against Women Prevention



## Practice

We expanded our global reach by supporting 43 *SASA! Together* partners across 30 countries including new partnerships in Francophone region such as Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso, and in Hispanic regions such as Mexico, Honduras. We stand in solidarity with partners who had to close their *SASA! Together* programs due to funding cuts.

## Learning

We strengthened practice based learning (PBL) by revising *SASA! Together* Learning & Assessment tools, including databases and guides, expanding multilingual access through French translations and facilitated 18 trainings and webinars on *SASA!* programming.

## Influencing

We strengthened feminist movement building by engaging 164 women activists across five countries (Uganda, Botswana, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia) through nine Rethink & Re-energize processes. We supported the regional 16 Days of Activism campaign by distributing 250 Advocacy and Action kits, and co-convened 10 virtual self and collective care series. In addition, we engaged over 260 activists through webinars that created space for reflection on *accountability to women and girls* and *where the money is now*.



# Violence Against Children Prevention



## Practice

We advanced the national scale-up of the Good School Toolkit through the rollout of an agile adaptation, cumulatively reaching 2,500 schools and engaging 7,500 teachers and 1,282,506 learners across Uganda. This expansion was strengthened through formal partnerships with 34 districts to support implementation and community activism, alongside strategic collaboration with the National Curriculum Development Centre to integrate Good School Toolkit ideas within the national curriculum.

## Learning

The GST Agile pilot study in five schools in Mukono District found positive shifts across all schools in overall school culture. All five schools moved away from corporal punishment toward more positive discipline approaches, demonstrated stronger student participation in activities such as debates, assemblies, and leadership, and showed improved peer-to-peer relationships, shifting from unfriendly to friendly environments.

## Influencing

We amplified our work through 12 global platforms and 8 Africa Hub events under the Coalition for Good Schools. In Uganda, we contributed to key policy processes on Gender in education and the Alternatives to corporal punishment Agenda. We also strengthened the wider opinion ecosystem by engaging 163 opinion leaders (religious, cultural, and media personalities). Our 2025 VAC Multimedia campaign reached all regions through 15 radio stations, airing 4,260 Public Service Announcements (PSAs), 112 recorded stories, 121 live talk shows, 15 media features stories and Op-eds. .





# Organizational Infrastructure

## Learning

We deepened organizational learning, collaboration and data-informed decision-making through 14 structured reflection spaces, cross team collaboration and produced 10 learning resources, including learning papers, user guides, Knowledge Builder series and posters.

## Governance

We updated key policies on travel, and data protection to strengthen feminist-aligned governance and operational integrity. Improved Microsoft cybersecurity score from 81% in 2024 to 96% in 2025 helping to ensure secure digital infrastructure.

## Communications

Our communication reached over 42,000 website users and actively engaged with 29,802 followers across all our digital platforms.



# The Year in Numbers

## PRACTICE

### VAC

Cumulatively, **2500** schools are implementing the Good School Toolkit in Uganda

**04** Partner organizations in Uganda and Tanzania were supported to implement the Good School Toolkit

Cumulatively, **7,500** teachers and headteachers; **1,282,506** learners have engaged with the Good School Toolkit ideas.

### VAW

**43** SASA! Together partner organizations supported across 30 countries

**03** SASA! Community of Practice in Ethiopia, Malawi & Uganda

**04** What Works 2 partners South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda, and Tanzania supported to innovate and scale VAW prevention

**05** Partners in Mali and Burkina Faso formed and started the Francophone SASA! Together cohort.

## LEARNING

### VAC

**02** On-going research collaborations (RRP study, NAVIGENDI)

**02** Program studies - GST Agile pilot, L&A tools usability

**03** Publications- Mental health Guide- corporal punishment perspectives, violence victimization

### VAW

**04** Publications - Feminist principles, working with Governments, SASA! Refugee adaptation, TWG reach

**18** SASA! Trainings & webinars

**05** L&A SASA! databases enhanced and translated to French

## INFLUENCING

### VAC

**34** MoUs signed with District Local Governments to support VAC prevention initiatives

**15** Media feature stories and Op-eds published

**4,260** PSAs broadcast

### VAW

**75** VAW prevention actors engaged in the What Works 2 Webinar, "Putting Accountability First into Practice"

**250** Advocacy and Action kits distributed to members for 16 Days of Activism

**164** Network members engaged in Rethink and Reenergize processes

# Preventing Violence Against Women



## Preventing Violence Against Women



Our VAW prevention work is grounded in feminist principles that center power, accountability and collective action. In 2025, we expanded our reach and strengthened our role as a bridge builder linking practice, influencing, and learning. We supported safe, ethical, and impactful community programming while nurturing collectives through the GBV Prevention Network, the What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (What Works 2) consortium and Community for Understanding Scaling Processes (CUSP). We advanced thought leadership on ethical VAW prevention, scale, feminist movement-building and pathways to sustainable and social transformation.



## VAW Prevention Practice

### 1. Establishing and sustaining partnerships for VAW prevention

#### SASA! Technical Assistance

**Partnerships.** We provided high-quality, tailored technical assistance to 43 partners across 30 countries through eight phase training courses (seven in-person, one online) and 10 thematic webinars. This support enhanced program quality and strengthened partner ownership.

We started the *SASA! Together Feminist Cohort* in the Central Sahel region; (Burkina Faso and Mali)

in partnership with Femmes et Développement (**FEDE**), Association pour la Promotion des Droits et le Bien-être de la Famille (**APSEF**), Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme (**IPBF**), Association D'appui et d'Eveil Pugsada (**ADEP**) and Center for Research, Studies, and Training for Social and Economic Developmen (**CERFODES**), with support from Irene M. Staehelin (IMS) Foundation. The cohort aims at translating the vision of feminist scale tthrough *SASA! Together* and strengthening PBL. These achievements also demonstrate the growing uptake of *SASA! Together* across diverse regions and reflect our strengthened multilingual technical assistance capacity.

Two partners, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in DRC and Nabilan in Timor Leste successfully completed the full *SASA! Together* implementation cycle while 17 new technical assistance providers from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), International Rescue Committee (IRC) and NCA were certified, strengthening long term access to quality implementation support within their institutions.

Despite the achievements, global cuts led to abrupt closure of several *SASA! Together* partner programs (including *LVCT Health in Kenya*; *CREAW and Project Hope in Namibia*; *Shanduko in Zimbabwe*; *GUK in Bangladesh*; *IRC in CAR and South Sudan*; *UNHCR in Ethiopia and South Sudan*; United Nations Population Fund (*UNFPA*) in *Bangladesh*). These disruptions reduced our partnership base, paused an Arabic adaptation and slowed momentum in some regions.

This technical assistance has not only improved our implementation quality but also strengthened our internal confidence and ownership of the process.” -

**Partner staff**

**Technical Assistance to other models:** We celebrated our expanded technical assistance support beyond *SASA!* partners, supporting non-*SASA!* VAW prevention initiatives across multiple countries, strengthened innovation and scaling effectiveness through co-design, implementation, and shared learning towards building the field.

