



# A Year of Advancements and Improvements

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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## List of abbreviations

<b>ACTs</b>	Active Community Teams
<b>AGYW</b>	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
<b>ASRHR</b>	Adolescents Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>ICT</b>	Information, Communication and Technology
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate Partner Violence
<b>NGAN</b>	Nairobi Girls Advocacy Network
<b>OGBV</b>	Online gender-based violence
<b>OTFGBV</b>	Online technology-facilitated gender-based violence
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>TOT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>WILD</b>	Women In Leadership and Development
<b>WHRDs</b>	Women Human Rights Defenders



## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year at Teenseed Community Based Organization, it fills me with immense pride to share with you the strides we've made in advancing the rights and well-being of women and girls in our community. In the face of numerous challenges, our team has remained steadfast in our commitment to fostering a safer, more equitable society for all.

Teenseed Africa operates as a community-based organisation within the Kiambu informal settlements, situated in the heart of Nairobi, Kenya.

Throughout the year, our multifaceted approach to addressing issues such as sexual reproductive health, sexual and gender-based violence, women empowerment, education, and feminist movement building has enabled us to reach new heights of impact and effectiveness. We've witnessed firsthand the transformative power of education and advocacy in empowering women and girls to take control of their lives and futures.

Our programs and initiatives have touched the lives of countless individuals, providing vital resources, support, and education to those in need. From comprehensive sexual reproductive health services to workshops on gender equality and women's rights, we have worked tirelessly to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women and girls to thrive and to be free from violence.

One of our proudest achievements this year has been the expansion of our feminist movement building efforts, which have brought together activists, advocates, and allies from across the communities to amplify marginalised voices and push for meaningful systems change.

Through collaborative action and solidarity, we are laying the groundwork for a more just and equitable society for future generations.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and donors. Your generosity and commitment to our mission have been the driving force behind every success we've achieved, and we are profoundly grateful for your continued partnership.

As we look to the future, we are more determined than ever to build on our momentum and create lasting change for women and girls everywhere. Together, we can break down barriers, challenge injustice, and build a world where every woman and girl has the opportunity to not only live dignified lives but to thrive.

Thank you for standing with us on this journey. Your support makes all the difference.

With deepest gratitude,

Winny Obure

**Executive Director - Teenseed Africa**

# Introduction

Teenseed Africa, situated in the heart of Nairobi, Kenya, operates as a community-based organisation within the Kiambiu informal settlements. As we reflect on the year 2023, Teenseed takes pride in the significant achievements, both internally and externally, stemming from our programs. The past year marked a period of profound introspection, growth, and strategic planning for Teenseed. Throughout 2023, our organization dedicated efforts to fortify its internal structure and operations, a journey that will be outlined in this report.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the friends and partners who supported us, making it possible for Teenseed to actualize its vision. Each partner played a crucial role in our accomplishments, collectively weaving stories of resilience, education, and empowerment.

## Our approach

It is grounded in a holistic strategy addressing the root causes of gender inequality and the increased vulnerability of adolescent girls and young women to violence. Extensive research within the Kiambiu community has allowed us to identify key societal issues impeding the pursuit of dignified lives for young women. These identified challenges form the basis for our programmatic thematic areas. Our programs are intricately crafted to directly confront these structural inequalities. We are dedicated to remaining informed and engaged in continuous education to refine our programs, ensuring their adaptability to the ever-changing needs of our community and the dynamic landscape of societal challenges.

## Our vision

A society where adolescent girls and young women fulfil their potential and live dignified lives.

## Our mission

To empower adolescent girls and young women politically, socially, culturally, and economically to make informed choices about their lives..

# Our Programs in Facts & Figures



5200+

### Adolescents Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

Girls reached with menstrual health information and dignity kits



210+

### Trainings & Capacity building

Key influential leaders trained on SGBV prevention, response and advocacy



34

### Women & Girls' Education

Vulnerable and at-risk women and girls supported with school fees and other educational needs



32

### Freedom From Violence

SGBV Survivors rescued, supported and reintegrated to the community.



