



## YW4A Transformation Journeys

## colophon

YW4A Transformation Journeys

© December 2025

This booklet was developed in the context of Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy and Accountability (YW4A), a programme funded by The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Power of Women Policy Framework. YW4A is implemented by a consortium of eight partners, led by the World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). KIT Institute led the Pathway 1 endline study, including the AOCA endline re-assessment and reflection workshops with the 23 organisations.

The stories presented in this booklet are captured by KIT's national advisors as part of the AOCA endline workshops:

Egypt: Monica Soliman

Kenya: Dr. Mariam Kamunyu

Palestine: Rasha Salah Eddin

South Sudan: Rita M. Lopidia

Photographs presented in this report were taken in the course of YW4A activities and courtesy of the YW4A partners.



Booklet composed by  
Felice Davids & Joke Manders  
KIT Institute, Amsterdam  
KIT project number: 10101-2583.11/12



## table of contents

4 The YW4A Programme

5 Assessment of Institutional Capacities

### organisations

7 Al Harah Theatre

9 Blooming Rose Association

12 Centre for Community Mobilization and Empowerment (CECOME)

13 Christian Agency for Peace and Development (CAPaD)

15 Egyptian Foundation for Family Development (EFFD)

18 Egyptians without Borders Association (EWB)

20 El-Farah Foundation

22 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)

24 Ibrahimia Media Center (IMC)

27 Inua Mama Mjane (IMM)

29 National Independent Church of Africa (NICA)

33 Nyatike Evangelism One Accord (NEOA)

35 Psychosocial Counselling Centre for Women (PSCCW)

37 Sabaya El Kheir

39 Safe Engage Foundation (SEF)

41 Self Help Women Development Organisation (SHWDO)

43 Seventh Day Adventist South Kenya Conference (SDA) Kisii

45 Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) Jerusalem

47 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Juba

49 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kenya

52 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kisii

54 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Meru

57 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Palestine

# The YW4A Programme



The Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy and Accountability programme is funded by the Strengthening Civil Society's Power of Women Partnership fund of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA). YW4A was implemented from 1 January 2021 until 31 December 2025 in Egypt, Kenya, Palestine and South Sudan by a consortium of eight partners: four country leads IMC, YWCA Kenya, YWCA Palestine and CAPaD, and World YWCA (consortium lead), Equality Now, Faith to Action Network, and KIT Institute. In each of the four countries the programme worked with several in-country partners, both women's rights organisations (WROs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs).

YW4A's goal is to strengthen and diversify young women's participation and amplify their voices to effectively influence decision-making towards gender-just laws, policies, norms, and practices related to their bodily integrity and equal participation.

To achieve this, YW4A supports the agency and capacity strengthening of young women (aged 15 – 30), women's rights organisations (WROs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) across the four countries through four interconnected pathways (see Figure).

The YW4A programme is founded on a feminist approach. It is not only based on the belief of the universality of human rights for all women and girls and the protection of those rights, but it also questions, and challenges existing power relations based on gender, norms, and inequalities at all levels, pleading for social change on gender norms. Young women's leadership, voice, and agency are at the centre of this process of transformative change, together with WROs and FBOs advocating for social, legal, and policy norm change.

# Assessment of Institutional Capacities

In order to achieve intermediate outcome (IO) 1 Enhanced advocacy capacity of 16-28 women's rights organisations to amplify young women's voices in Palestine, Egypt, Kenya, and South Sudan by 2025, the YW4A programme envisaged enhancing in-country partners' internal organisation and advocacy capacity to amplify young women's voices and promote that WROs and FBOs provide space in their internal organisations for young women and establish internal inclusive processes and practices in decision-making, management, and programming. Also, by working with WROs and FBOs to include, represent, hear, mentor, support, and prepare young women to take part in advocacy initiatives, link them to strategic decision-making forums, and scale-up local advocacy strategies. Equality Now and the four Country Leads were the key partners in charge of enhancing the institutional and advocacy capacity of the organisations. Equality Now was leading the advocacy related capacity strengthening training in-country partners on legal and policy



advocacy, social media advocacy strategies and skills, and mentoring and supporting organisations in their advocacy work, in line with the country specific advocacy priorities set under IO 4 (legal and policy reforms), bridging the gap between capacity strengthening and actual advocacy implementation. Moreover, Equality Now supported the organisations in building coalitions and networks with likeminded actors.

The four Country Leads were responsible for the institutional capacity training (for example Monitoring & Evaluation, operational management, SEAH, financial management), and overall support to the in-country partners. KIT Institute was responsible for assessing the organisations' capacity at baseline, mid-term and endline.

In year 1 of YW4A programme, KIT Institute designed and conducted a baseline study to measure the organisations (policy and legal) advocacy and organisational capacity, against which to monitor progress of IO1 and its selected short-term outcome indicators. In contrast to external evaluators assessing an organisation's capacity, the designed Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) is a facilitated self-assessment process by selected staff of the partner organisations, to engage in an empowering self-reflective and learning process about strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the organisations' capacity,

## Assessment of Institutional Capacities

and needs for capacity strengthening. The organisations took part in AOCA workshops at baseline (2021), mid-term (2023) and endline (2024/25) to capture each organisation's capacity enhancement journey.

During an AOCA workshop, an organisation reflected on their current capacity - for which the synonym of taking a selfie picture has been applied - by (re-)assessing the 21 AOCA sub-domains. This results in a final rate, the AOCA measure, which indicates an organisation's advocacy and organisational capacity level on a seven-point scale - ranging from very limited to well-developed capacity - defining an organisation's capacity in the field of amplifying young women's voices and promoting young women's leadership and equal participation in (political) decision-making, their bodily integrity, and the prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

At endline a two-day AOCA workshop was conducted with each of the 23 partner organisations\*, reflecting on the extent to which the organisation's capacity changed over time by re-assessing their capacity on each of the 21 sub-domains of the AOCA, assessing how YW4A and other (f)actors contributed, and identifying key achievements and learnings in their organisation's ability to undertake advocacy for young women's rights and in amplifying young women's voices and leadership.

The workshop participants identified one story that best captures the key change(s) in their organisation's ability to undertake advocacy for young women's rights, resulting in a Transformation Journey of each of the 23-partner organisation. The story was drawn up through an associative thinking exercise, and participants were encouraged to capture their journey in a (creative) way they prefer.

**The organisations' stories are presented in this booklet.**

6



\* Across the four countries of implementation, YW4A experienced some changes in the partnerships with WROs and FBOs. At endline, a total of 17 WROs and 6 FBOs were engaged and participated in the AOCA endline workshop.

organisation

# Al Harah Theatre

country

Palestine

engaged in YW4A since

2021

organisation type

WRO

Al Harah Theatre is a performance arts organisation that promotes women’s rights. It provides an uncensored space for expression and promotes social change, through performance and theatre art. Al Harah participates in advocacy processes that relate to influencing the public towards social and policy reforms, with focus on targeting women’s issues and

rights. The organisation is committed to young women’s voices; not only by creating a space for expression by young women, but also by producing theatre works that tackle specific challenges that young women in Palestine face, such as violence against women and discrimination against women living with disabilities, amongst others.



transformation journey

The change identified is at the macro level and relates to change of the theatre’s prior neutrality towards young women’s right issues. All other changes were considered as contributing to this change.

Before the YW4A, the theatre was neutral about young women’s rights, generally due to limited experience and knowledge of advocacy, limited vision of theatre as an advocacy tool,

and negative perceptions amongst male staff about women’s rights. However, thanks to the discussions on young women’s rights, trainings and learnings on advocacy, definition, targets and tactics, the outreach to a diverse group of young women and recruitment of some young women within the organisation, all these barriers were dismantled. This has resulted in changes in the content of the theatre production and its quality, reflecting

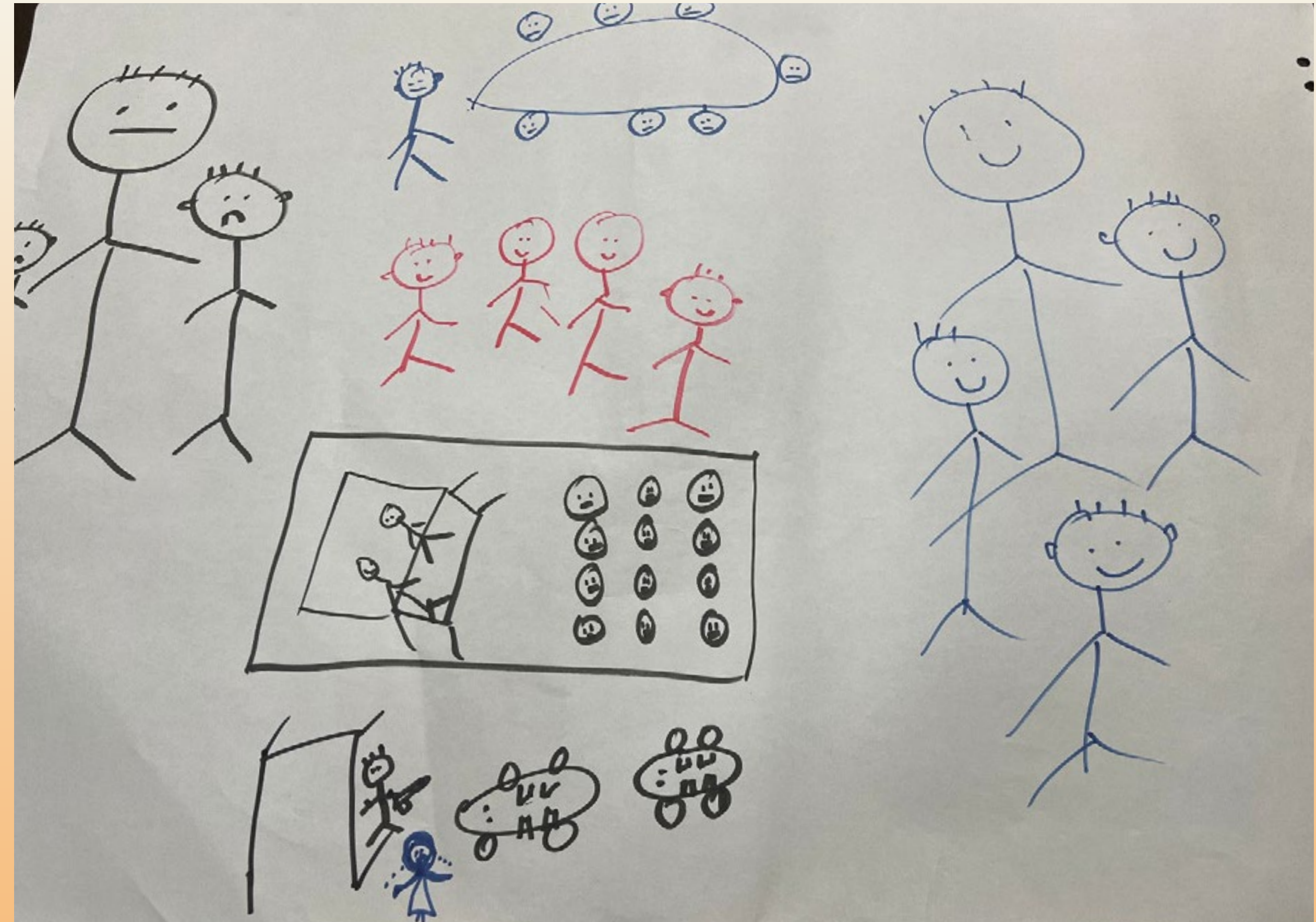
a better understanding of rights, legal and policy frameworks.

Examples included the production of *Matab*, a theatre show that tackled harassment in the workplace, which for the first time attracted an audience of 300 person (150 of them are youth and 150 representing CSOs and decision-makers). The show was followed by a discussion between the young women and

## Al Harah Theatre

the decision-makers, in which young women raised their voice against a university president who blamed young women in one of his public statements for harassment in the workplace. This experience highlighted that young women were empowered to discuss topics that were considered taboo before the show. And that the discussion, taking place in a safe space, allowed the content to be more direct and influential. young women, according to the Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) participants, now consider their right issues as public ones and not private, which empowers them to speak louder about harassment from their own experiences.

They are also proud of positive masculinities related learnings, which they also included as an approach to promote young women's rights.



organisation	<h1>Blooming Rose Association</h1>		
country	Egypt		
engaged in YW4A since	2023 (February)		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>The Blooming Rose Association (El Zahra El Nayera), established in the year 2000, is a non-governmental organisation based in the Basateen area of Cairo. The organisation is dedicated to a wide range of activities aimed at promoting economic and social development, health initiatives, family care, support for special needs groups, environmental protection, cultural and scientific services, child and maternal welfare, organisation and management, educational services, human rights, prison inmate care and support, empowering</p>	<p>women who are the breadwinners of their families, youth employment and training, marginalised community groups, vocational training, comprehensive awareness for girls, and the creation of effective cadres.</p> <p>The association operates at the national level with a focus on the southern part of Cairo. It serves a densely populated and predominantly lower-income community in the Basateen area. The organisation works on shifting mindsets, changing habits, and</p>	<p>adapting traditions to better align with the community's needs. The organisation also runs essential facilities, including a medical centre, a nursery, a children's club, a vocational and administrative training centre, and a resource centre. Through its comprehensive range of services, the Blooming Rose Association strives to make a positive impact on the lives of the people it serves, with a focus on improving their wellbeing, providing educational and vocational opportunities, and supporting marginalised and underprivileged community members.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Prior to the YW4A programme, the organisation primarily focused on issues related to health, reproductive health, and education. While some activities addressed women's issues, they were not explicitly designed to advocate for women's rights. Advocacy efforts were broad,</p>	<p>covering various topics without a specific focus on gender-based violence or harmful practices like female genital mutilation (FGM). For example, in a previous project funded by the Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services (CEOSS) to improve the working</p>	<p>conditions of women in the informal sector, efforts focused on securing safe work environments for female breadwinners. However, there was no direct emphasis on gender, violence, or advocacy against harmful practices. Volunteers received basic training</p>

## Blooming Rose Association

on violence against women, but their exposure to advocacy was limited.