Under What Works 2, we provided technical assistance to the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), whose innovation was to integrate *SASA! Together*, into climate restoration programming, building community resilience, and generating learning on the links between VAW prevention and climate restoration.

In addition, three programs led by four Women Rights Organisation (WROs): Soul City in South Africa, Vision Springs Initiative (VSI) and Centre for Health Education and Vulnerable Support (CHEVS) in Nigeria, and Kivulini in Tanzania received tailored technical assistance to design and implement various programs on VAW prevention. Through this support partners demonstrated a stronger grasp of VAW analysis, incorporated feminist and evidence-based frameworks. and transformative programming principles in the models they are innovating and scaling.

Years of experience supporting *SASA!* across diverse contexts have created a strong foundation for strengthening other VAW prevention models by infusing them with feminist, community-centered principles. This reflects the compounding value of sustained, rigorous technical assistance: it not only strengthens what exists but also elevates the quality and potential of what comes next.

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

**Program Tools and Resources.** Our technical assistance engagements informed the development of practical tools and resources for *SASA! Together* programing including:

- Multilingual Capacity Grid Animation (**English, Spanish, and French**) and Budgeting template (English and French) to support program design
- Integrated French training content across all four *SASA! Together* booklets
- Tailored materials for Muslim religious leaders.
- **Bangladesh Creating Change Series** to support *SASA! Together* in humanitarian context

These resources strengthened program quality and accessibility across diverse contexts.

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

**Communities of Practice:** *SASA!* Communities of Practice (CoP) gained momentum through 12 in-person and virtual meetings bringing together 48 activist organizations (Malawi–18, Ethiopia–12, Uganda–18). These engagements enabled experience sharing, strengthened partnerships, and advanced collective action for VAW prevention. Building on this progress, we shall continue to explore opportunities to expand CoPs at both country and global levels.



## VAW Prevention Learning

Learning is central to our work driven by ongoing reflection, experimentation, and collective analysis to strengthen our practice and influence the ecosystem.

### 1. Greater prioritization of integrating learning in programming and strengthening accountability to communities.

**Quality of Technical Assistance and Accountability:** Findings from the Partner's Quality Survey indicate a high level of partners' confidence in the depth, relevance, and feminist grounding of our technical assistance.

Figure 1 shows that over 80% of partners identified sustained and responsive support as critical to effective adaptive programming and problem-solving. Key elements highlighted include continuous open communication, flexibility and tailored support, as well as systematic engagement through regular check-ins, practical skill sessions, and onsite support, all of which strengthened partners' ability to own interventions and respond to evolving needs.

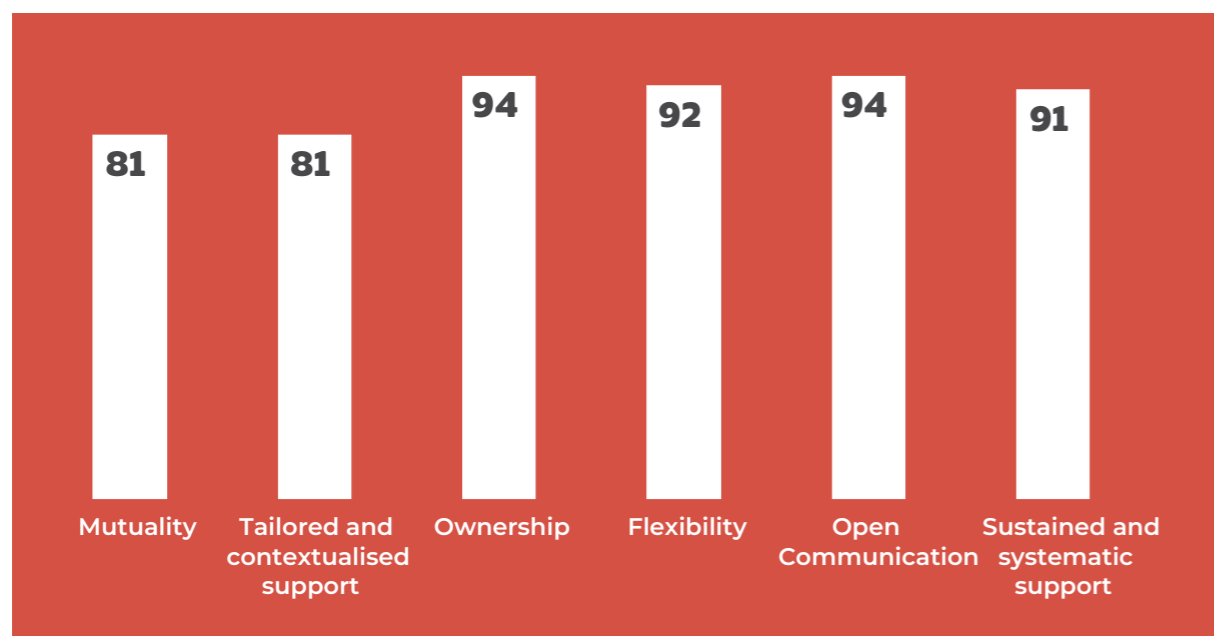


Figure 1: Partner feedback on how Raising Voices embeds technical assistance Principles in ongoing support (2025)

‘The support was deeply rooted in our local context, helping us adapt materials to reflect cultural and linguistic nuances, ensuring relevance and community resonance.’ -

**Partner staff**

**Learning & Assessment Tools and Guide:** The Community Assessment Survey (CAS) tool, associated databases and Learning & Assessment (L&A) guide were revised and translated into French. Enhancements including integration of Kobo import-functionality across all five databases, improved data quality, reduced social desirability bias and strengthened partners' ability to track progress and adapt programming in context. These upgrades increased partner motivation and capacity for consistent learning and documentation, while ensuring that organizations can more effectively adapt, use and integrate databases within their *SASA! Together* programming.

### 2. Driving Deeper Insight into VAW Prevention Through Strategic Learning Investments

**Practice-Based Learning:** We furthered commitment to learning and evidence generation by strategically investing in processes that deepen understanding of VAW prevention. A key milestone was the co-authoring the paper *Working with Governments* highlighting the nuances of engaging with governments in scaling VAW prevention.

We reflected on our movement-building experience through PBL, examining both online and in-person engagement. This learning showed that the Rethink & Reenergize (R&R) processes strengthened feminist identity, collective agency, and movement building overall.

- **100%** of returning participants identified as feminists (compared to 75% of new participants with no prior R&R experience)
- **70%** identified unequal gender power relations as the root cause of VAW
- **98%** reported stronger commitment to collective action
- **97%** recognized the importance of self and collective care to sustaining activism

These findings underscore the transformative value of sustained feminist movement-building processes in deepening shared feminist analysis, solidarity, feminist leadership, and collective resilience across the region.

