

YOUNG WOMEN FOR AWARENESS, AGENCY, ADVOCACY & ACCOUNTABILITY

PROGRAMME 2022 SNAPSHOT

(JANUARY–DECEMBER 2022)



This brief is a consolidated summary of the achievements of the YW4A initiative and partnership in 2022. In four major sections, the brief gives an overview of the implementing environment, programme achievement and impact, reflections on 2022 programme strategies, and the learning agenda and sustainability



YW4A APPROACH & OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

The YW4A Programme hinges on four main pathways to enhance young women's leadership & tackle sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Egypt, Kenya, Palestine, and South Sudan.

OUR APPROACH

1. **Organizational and advocacy capacity development** is based on the acknowledgement that a vibrant and competent civil society is a prerequisite for transformational change.
2. **Young women's transformative leadership** pivots on building young women's agency, advocacy capacity, leadership capacity, and access to leadership and decision-making spaces through the World YWCA's RiseUp! Leadership training, the creation of physical and virtual safe spaces for young women, and the Young Women's Feminist Consultation methodology.
3. **Interfaith dialogue and collaboration** entail working with faith leaders and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to challenge harmful norms and practices that inhibit the protection of young women's dignity, body integrity, and participation in decision-making through mobilizing and training faith actors, promoting gender transformative norms, and promoting positive masculinities within their institutions.
4. **Legal and policy advocacy** aims to influence the effective implementation, repeal, adoption, and/or amendment of laws and policies to promote young women's leadership and eliminate SGBV.



SECTION I: IMPLEMENTING ENVIROMENT



In 2022, compounding multi-layered crises threatened the gains that had been won globally relating to women's rights and gender equality. This included the rising cost of living, the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate emergency, and large-scale conflict. During the year, the most significant manifestations of violence against women and girls worldwide were increased attacks on their bodily autonomy and restricted access to sexual and reproductive health rights. Despite the challenges, the feminist movement, and state and non-state actors stood up to demand justice for human rights abuses.

The context of each country in which YW4A operated in 2022 presented the following trends:

In **Palestine**, the Israeli forces launched a series of attacks on the Gaza Strip while the West Bank and Jerusalem witnessed closures and strikes in response to the military occupation which contributes to oppression and violations against women and girls. In this context, women's rights organizations (WROs) continued to

experience backlash from conservative groups that openly oppose CEDAW, while misinterpretations of religious texts are used to justify discrimination against women.

In **Egypt**, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi announced the commencement of a national dialogue process aimed at including members of the opposition and representatives of civil society in politics. While the national dialogue resulted in the expansion of civil society activities, the release of political prisoners, and the lifting of travel bans for activists, restrictions were heightened as a result of the COP27 meeting. Throughout 2022, the country took positive steps in terms of women's participation and leadership, however, there was an increase in violence against women.



Young women undergoing RiseUp! Leadership training in Salfet in the West Bank, Palestine.

In **Kenya**, election season has traditionally been a period for rampant sexual violence against women. The YW4A programme in Kenya was active in decrying election-related SGBV during the national elections. On a positive note, seven women were elected as governors in Kenya. In the legal arena, there have been two important High Court rulings invalidating the mandatory minimum sentences for offenders of the Sexual Offences Act (2006) that have opened much-needed discussions on SGBV in the country.

In **South Sudan**, gender roles have resulted in women's limited participation in public spaces. However, the review of South Sudan's State Party report by the Committee on the Rights of the Child provided an opportunity for young women to participate in state accountability. Although YW4A partners held bilateral meetings with networks and government officials to advocate for the ratification of the Maputo Protocol, the planned ratification mission was cancelled.



From left to right, Mrs. Ranan Issa Abu Shanab, Bishop Sani Ibrahim Azar, Ms. Shadin Nassar

Considering this context, during the reporting period the following risks materialized:

- **External risks:** shrinking space for civil society and restriction of freedom of expression and association; vulnerability to global financial shocks; security restrictions; and movement restrictions. Mitigation strategies: grant implementation agreements to overcome funds transfer restrictions; merging similar activities and cross-country support for training to reduce the impact of global financial shocks on the budget; rapid assessments and postponement of activities to avoid security issues; and requesting visas in advance to prevent immigration processes from hindering the participation of young women.