Through the YW4A, team members engaged in multiple capacity building trainings on advocacy, political participation, social media, and gender. The organisation's board of trustees plays a crucial role in supporting these young women, granting them the space and autonomy to make decisions. The board also empowers the executive director to sign agreements and take decisive actions with donors. A key realisation emerged: advocacy is a skill that develops through practice. Early trainings differed significantly from later ones, as facilitators gained confidence, learned from each other, and adopted a culture of mutual support. This growth was reinforced by self-learning, research, and flexibility in tailoring activities to diverse participants.

After the Blooming Rose Association joined the YW4A programme, they made a shift towards women's rights advocacy. Awareness activities on women's rights became more prominent, and trained facilitators began leading discussions beyond the original YW4A activities led by Ibrahimia Media Center (the YW4A County Lead).



### The organisation established

- A trained pool of facilitators who were hired to conduct workshops and trainings.
- A dedicated team of around 20 volunteers, which did not exist before.
- A social media team skilled in using digital tools and running online advocacy campaigns.
- An advocacy team equipped with knowledge on policy advocacy and protection frameworks.
- A broader grassroots reach, expanding into marginalised neighbourhoods like a and engaging with refugee communities.

Facilitators themselves acknowledged the personal transformation they experienced, gaining self-confidence and the ability to express themselves after previously struggling with public speaking.

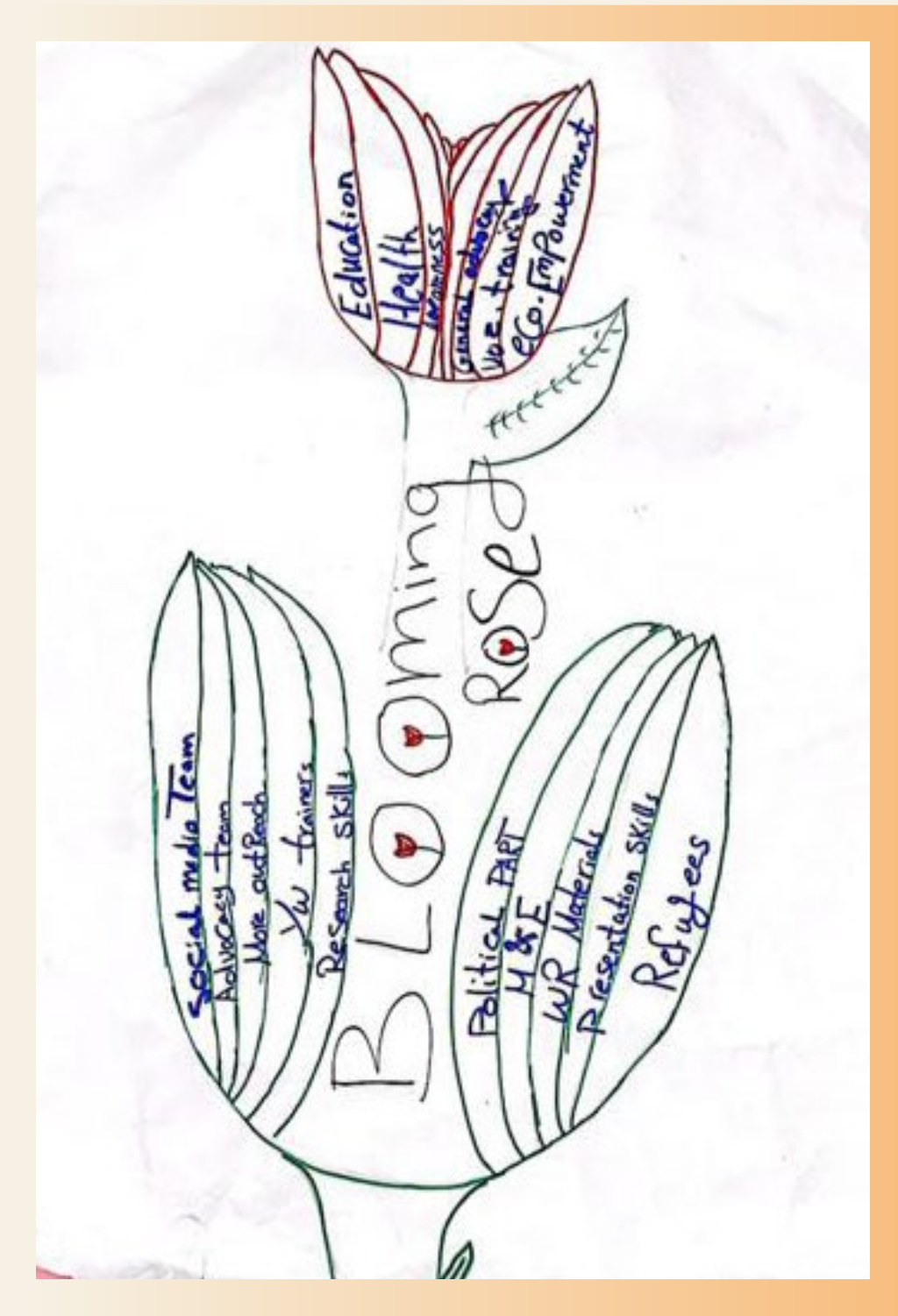
# Blooming Rose Association

## Results of the Change

- The team initiated independent campaigns on issues such as gender-based violence, early marriage, and cyber harassment.
- The organisation's Facebook page became significantly more active.
- All staff members signed the organisation's Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) policy.
- A dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation team was formed to track the progress.
- Young women who participated in advocacy activities emerged as community leaders after attending RiseUp! sessions.
- Young women developed the ability to tailor messages to different participants, enhancing the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts.
- Many facilitators were recruited into other projects as trainers, scaling the impact of their advocacy skills beyond YW4A.

- A structured approach to knowledge sharing was established, with PowerPoint presentations on RiseUp! topics enriched by the facilitators' own research. They also began independently exploring advocacy topics from reliable sources beyond the initial curriculum.

The team agreed to reflect this journey of change in a drawing which represents the change of Blooming Rose from a small rose focusing on health, education, and economic empowerment to a bigger one addressing women's right advocacy issues having different teams as advocacy, social media, M&E, etc.



organisation	Centre for Community Mobilization and Empowerment (CECOME)		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>Centre for Community Mobilization and Empowerment (CECOME) was established in 2012. Their core work is around sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and female genital mutilation (FGM). They have been running a funded SGBV programme since 2015.</p>	<p>Their goal is to ensure that the community is informed about SGBV in order to take action. Towards this, they work with community volunteers, run school programmes (such as anti-FGM clubs) and utilise media to reach out to the community.</p>	<p>Their work is geographically focused in Kisii County. The young women targeted include girls in the communities they work in, girls reached by their school programmes and survivors who are reached by their paralegals for legal assistance.</p>
transformation journey	<p>CECOME has grown into a safe and empowering space where young women can raise their voices, engage with duty bearers, and influence decision-makers using a variety of advocacy tactics and strategies. Over time, the organisation has significantly strengthened its capacity to undertake advocacy, employing tools such as media engagement, legal advocacy, community trainings, and peaceful demonstrations to amplify the voices of young women and demand action from policymakers. The YW4A programme has been instrumental in this transformation.</p>	<p>Through the capacity building, CECOME has enhanced its use of legal and media advocacy strategies, becoming more effective and confident in addressing systemic issues. YW4A has also created valuable linkages with other organisations, enabling CECOME to learn from best practices and expand its reach. Events such as the Gender Justice Gala have offered powerful exposure and inspiration, described by the team as experiences that “flame the dream.” That dream is ambitious. As one member put it, “It’s big and scary—it feels like a car</p>	<p>rolling downhill.” The vision is to build a one-stop centre for young women and girls: a space for mentorship, empowerment, and safety, where girls can find the tools and the support they need to thrive. YW4A has helped to lay the foundation for that dream by ensuring that the voices and issues of young women are placed at the centre of CECOME’s work. As the organisation looks ahead, the core challenge will be sustaining the momentum, but with commitment from within, the vision remains both powerful and possible.</p>

organisation	Christian Agency for Peace and Development (CAPaD)		
country	South Sudan		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	FBO		
	<p>CAPaD is a faith-based national non-profit, non-governmental organisation, committed to fundamental freedoms and the freedom of expression. The organisation promotes social justice, respect for others, human dignity that restores livelihoods, and charity that benefits the giver as much as the receiver so that they both may find peace and joy. CAPaD hopes to</p>	<p>reshape South Sudan so full of pain and uncertainty into resilience and self-reliance. It operates in the states of Central Equatoria, Lakes (eastern and western), Jonglei (Boma states), Bieh and Terekeka. The organisation targets youth, women, children and other key stakeholders drawn from the communities. CAPaD's areas of focus include Gender and</p>	<p>protection, Peace building, Livelihoods, Water and Sanitation, Governance and Civic Engagement. Most of their advocacy work focuses on diverse young men and women at the County, State and national level, with some limited efforts to contribute to advocacy at the global level.</p>
transformation journey	<p>From 2012 to 2020, CAPaD operated as a youth-led, faith-based national organisation advocating for the rights of youth and marginalised groups. The organisation policy advocacy programmes primarily focused on youth rights, engaging with line ministries concerned with youth-related issues, such as the Ministry of Youth and Sports. All campaigns and activities centred on youth initiatives, with little specific attention to (young)</p>	<p>women's rights. Furthermore, the organisation had limited female representation, with only a cleaner and a finance assistant.</p> <p>The introduction and launch of the YW4A programme in 2021, through the interventions led by YW4A partner F2A, led CAPaD to mobilise faith-based institutions. Utilizing gender assessment methodologies, the organisation recruited gender champions</p>	<p>comprising both men and women. This process highlighted significant gender gaps within both CAPaD and the faith-based institutions, including restrictive norms limiting young women's participation in decision-making and their limited voice. There was a noticeable lack of focus on young women's rights or perspectives.</p> <p>Subsequently, CAPaD initiated internal changes to increase female representation. In 2024,</p>

## Christian Agency for Peace and Development (CAPaD)

the organisation recruited a gender officer, an M&E officer, an administrative assistant, and a YWRG coordinator for the YW4A programme, thereby increasing the number of young women in the organisation. Various capacity building trainings further enhanced the organisational capabilities, including sessions on positive masculinities, organisational governance and leadership for Women's Rights Organisations, the Maputo Protocol, RiseUp! mentorship, M&E, advocacy, and media engagement.

With enhanced capacity, CAPaD's activities underwent a significant transformation in terms of programming, interventions, and engagements. The organisation initiated an advocacy forum with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Justice, to spearhead advocacy for (young) women's rights and create space for young women to voice their concerns with decision-makers. CAPaD took a leading role



in mentorship, collaboration, and coalition building around young women's rights, championing the priorities of the YW4A programme, all centred on young women's rights.

This shift in organisational priorities was a direct result of the YW4A programme's impact, which served as an eye-opener for CAPaD. Consequently, CAPaD assumed the Country

Lead for the YW4A in South Sudan, expanding networks and collaborations across civil society, youth coalitions, and women's groups focused on young women's rights, bridging the gap between youth and women's rights initiatives.

organisation	Egyptian Foundation for Family Development (EFFD)		
country	Egypt		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>The Egyptian Foundation for Family Development (EFFD) was established in 2005 and has few staff members. EFFD has strong experience in awareness raising and sensitizing the community on human rights. The organisation provides services, awareness and counselling. They target and support the social, economic and legal rights of the family with special attention to supporting women's issues,</p>	<p>children, youth and family rights. EFFD assesses cases and provides services for the most vulnerable, such as Legal &amp; social counselling, referral to relevant service providers, psychosocial support, etc.</p> <p>Before joining the YW4A, advocacy was not the organisation's main purpose or scope of work, hence at the time EFFD did not have advocacy</p>	<p>staff, though its director had some knowledge and experience on advocacy, as well as some experience working on advocating for rights. EFFD's experience was mainly related to women's rights and legal advocacy, and they did some work targeting young women specifically, but before joining YW4A, young women were not their key focus.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before YW4A, EFFD was already active in women's rights. They began by focusing on young girls and women to reduce divorce rates. Throughout the organisation's life, they have implemented 13 projects, including premarital counselling programmes, and collaborated with USAID to empower women economically, socially, and legally. Additionally, they partnered with "Woman to Woman" from Sweden on a</p>	<p>reproductive health project for girls with intermediate education levels. Their activities mainly focused on raising awareness and empowering women rather than advocacy, working with other organisations like the Social Fund, the GIZ on a five-year personal status law reform project, and the Spanish Development Agency. They always believe that women's economic empowerment reduces the violence they face.</p>	<p>They also operate a centre for legal and psychological support.</p> <p>During the YW4A programme, they gained a deep understanding and extensive experience in guiding facilitators and leveraging previous project lessons to enhance their participation in the YW4A programme. The approach included training and building various capacities,</p>

## Egyptian Foundation for Family Development (EFFD)



improving facilitation skills, practical application, and conducting comprehensive processes like pre-session preparation, facilitation, and post-session tasks such as reporting and evaluations. They also built capabilities in managing discussion sessions and honed skills in logistics, procurement, and technical expertise. EFFD also got equipped with light system and microphone to facilitate the social media advocacy campaigns.