## VAW Prevention Influencing

We continued to shape VAW prevention efforts by engaging at national, regional, and global levels, strengthening shared analysis and collective activism, strategic collaboration while advancing a responsive and sustainable ecosystem for feminist thought, practice, and financing in VAW prevention.

### National level

**Accountability to Women:** We co-convened two Accountability to Women Group dialogues with the Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET) and CEDOVIP, engaging 15 feminist leaders to reflect on the funding constraints, shrinking civic spaces and research findings related to the Uganda Men Parliamentary Association (UMEPA) These processes strengthened coordination and collective advocacy.

**Healing Justice:** The 2025 Feminist Healing Festival, that we co-hosted with Akina Mama wa Afrika, brought together over 200 feminists to reflect and advance healing justice under the theme *Circles of Healing: Communities of Love and Power*. Through care practices, dialogue, and skills-building sessions, the festival strengthened collaboration among feminist leaders and activists and advanced a shared commitment to healing justice across the movement.

### Regional level

**Collective Care in Moment of Crisis:** In response to the growing funding crisis and burnout, we co-hosted collective care initiatives to reflect on the moment, assess its impacts, and share strategies for strengthening individual and organizational resilience.

- a **six-part collective care series** in collaboration with Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) and other partners, reached over 200 activists from multiple regions
- a four-part series in partnership with Healing and Resilience after Trauma (HaRT), engaged 318 participants across more than 10 countries

In addition, in collaboration with Urgent Action Fund (UAF) Africa and other WROs held a session titled *‘The Constant Storm and Regeneration Addressing Violence in a Conflict Setting’* during the 3rd Feminists Republik Festival. The session was attended by over 90 feminists to reflect on the need and ways to infuse care during emergency and post emergency response.

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“When you are kinder to yourself, you will have more energy and patience for other people too. True inner kindness means meeting yourself with compassion, not just when you succeed, but especially when you struggle”

### Virtual care session participant

**Shared Feminist Analysis and Solidarity:** With support from the UN Trust Fund, and in collaboration with Network member organizations—*Women Against Rape (WAR)* in Botswana, *Rwanda Women’s Network (RWN)* in Rwanda, *Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)* in Zambia, and *Women in Law and Development Africa (WiLDAF)* in Tanzania—we co-hosted two rounds of R&R convenings across five countries, including Uganda. These convenings engaged 164 women and strengthened feminist analysis, solidarity, and movement cohesion amid shrinking civic space.

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‘In the past year, I participated in a peaceful protest held on 4th April 2025 in Lusaka to raise awareness and demand action against rape, defilement, and all other forms of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)’

### Partner from Zambia

**VAW Prevention Campaigns:** The regional 16 Days of Activism Campaign was carried out under the theme ***Re-imagining feminist futures: Rising in Solidarity and Thriving out of Crisis***. The campaign aimed at preserving feminist gains, infusing hope and highlighting transformative opportunities in moments of crisis. To support the campaign, the Network developed and distributed 250 Advocacy and Action kits across the Horn, East and Southern Africa region, with soft copy of the Kit available to all Network members in **English, French** and **Kiswahili**.

Four social media campaigns that focused on amplifying feminist voices across digital spaces were conducted across Facebook, Bluesky, and Instagram, generating a total of 176,696 engagements and 6,135 new followers. The Network made a deliberate decision to deactivate X (formerly Twitter) due to the growing concern on the safety of the space, including misogynistic content directed towards activists. This shift reflects a commitment to a safer, value-aligned digital space grounded in care, dignity, and inclusive participation.



## Global Level

**Thought Leadership:** We are contributing to shaping the global thinking and direction of the field through our presence in consortiums, advisory committees, and key document reviews. *What Works 2* convened a webinar titled “*Accountability in Practice*”, which engaged over 200 participants. The session created space to critically explore how feminist accountability can be practiced in the wake of funding cuts and shrinking resources. By centering collective responsibility and transparency, the webinar strengthened shared strategies for sustaining feminist movements and emphasized the importance of accountability as a cornerstone of VAW prevention.

The CUSP organized a webinar titled “*Where is the Money?*”, featuring panelists with deep insights into the funding landscape. The discussion highlighted shifts in funding, emerging trends, and new opportunities. It was attended by over 220 activists, who expressed appreciation for the valuable insights shared and recommended holding similar discussions regularly.

**Call for Feminist Resource:** On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we collaborated with Ford Foundation to co-author an **op-ed** highlighting the urgent need to sustain funding for VAW prevention and WRO. The op-ed underscored the need to invest in long-term social norm change and providing flexible, sustained resources to organizations at the forefront of prevention work.



# Preventing Violence Against Children



## Preventing Violence Against Children

Preventing violence against children (VAC) is a core pillar of Raising Voices' work. In 2025, we marked a major milestone with the completion of the Good School Toolkit (GST) Agile pilot and began advancing its national scale-up across Uganda. Developed through years of implementation learning, research, and engagement with teachers, learners, and government partners, GST Agile is a lighter and more scalable adaptation of the Good School Toolkit. It preserves the core principles of the whole-school approach to violence prevention while streamlining activities, reducing implementation time, and strengthening feasibility for wider uptake. The pilot demonstrated strong feasibility, teacher ownership and alignment with national education priorities, positioning GST Agile as a promising approach for expanding violence prevention efforts in schools at scale.



## VAC Prevention

### 1. Advancing GST for Greater Reach and Effectiveness

The Good School Toolkit supports schools internalize violence prevention as a shared value, where power is used to nurture safety and dignity, strengthen relationships, and grow learner agency. By December 2025, the total number of schools implementing the Good School Toolkit reached **2,500** (2,000 primary, 500 secondary), midpoint of our strategic target to reach **5,000** schools by 2027. In the first cohort, (2023), we supported **1100** schools (1,000 primary using GST Primary and 100 using GST - Secondary); we supported **400** secondary schools in the second cohort (2024); and in 2025, we enrolled the third cohort of **1000** primary and secondary schools using GST Agile. Since 2023, we have reached over **7,500** teachers and headteachers and over **1,282,506** learners (664,754 female and 617,752 male) who have interfaced with Good School ideas - shaping relationships founded on respect, empathy and fairness, rather than fear and authority.

**Capacity strengthened for the rollout of GST Agile:** We have continued to build the capacity of Regional Resource Persons (RRPs) - 40 dedicated local activists – who are central to the scale, quality, and sustainability of the Good School Toolkit. In 2025, each RRP provided oversight to 25 schools, accompanying them through coaching, mentorship, and contextualized guidance, helping teacher protagonists, student committees, and school leaders transform GST concepts into everyday practices. Raising Voices invested intentionally in the capacity of RRP through regular trainings, reflective learning spaces, on-site support supervision, and mentorship in gender-responsive facilitation, positive discipline, and nonviolent activism. A total of 41 structured in-person and virtual sessions were provided in 2025.