- **Institutional risks:** limited management and implementation capacity of some implementing partners and staff turnover. Mitigation strategies: policies, structures, and processes in place to fulfil accountability, transparency, and compliance with financial management principles; strengthening partner's programme management and implementation capacity and systems; and close monitoring and hands-on support to country leads.
- **Programmatic risks:** attrition of WROs. Mitigation strategies: identifying and engaging new WROs when necessary and monitoring and adaptive learning workshops with WROs to reflect on partnership building.



PARTNERSHIPS AND SHIFTING POWER

The YW4A programme and partnership are underpinned by principles of inclusion and collaboration envisioning collective decision-making and knowledge transfer among all partners. The YW4A partnership has been characterized by:

Local partners taking ownership and leading their own activities: throughout 2022, the YWCAs of Palestine, Kenya, and South Sudan, and IMC, as country leads, demonstrated increased capacity in leadership and coordination of national activities. They have used

strategies to ensure collective decision-making and increased ownership among local partners such as in-county programme forums. In parallel, there have been regular consultations and joint planning among YW4A consortium partners through the monthly country coordination committee meetings which have led to collaboration and harmonization of processes.

Opportunities for learning and collective growth: after working together virtually for over two years, the YW4A partners finally met face-to-face for the first time in Kenya. The meeting brought together key YW4A staff from all eight core consortium partners and resulted in the joint development of the team's core values, IRAC, which will guide the consortium culture and work:



Integrity: internal and external accountability.



Respect: acknowledging and appreciating each individual and each partner's uniqueness and expertise.



Agility: being responsive in an innovative way to a dynamic environment/needs.



Collaboration: ensuring harmony and complementarity through inclusive participation



YW4A consortium partners - World YWCA, YWCAs of Kenya, Palestine and South Sudan, Ibrahimia Media Centre, Equality Now, Faith to Action Network and KIT during the inaugural face to face annual reflection and planning meeting, held in Nyeri, Kenya.

Furthermore, the convening contributed to the identification of opportunities and lessons from the programme; the design and evaluation of potential solutions; the development of country and partner workplans; and to embracing organizational change through appreciative inquiry.

Meaningful inclusion of young women and WROs in all aspects of the programme: with careful considerations of power relations and dynamics, young women from WROs have been trained to lead the implementation of the positive masculinities programme and facilitate community peer-to-peer dialogues to promote transformations in social, cultural, and gender norms.

These young women are empowered and are becoming agents of change in both small and big ways, and across different levels. Examples of these positive impacts include Ms Neema Nyakundi from Kenya, who has been advocating for a policy to address sexual violence in the

county; Ms Agnes Wani from South Sudan, who has been following up on the ratification of the Maputo Protocol; Ms Kholoud Khaled, from Palestine, who has made an oral submission at CEDAW and the Committee Against Torture (CAT); and Ms Samia Abo el Fetouh, from Egypt, who actively advocated for CEDAW and promoted the Unified draft law to combat violence against women proposed by civil society



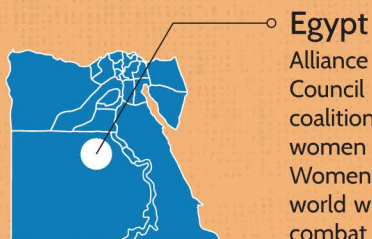
Alliances at different levels: alliances / CSOs engaged with during the year:

Global

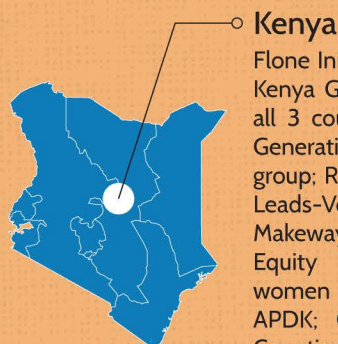
Accountable Now; International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP); Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI); UN Commission on Population and Development; and UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Regional

Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) and the Hurra Coalition on Family Law.