EFFD highlighted that YW4A was a unique programme that significantly enhanced both the expertise of its employees and the foundation's reputation. First, it established long-term engagement with the target group by maintaining strong connections with young women through WhatsApp groups. This was made possible by the bond created during RiseUp! sessions and the Feminist Consultation Methodology (FCM), the latter helping to reconnect with previous RiseUp! participants. Second, YW4A introduced EFFD to diverse and intellectually enriching topics for young women, addressing issues they had not previously tackled, such as new forms of violence like cyber violence, particularly affecting women aged 18 to 30. Third, the programme developed partnerships with various organisations, creating protocols to implement RiseUp! sessions. This expanded EFFD's outreach and enriched its database. Fourth, the initiative empowered young women by enabling participants to become volunteers or facilitators,

allowing them to build their skills and capacities while contributing to YW4A and other programmes and projects where EFFD is a partner.

Lastly, YW4A worked with refugees, delving into their unique challenges, cultural differences, and specific issues. Resulting to integrating refugees into their surrounding communities.

### Results of this Change

- Facilitators gained maturity in handling and managing diverse groups.
- Facilitators improved their skills, both in facilitation and project management.
- Experience in working with a wide variety of individuals aged 18 to 30, including students, married women, and workers, strengthened their capabilities.
- Younger girls raising awareness among older women, a significant cultural shift in the community, provided the facilitators with valuable and unique experiences.

## Egyptian Foundation for Family Development (EFFD)

To present this session, the team quickly agreed on an idea to showcase the change through a TV show. The show featured two individuals: a long-time employee (manager) representing EFFD before the YW4A programme, and a young woman representing EFFD after the

programme, highlighting the transformations. They quickly improvised the scenario and started filming it. Below is a picture of the filming they did.

The video is available on:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/Yc9fDhvrutREScnU8>



organisation	Egyptians without Borders Association (EWB)		
country	Egypt		
engaged in YW4A since	2023 (February)		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>Egyptians without Borders (EWB) was founded in 2007 and provides consulting, training and research services. EWB was established by legal and developmental activists to work on development with a human right’s perspective in the following areas: Education Programs Development and Culture Enrichment, Human Community Development, Legal and Social Support, Legal and Social Studies and research and Developmental, Social and Legal Training and Rehabilitation.</p>	<p>EWB has implemented different projects for women’s rights such as “Women on the road” for women political empowerment funded by the National Fund for Democracy; and “First step”, an awareness-raising development project, funded by the Middle East Partnership Programme aimed at empowering 50 women to access to decision-making centres in their civil institutions to which they belong (associations, youth centres, unions and parties) in Aswan Governorate. In addition, EWB worked</p>	<p>on other projects in the field of providing equal opportunities of education and trainings to young people funded by different donors, including Sawiris foundation and Oxfam Novib.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before the YW4A Programme, EWB engaged in various advocacy-related activities, but these efforts were largely unstructured, project-based, and lacked strategic planning. Advocacy for women’s rights was conducted within specific projects without independent funding or long-term sustainability plans. There also</p>	<p>was no dedicated advocacy staff or structured capacity building for advocacy-related work. Key initiatives included 16 Days of Activism campaigns in collaboration with Oxfam Novib; the Women and Films Project, a regional initiative addressing child marriage and menstrual health through social media; conducting some</p>	<p>training programmes on political participation; and some social media advocacy efforts, but they were often ineffective due to a lack of technical expertise. EWB was hesitant to engage in sensitive topics, such as virginity testing and marital rape, due to fear of backlash from the community.</p>

## Egyptians without Borders Association (EWB)

Due to the YW4A Intervention, the organisation underwent a continuous learning process, refining its advocacy approach and gaining deeper strategic insight:

- The ongoing learning journey helped the team gain clarity on their advocacy goals and methods. Each project became an opportunity for reflection, evaluation, and growth.
- The YW4A Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessments (AOCA) played a crucial role in helping the team understand their advocacy priorities and improve strategic planning.
- Reflection meetings became a regular practice, allowing the team to review progress, exchange lessons learned, and adjust strategies accordingly.
- Social media advocacy improved significantly, with better message design and greater technical expertise in using digital platforms effectively.
- Intensive capacity building efforts were

introduced, particularly within YW4A's advocacy and social media message design training, which equipped the team and volunteers with specialised skills.

EWB became more open to discussing sensitive topics, overcoming past fears of addressing complex feminist issues.

YW4A transformed the organisation's approach to advocacy, making it more institutionalised, strategic, and sustainable:

- Advocacy is now a core component of the strategic plan, rather than a secondary project activity.
- A structured advocacy framework was developed, including:
  - A general advocacy plan.
  - Project-specific advocacy strategies that complement the broader vision.
- The organisation built a trained volunteer base capable of leading social media campaigns and community mobilisation.

- Advocacy efforts became more strategic, rather than just reactive or ad-hoc.
- The team actively selects key advocacy topics and has become bolder in addressing feminist issues.

### Results of this change

- EWB is now an active member of larger advocacy movements, engaging in policy discussions and legal reform efforts.
- Increased institutional recognition, with organisations now seeking their expertise on gender-based violence and women's rights.
- EWB shifted from education-focused initiatives to a broader feminist agenda, while keeping education as a key pillar.
- Enhanced engagement on social media, attracting experts, researchers, and activists who now volunteer or collaborate with the organisation.
- A stronger advocacy network, with a skilled and sustainable volunteer base supporting long-term advocacy efforts.

organisation	El-Farah Foundation		
country	Egypt		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>El Farah Foundation for the Care of People with Special Abilities was established in 2010. The organisation has the goal of developing and empowering marginalised people in remote areas, including single mothers who are head</p>	<p>of the household; people with motor, auditory and visual disabilities, with a focus on people with neurological disabilities in particular; as well as empowerment for young women aged between 11 to 18 years old. The organisation</p>	<p>does this work through different approaches such as awareness-raising, trainings, capacity building, advocacy, as well as providing guidance to the beneficiaries to find jobs or to establish their own businesses.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before the YW4A programme, the organisation had a large volunteer base, with approximately 300 active volunteers. It had already established multiple partnerships and was engaged in advocacy efforts for the rights of girls and persons living with disabilities through various ongoing initiatives. It made large events on the orphans' day and spread awareness message to a lot of people.</p>	<p>Following their engagement in YW4A, the organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expanded Partnerships:</b> The implementation of RiseUp! initiatives significantly strengthened and increased the organisation's partnerships. In addition to building relations with lawyers and policy makers as part of the legal advocacy for women's rights.</li> <li>• <b>Internal Capacity Building:</b> The leadership provided substantial internal support for team capacity building, enabling staff to effectively engage in advocacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Training Opportunities:</b> Team members participated in project-related training sessions and collaborated with other institutions to enhance their advocacy skills as trainings related to advocacy on social media, Psychological first aid and Gender. In addition to this, team members pursued additional skill-building opportunities, such as Political English courses at the British Council to enhance their advocacy communication.</li> </ul>

## El-Farah Foundation

Through enhanced advocacy capacity successful partnerships were established with international NGOs as GIZ and governmental institutions as the Ministry of Youth and Sports. El Farah developed stronger connections with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which emerged indirectly from YW4A activities. And a dedicated team for advocacy was formed including representation of young refugee women to engage in advocacy on social media platforms.

### Results of the change

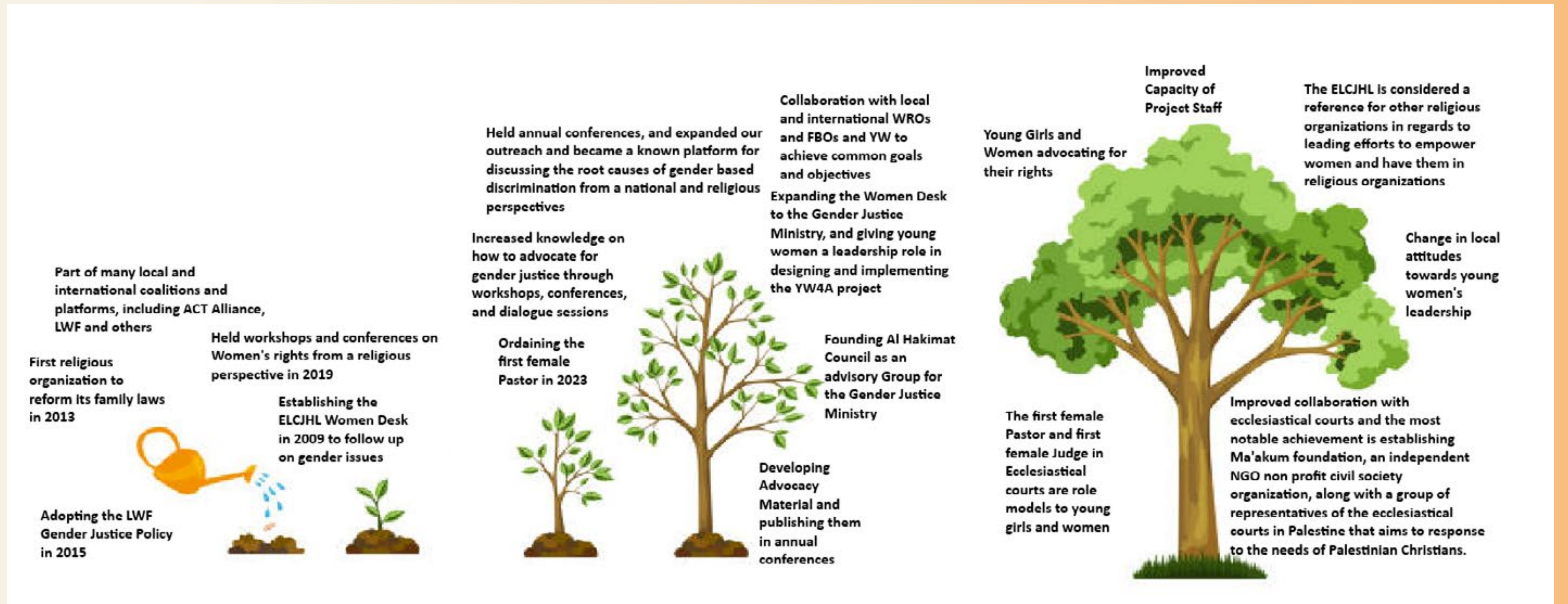
- The organisation gained consultative status in ECOSOC, which played a crucial role in strengthening its advocacy reach which enabled the organisation to participate in international conferences and learning exchanges, further amplifying its advocacy work and participate in writing the Universal Periodic Review.
- Strengthened institutional credibility and visibility through its international collaborations and policy engagements.
- Increased youth engagement in digital advocacy, particularly among refugee volunteers, expanding the organisation's influence in online advocacy spaces.



organisation	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)		
country	Palestine		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	FBO		
	<p>ELCJHL is a Palestinian Lutheran church that has six churches, several schools and educational ministries. Their work is focused on providing Christian Evangelical instructions, quality training and peace education. The church has a gender justice programme, as well as a disability ministry and a youth ministry. These ministries complement each</p>	<p>other’s interventions, though they are led by different staff. Before joining YW4A, the advocacy work of the church included advocating for peace in the holy land. The gender justice programme advocacy work was focused on women’s rights within the church and its instructions, and on promoting gender justice including through revisions of the family law,</p>	<p>the inclusion of a woman judge in the church court and the preparation of a female reverend. These successes of the ELCJHL have created a very proud team of advocates within the church, who are willing to take challenges and work with the communities out of belief that change can happen.</p>
transformation journey	<p>The most significant change was identified following a discussion on all the YW4A contributions which altogether led to this change, which is the enhanced capacity to lead advocacy amongst the staff of the gender justice ministry in the church.</p> <p>The contributors are related to the YW4A trainings in legal and digital advocacy, the monitoring and evaluation training, the learning platforms</p>	<p>and international participations which empowered the staff, broadened networks made available for the gender justice ministry leader, the support of the church leaders after observing the achievements made during the last year and the connections established directly with the YW. They all together contributed to promoting the women desk into a Gender Justice Ministry, where also a young women who had a coordinator position was promoted to become the</p>	<p>Director of the Ministry – she was around 30 years old when the YW4A programme started.</p>

# Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)

They selected this change as they see human capacity building and networking as a sustainable achievement. The team captured this capacity enhancement into the below illustration:



organisation	<h1>Ibrahimia Media Center (IMC)</h1>		
country	Egypt		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	FBO		
	<p>Ibrahimia Media Center (IMC) was established in 2005 as the first Christian media centre in the Middle East. It has three main departments: Trainings, Production, and the Development department, which works to plan and implement community development projects, as a part of the overall vision of the centre.</p>	<p>The main focus of these projects is peace building, human rights, child protection, and gender equality. The centre also gives special attention to advocacy campaigns. Both the production and the development departments implement advocacy work from different angles and approaches, to advocate for justice and equality,</p>	<p>on both the national and regional level. Before joining YW4A, young women were not one of the organisation’s main targets. However, IMC’s principles include gender equality, and youth participation, which means that young women evidently fall under these categories.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before the YW4A programme, IMC had already been involved in projects related to women’s rights, gender equality, and advocacy. They worked on initiatives such as “Changing the Image of Women in Media,” which aimed to enhance the representation of women in media while training women and girls to play active roles in the sector. This project was supported by PMU Sweden and the Swedish Church. Another key project focused on capacity building for children to</p>	<p>reshape their understanding of gender roles and equality, conducted under the “For Peace” initiative.</p> <p>Additionally, IMC implemented a project on domestic violence targeting both men and women in marginalised areas, such as Abis and Al-Awayed, raising awareness about gender equality among Egyptian communities. Another initiative, “Very Happy Marriage,” tackled family rights and domestic violence</p>	<p>against women through booklets, a television series, and an online marital counselling platform. Further engagements included interfaith dialogue programmes and women’s rights initiatives. IMC also worked on strengthening advocacy and strategic planning capacities in Egypt, Algeria, and Palestine without specifically focusing on women’s rights. other projects targeted refugees, including awareness-raising on gender issues among Syrian children.</p>

## Ibrahimia Media Center (IMC)

However, before YW4A, volunteer engagement was limited, volunteers executed activities but did not receive structured capacity building. And there was also no legal advocacy component. The organisation had experience in media, advocacy, gender, and peacebuilding, but its approach was primarily focused on awareness-raising rather than structured advocacy efforts.