With the introduction of GST Agile, RRP evolved from facilitators to strategic enablers of teacher-led implementation, focusing on building local ownership, strengthening relationships with District Education Officers (DEOs), who integrated some GST Agile indicators into their monitoring tools to track progress.

**Collaboration formalized with government of Uganda for VAC prevention:** Raising Voices formalized partnership with 34 districts through Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), strengthening pathways for transition from organization-led implementation to district-led systems. At the National level, we formalized our partnership with the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), the government body mandated to develop, evaluate, and certify curricula in Uganda. This collaboration will support the integration of GST Agile VAC prevention practices into the national curriculum.

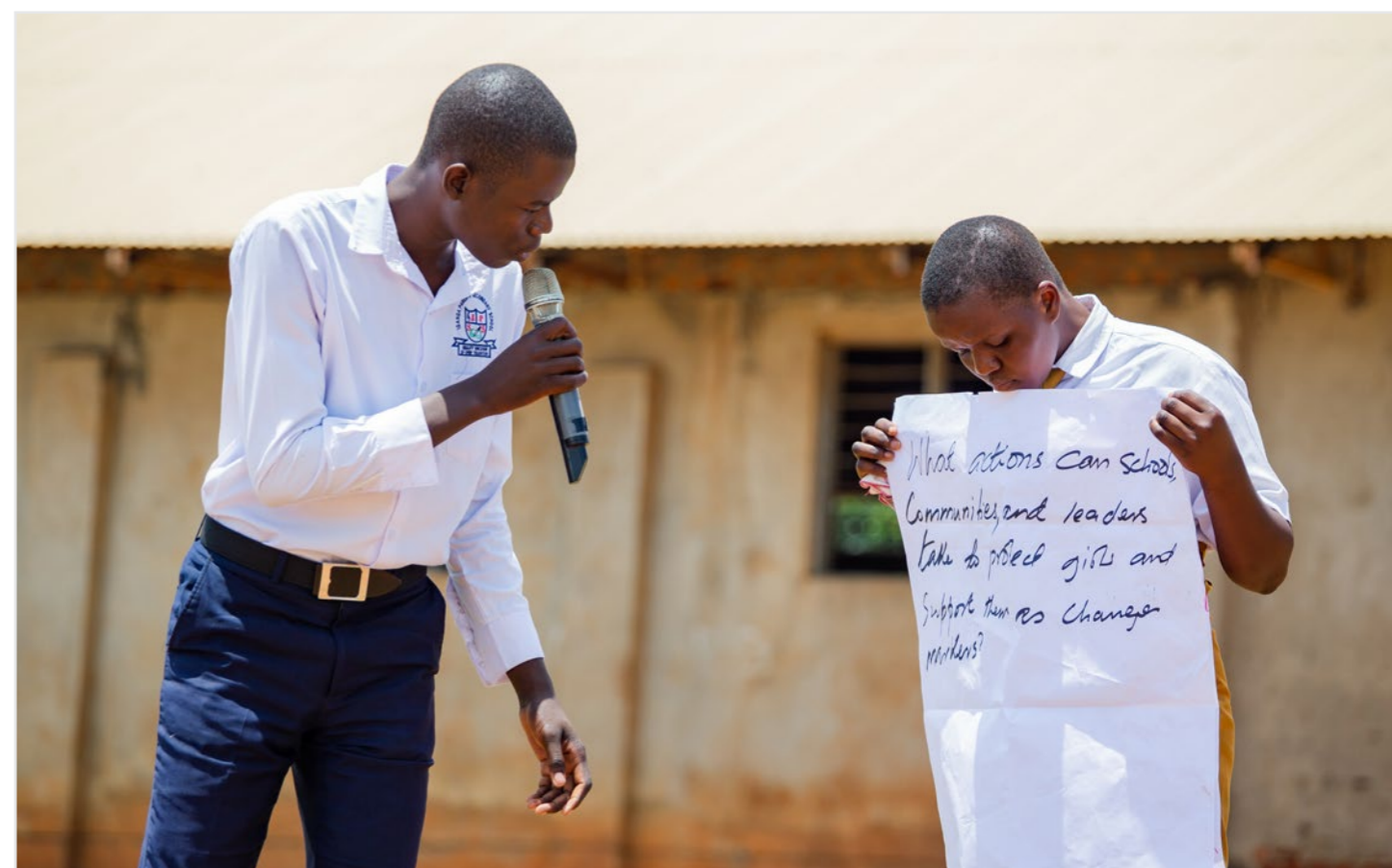
**Linkages strengthened with schools, districts and communities:** Raising Voices conducted capacity strengthening sessions for 115 local leaders including Community Development Officers (CDO), Probation Officers and Community Education Officers across 31 districts. These sessions equipped participants to lead VAC prevention efforts within their communities, strengthening community ownership, and helping anchor violence prevention within local systems.

### 2. Growing Partnerships and Building a Digital Infrastructure to Grow Practitioner and Activist Leadership Beyond Raising Voices

**Curriculum integration process initiated:** Raising Voices participated in the NCDC-Led review of the primary and secondary curricula, creating inroads towards the integration of GST Agile into the national curriculum across 12 thematic areas such as *Our Home, Our Community, Living Together, Accidents and Safety*. This process will strengthen alignment between GST Agile elements and national learning outcomes, enabling smoother integration.

**Improved access to GST resources:** The Violence Prevention Learning Centre (VPLC) has continued to grow. The VPLC is a Moodle-based platform designed to provide structured and reflective learning pathways for practitioners, teacher protagonists, Regional Resource Persons (RRPs), and technical assistance partners. In 2025, the VPLC featured two foundational courses: **What is a Good School?** and **Understanding Violence Against Children**. Across eight modules, participants critically engaged with concepts of safety, dignity, relationships, power and violence within school settings, reflecting on how everyday interactions shape school culture and children's experiences. The modules also supported peer learning circles, online dialogues, and remote accompaniment facilitated by RRP and technical assistance providers.

**Finalized the Mental Health Discussion Guide.** The **Guide**, was developed jointly with MoES from findings of a 2022 qualitative **study** on Adolescent Mental Health and COVID-19 in Uganda, undertaken in collaboration with University of Alabama. It helps schools to identify and address everyday mental health needs of students and teachers by providing basic skills for identifying and responding to common mental health challenges, alongside practical ideas for promoting positive wellbeing in schools.



## VAC Prevention Learning

### 1. Shaping VAC Prevention Through Practice-Based Learning

We prioritized intentional, routine PBL grounded in day-to-day implementation with schools and partners. Structured reflection and documentation enabled us to capture real-time insights and translate them into program refinement and decisions about scale. Internally, Reflect and Act (R&A) sessions remained a core learning mechanism, providing structured spaces for teams to examine implementation experience, identify challenges, and make timely adjustments. Together with cross-team reviews and partner exchanges, these processes ensured that practitioner insights systematically informed program quality and adaptation.