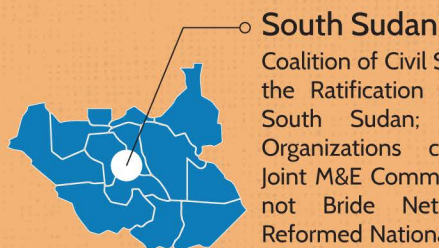
Egypt
Alliance of NGOs Forum in the National Council for Women; Alliance of the coalition of combating violence against women in the National Council for Women; Alliance of NGOs in the Arab world with V-Day Karama organization to combat violence against women; Alliance with the Musawah International Movement, working on gender equality from an Islamic perspective; and the State of African Women Campaign and the Dutch Embassy in Egypt.



Kenya
Flone Initiative; IPAS; Zamara Foundation; Kenya Gender Sector Working Groups in all 3 counties; Court Users Committees; Generation Equality Forum CSO working group; Right Here, Right Now-Voices; She Leads-Voices; We lead-Voices; Makeway-Voices; VSO-Voices; VCA; TISA; Equity Bank; CBM; Collaboration of women in development; Rising Future; APDK; Gender departments in the 3 Counties; Meru Law Courts; SOS Kenya; YWAN Kenya; CREAM Kenya; CIFORD Kenya; RIPOS International; and Interreligious Councils in Kisii, Meru, and Migori counties, and the Dutch Embassy in Kenya.



Palestinian
Palestinian NGOs against violence against women-Al Muntada; Civic and Women Coalition for the Implementation of CEDAW in the Occupied State of Palestine; Palestinian National Coalition for the Implementation of Resolution 1325; Birzeit University; Annajah University; Alquds Open University-Bethlehem; Women Club-Beit Oulah/Hebron; The Union of Palestinian Women's Committee-Hebron; Gender Justice for Palestine Coalition; Interfaith Advisory Group/Scholars Council; MENA Gender Justice CoP; GJP Transformative Masculinities Task Group; GJP Family Law Task Group; ACT Alliance Reference Groups; and SAWASYA II: Promoting the Rule of Law in the State of Palestine, and the Dutch Embassy in Palestine.



South Sudan
Coalition of Civil Society Organizations on the Ratification of Maputo Protocol in South Sudan; South Sudan Youth Organizations coalition; Reconstituted Joint M&E Commission; GBV cluster, Girls not Bride Network, Women's Bloc; Reformed National Transitional Legislative Assembly; Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements, monitoring and verification mechanism; Council of State; National Human Rights Forum; Association of Female Journalists; South Sudan Law Society and BAR Association; and South Sudan Council of Churches and the Dutch Embassy in South Sudan.

SECTION II: PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

PATHWAY 4

16 laws, policies, and strategies implementation

Impact: facilitation of advocacy activities aimed at adopting, modifying, withdrawing or improving the implementation of 16 laws, policies, and strategies in the four countries.

The programme worked on the following laws and policies during 2022:

Kenya Sexual Offences Act; Meru County SGBV Policy; Meru County Safe House Bill; Kisii County Gender Bill; Maputo Protocol; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; South Sudan GBV Bill; South Sudan Family Law Code; Draft Bill on Domestic Violence in Palestine; Draft Law on Workplace Sexual Harassment in Palestine; Child Marriage Legal Exception in Palestine; Palestine Elections Act; Sexual Exploitation; Abuse and Harassment Policies in Egypt; Draft Law on Domestic Violence in Egypt; Egyptian Family Law (Guardianship and Custody Rights); and Constitutional Provision on Affirmative Action for Women at Local Councils in Egypt.

PATHWAY 3

419 Faith Actors

Impact: 179 faith actors from the Muslim, Protestant and Orthodox faiths mobilized for interfaith dialogues on gender equality and 240 capacitated to challenge gender-discriminatory social norms and promote women's rights through positive masculinities.