Due to the YW4A Intervention, IMC developed deeper expertise in advocacy, legal frameworks, and volunteer capacity building. The team adopted self-learning practices to align with donor and partner expectations while benefiting from structured capacity building programmes for both staff and volunteers. Close follow-up and support from partners such as Equality Now contributed to strengthening advocacy efforts. The organisation worked under high-pressure conditions, attended various youth conferences, and expanded its learning through practice and reflection on past

mistakes. YW4A also enabled the organisation to develop different curricula on women's rights, acquire advocacy equipment such as media tools, and enhance social media-based advocacy campaigns.

YW4A significantly transformed the organisation's approach to advocacy for women's rights. First, it expanded the organisation's presence in civil society, allowing it to build broader networks beyond previous limited partnerships. Second, it professionalised advocacy efforts, particularly in legal advocacy. Additionally, the programme empowered volunteers, providing them with comprehensive training and enabling them to become skilled facilitators. Unlike before, their engagement was no longer limited to short-term activities but became a sustained effort, particularly in social media advocacy, legal advocacy, and the RiseUp! programme.

On an institutional level, staff members gained experience in engaging diverse partners,

including external organisations in Palestine, South Sudan, and Kenya. The organisation also strengthened its strategic planning and detailed reporting processes. Through this programme, the organisation emerged as a leader in women's rights advocacy, deepening its knowledge on legal aspects of gender equality and developing annual advocacy strategies to track progress and impact. Staff also built expertise in managing long-term funding and partnerships while improving their ability to navigate diverse stakeholders. A specialised social media advocacy team was established to respond to inquiries about women's rights issues. Furthermore, the organisation gained knowledge on project exit strategies and sustainability planning, particularly for women's rights initiatives.

### Results of this change

- Volunteers became highly skilled facilitators, forming a sustainable talent pool for future projects.

## Ibrahimia Media Center (IMC)

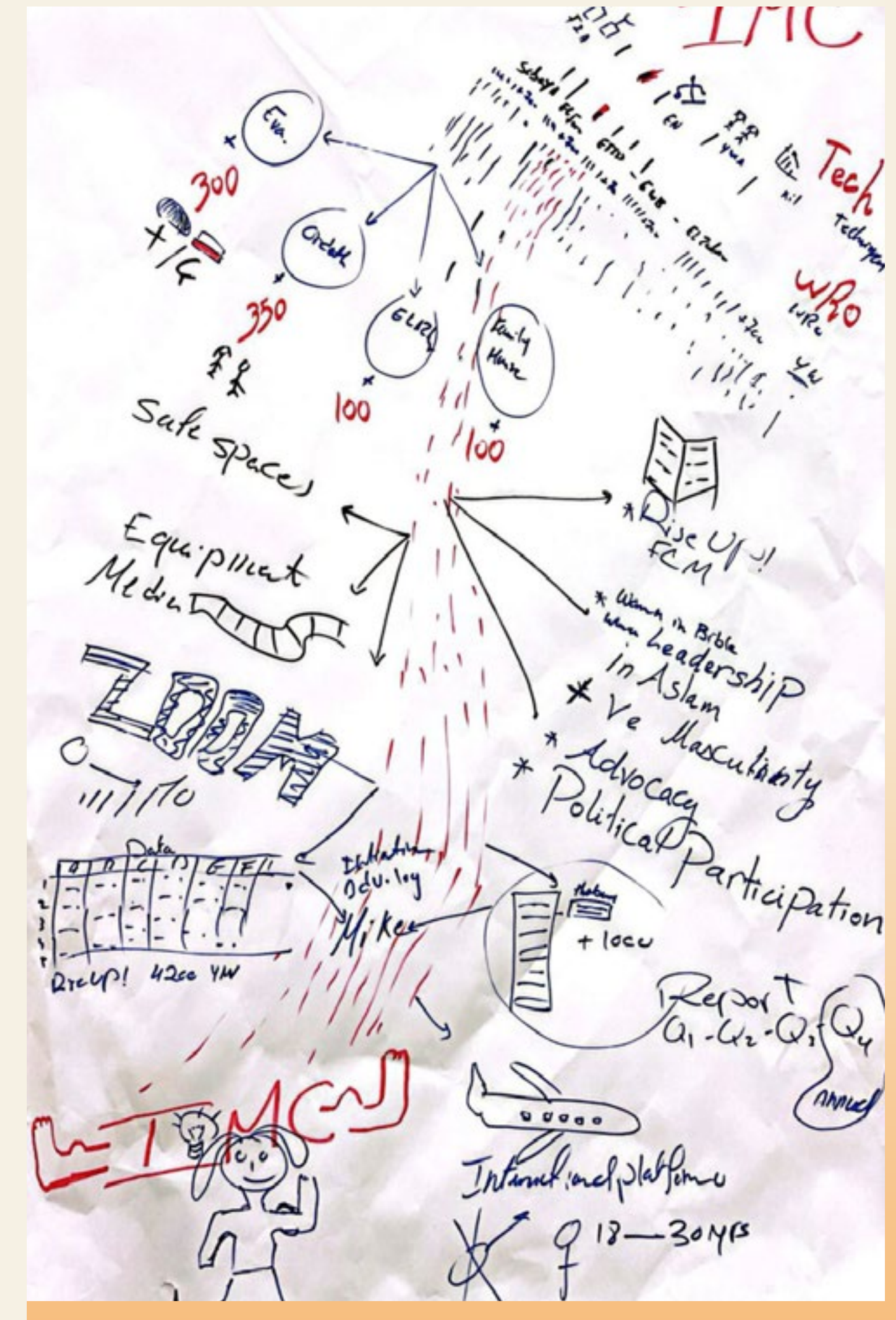
- The team developed strong data management skills, allowing them to extract and analyse quantitative results from a comprehensive database of women and partner organisations.
- A structured safeguarding policy was drafted, alongside the establishment of complaint mechanisms for reporting violations.
- The organisation now possesses a comprehensive database of women and grassroots organisations, facilitating future collaboration.
- The organisational portfolio was strengthened, making it more competitive for future project funding.
- The team expanded beyond a small group of staff to a broader institutional network with enhanced expertise.
- The organisation formed a partnership with Al-Azhar, broadening its advocacy scope.
- Social media advocacy will continue beyond the programme's duration, using

the “Kalam Mesh Fi Serek” page on social media to sustain online advocacy campaigns.

- Advocacy curricula developed during the programme were integrated into other partnerships, ensuring continuity in awareness-raising efforts.
- The concept of a women’s club was introduced, with efforts underway to secure funding for its establishment.

This transformation represents a shift from awareness-raising to structured, long-term advocacy for women’s rights, emphasizing the organisation’s role in shaping the advocacy.

The drawing represents IMC at the beginning of the programme as a solo implementer in advocacy, then it started to build partnerships with a lot of stakeholders, built their capacities and participated in different spaces and pathways to discuss the women’s rights issues. It reflects that IMC became a strong young woman with these capacities and partners.



organisation	Inua Mama Mjane (IMM)		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>Inua Mama Mjane is a Swahili phrase that translates to “empower the widow”. It is a community-based organisation that was founded in 2012, initially as a table banking platform with 12 members. As time progressed, they realised that the challenges facing rural widows were numerous. This became the organisation’s focus, and it is now a network</p>	<p>of women’s groups comprised mainly of widows. The organisation works to (economically) empower other women groups for widows in Meru, Isiolo and Tharaka Nithi counties. In addition to dealing with widows, they realised that widows also have children and girl children who also face many challenges, and they therefore included menstrual health</p>	<p>as one of their focus areas. IMM also undertakes sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) trainings in the community for women and young girls (not only widowed women/girls). Their strategic advantage includes their grassroots connections, ability to mobilise groups of women and their reputation and credibility/legitimacy.</p>
transformation journey	<p>The Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) participants engaged in a reflective exercise to identify stories that capture the most significant change in the organisation’s capacity to advocate for young women’s rights. Through this dialogue, the team agreed that the journey of transformation could best be represented through a creative metaphor, one that mirrors growth, resilience, and collective effort. The following story, developed</p>	<p>collaboratively by the participants, tells the story of their organisational change through the lens of a young woman farmer. It captures the phases of preparation, uncertainty, learning, leadership, and impact, symbolising the organisation’s evolving ability to support, amplify, and sustain young women’s leadership in advocacy. This is the story of a young woman who decided to take a bold new path. She left</p>	<p>behind familiar work to pursue something with deeper purpose, farming. With vision and determination, she acquired a small plot of land and began preparing the soil. This stage, filled with effort and anticipation, mirrors the initial phase of the YW4A programme, the groundwork of proposal development, strategic planning, and mobilisation. She planted her seeds in a nursery, and soon after, the first rains came, gentle and uncertain. This initial rain represents</p>

## Inua Mama Mjane (IMM)

YW4A's baseline assessments and early engagement with young women. But then the rain stopped. A period of silence and uncertainty followed, raising questions: Will the seeds survive? Will this vision take root? Eventually, the rains returned, stronger this time. With renewed hope, the young woman transplanted her seedlings into the open field.

The plants now needed more than water, they needed nourishment. This stage reflects YW4A's capacity building phase, where young women received tools, skills, and confidence to begin growing into leaders in their own right. But growth is rarely linear. As the plants began to flower, some flowers dropped prematurely, symbolising young women who disengaged from the programme, for various reasons.

Others were pruned, gently released or not fully accommodated, depending on alignment with the programme's focus. Still, many plants progressed to fruiting. Weeding continued throughout, representing the process of

unlearning internalised norms and clearing space for transformative growth.

One tomato plant, nurtured with care, yielded not just a handful of fruit but many fruits. Each tomato became a symbol of impact, a young woman leading her own FemSpace, catalysing change in her community. As the plants matured, their vines began to intertwine, illustrating the power of collaboration and solidarity among young women leaders and like-minded actors. Today, the young woman is no longer just a farmer, she is a leader in her field. Her success is recognised beyond her own garden, and others now call on her to share her methods, inspire new farmers, and model what's possible when seeds are planted in good soil, at the right time, with the right care.



This is not just her story, it is the story of YW4A's journey of collective growth, resilience, and transformation.

organisation	National Independent Church of Africa (NICA)		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	FBO		
	<p>The National Independent Church of Africa (NICA) is a church that is based on African ideologies in order to make Christianity more relatable to Africans. The guiding idea in NICA is to make the bible speak to Christians in a more contextualised fashion. NICA has its own creed and statement of faith as a church. The church’s governing documents are the Bible and the church constitution.</p> <p>NICA emphasises the equality of all believers, and they are included in all spaces including the highest positions. NICA also emphasises</p>	<p>on ecumenism – meaning that they do not operate singularly and are accordingly in different Christian coalitions and groups such as the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK), Organisation of Africa Instituted Churches (OAIC) and the Faith to Action Network.</p> <p>NICA’s church structure includes the recognition of various groups which have structured leadership including men’s fellowship,</p>	<p>women’s fellowship, youth group, children’s ministry and evangelism ministry.</p> <p>Before joining YW4A, NICA did not run any independent advocacy programmes and the instances it engaged in advocacy efforts were on account of its membership in the aforementioned faith-based coalitions. NICA did not have advocacy staff members, and any such endeavours fell to the priests.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before its engagement with the YW4A programme, NICA was known primarily as a traditional, male-dominated church. It had limited visibility, and where it was known, its identity was closely tied to senior male clergy and spiritual matters. There was little</p>	<p>to no space for young women’s participation or leadership. The church operated in isolation, with minimal interaction with external organisations and little engagement with societal issues such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).</p>	<p>The introduction of the YW4A programme marked a turning point. Through collaboration and exposure to new ideas, NICA experienced a profound shift. There was a growing awareness of the importance of young women’s inclusion and leadership within the church and the</p>

## National Independent Church of Africa (NICA)

broader community. The programme inspired clergy and members alike to expand their remit beyond purely religious duties, embracing advocacy and social justice, particularly in the area of women's rights. Culturally entrenched gender roles, which had limited the roles women could play within the church, began to be challenged. Shame and silence around issues like SGBV were replaced by open discussion. For the first time, members could stand on public platforms and speak out on issues that were once considered too controversial for a religious institution.

The journey was not without fear. Initially, there were concerns that by engaging in community dialogues and rights-based advocacy, NICA would be misunderstood, that it might be seen as attempting to recruit members (from other churches) or elevate the girl child at the expense of the boy child. Some feared that such work would erode the church's doctrine or alienate its base. But instead, the opposite

occurred: the church became more relevant and more trusted. Members began to see NICA as a safe space where they could seek both spiritual guidance and practical support.

YW4A also helped NICA recognise internal capacity gaps, especially regarding gender equality and the role of young women. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a metaphor, one participant reflected on the church's growth. At the programme's start, NICA was at a "naïve level", unsure and fearful of exposure. As the programme progressed, the church entered an "ice-breaking" phase, asking questions, seeking ideas, and building confidence. It then reached a "realisation" phase, marked by openness, collaboration, and awareness-raising. Today, NICA sees itself at the "actualisation" level: equipped, engaged, and proud of its many success stories, including receiving an award recognising its role in championing women's rights.