29

### Women's Economic Empowerment

Women impacted directly through entrepreneurship skills, trainings, seed grants and mentorship



14

### Stakeholder Forums & Engagements

Key community outreach forums on women and girls' rights in Nairobi, Busia, Kisumu, Homabay and Migori Counties

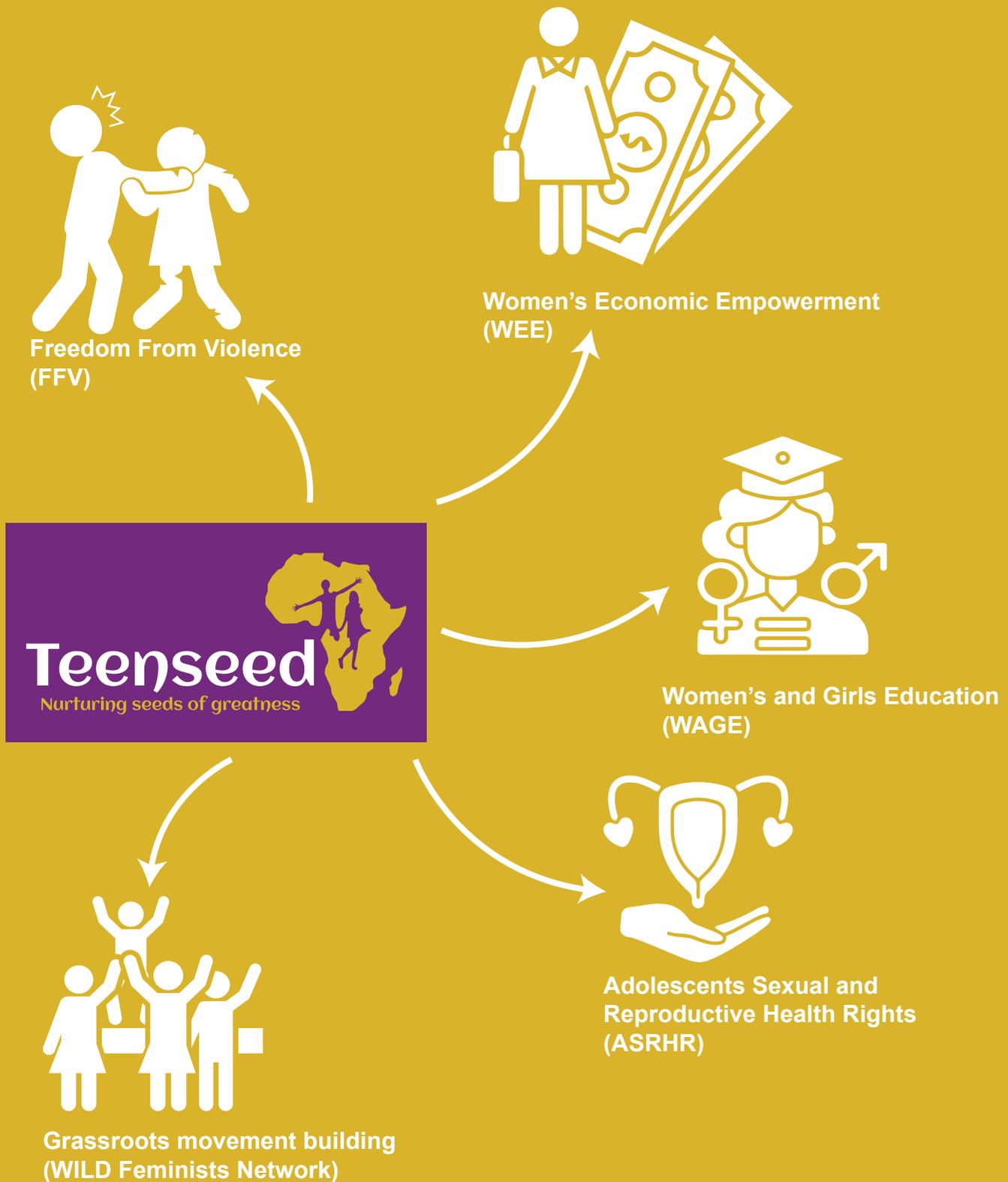


*A part of Teenseed core team: From left - Quinter Faith, Nyaguthii Kioi, Florence Nzilani, Margaret Mwamba and Winny Obure*



**We firmly stand against violence targeting women and girls... Together we are breaking the cycles of inequality, injustice, discrimination and oppression”**

# Teenseed's Programmatic areas



# A Year of Advancements and Improvements

The achievements of Teenseed in 2023 can be categorised into two significant domains namely: Internal Organisational Strengthening and Programmatic/Community Impact.