Through training and technical assistance, we supported Amani Girls Organization (AGO) and Children's Dignity Forum (CDF) in Tanzania to adopt our PBL practice, including the integration of R&A sessions within their own implementation structures. By sharing both tools and practice, Raising Voices contributed to a wider shift in VAC prevention toward adaptive, practitioner-driven learning.

This learning approach strengthened accountability and responsiveness. For example, during GST pilot implementation in Mukono District, learning outputs were shared with schools and district leaders, creating feedback loops that informed adjustments and shared ownership of VAC prevention efforts.



Through training and technical assistance, we supported partners - Amani Girls and Children's Dignity Forum in Tanzania to adopt our practice-based learning approaches, including the integration of Reflect and Act sessions within their own implementation structures.

### 2. Driving Deeper Insight into VAC Prevention Through Strategic Learning Investments

Raising Voices developed the Knowledge Builder series to provide short, accessible summaries of research, learning, and how these insights were applied in practice. The first brief, *Piloting the Good School Toolkit's Mental Health Guide* captured key findings from a Mental Health Guide pilot in four Ugandan schools. In collaboration with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Raising Voices co-authored two learning paper on VAC prevention; *Changing perspectives on corporal punishment in schools: Insights from Ugandan young people.* and *the association between violence victimization and subsequent unplanned pregnancy among adolescent girls in Uganda: Do primary schools make a difference?*

### 3. Expanding Access to Learning Tools for Responsive and Impactful Programming

**Deepened learning on the use of GST L&A tools:** Raising Voices engaged 40 RRP and five teacher protagonists to better understand their experiences using the L&A tools through focus group discussions and interviews. These engagements identified which tools are most used, challenges in monitoring implementation, and opportunities to better capture learner's voices. These findings provided valuable directions for improving tool usability, will directly inform the revision of the GST Agile L&A tools and the finalization of the GST L&A guide in 2026, supporting a more structured, systematic, and context responsive approach to learning in Uganda and across global GST Agile partners.

**Good School Program Mobile Application upgraded:** The Good Schools Program mobile application provides secure access for RRP and staff to interactive learning content, discussion guides and monitoring tools that support real-time data collection, GPS tracking, and dashboard reporting. All the GST Toolkit resources are also accessible globally through an open-access guest portal. Following the completion of GST Agile adaptation in 2025, Mobile application upgrades were initiated to strengthen capacity-building features, address challenges experienced by previous app users, better capture learners' voices, and profile schools implementing GST Agile. These enhancements will be finalized in 2026.



## VAC Prevention Influencing

Raising Voices continued to strengthen an opinion infrastructure for VAC prevention to build broader support across the stakeholders who shape the school environment. This work focused on two priorities: expanding our long-term communications efforts through an annual multi-media campaign, and leading or participating in national, regional and global communities of practice and coalitions.

### 1. Elevating Global South Leadership in VAC Prevention globally

**Coordinated the Africa Hub coalition for Good Schools:** Raising Voices continued coordinating the **Africa Hub for Good Schools** in 2025. We held two Community of Practice engagements that drew increased participation from the Global South practitioners including *LVCT Health* in Kenya, *Future Leaders Initiative* in Sierra Leone and *Education Out Loud* in Uganda. Both participation and depth of engagement continued to grow with an average of 50 participants per session.

**Advanced Regional and Global Influence on VAC Prevention:** we strengthened our regional and global leadership on VAC prevention through participation in 12 high-level platforms, independently and through the Coalition for Good Schools. These spaces brought together adolescents, civil society, government officials, UN agencies, and the African Union, creating important opportunities to shape policy, share learning, and elevate feminist perspectives in VAC prevention.

We made significant contributions at major convenings, including the *International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (ISPCAN) 2025 in Lithuania*; the *inaugural Rise Up policy forum*, the *10th International Policy Conference on the African Child and the Arise Africa*; *Bogotá +1 Summit both in Addis Ababa*; *Post Ministerial Conference on Preventing VAC in Abuja, Nigeria and Africa Children's Summit in South Africa*: Our contributions focused on building an opinion infrastructure for VAC prevention, the GST Agile development journey, and strategies to influence education systems to advance VAC prevention and learner agency. Raising Voices and the Coalition also coordinated panels discussions with UNICEF, Safe to Learn, Together for Girls, and the Government of Jordan, University of Cape Town, Forum for African Women Educationalists - Uganda Chapter (FAWE-U) and others to further amplify collective influence.

**Accelerator for Shifting Gender Norms through Education,** Raising Voices is a member of a 12-organisation cohort in a four-year initiative advancing evidence-based approaches to transform harmful gender norms through education systems. Through virtual and in person convenings, we contributed to strategy, proposal development and led the stakeholder mapping workstream. This engagement strengthened collective leadership for VAC prevention and increased the visibility and influence of Global South voices in shaping global agendas.

## 2. Integrating principles of safe, effective and ethical VAC prevention across all levels

**Contributed to the integration of national-level frameworks and guidelines in Uganda:** Raising Voices provided technical input in the review, revisions and development of national frameworks

- *Gender in Education and VAC strategy*
- *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment guidelines*
- *Compendium of Violence Against Children in Schools*
- *The National Framework for Health and Wellbeing* (formerly the Comprehensive Sexuality Framework)
- *School Management Committee guidelines*

Several approaches in the *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* guideline drew directly from GST. These contributions were made through participating in over five government-led processes that strengthened the visibility and uptake of Raising Voices methodologies, advancing national policy commitments to prevent VAC.

### 3. Empowering key voices in Uganda to speak out against VAC

Raising Voices continued to strengthen its opinion infrastructure for VAC prevention, by strategically engaging influential leaders across civil society, faith, cultural, and media institutions. We held dialogues with a total of 163 opinion leaders (25 religious, 99 cultural, and 39 media), and our 2025 VAC Multimedia campaign reached all regions through 15 radio stations.



These engagements deepened understanding of VAC and Strengthened capacity to champion prevention within their spheres of influence. They also yielded meaningful strategic partnerships, including an emerging Memorandum of Understanding with the Busoga Kingdom that will formalize ongoing collaboration, expand access to kingdom-owned media, and enhance Eastern region advocacy. Our media partners sustained visibility of VAC prevention across various media platforms.



“The issue is rooted in our culture. We have come to accept violence as normal because traditions passed down through generations. While some of our forefathers’ disciplinary methods were misguided, we now have the chance—and the responsibility—to break that cycle.”

**Education focal person, Namirembe Diocese, Kampala**

Religious leaders demonstrated strong commitment to advancing nonviolent approaches within their schools and leveraging existing institutional structures to support prevention efforts.

“Using nonviolent methods to discipline learners has greatly benefited us in Masaka. One school has seen its enrolment rise from 400 to 1,200 in just one year. Our next plan is to begin involving parents,”

**Masaka Catholic Education Secretariat.**

Collectively, these partnerships are embedding violence prevention within influential systems while fostering solidarity and coordinated action across faith-based, cultural and media stakeholders.