A particularly powerful image emerged during the workshop: NICA as a young girl who once believed her only calling was to preach the gospel, leaving other social justice work to NGOs. But through YW4A, she discovered her voice and authority to speak out against social injustices. She realised that faith and advocacy are not mutually exclusive, that the church can be a platform for transformation.

Looking forward, the dream is to establish a permanent wing within the church dedicated to women's rights programming, ensuring that the progress made under YW4A is sustained and expanded. The hope is that the clergy will continue to address these issues beyond the project's lifespan, with the NICA Meru branch already emerging as a model site for good practices. The journey of change for NICA has been one of rediscovery, courage, and growing conviction that faith-based spaces can, and must stand at the forefront of advocating for the rights and dignity of young women.

## National Independent Church of Africa (NICA)

In addition to the rich group reflections, participants also engaged in a creative exercise to visually express their perception of the organisation's journey of change. Each drew an image that captured how they saw NICA's transformation over time:

- One participant drew a minivan with flat, deflated tyres representing the church's earlier limited capacity. Now, the same vehicle was depicted with fully inflated tyres, a metaphor for NICA's strengthened ability to move forward and actively advocate for young women's rights.
- Another sketched a hen without eyes to symbolise the church's previous lack of vision or awareness around critical social issues.
- A bar graph drawn by another participant depicted NICA's steady growth, demonstrating how the organisation had made measurable progress over time.

- Another drew a vibrant image of a well-tended tree bearing fruit illustrated how nurturing the organisation, through knowledge, collaboration, and support, had led to visible and valuable outcomes.



- Finally, a landscape was drawn, young women were shown running from an arid, barren area, symbolic of exclusion and struggle, toward a green space representing NICA. This green space stood as a safe, fruitful environment where they could thrive. In the background, a mountain under a clear, sunny sky evokes the strength and aspiration to overcome their challenges.

These drawings added a powerful, personal layer to the discussion, illustrating both the emotional and structural shifts within NICA as a result of their engagement in the YW4A programme.

## National Independent Church of Africa (NICA)

A young woman also formulated a poem:

*In NICA's embrace, a dream takes flight,  
A beacon of hope, a source of light.  
A space where all are safe to be,  
Rooted in love and equity.*

*Yet dreams are fragile, bold yet shy,  
They need strong wings to touch the sky.  
The fear, it lingers, quiet but near,  
What if the vision fades unclear?*

*What if inclusion loses its way,  
And voices are silenced, led astray?  
What if the dream of equality breaks,  
Under the weight of human mistakes?*

*But NICA's heart is fierce and true,  
Its mission clear, its values new.  
A dream where every soul belongs,  
Where harmony mends what the world has wronged.*

*Let courage guide through fears that rise,  
To meet the future with open eyes.  
Dream boldly, NICA, and never sway,  
For fear is just the price we pay—*

*To build a world where all can see,  
The beauty of full humanity.  
And though the path is long and steep,  
The dream of NICA is one to keep.*

organisation	Nyatike Evangelism One Accord (NEOA)		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	FBO		
	<p>Nyatike Evangelism One Accord (NEOA) is a faith-based organisation formed by bringing together different organisations (churches) in order to unite pastors to work together to elevate the rights of women and children, including work with the community to ensure that children stay in school. It focuses on serving people outside of the pulpit. From a</p>	<p>programme’s perspective, they have worked significantly with World Vision on child rights and protection. Programme focus areas have included child protection, child rights, health and education. Before joining YW4A, there had also been some work on women’s rights, though not from an advocacy perspective but rather in terms of engaging with communities</p>	<p>on issues relating to teenage pregnancies by supporting girls and counselling their parents. The YW4A programme represented the first time that they had partners to collaborate and work on women’s rights. NEOA does not have dedicated (advocacy) staff but rather relies on the pastors and its members in engaging in various programmatic endeavours.</p>
transformation journey	<p>NEOA is a faith-based organisation with the ability to undertake advocacy. We had a dream and hope to change our community, to move away from social norms and traditions that reinforce poor education backgrounds, early pregnancies, early marriages, disunity among different religions, inequality, discrimination of young women in leadership, school dropouts, and rampant gender-based violence (GBV).</p>	<p>Prior to engaging with YW4A, our situation entailed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No funds for advocacy</li> <li>• Many early and unwanted pregnancies</li> <li>• Discrimination of young women in leadership</li> <li>• Violence in families</li> <li>• No unity among denominations</li> </ul>	<p>Our fears included inadequate economic resources and uncertainty about how the community would embrace the change.</p>

# Nyatike Evangelism One Accord (NEOA)

## Key Changes Achieved

- More young women are now in leadership within NEOA
- Perceived greater harmony in families due to reduced GBV reports
- Increased gender equity in leadership in NEOA
- Improved gender roles
- Increased enrolment of young women in schools and colleges
- Empowered young women with advocacy skills
- Society has embraced change

YW4A contributed to this change through the provision of funds for advocacy, trainings and empowerment on advocacy, and networking support.

## Results of the change

- More young women are in leadership roles in the church
- Young women can participate and express their views freely
- They are now empowered to claim their rights
- Young women have gained knowledge on advocacy
- Reduction in early and unwanted pregnancies
- Increased enrolment of young women in schools and colleges
- NEOA now has strong networks with gender actors, faith actors, and WROs
- Improved unity among denominations and religions

This change was driven by the determination to realise our dreams and hopes. It was made possible through the YW4A programme, partnerships with government and community leaders, unity among faith leaders, and the commitment of the NEOA team to advocacy.



organisation	Psychosocial Counselling Centre for Women (PSCCW)		
country	Palestine		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>The Psychosocial Counselling Centre for Women (PSCCW) was established in 1997. The leadership of the organisation were active women leaders, so advocacy started formulating from its beginnings. The PSCCW is an establishing member in the VAW civil coalition and an active member in other women’s rights platforms in Palestine. Advocacy is stated as part of the organisation’s mission and included in one of its three strategic objectives. At the start of YW4A programme, the organisation allocated national advocacy work to the</p>	<p>different staff members. While international and regional advocacy was led by the executive director, other staff members participated in regional and international advocacy related training and workshops. The organisation targets young women and girls, specifically young women survivors of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV). Following to the strategic plan, other targeting criteria include economic vulnerability, marginalised groups especially women and girls, women who suffer psychological symptoms because they</p>	<p>faced traumatizing experiences, women who need legal support, and children who need psychological support service especially in Areas C*.</p> <p>* Since Oslo interim accords the West Bank was divided into three political categories: Areas A representing 17.7% of the West Bank under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority (PA); Areas B representing 18.3% of the West Bank with partial administrative control by the PA; and Areas C representing 60.9%, under full the Israeli military and administrative control.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before YW4A, young women did not have ownership over advocacy on their rights, they had limited participation in decision-making at the internal level in term of identification, planning and implementation. The number and diversity amongst young women with</p>	<p>direct contact with the organisation was limited, and the organisation was absent from international advocacy and never led national level advocacy to amplify young women’s voices.</p>	<p>Due to the change in the organisation leadership vision towards young women, following the YW4A experience, where young women received trainings, participation opportunities and safe spaces, and built ownership, internally the organisation now has regular direct contact</p>

# Psychosocial Counselling Centre for Women (PSCCW)

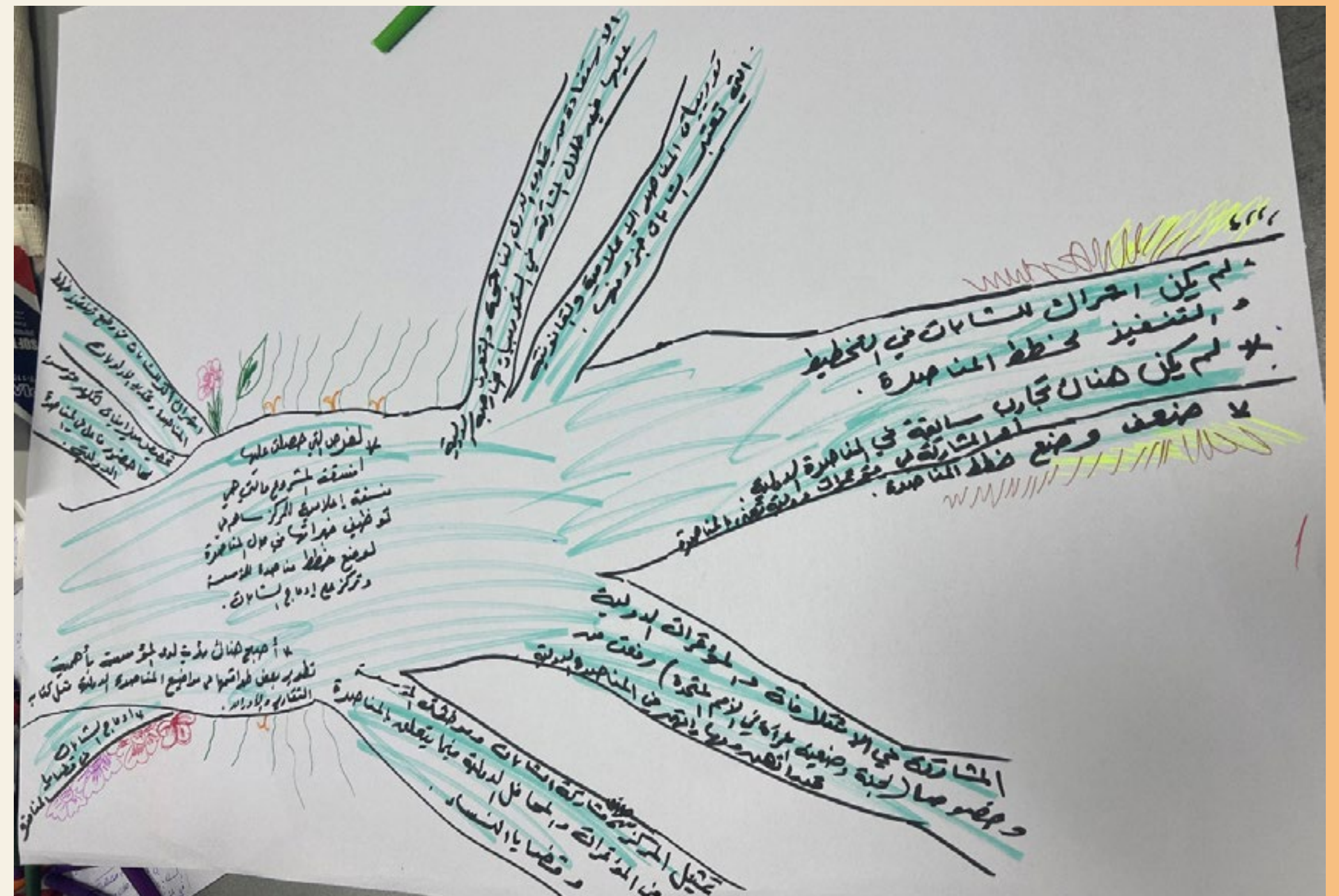
with a diverse group of young women.

The organisation adopted legal and policy analysis that reflects young women perspective as an approach to policy advocacy at the national level and is now preparing an advocacy strategy aside from the organisation overall strategy as a service provider. This approach also entails that young women lead the identification of right areas, lead the legal analysis, design the campaign and implement it. During the first few months of 2025, the young women are representing the organisation in meetings with ministers monthly.

As a result of young women participation in regional training, coalitions and international platforms, their role and contribution to decision-making was informed. The organisation is planning for international advocacy through young women in its projects' design to ensure allocating enough resources for that, as well as for their preparation to continue taking on representative roles.

They selected this change as they noted the added value of young women ownership, in adding new perspective based on real life experiences, which are new experiences, as well as the enthusiasm it creates for movement building through reaching more young women.

They selected to imagine the change in advocacy as a river, that is maintained and encouraged by the water coming from smaller rivers and waterfalls representing the interventions and the young women ownership building.



organisation	<h1>Sabaya El Kheir</h1>		
country	Egypt		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>Sabaya Al Kheir Association was established in 2014, and before that, was a kindergarten for young children. The organisation focuses on women and children. It provides services for poor families as well as activities for families and children, such as their work in the protection committees, and case management for children.</p>	<p>They had several partnerships including with Plan International in a project focused on child protection &amp; rights (“Safe Cities”). They also worked with Save the Children on a project related to positive parenting. Sabaya Al Kheir has built a good reputation in child protection despite their relatively short history.</p>	<p>The organisation has a lot of young women facilitators and volunteers; a part of their scope is to build capacities of young women to become leaders and community key actors. Before joining YW4A, advocacy had not been the organisation’s main objective.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before YW4A, Sabaya El Kheir focused exclusively on children’s rights, as the founder was a member of the Child Protection Hotline Committee in a district in Alexandria. Their child protection policy only addressed issues related to children, with no focus on women’s rights.</p> <p><b>Changes due to the YW4A programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through capacity building opportunities, the team was exposed to various programmes and advocacy strategies,</li> </ul>	<p>expanding their scope beyond children’s rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation set a long-term goal to establish a strong reputation in the field of women’s and children’s rights within the development sector.</li> <li>• A girls’ club was created within the organisation to provide a safe space for young women.</li> <li>• The organisation acquired media production tools to enhance their social media presence and advocacy efforts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key change in advocacy capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young women were trained through RiseUp! and equipped to become facilitators and community leaders.</li> <li>• The organisation launched a dedicated unit to provide legal and mental health support to women and girls in need.</li> <li>• A specialised team was formed to lead digital advocacy efforts and amplify their message.</li> <li>• Girls received training in sign language and</li> </ul>

## Sabaya El Kheir

assisting individuals with visual impairments, enabling them to support persons living with disabilities.