## A. Programmatic Impact

For the first time since its inception and registration, with the support from partners, Teenseed was able to draft work-plans for each of the programs that highlighted activities, implementation plans and schedules as well as programmatic financial planning. Our work plans were built off understanding the problem, assessing the best strategies for our communities and drawing up programmes to address this. Each of the programmes has grown and achieved tremendously and we acknowledge the role our team, community volunteers, friends, partners and donors have played in ensuring the impact demonstrated below.

### 1. Freedom from Violence

This program addresses sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) with a focus on protecting women and girls. The program encompasses three concurrent intervention areas:

**Prevention:** Teenseed's prevention strategy employs community change agents and awareness campaigns aimed at challenging and transforming harmful societal norms contributing to violence. The project relies on male champions, allies, and trained community volunteers who, after continuous training, become educators within their communities. Armed with a profound understanding of SGBV causes, impacts, and legal frameworks, these agents conduct community forums, engage with potential perpetrators, and act as Teenseed's vigilant observers on the ground to thwart planned attacks.

**Response:** In response to SGBV incidents, Teenseed operates two shelters—one for minors and another for adult women survivors. These shelters offer a safe haven for survivors for up to six months, providing essential support such as food, clothing, hygiene supplies, medical assistance, and psychosocial services. Teenseed also facilitates referrals for legal support through partnerships with governmental entities like the police and children's office. In 2023, Teenseed directly supported 32 survivors whose cases are categorized as follows:

- Physical Abuse: 17
- Sexual Harassment/Violation: 7
- Defilement: 4
- Neglect/Abandonment: 3
- Child Trafficking + Abuse: 1

**Emotional Violence/Conflict at Home:** Recognizing the broader impact of SGBV on both survivors and their families, Teenseed implements a restoration intervention. This multifaceted approach addresses the individual survivor and their family, acknowledging the profound ripple effects of trauma. Psychosocial support, including counselling, is a key component of this intervention, aiming to facilitate the reintegration of survivors back into the community. The program adopts a holistic stance, understanding that successful restoration encompasses not only the individual survivor but also their familial environment. This approach reflects Teenseed's commitment to providing comprehensive care and healing to survivors who have sought refuge in their shelters over the past decade.

**16 days of activism against GBV:** The theme guiding the #16daysofactivismagainstGBV in 2023 was '**Invest to prevent violence against women and girls.**' Teenseed actively participated in various partner initiatives, including the launch activity of the Nairobi County and the Nairobi County GBV technical working group. Collaboration with the Kiambu Information and Justice Network involved a GBV film screening and panel discussion, engaging community members on addressing GBV in informal settlements and its broader impact on families. The focal point of Teenseed's campaign was a community football match, featuring four teams comprising influential community figures and players. The match served as a platform for a healthy competition aimed at raising awareness. Subsequently, the Teenseed team, including program leads and community volunteers, conducted a panel discussion to elucidate the fundamentals of understanding sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and tying in the specific needs for investing in systemic changes through education, economic empowerment and social protection and access to comprehensive health including sexual and reproductive health rights.

In collaboration with the other Teenseed programs, survivors were also supported to access education and economic empowerment. As we celebrate these achievements, we recognize the resilience of the survivors and the unwavering support of our community. Together, we are creating a future where every individual can live free from violence, with the tools and resources to shape their own destiny. We continue to stand against violence, we extend our gratitude to our supporters for making it possible to create a safe space for these survivors. Together, we are breaking the cycle and building lives anew.