# Organizational Learning & Communications

## Learning

Organizational learning is central to Raising Voices' strength and sustainability. We cultivate a learning culture grounded in reflection, experimentation, and adaptation across our work. In 2025, we advanced practice-based learning with staff and partners through inquiry, knowledge exchange, and collective reflection that strengthened programming, innovation, and accountability to communities.

### 1. Deepened Feminist Practice across the Organization for Collective Discovery and Action

Skills strengthening and PBL remained central to our organizational growth in 2025. We supported staff to develop individual learning plans and actively engage in diverse learning opportunities to strengthen technical competences while deepening personal and professional activism. Through structured spaces for reflection and synthesis, including thematic working groups and monthly learning spaces, we fostered a vibrant culture of inquiry and care. We also expanded our PBL by developing and sharing written and creative resources that documented insights, challenged assumptions, and strengthened our feminist-informed programming across the organization. These resources (**Raising Voices resources**) are widely shared both internally and externally to contribute to learning. Key publications include

- **Creating Change Series** on adapting *SASA! Together* for refugee settings (Rohingya Community case study in Cox's Bazar Bangladesh),
- **Knowledge Builder series** on piloting the Good School Toolkit's mental health guide,

These resources provided clarity on core elements of our work and strengthened shared analysis across the organization and stakeholders.

### 2. Strengthened Organizational Learning Through Cross-Team Knowledge Sharing

We deepened our commitment to cross-team collaboration spaces for reflection, dialogue, and sharing understanding. Monthly learning sessions and thematic working groups strengthened collaboration, encouraged experimentation, and consolidated our feminist-informed approach to organizational learning. As shown in *Figure 2*, a total of fourteen structured learning spaces were convened during the year, these included four all staff unpacking research sessions, two team specific technical research unpacking sessions, five staff development sessions, and three learning circles sessions. All sessions were designed to facilitate meaningful engagement with emerging evidence and practice-based insights. These spaces provided opportunities to unpack findings from formal studies, reflect collectively, and integrate learning into programming. Based on session feedback, majority of staff found these spaces meaningful to nurture compassion, strengthened motivation and supported continued activism and feminist leadership.

2025 Organizational Learning Spaces

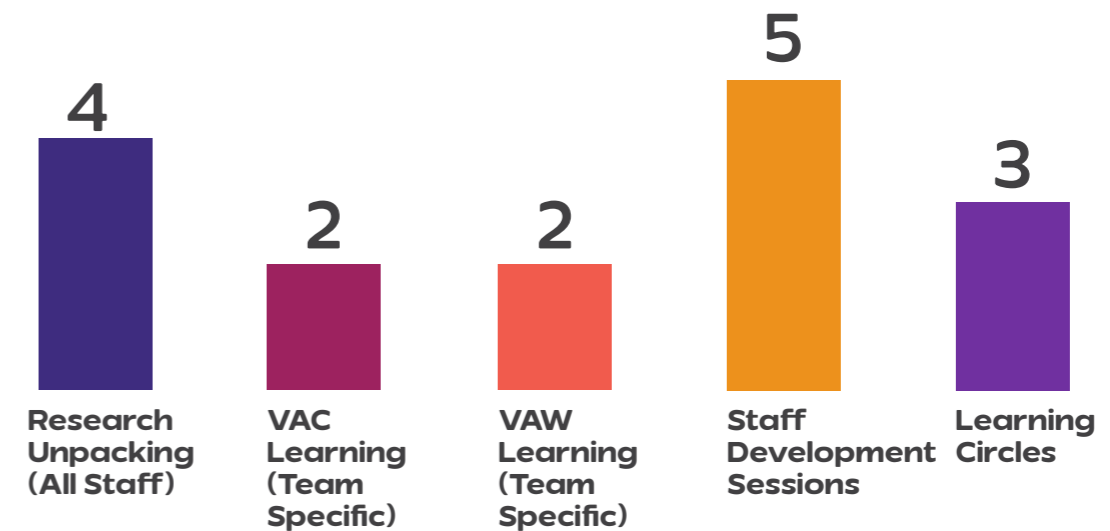
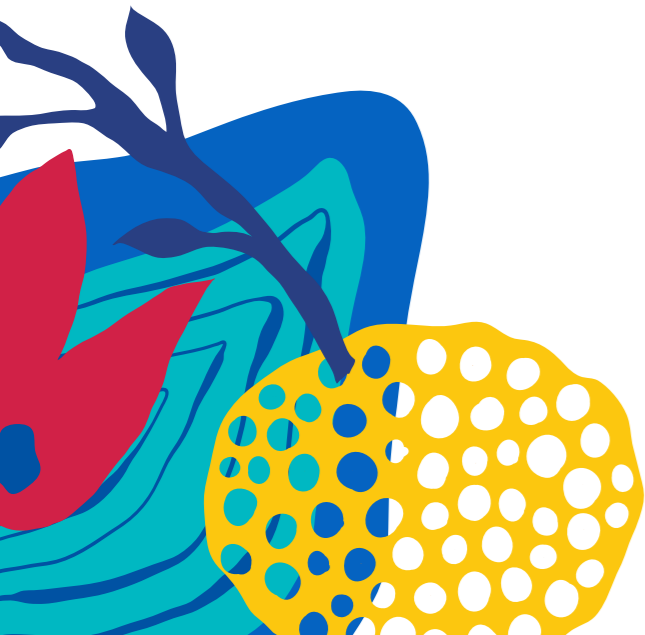


Figure 2: Organizational learning spaces conducted in 2025

Based on session feedback, majority of staff found these spaces meaningful to nurture compassion, strengthen motivation and support continued activism and feminist leadership



### 3. Applying a learning framework to understand progress and strengthen programming

Raising Voices continued to operationalize its organizational learning framework to systematically track progress toward strategic goals. This framework prioritizes not only measuring results but also understanding how change happens, ensuring learning remains central to program quality and effectiveness. A key mechanism for operationalizing this framework is the organization's bi-annual and annual Reflect and Act (R&A) sessions. These structured, participatory spaces bring teams together to share implementation experiences, critically examine assumptions, and co-create responsive actions. These are intentionally designed as inclusive and participatory spaces where diverse perspectives and reflections drive meaningful dialogue and learning.

In 2025, all staff participated in a comprehensive R&A process to review progress at the midpoint of the **2023-2027 Strategy**. This review served as an important moment for organizational reflection, enabling teams to assess achievements, lessons, and identify barriers requiring course correction. Overall, the review indicated strong progress, with 69% of strategic milestones achieved and the remaining 31% on track. These findings reflect both the effectiveness of ongoing programming and the value of embedding continuous learning and adaptation within Raising Voices' organizational culture.