- A scouting group was established, including young women living with disabilities, fostering inclusion and leadership development.

### Results of this change

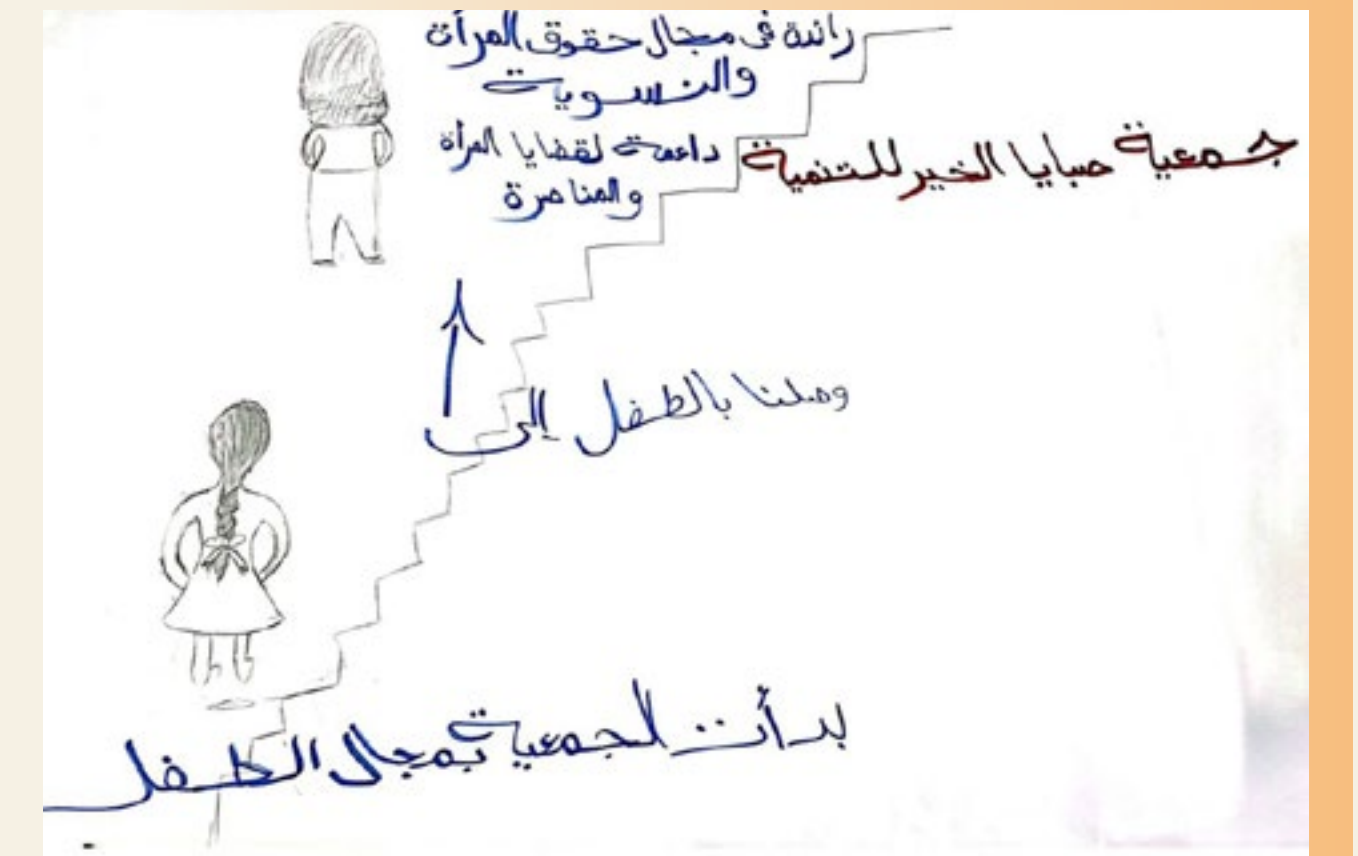
- Girls, previously restricted by parental opposition, are now able to travel domestically and internationally for capacity building opportunities related to women's rights.
- The organisation is now equipped to lead advocacy campaigns and organise conferences involving religious leaders and government representatives. These events are organised and led by young women staff of Sabay El Kheir trained under YW4A.
- Sabaya built partnerships with 24 local organisations in Alexandria, enhancing its impact and outreach.

During this discussion there were several quotes mentioned by the Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) participants:

*Sabaya El Kheir was like a child, and now it has grown into a young woman with its own identity, connections, and presence in the field of development and women's rights advocacy.*

*Sabaya El Kheir is the first step in changing a girl's mindset, helping her see beyond just household chores.*

*Being part of the organisation and its projects shaped my most important life decisions, like choosing my field of study. My perspective has been deeply influenced by my experience here.*



Following this discussion, the AOCA participants chose to represent this journey of change through a drawing. The illustration shows Sabaya as a child (symbolising its early focus on children's rights) growing into a young woman who becomes an advocate for young women's rights since they have broadened their scope to work on women's rights advocacy.

organisation	<h1>Safe Engage Foundation (SEF)</h1>		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2023 (March)		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>Safe Engage Foundation (SEF) was established in 2016 and registered in 2018. It is a youth led community-based organisation located in Kuria, Migori County. SEF's main areas of focus are children's rights and women's rights. SEF was founded to empower young girls and boys to know their rights and have agency, with a special target on addressing child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).</p>	<p>The organisation's pioneering interventions were school related including: school visits (primary and secondary); recruiting mentors to visit schools; and reaching out to parents through community meetings. These initial efforts led to more women's rights empowerment programmes, including from a rights and economic empowerment perspective by training women on hands-on skills such as making mats and ponchos from yarn and various artefacts using banana leaves. The organisation has run</p>	<p>several programmes including a mentorship programme known as 'Hold my hand' initiative; a women's mentorship programme called 'Endelea initiative'; a programme targeting children out of school during holidays and weekends on various life skills and computer literacy known as 'Enlighten us'; art to end FGM, also targeting children; and a Parents Forum &amp; Village Forum, which talks about the need to uphold children's rights and women's rights.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before the YW4A programme, SEF embarked on what they referred to as the <b>planting season</b>. During this phase, they assessed the needs of the community and clearly identified a strong desire to end all forms of violence. However, as they moved into the early <b>growth stage</b>, the organisation encountered significant</p>	<p>challenges, including hostility from some quarters and a widespread lack of understanding about their mentorship and village forum models. Recognising the need for nurturing, SEF focused on strengthening their organisation internally and refining how their goals could be</p>	<p>achieved. As they entered the <b>fruiting season</b>, their passion for fighting sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) began to attract like-minded partners. They also started actively recruiting young women to broaden their reach and deepen their impact within the community. The YW4A programme played a critical role at</p>

## Safe Engage Foundation (SEF)

this stage by building SEF's capacity through training, resource management, and strategic planning.

This support led SEF to reflect on their post-programme strategic focus. They decided to concentrate specifically on empowering young women — helping them become leaders and equipping them to combat gender-based violence effectively.

In the **blooming** stage, SEF experienced a remarkable shift in leadership: young women began leading both at board and staff levels. These young women were entrusted with running programmes, a reflection of the leadership's growing confidence in their abilities.

The **harvest and fruits** of the YW4A programme were tangible. Prior to their engagement with the programme, SEF lacked systems like e-banking and had limited financial capacity. Since then, their financial processes

and accountability structures have significantly improved. Documentation practices have also strengthened, with a more strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E), helping them use evaluation outcomes to inform programme design and decision-making.

There is now a strong sense of hope, energy, and enthusiasm within the organisation, with leadership engagement reaching new heights. Their work with YW4A has also enhanced their visibility and they were recognised by an external organisation following their activities on Facebook. Notably, three young women from SEF, Nancy Boke, Christine Alfons, and Mercy Robi were honoured with awards for their outstanding contributions to the community.

Reflecting on their journey, SEF acknowledges that before the YW4A programme, they struggled to see tangible outcomes from their work. Capacity building, exposure to new partners, and learning how to document every step of

their progress have enabled them to establish a clear strategic focus and track achievements meaningfully. Today, their growth is visible year-round, attracting attention from new partners and funders.

One significant achievement was receiving a grant from the Obama Foundation's Girls Opportunity Alliance, which now supports the education of ten young women. Through their focus on young women's empowerment, SEF has not only strengthened internally but also increased their impact across the wider community.



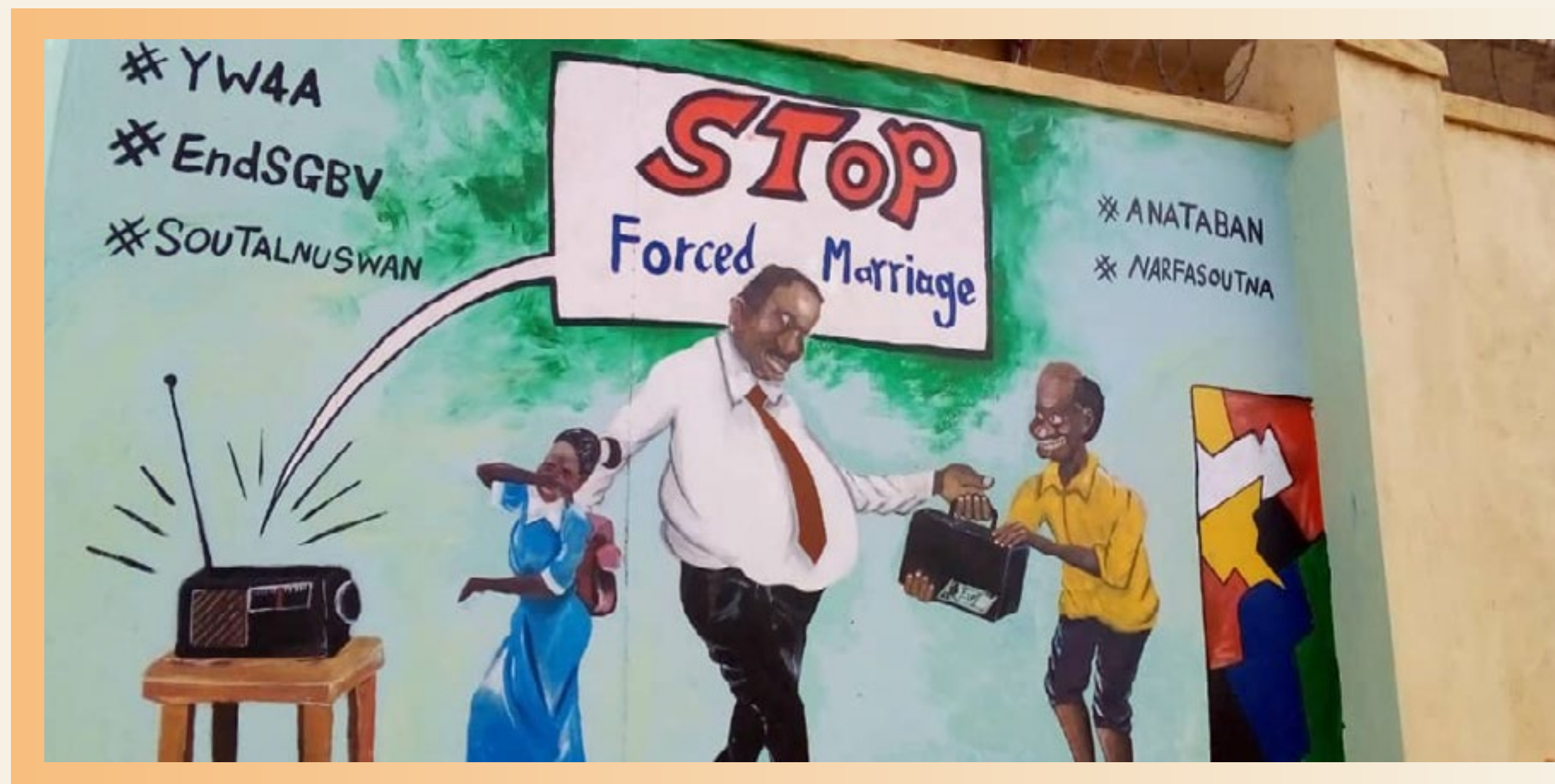
organisation	Self Help Women Development Organisation (SHWDO)		
country	South Sudan		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>Self Help Women Development Organisation (SHWDO) is a non-profit and nonpartisan organisation, initiated in 2009 as a Women Group and later transformed into a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) in 2010. The organisation has its head office in Yambio, the State Capital of Western Equatoria State. The organisation is governed by an elected board of directors, which is overseen by the General Assembly who serves as the supreme decision-making</p>	<p>body. The management is headed by the Executive Director who implements the operational policies of the organisation. SHWDO is operating with six field offices or branches: in Asanza, Yambio, Nzara, Ezo, Tambura and Ibba in the greater Western Equatoria Region. SHWDO is committed to the promise of ensuring gender equality is a reality in the lives of women and girls across all multi-sectors and levels of decision-making</p>	<p>in South Sudan. Women’s empowerment is at the core of its interventions and programmes aimed at equipping women and girls with smart skills that produce quick results in terms of income generation. Before joining the YW4A programme, SHWDO had no advocacy strategy in place, though the organisation had been engaged in advocacy on gender-based violence (GBV).</p>
transformation journey	<p>SHWDO initially focused on projects related to women’s livelihoods and psychosocial support. Therefore, SHWDO had limited knowledge in areas such as advocacy, young women’s leadership, participation in decision-making, and creating space for young women. The organisation also had limited experience in networking and collaboration with other</p>	<p>Women’s Rights Organisations (WROs), CSOs, or key stakeholders like the National and State Ministries of Gender. Key policies, such as advocacy, gender, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), M&amp;E, finance, project management, and media advocacy, were also lacking.</p>	<p>However, the interventions brought in by the YW4A programme led to SHWDO staff undergoing capacity building in areas such as leadership, advocacy, policy development, women’s rights, CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, feminism, and positive masculinities. SHWDO also built partnerships and joined networks, which improved its visibility at the state and</p>

## Self Help Women Development Organisation (SHWDO)

national levels. Staff began to understand the need to create space for young women and advocate on their behalf.