*Teenseed team hosting Beca Stephens (US) and Dr. Hitimana (Rwanda) from Thistle Farms, here showing support to the young women survivors economic empowerment project by buying hand-made functional bags.*

## 2. Women's Economic Empowerment

This program targets young women particularly young single mothers and survivors of violence and is geared towards economic empowerment through skills training (tailoring, computer skills, baking and other hands-on skills), work for pay scheme where we hire from our beneficiary pool and compensate them, financial literacy training and supporting their access to governmental social protection/welfare funds, entrepreneurship training mentorship and seeds grant, and supporting cohort savings groups. The seeds grant is an investment given to the cohort graduates towards building their businesses. Once a cohort graduates, we support through funding and linking them to investors for them to start their businesses using their business proposals to ensure a higher chance of success. Financial independence significantly reduces the risk of violence for women. Statistically, women who are fully dependent on their spouses are at more risk of violence and are more likely to not report or seek redress because that would amount to economic loss and instability. In 2023, this program impacted a total of 29 women specifically as:

- Entrepreneurship Mentorship & Seed Grants: 13
- Tailoring: 5
- ICT Training: 5
- Work for pay scheme: 6  
(Bags and Sales: 5 and office cleaner: 1)

This was also the first year that the work for pay tailoring team was engaged as a vendor for a feminist event and business. This year, this program was able to register a till to streamline payments towards this intervention and ensure financial transparency and autonomy for the young mothers. As we celebrate the economic strides of these young women, we extend our gratitude to our supporters for making these opportunities possible. Together, we are sowing the seeds of economic independence and fostering a community where every woman has the tools to thrive.

### 3. Women and Girls Education (WAGE)

This program is built on the appreciation that educated women have more power and opportunities to make informed and independent decisions over their lives. Education opens up doors for economic empowerment, enlightenment, awareness and knowledge, and access to decision-making spaces. This in turn could increase autonomy and agency of the women and girls for self-development and social mobility. Launched during the year under review, this program has already made significant achievements. The key ones are:

**a. Seeds Education Support:** This cohort of beneficiaries are often those minors who are under full scholarship and upkeep support only extended to minors who come into Teenseed as survivors and absorbed long-term in the safehouse. Beyond the support extended at the safehouse (basic needs and upkeep), Teenseed fully caters to all their education costs- school fees, books and any other needs that come up.

**b. Seeds Education Fund:** This scholarship extends to vulnerable girls identified within our community and who are supported through school fees payment. These beneficiaries still live with and rely on their family for their other needs.

**c. Adult Literacy:** This is a project aimed at empowering adult women who never completed their education to do so. This is at the basic primary level and they acquire their national certificates at the end of it all. Most women in informal settlements are school dropouts and this is an avenue for them to pursue their education again. They are tutored by our community education volunteers. We have partnered with the Nairobi County Ministry of Education - Adult Education to facilitate this intervention.

Additionally, Teenseed runs a resource hub that was used for the adult learning tuition. With the success of this program, we see potential for the resource hub to be a community space where children can come to do their homework, access books and utilise. In 2023, the WAGE program supported a total of 34 girls and women as follows:

- Adult literacy: 26 women registered and 18 completed and attained certification.
- Seeds Education Support: 18
- Seeds Education Fund: 6



*Our SRHR Team lead, Quinter Faith educating teenage boys and girls on period stigma and menstrual health.*



*Some of the teenage girls in our SRHR programme in rural areas receiving disposable sanitary towels*

#### 4. Adolescents Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (ASRHR)

This program centres the rights of adolescent girls and ensures holistic support and their overall well-being. We recognize the complexities of adolescence through emotional and mental transitions, physical and hormonal changes, heightened external attention and the sensitivity as a result of this. At Teenseed, we work with adolescent girls through several interventions:

**a. Mentorship** - our girls are grouped into cohorts and go through weekly mentorship for a period of one year. This mentorship addresses leadership, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, sex education and negotiation amongst other pivotal topics crucial to their age and development. Peer mentors are selected and undergo a training of trainers (TOT) to amplify this initiative and ensure continuance outside of the organisation.

**b. Pads4Progress** - this intervention is a nationwide campaign to address period poverty and stigma by providing dignity packs for vulnerable and underserved girls particularly in informal settlements and rural areas. This program is across the country in Nairobi, Busia, Homa Bay counties as well as girls in conflict in South Sudan. Beyond providing dignity kits/packs, the girls reached through this initiative are targeted through schools and this provides an avenue for school-based training on menstrual hygiene and management.