#### Raising Voices mid strategy progress per milestone

##### VAW Prevention

Milestones	Progress	
<b>Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One feminist funded cohort of at least 8 organizations</li> <li>Three additional cohorts of at least 8 organizations are actively implementing SASA! Together/ SASA! Faith in their communities</li> <li>Two adaptations of SASA! Together published</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One funded feminist cohort of 4 organizations in West Africa</li> <li>3 additional cohorts: Bangladesh- 5 partners, Activist cohort- 3 active partners, Mexico &amp; Honduras-4 partners</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three learning papers published</li> <li>Two peer-reviewed journal articles on VAW prevention Published</li> <li>Two research collaborations are ongoing to assess adaptations and scaling of SASA! Together</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One adaptation published: SASA! Together in French</li> <li>2 learning resources published</li> <li>1 Peer reviewed journal articles published</li> <li>1 research collaboration</li> </ul>
<b>Influencing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two new global collectives/ initiatives actively engaged in to advance feminist advocacy objectives</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger connections and shared analysis through collaborative platforms like the Community for Understanding Scaling Processes (CUSP), What Works 2, and ACT</li> <li>1 new initiative on Field Building -VAW Prevention.</li> </ul>

##### VAC Prevention

<b>Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One adaptation of the GST (GST Agile) and three new accompanying modules completed</li> <li>5,000 schools in Uganda are actively implementing the GST</li> <li>Community Activism Toolkit rolled out in at least 1,000 schools surrounding communities</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 adaptation: GST Agile and 3 accompanying modules completed on mental health, Good School and VAC completed</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three Learning Papers/Briefs published to share our VAC prevention focused practice-based learning</li> <li>Two peer-reviewed journal articles on VAC prevention published</li> <li>Two research collaborations ongoing to assess adaptations and scaling of the Good School Toolkit</li> <li>One set of tools developed to guide learning and assessment relevant for all GST programming</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 2,500 schools across Uganda implemented GST programming between 2023 and 2025, including 914 schools currently implementing GST Agile.</li> <li>115 local government officials (65 female, 50 male) trained in 2025 to support roll out of the Community Activism Toolkit in 345 surrounding school communities by 2027</li> <li>3 learning papers/briefs published.</li> <li>3 peer-reviewed journal articles on VAC prevention published</li> <li>5 research collaborations (RRP study, GST-S pilot study, Impact of School Closures on Mental Health of Adolescents study, COVAC – Longitudinal study, NAVIGENDI study - intersection of gender, violence, disability)</li> </ul>
<b>Influencing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>55 government officials, 39 journalists and media personalities, and 30 religious and cultural leaders make public commitments on the need to prevent VAC at school</li> <li>Three regional hubs and one global Coalition for Good Schools center global South practitioners in global convenings and decision-making bodies to advocate for effective approaches to prevent VAC</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One set of tools developed to guide learning and assessment relevant for all GST programming</li> </ul>
	<b>Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 government officials, 99 cultural and 25 religious leaders engaged, 29 journalists and media personalities engaged</li> <li>Three regional hubs and one global coalition for Good Schools</li> </ul>

## Communications

Raising Voices leveraged diverse communication channels including its website, social media platforms, digital publications, and online resource hubs, to strengthen its learning culture, expand its reach, and advance feminist-informed communication and online activism.

### Our websites

Our **Raising Voices' website** demonstrated strong reach and engagement, attracting 42,730 active users with a 56% engagement rate, reflecting sustained interest in accessing our resources and learning materials. Similarly, the GBV Prevention **Network website** engaged 15,953 users with a 47% engagement rate, with the Home Page (5,754 views) and Join Us page (2,144 views) drawing the highest traffic, highlighting continued demand for information and growing interest in participation and membership.

### Social Media

Raising Voices strategically leveraged **X**, Facebook (**Raising Voices** and the **GBV Prevention Network**), **LinkedIn**, and the emerging **Bluesky** platform to amplify its influencing agenda through timely, campaign-driven engagement, particularly around key global advocacy moments such as the Day to End Sexual Violence Against Children, Global Action Week, Drop Everything and Read (DEER) Day, the International Day of the Girl Child, and the 16 Days of GBV Activism. Together, over 29,800 followers (3,186 on Raising Voices and 26,716 on the GBV Prevention Network) were reached and actively engaged through our digital spaces.



## Organizational Capacity

### Leadership

Raising Voices strengthened its leadership structures to enhance coordination, accountability, and shared decision making. The Management Team was fully functionalized, bringing greater clarity to roles and improving departmental collaboration. Terms of Reference were developed to guide the team's purpose, expectations, and feminist aligned leadership practices. Regular management meetings were instituted to support strategic reflections, timely, informed, and collective decision making, reinforcing consistent leadership culture grounded in feminist values and organization coherence.

### Human resources

**Policy and System Functioning:** Raising Voices advanced its feminist commitment to transparency, care, and accountability by initiating the revision of key organizational policies; Travel, and Data Protection in 2025. These updates aim to strengthen operational efficiency while aligning with organizational growth, feminist values, and emerging best practices. In addition, safeguarding awareness was enhanced through staff orientations and ongoing refresher sessions focused on cybersecurity, safety, consent, and accountability.

**Staffing and Organizational Capacity:** Our human resource practice is grounded in equity, ensuring inclusive recruitment, transparent processes, and a work environment where all staff feel respected, valued, and supported. In 2025, we strengthened recruitment processes which led to successfully filling two out five vacant positions and supported retention by fostering a work environment grounded in care and purpose. This progress contributed to maintaining a stable workforce of 35 staff and consultants, enabling the organization to uphold consistency, quality, and feminist informed leadership across programs.

We further prioritized staff wellbeing through the regular and intentional practices of care like the well being sessions, attended by staff across teams, this provided space for connection, cohesion and collective care which are key practices for sustaining activism in emotionally demanding work.





Figure 3: Three-year Security Risk Score Trend

Raising Voices continued to advance its goal of building and maintaining a “Truly Digital” workspace by investing in key digital systems including Centralized Portal, Mileage tracking system and Mifi issuance system. In 2025, the global security score improved to **96.32%** from **40.81% in 2023** as shown in figure 3 hence achieving a **zero-incident cybersecurity record** and a consistently low risk systems score.

This progress reflects a strengthened digital foundation, improved organizational resilience, and a secure technology environment capable of supporting long-term efficiency and growth.