Through the YW4A programme, SHWDO created safe spaces for a diverse group of young women such as young women from diverse ethnicities, religious and education backgrounds, and including young women living with disabilities from the community and trained them on their rights. As a result, these young women were able to engage key stakeholders at both the state and

national levels on issues affecting them such as negative cultural practices of early and forced marriages, lack of support of the girl child education and the relegation of young women to the lowest in the community in terms of leadership. At the state level, this engagement led to the drafting of the Girl Child Education Bill and advocacy for its adoption into law.



The result of these changes is that SHWDO has become a stronger and more recognised WRO at both the state and national levels, serving as a voice for change for young women in Yambio.

organisation	Seventh Day Adventist South Kenya Conference (SDA) Kisii		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2022 (Q4)		
organisation type	FBO		
	<p>The Seventh Day Adventist Church - South Kenya Conference (SDA Kisii) is an organisation in charge of the management of the SDA Church in Kisii County. The church has been in existence for 100 years and has a rich history in the community, where it has evolved and grown in stature over the years. It started as a church then grew into to a mission, thereafter a mission field and finally became a conference. When joining YW4A, the South Kenya Conference</p>	<p>had 500 churches and 100 active employees and 120 retirees. SDA Kisii is guided by the overall Adventist doctrine which comprises of the Bible and the 29 fundamental beliefs. In addition, they are guided by the General Conference Policy and the Church Manual.</p> <p>In Kisii county, there are two major denominations, being the SDA Kisii and the Catholic Church. SDA Kisii occupies a dominant faith-</p>	<p>based space in the county. SDA Kisii is the proprietor of a teacher's college, a preparatory school, hospital, several medical clinics and a School for the Deaf. Several secondary and primary schools are also sponsored by SDA Kisii. SDA Kisii acknowledges the sanctity of life, values women and believes men and women were created equal. There is a department dedicated to Women and Children in particular.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Initially, the organisation approached the YW4A programme with considerable hesitation, which contributed to their delayed entry. Much of the apprehension stemmed from concerns about how the programme's aims, particularly its focus on gender equality, would be received within the broader Adventist community. There was a perception that the programme</p>	<p>might conflict with established religious and cultural norms.</p> <p>Despite these concerns, the organisation gradually embraced the YW4A programme, particularly within the Nyaribari Constituency, where they have since undertaken substantial advocacy and community engagement.</p>	<p>The programme is increasingly viewed in a more positive light, generating interest from other segments of the church. Participation has also facilitated stronger relationships with other denominations and faith groups, broadening the organisation's interfaith collaboration.</p>

## Seventh Day Adventist South Kenya Conference (SDA) Kisii

Implementing the YW4A programme was not without challenges. Limited financial resources and stringent reporting requirements created logistical difficulties, particularly in terms of mobilising participants and covering basic costs. These constraints initially made it harder to build support internally. Nonetheless, the organisation chose to proceed, recognising a strong alignment between the programme's objectives and their own values, especially the commitment to empowering young women within their congregation and wider community. Over time, their involvement has led to greater visibility in Kisii county and enhanced their reputation.

The advocacy work has grown steadily at community level, with participation expanding incrementally. In one instance, a faith-based dissemination meeting attracted as many as 750 people, demonstrating increasing community engagement. Through the programme's support, including training and facilitation by YW4A, the organisation has been able to promote messages grounded in faith that affirm equality, dignity, and rights for both women and men, while also addressing issues such as sexual and gender-based violence.



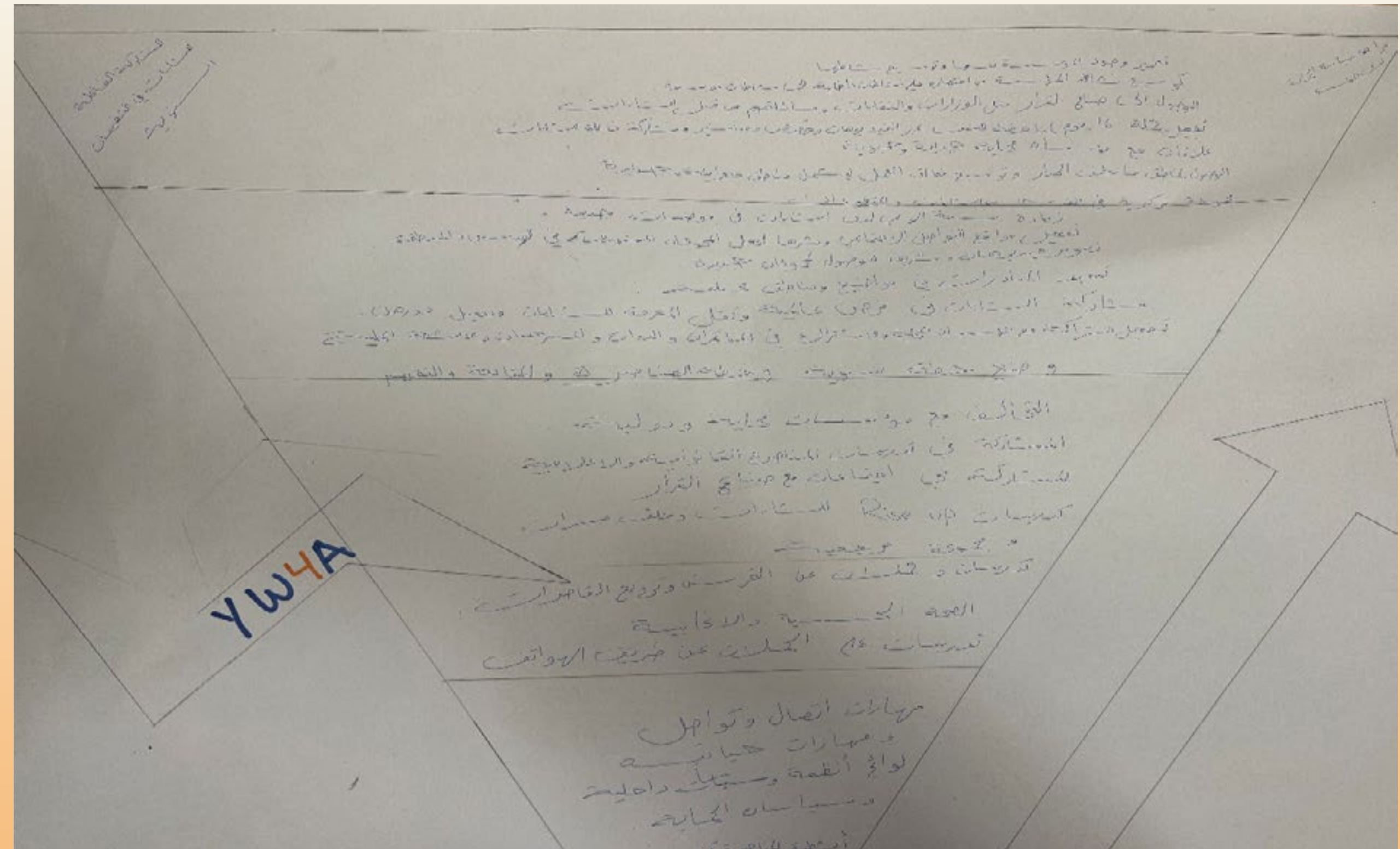
organisation	Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) Jerusalem		
country	Palestine		
engaged in YW4A since	2022 (Q4)		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>YWCA Jerusalem is a non-governmental association initiated in 1893 by informal groups of Christian women and was formally established in Jerusalem in 1918. The organisation is part of YWCA Palestine. Where YWCA Jerusalem is responsible for direct implementation of programmes with young women besides other branches, YWCA Palestine as a Union is more</p>	<p>responsible for the advocacy components on behalf of the branches.</p> <p>YWCA Jerusalem provides technical and vocational trainings to young women and men from all around Jerusalem. Its services also include empowerment programmes for young women in association with the vocational</p>	<p>training opportunities provided. The YWCA Jerusalem operates from the Eastern part of Jerusalem, where services are mostly governed by the Israeli occupation authority. YWCA is a member of the Hemaya (protection) Network and other women’s rights coalitions in Palestine.</p>
transformation journey	<p>The Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) participants worked together, as one group, explaining the YW4A experience (before, through and after) by drawing a triangle to show levelling up process in advocacy, and then identified the most significant change.</p> <p>Before YW4A, meetings with the decision-makers (Palestinians) happened through the participation</p>	<p>of the YWCA Jerusalem leaders through the network and Vocational Training Centre coordination platforms. They had a limited number of young women engaged in their advocacy, who also did not have the opportunity to explore the priorities of young women in diverse communities of East Jerusalem, for example those living inside the borders of the apartheid wall and those who live outside. As such young women were not aware of</p>	<p>challenges experienced by other young women, never participated in analysis of policies and laws, and were not fully aware of their rights, amongst others.</p> <p>Through the YW4A programme, young women gained the network, the knowledge, the skills and built their will to take an active role in advocacy. This happened through the trainings on advocacy and digital advocacy, the RiseUp!</p>

# Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) Jerusalem

and Feminist Consultation Methodology (FCM), the regular meetings with other Women's Rights Organisations and the safe spaces created through the YW4A. The overall approach of bringing together young women from diverse groups encouraged the young women to be active participants in advocacy. The YW4A also expanded their knowledge about national level coalitions and networks that relate to their rights, better understand the policies and the context that govern the different parts of East Jerusalem.

The result, comprising the most significant change was a group of young women, who met with ministers, fully knowledgeable and skilled to discuss their demands. Which led to the formation of National Committee for example, through the Minister of Labour, to follow up on the young women demands related to harassment in the workplace, the committee is inclusive of young women participants in YW4A. Another result they

found important to highlight relates to breaking the isolation between the young women in East Jerusalem in areas administered by the occupations and engaging them with young women from other areas to work on common rights.



organisation	Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Juba		
country	South Sudan		
engaged in YW4A since	2023 (August)		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>YWCA Juba was founded in 2015. The organisation focuses on peacebuilding, advocacy for young women's rights, offering referrals and case management to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and facilitating access to justice to the survivors. The mission of the organisation is to empower young women and girls in South Sudan to achieve</p>	<p>justice, peace, health, human dignity and sustainable environment, and to develop their leadership skills and values to effectively participate in nation-building.</p> <p>YWCA Juba is a strong advocate and human rights defender in South Sudan. As a membership organisation, YWCA Juba draws its strength</p>	<p>from its members, the majority of whom are young people. The members work to promote unity and peaceful coexistence in their communities. They engage in activities that promote peace such as drama, sports, peace songs, and dancing, to disseminate messages of peace to the public.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before joining the YW4A programme YWCA Juba had very limited advocacy skills, strategies and tactics. Advocacy efforts were hampered by limited resources, lack of awareness and capacity on advocacy as well as limited knowledge on the rights of young women. There was also a lack of systematic channels to influence policy changes. The chairperson noted that "you cannot advocate on issues that you are not fully aware of." Young women's voices in</p>	<p>the communities were significant, yet it doesn't get to the right ears or spaces hence not taken seriously due to cultural barriers and economic instability in South Sudan.</p> <p>The organisation's advocacy capacity however significantly improved with the introduction of the YW4A programme, which provided funding to amplify the voices of young women. The trainings, workshops received and joint</p>	<p>advocacy initiatives using different strategies and tactics positively alleviated the organisation's capacity to speak on behalf of young women as well as supported young women to know their rights and speak out on their issues.</p> <p>Through the YW4A, YWCA Juba became a voice for the marginalised young women and was able to advocate on their behalf, and in close collaboration with the young women</p>

## Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Juba

engaged through the programme. The organisation together with other Women's Rights Organisations advocated for the GBV Bill and the Women Empowerment Bill. The organisation organised several round table discussions with different stakeholders on issues of young women in the communities.

This resulted in the creation of three safe spaces in the communities where young women discuss their issues, share ideas as well as get trained. These spaces also brought together a diverse group of young women including those living with disabilities. Young women were also empowered to speak up for themselves and take up leadership roles in their communities such as in the quarter councils, as community mobilisers and some as staff within YWCA Juba.