YW4A engaged actors from multiple faiths resulting in shifts in understanding and attitudes towards promoting young women's rights to dignity, bodily integrity, and equal participation in decision-making.

The faith actors and leaders participated in peer-to-peer training, community conversations on positive masculinities, and ecumenical and interfaith dialogues to advocate for women's rights and gender equality.

PATHWAY 3

1,584 young women gained awareness

1,584 young women gained awareness of their rights, deepened their understanding of women's rights issues, and the ability to generate support around a common cause through the RiseUp! Leadership training model

YW4A trained 1,206 young women using the RiseUp! Leadership curriculum (many of these young women also participated in the legal and digital advocacy training), resulting in a cumulative total of 1,584 young women trained.

Stories that spotlight young women's [individual experiences](#) are strong evidence of progress towards the achievement of the programme's intermediate outcomes.

PATHWAY 3

27 women and youth-led CSOs

Impact: 17 women-led CSOs, 5 women and youth-led CSOs, and 5 other CSOs improved their capacity to advance young women's rights to bodily integrity and equal participation in decision-making.

WROs' advocacy and organizational capacity has been strengthened.

WROs and young women have increased their capacity to conduct digital advocacy and national, regional, and international legal advocacy.

WROs have improved their capacity and knowledge on developing and implementing advocacy strategies and engaging key human rights instruments.

SECTION III: REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAMME STRATEGIES

The main strategies used to effectively conduct the programme activities in 2022



Transformative leadership of young women: through the World YWCA RiseUp! Leadership model and training, young women are involved, learn, and practise their leadership in safe spaces.



Participation in advocacy spaces (international/ regional/ local and face-to-face/digital): the YW4A partners participated in various advocacy and dialogue spaces and campaigns, ensuring the involvement and active participation of young women and WROs (e.g., [Accountable Now](#), [Ecumenical Youth Gathering](#), [Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition \(SOAWR\)](#), [Sexual Violence Research Initiative \(SVRI\) Forum](#), [#ThursdaysInBlack](#), [YWCA Week without Violence](#)).

Results:

- i. young women and stakeholders learnt and exchanged ideas and cemented their leadership experiences and
- ii. spaces facilitated dialogue with potential partners and donors, galvanizing support and investment in young women's leadership.



Faith and community leaders, as well as members of the Senate and Parliament in Egypt during YW4A interfaith dialogue.

Interfaith engagement: mobilization and training of faith actors, using social behavioural change approaches and promoting positive masculinities to challenge gender-discriminatory social norms and promote women's rights within faith institutions and communities.

Result: evidence of a shift in attitudes towards women's participation in decision-making spaces within faith structures, previously reserved for men in Egypt and Palestine (e.g., the ordination of the first female pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Land and Jordan).





- **Increasing access to spaces and opportunities for young women to exercise their leadership:** YW4A created and used a merit-based approach to select young women, and it identified a healthy mix of low-cost community opportunities for advocacy that enable a maximum number of young women possible.
- **Programme adaptability while ensuring effectiveness and efficiency:** the weakening of the Euro against other major currencies and the rising cost of living, resulted in limited resources for critical activities. The programme merged activities that had similar objectives to reduce meeting costs; created innovative approaches for young women's engagement (e.g., FEMspaces model); and renovated existing physical spaces.

In addition to the risks presented in section I, the YW4A partners timely addressed some situations to prevent them from hindering the effectiveness of the strategies and to ensure that the programme remains resilient, from a conflict-sensitive approach, as follows:

- **An intentional approach to trauma-informed care:** the process of holding safe spaces and building young women's leadership capacity to fight SGBV often triggered suppressed or latent trauma, putting the programme participants at risk of re-traumatization. To overcome this, the programme developed a trauma-informed care approach that involves integrating an understanding of the effects of trauma into all aspects of young women's participation while facilitating resilience healing and growth.



For young women in the slums of Majengo, in Meru County Kenya, the YW4A FEMspaces improve their agency and the valuing their opinions and ideas has proved to be a lifeline.