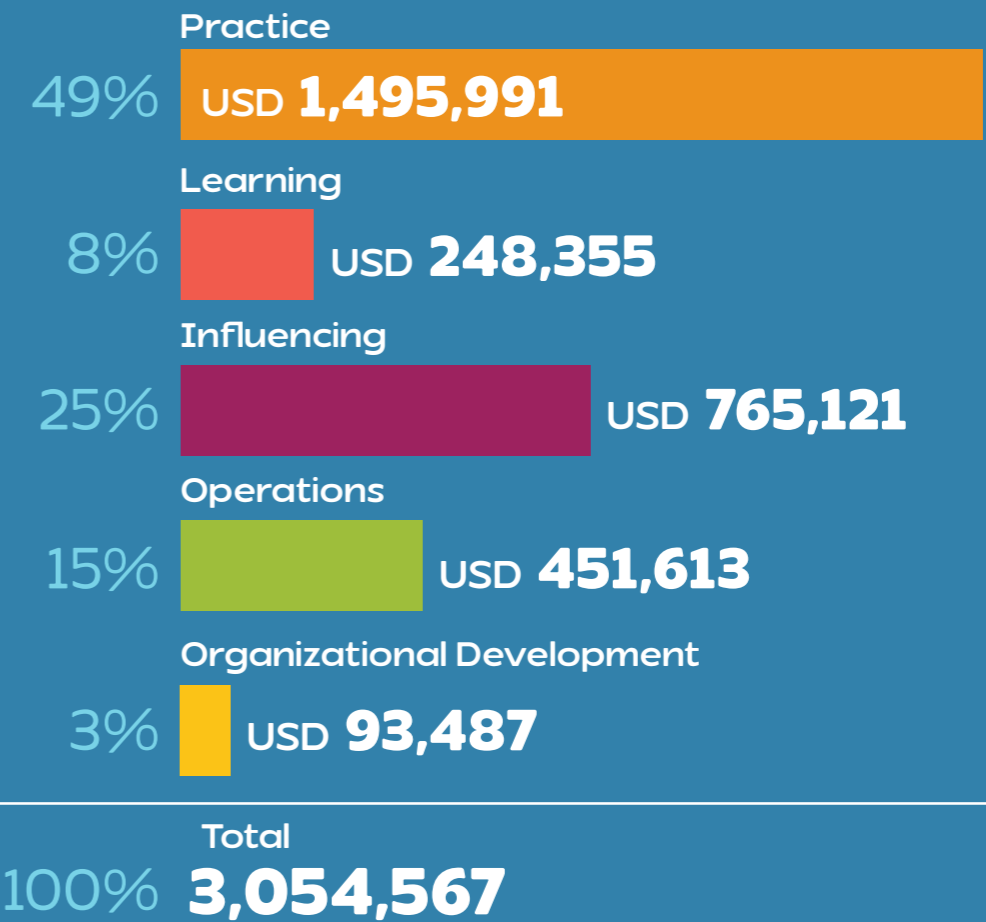
# Financial Overview

Raising Voices received financial support from 15 donors, each contributing meaningfully to our mission to prevent violence against women and children. Our seven core donors provided 77% of the total income, reflecting the value of strategic partnerships in advancing violence prevention efforts. This demonstrates both deep donor commitment and diversified program support.

## Funds allocation by core thematic areas

Figure 4 shows how Raising Voices utilised a total of USD 3,054,567 across four thematic areas: Practice, Learning, Influencing, Operations, and Organizational Development, to deliver meaningful, sustainable violence prevention. Practice accounted for the largest allocation which reflects the resource-intensive nature of delivering our programs with fidelity across diverse contexts.

Figure 4 Summary of expenditure per thematic area



Raising Voices remains committed to maintaining programming that is responsive, grounded in feminist values and accountable to the people most affected by violence. Together, this distribution demonstrates our intentional investment in feminist praxis, centering community rooted prevention, feminist movement building, and advancing the broader political work required to dismantle the systems that drive violence.

# Funding Partners

In 2025, Raising Voices was privileged to receive generous contributions from the following donors who share our commitment to preventing violence against women and children.

1. Accelerator
2. Coalition for Good schools
3. Echidna Giving
4. Ford Foundation
5. Imago Dei Fund
6. International Rescue Committee / Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
7. Irene M. Staehelin Foundation (IMS)
8. Irish Aid
9. NoVo Foundation
10. Oak Foundation
11. Sigrid Rausing Trust
12. UN Trust Fund
13. Vista Hermosa Foundation
14. Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (WPF)
15. Friends of Raising Voices

These contributions enabled us to advance our feminist-informed strategic goals and sustain impactful programming. We extend our sincere appreciation to all our partners whose trust, solidarity, and generosity continue to make our work possible and impactful.



# Final Reflections



## A year of resilience building and reimagining

It has been a dynamic year, marked by both meaningful progress and significant disruption. We began with renewed energy and plans to launch key initiatives, alongside two organizational milestones: the midterm review of our 2023-27 strategic plan and the celebration of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. However, the year quickly took an unexpected turn, as global funding cuts and intensifying backlash reshaped the operating environment, infusing a sense of uncertainty across our work and the wider environment.

**Midterm review of the 2023-27 Strategic Plan:** The review provided an important opportunity to assess our progress and direction. While we are encouraged that many milestones were achieved and others remain on track, the process prompted critical reflection. It challenged us to consider how we must adapt to a rapidly changing context, and what is required of us to remain relevant, responsive, and impactful in the years ahead.

**25 years of preventing VAW and VAC:** The anniversary was celebrated modestly, considering the broader funding context. It provided an opportunity to reconnect with long-standing partners and activists, and to reflect on our shared journey and collective achievements over the years. We were particularly uplifted by stories of personal transformation and leadership growth, which highlighted the lasting impact of our programs. This moment reaffirmed not only the depth of our contribution, but also the resilience and leadership of the individuals within the schools and communities with whom we continue to work.

**New initiatives:** Despite the challenges, we continued to move into key areas of growth. The launch of the *Accelerator for shifting gender norms through education* project and the Fully Funded Feminist *SASA! Together* cohort in the Central Sahel region reflect both our growing capacity and strategic ambition. These initiatives represent a deliberate effort not only to scale our work, but also to deepen its quality and relevance.

**The shifting landscape:** Over the course of the year, we saw valued partners scale down or close programs, creating a collective sense of loss across the movement and leaving parts of our work in continued uncertainty. These developments raise serious concerns about the resilience of the broader ecosystem and the consequences for women and children. Yet, while the scale and pace of these shifts were deeply unsettling, they also sharpened our focus on emerging opportunities to drive meaningful transformation within this moment of change.

**Moving forward:** We recognize the moment demands more than incremental change; it calls for intentional reflection, collective dialogue, and the courage to reimagine the future of violence prevention work and the broader movement for women's and children's safety. We remain committed to engaging in this evolving context in a thoughtful and strategic way, collaborating with others to shape the direction and build a stronger, more resilient future.

## 2025 Publications

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Katherine G Merrill., Louise Knight., Janet Nakuti., Angel Mirembe., Elizabeth Allen., Amiya Bhatia., Jenny Parkes., Dipak Naker., Karen M Devries. (2025). *The association between violence victimization and subsequent unplanned pregnancy among adolescent girls in Uganda: Do primary schools make a difference?*. **The association between violence victimization and subsequent unplanned pregnancy among adolescent girls in Uganda: Do primary schools make a difference? - PMC**



16 Tufnell Drive, Kamwokya  
P.O. Box 6770, Kampala, Uganda  
(+256) 41 4531186 / 39 3266400

[info@raisingvoices.org](mailto:info@raisingvoices.org)  
[www.raisingvoices.org](http://www.raisingvoices.org)