YWCA Juba Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) participants chose this change as it is the game changer for them. Through advocacy, they were able

to influence policies, create networks and partnerships, amplify the voices of young women and contribute to reducing women's rights violations and abuses in the communities. The recognition of advocacy as a game-changer highlights the transformative power of speaking

up and taking action. The impact of the YW4A programme on YWCA Juba and the wider community is a testament to the importance of investing in young women's leadership and advocacy.



organisation	Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kenya		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>YWCA Kenya is an NGO advocating for women's rights since 1912. The organisation has seven branches in Kenya: Tana River, Mombasa, Meru, Kisii, Nairobi, Kisumu, Siaya and HQ. These offices together cover a geographical scope of 21 counties. YWCA Kenya is a young women's Christian membership organisation. The scope however goes beyond young women to include women generally in consideration of intergenerational continuity of the organisational culture and history. Men and non-Christians are also included as non-associate members as well as membership</p>	<p>for corporate institutions. YWCA Kenya is affiliated to the World YWCA. YWCA Kenya implements programmes with a national scope of work. It also steers the programmatic interventions of the branch offices ranging from oversight to programme coordination.</p> <p>As an organisation, YWCA Kenya has evolved over time. Initially, the focus was on provision of safe spaces for young women and in promoting their rights, life skills and access to education. Over time, YWCA Kenya also</p>	<p>ventured into programmes on sexual gender-based violence (SGBV), socio-economic empowerment, climate change, peace building and security, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and fostering the leadership of young women from a life skills perspective so that they can take up leadership in all spaces. YWCA Kenya provides safe spaces for many young women and girls and works towards their emancipation in all spheres.</p>
transformation journey	<p>The Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) engaged in a reflective exercise to identify stories that capture the most significant change in the organisation's capacity to advocate for young women's rights. Through this dialogue, the team agreed that</p>	<p>the journey of transformation could best be represented through a creative metaphor of a flower in bloom.</p>	<p><b>Before YW4A: A Drooping Flower</b>  Before the YW4A initiative, the organisational capacity for advocacy, particularly for and by young women, was constrained, like a flower with potential beauty, but bowed and under-nourished. In Kenya, civic space for CSOs was</p>

# Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kenya

shrinking, limiting their ability to empower young women and amplify their voices.

Within the YWCA, young women had low representation in leadership spaces, and the structural barriers were compounded by fears around unprecedented challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, insufficient funding, and community resistance to change.

## The Dream That Rooted Change

Amid these challenges, there was a clear and powerful dream: to strengthen the leadership capacity of young women so they could amplify their voices, claim and occupy decision-making spaces, and shift power structures that historically excluded them. This vision was underpinned by research exposing the high prevalence of SGBV in counties such as Migori, Meru, and Kisii. These findings illuminated an urgent need for coordinated action to protect and promote the rights of young women.

## After YW4A: Nourishment and Growth

The introduction of the YW4A programme marked the beginning of transformative change. Like water and fertiliser to a wilting flower, YW4A brought trainings, mentorship, strategic partnerships, and platforms for networking that revitalised advocacy capacity. One flower began to flourish, and with the support of enabling actors and advocacy spaces (likened to bees), cross-pollination began. Knowledge and leadership cascaded through peer-to-peer trainings, enabling organisations to reach even more young women and cultivate a whole garden of empowered young women leaders.

## Key Changes Realised

Through the interlinked action of YW4A's four pathways, young women began taking up leadership roles and driving collective transformative actions to hold decision-makers in the three programme counties accountable. The capacity of both YWCA and young women

themselves was enhanced, laying a solid foundation for sustainable advocacy. The change was visible, significant, and systemic.

## YW4A's Strategic Role

YW4A played a pivotal role in this transformation by:

- Building the capacity of young women, women's rights organisations and faith-based organisations through different training interventions
- Providing platforms for advocacy at national, regional, and international levels
- Amplifying young women's voices through media, the RiseUp! model, and robust networking platforms
- Supplying essential tools and resources
- Offering technical support in legal and policy advocacy (Equality Now), social norms change (Faith to Action Network), and leadership development (YWCA Kenya)

# Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kenya

## The Results: A Garden in Full Bloom

The tangible results speak volumes:

- 4,400 women empowered
- Strengthened institutional capacity to promote and defend young women's rights
- Increased partnerships and coalitions for broader impact across YW4A partners in Kenya and the broader CSO playing field
- Expanded media engagement that elevated the voices and issues of young women
- Intergenerational leadership embraced and practiced
- A marked increase in organisational visibility and influence



## Why This Story Matters

This story of change is more than a success narrative; it is a call to action. It urges all stakeholders to recognise and invest in the immense potential of young women as transformative agents of change.

The YW4A programme has not only empowered individuals but has also forged meaningful coalitions and enhanced visibility, leaving a lasting impact on advocacy landscapes and leadership norms.

organisation	Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kisii		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>YWCA Kisii is a membership organisation and one of the branches of the YWCA Kenya. The branch started its operations in 1986. Its programmatic coverage includes Kisii, Nyamira, Migori and Homa Bay counties. The main office is in Kisii, and there is another branch in Nyamira. YWCA Kisii is an organisation that champions women's rights and human rights at large, including advocacy on those issues with key programming in this area relating to female genital mutilation (FGM) which is prevalent and deeply rooted in Kisii county.</p>	<p>YWCA Kisii therefore undertakes advocacy on the effects of FGM and the law prohibiting the practice. Their beneficiaries tend to be young girls who are likely to be victims, parents, churches, teachers and other opinion leaders.</p> <p>Other programmes focus on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), HIV/AIDS, menstrual hygiene, Family Planning, maternal health, economic literacy/livelihood programme, table banking (information provision), and safe spaces for young girls.</p>	<p>The YWCA Kisii also offers hostels and conference facilities. YWCA Kisii works with champions on the ground who champion the rights of young women at a community setting. For FGM and SRHR the champions are based in the community, and they implement programmes at the grassroots level. For instance, they have Y-Teen clubs in high schools and some primary schools which are used to sensitise young girls on their rights.</p>
transformation journey	<p>Before the YW4A programme, the organisation faced significant limitations in its ability to undertake advocacy for young women's rights, operating without any formal staff, relying on a volunteer manager, struggling with low membership, and lacking funding. The introduction</p>	<p>of the YW4A programme marked a turning point, providing both financial support and capacity building through targeted trainings.</p> <p>As a result, the organisation now has trained staff and a growing pool of empowered young</p>	<p>women equipped with the skills and confidence to lead and participate in advocacy efforts. This transformation has made the organisation more visible, effective, and capable of championing young women's rights.</p>

## Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kisii

### Advocacy and Organisational Capacity

Assessment (AOCA) participants emphasised that this change best represents the journey they have taken, growing from a place of limited capacity to one of strength and influence. To honour and creatively express this transformation, they chose to further capture their story of change through a poem developed during the session. The poem captures the transformation that has resulted from YW4A as well as the fears on sustainability once the programme ends.

### A Poem on YWCA Kisii's Story of Change: From Spark to Flame

*A dream untold, a vision small,  
No staff, just one to answer the call.  
A volunteer manager, lone and true,  
Struggling, wondering what to do.*

*Membership low, no hands to lend,  
A building neglected, where does it end?  
No funds to breathe, no support to find,  
Yet hope was kindling, still undefined.*

*A spark ignited, now a flame,  
Membership blossoms, no longer the same.  
She grows stronger, a team united,  
Her future now brightly lighted.*

*The building stands proud, a place to thrive,  
Hostels and offices come alive.  
Networking grows, partnerships bloom,  
A dream once faded, now brightly groomed.*

*Young women empowered, standing strong,  
Advocacy calls echo, loud and long.  
Economically strengthened, their voices clear,  
A movement forged, no longer mere.*

*Through the trials and the fears,  
They rise above, through blood, sweat, and tears.  
Yet we fear that when her journey ends,  
The young women may not fully transcend.*

*Without her support, the bond may break,  
The momentum lost, for old times' sake.  
The journey's long, the growth immense,  
A tale of progress, and its consequence.*

organisation	Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Meru		
country	Kenya		
engaged in YW4A since	2021		
organisation type	WRO		
	<p>YWCA Meru is a membership organisation and one of the branches of the YWCA Kenya. The branch was started in 1982 by a group of young women who wanted a space where young women could come and earn some technical skills while utilising the hostels. Its programmatic operations cover Meru, Tharaka Nithi and Isiolo counties. It is a membership organisation comprised of women, most are young women, but not exclusively as they encourage all ages of women to facilitate intergenerational dialogue.</p>	<p>YWCA Meru implements programmes that aim to empower women and girls. The organisation works to create safe spaces. They empower women and girls economically through savings and investments groups and try to link them to micro finance institutions. There are some income generating activities (IGAs) including hostels, kitchen and rental of facilities. Funds from the IGAs are utilised for their programmes which include health including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR);</p>	<p>education for girls; young women's leadership development; socio-economic empowerment for young women; climate change and environmental degradation; advocacy for women and girls; safe spaces for girls who are pursuing their education and careers through provision of hostels.</p>
transformation journey	<p>At the start of our advocacy journey under YW4A, our organisation had only a limited understanding of what advocacy truly entailed. We knew we wanted to do something meaningful, but we did not fully grasp what we were getting ourselves into. With time, and through a series of well-structured trainings of the</p>	<p>different YW4A partners, that uncertainty transformed into clarity, confidence, and action.</p> <p>Today, a number of young women have emerged as powerful advocates for young women's rights. They now understand</p>	<p>advocacy in its depth and complexity: conducting research, representing the organisation in key spaces, writing reports, and most importantly, leading change. Our branch's membership has expanded, and many young women now occupy leadership roles, with some even founding</p>

## Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Meru

their own organisations. As an organisation, we are incredibly proud of this transformation. It has been a remarkable journey of growth and discovery.

Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) participants shared their experiences. Overcoming fear has been a key theme in many of these individual journeys, as well as the programme given shape and direction to their sense of justice. Also, empowerment has gone beyond participation, it has translated into initiatives and independence, which is mirrored across many FemSpaces. Young women now independently distribute sanitary pads and run economic empowerment activities, including savings micro-enterprises. Some FemSpaces have even registered as self-help groups, one is proudly named Luminous Safe Space, signifying a future full of promise.



*I don't need to be facilitated by YW4A anymore. I run my own community interventions. I go to Madrassa to hold sessions and work with women in the community. I even distribute sanitary pads.*

*When I joined YW4A, I remember thinking: 'Sasa hizi ni gani?' (what is all this about?) I was so afraid of being rejected, of not understanding. I used to see Santa facilitating in the community and hoped I could grow to be like her. Now, I speak confidently in schools and communities, I write reports and I also facilitate meetings.*

The ripple effects have reached far beyond individuals. The visibility and reputation of the YWCA branch has grown, not just within the local community, but at the national level as well. Today, more significant partners are actively seeking collaboration with us. The YW4A programme has also contributed to the upgrading of YWCA facilities, boosting both income and institutional visibility. The change at YWCA Meru is sustainable, participants feel transformation will outlive the programme. Some kinds of change are irreversible, like empowerment, or a deepened awareness of one's own agency. It is like a light that cannot be switched off.

## Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Meru

*I was a young feminist. I had this sense of justice, but it didn't go beyond my space. I didn't have the skills, and I didn't know how to actualise it. During the first RiseUp! training session of the programme, I thought, 'This feels like home.' As I grew in my journey, I noticed the gap for people with invisible disabilities like the deaf community. I brought this issue into the advocacy space, and it was so well received. The deaf community is now finding its voice. In fact, through YW4A training and support, I helped them form their own community-based organisation.*

*When I joined the organisation, I was a naïve girl with a dream to work with the community, but I didn't know where to start. I was given a space to learn, to unlearn, to share my opinions, and to gain experience. Through the training and support, I realised I could go back to my community and be the voice for the girls who cannot speak for themselves. That dream I had? I am living it now, I have helped my community.*



organisation

# Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) Palestine

country

Palestine

engaged in YW4A since

2021

organisation type

WRO

YWCA Palestine is a non-governmental association, operating since 1893. Its vision is that women, especially young women are decision-makers, agents of change and leaders in a society where equality, freedom, tolerance, justice, peace and dignity are promoted. To that end, YWCA Palestine empowers women and youth to demand, exercise and protect their economic, social and political rights. Amplifying young women’s voices is at the core of its mission, through building their capacities,

advocating with them and for their rights at the national, international and regional levels.

YWCA Palestine is an active member of several civil society coalitions (CSOs) in Palestine that target (young) women’s rights, especially the civil society coalition against violence against women, the civil coalition on resolution 1325, CEDAW committee, and National committee on UNSCR 1325 amongst others. YWCA Palestine integrates national and international advocacy

towards young women’s rights as part of their strategic directions. Their advocacy tactics are driven from their participation in the national and civil society coalition. They provide empowerment services for young women, focusing on economic empowerment. Long term operations in the refugee camps inside Palestine gave them a reputable track record in young women’s empowerment and within the communities.

transformation journey

Before the YW4A programme, the YWCA Palestine strongly focused on advocacy at the international level, having tools and capacities in place, especially supported by the World YWCA. They had Palestinian youth as participants in the international youth day. The YWCA Palestine always showed practices that

promotes young women leadership, examples were provided by the Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) participants in relation to how they started within the YWCA Palestine and their career path till today.

Due to the YW4A programme, this shift focused to national advocacy. The programme contributed to enhanced knowledge and skills, specifically, on intersectionality and legal and policy advocacy. It also ensured investment in safe spaces for young women through the programme. Due to the upgrading of their

## Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Palestine

tools, such as the Feminist Consultation Methodology (FCM) and the RiseUp! package, the YWCA Palestine Advocacy and Organisational Capacity Assessment (AOCA) participants see their scalability at the national level as key change in the organisation ability to undertake national and international level advocacy.

This scalability, in geographic outreach, diversity and in numbers, is complemented with quality enhancement and opportunities creation, which lead to increased awareness and believe amongst young women that they are key contributors to change, when it comes to their rights, as such they participated actively in all stages of identification, design, outreach, content building, policy analysis and advocacy meetings at national level and in international platforms. The results also include the planning for a national youth advocacy committee, being a potential mechanism to continue and building on the achievements of the YW4A programme.



The AOCA participants selected this change as they are proud that advocacy is now being led by a diverse group of young women. For instance, it is not limited to those who have solid English skills, or have a certain educational background, or come from certain cities. They are proud of the diversity as well as changes to the branding of the YWCA Palestine being a national young women-led organisation.



## YW4A Transformation Journeys