SECTION IV: LEARNING AGENDA & SUSTAINABILITY

In line with the YW4A's feminist, inclusive, and participatory approach and principles, collective reflection, iteration, and learning are essential throughout implementation. Collective reflection and learning have taken place through activities related to monitoring and evaluation and the YW4A learning agenda.



Reflections on the Theory of Change	Reflections on Programming Mechanisms & Partnership
<p>A learning event was held to reflect on progress towards achieving the programme's ToC.</p> <p>Partners drafted strategies by pathway:</p> <p>Pathway 1: to prevent organizations from dropping out of the YW4A programme.</p> <p>Pathway 2: to address budget constraints for some activities.</p> <p>Pathway 3: to improve communication between FBOs and country leads and collaboration between FBOs and WROs.</p> <p>Pathway 4: to address gaps in implementation both in practical terms and content wise.</p> <p>As part of the MTR, the YW4A ToC underlying strategies, objectives, and assumptions will be reviewed in detail to assess their relevance and validity, to evaluate progress, and to consider adaptations for future implementation.</p>	<p>Through a learning meeting, the YW4A partners reflected on planning and management tools; programme governance and organizational structure; and programme decision-making processes.</p> <p>Critical issues were identified:</p> <p>Regarding planning and management tools: there have been improvements in the frequency and efficiency of coordination meetings and accountability and reporting mechanisms.</p> <p>Regarding governance and organizational structure: by the end of 2022, the YW4A Communications Working Group and the Country Coordinating Committee in each country had improved their effectiveness through monthly meetings, communication, and collaboration.</p> <p>Regarding decision-making processes: some issues were identified in feedback loops at different programme levels: the involvement of partners in programme staff recruitments; joint decision-making at the country level; and the attrition rates of young women.</p>

The knowledge and experiences of all programme partners have been essential for collective reflection and adaptive learning.



To ensure the sustainability of the programme structures and results, the YW4A programme is taking different actions that have contributed to the following:



Strong local stakeholder ownership which has been built by involving WROs, community members, and marginalized groups in the planning and implementation of the project.



Changes in laws and policies around gender equality, family laws, and women's rights to create a more favourable legal and policy environment for gender equality.



The improved individual capacity of participants by providing training and capacity-building opportunities.



A strong regular monitoring and evaluation system to help identify areas where changes are needed.



Strengthened capacity of the programme coordinators and staff as a result of opportunities for acquiring skills, cross learning, and sharing.



The active participation of partner WROs and FBOs in the different phases of the programme including practical sessions on stakeholder mapping and analysis, tool development and adoption, and practical sequencing of the implementation of the strategies.



Systemic changes in social and religious norms by addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality and working to create a sustainable environment for gender equality in the long-term.

All these actions have already strengthened and will continue to reinforce the ownership of the YW4A programme by all partners and elicited guarantees of commitment towards its implementation.



Karima Al Majayda
35 years
Gaza in Palestine

“ I consider my attendance of the (YW4A) Digital Advocacy Training in Cairo as an achievement for young women from Gaza, Palestine. It is not acceptable for women to travel on their own, let alone a young woman with a disability. But my family supported me and believed this would be a great opportunity to pursue my dream of becoming a women’s rights activist.”

“ Through our involvement with the FEMspaces, we have emerged as confident leaders and powerful young women advocates, dedicated to ending sexual and gender-based violence in our communities.”



Zainabu Nkirore
30 years
Meru County in Kenya



Keji Viola Geroge
29 years
Central Equatoria state
South Sudan

“ I gained a better understanding of my rights and how to be involved in the constitution -making process, thanks to the mentorship I received (under the YW4A programme).”

“ At first, I was a little tense about travelling abroad, but when I arrived there and get to know people from different cultures we spoke about women’s issues and the various forms of violence girls face in each society that gave me more power and passion to come home and work with the young women on these issues.”



Monica Hany
23 years
Alexandria, Egypt

In partnership with



SDA Kisii

Evangelism One Accord

In cooperation with



Ministry of Foreign Affairs