**c. Comprehensive Sex Education** - this intervention works with duty bearers and stakeholders namely: parents, teachers, faith-based leaders, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health to ensure that adolescents (both boys and girls) receive comprehensive sex education at

home, in school and in community to better protect them and equip them with the right information to make sound decisions for their lives. We hope that through this program we can achieve meaningful policy change and influence comprehensive sex education in the national curriculum.

**d. Empowerment** - This intervention focuses on enrolling adolescent girls in extracurricular activities, providing opportunities to develop skills beyond the academic realm. Activities include photography classes, ICT, and STEM programs, aiming to empower girls with the belief that they can overcome traditional gender barriers in male-dominated fields.

**e. Leadership and Movement Building** - These girls are supported to access decision-making spaces, and opportunities for growth and development through capacity building on social justice issues and movement building. Beneficiaries have already formed the National Girls Advisory Network (NGAN) that facilitates the continued engagement of the alumni. The girls are mentored and supported by mentors from the Women in Leadership and Development (WILD) collective.

Through all the above interventions under the ASRHR program, Teenseed reached over 5300 girls as follows:

- **Direct mentorship:** 54 (4 as TOT peer mentors)
- **Skills empowerment:** 20 (10 in STEM and 10 in Photography)
- **Pads4Progress:** 3200 menstrual hygiene kits distributed (700 in Nairobi, 2000 in the other counties and 500 in South Sudan) and over 2000 girls educated on menstrual health management.
- **Movement building:** 70 girls from 12 informal settlements convened under the NGAN network.

## 5. Grassroots Movement Building



The WILD Feminists Network serves as a grassroots feminist movement uniting leaders and women in leadership roles within informal settlements in Kenya. Members form a diverse pool of organisers addressing various social justice issues in their communities. Initiated and convened by Teenseed Africa, the network was established to foster feminist solidarity, provide capacity-building opportunities, and facilitate joint advocacy. Recognizing the often-traumatic paths that lead individuals to human rights activism, the network aims to support its members in the following areas:

- **Develop Leadership Skills and Peer Learning:** Creating a platform for members to enhance their leadership skills through peer learning.
- **Trauma Healing:** Acknowledging the impact of trauma, the network focuses on individual and communal healing for its members. This is facilitated through group debriefs, monthly solidarity and wellness check-ins, and monthly women's circles.
- **Capacity Building:** Providing opportunities for members to develop their capacity, knowledge, and technical skills through feminist political education, security training, and resource mobilisation efforts.
- **Solidarity and Joint Advocacy:** Recognizing the importance of a supportive community, especially for those working on the frontline, the network emphasises solidarity and joint advocacy to create a sense of family and support for its members.

In 2023, the WILD Feminists Network grew its membership from 18 to 25 and had these milestone activities:

**a. Intergenerational Trauma Healing Retreat in Diani:** WILD members and their mother figures gathered in Diani, the coast of Kenya for a relaxing and rejuvenating environment to address intergenerational trauma recognizing that as women and survivors, our childhood traumas and experiences play a significant role in how we approach feminist and community work, and complicates our relationships with our mothers who should be our first line of support. With professional circle keepers and a feminist consultant, this retreat offered a significant step towards healing, fostering resilience, and building a stronger foundation for the future. This retreat had 26 participants and was supported by the Urgent Action Fund.

**b. 16 Days of Activism:** WILD held two activities in honour of the global campaign. On 29th November, WILD Feminists Network, through one of the members Feminists for Peace Rights and Justice held an event in Kibera to commemorate the International Day of Women Human Rights Defenders. This activity was organised by the Feminists Center and supported by Wangu Kanja Foundation, Defenders Coalition, Human Rights 75, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR-Kenya) and Teenseed. This was an opportunity to centre women in the human rights space and particularly those at the forefront of grassroots feminist movements and organising, amplify their voices and raise awareness on crucial issues affecting women human rights defenders locally and globally. This day brought together more than 100 women. The day's activities featured group and individual counselling and debrief, three panel discussions, an exhibition for member economic empowerment interventions and celebrations.



Teenseed team poses with our supporter Prof. Alfred Omenya (far right), after a meeting to conceptualise our architectural vision for the new girls' center in Kiambiu informal settlements - Nairobi.

**c. Debrief Sessions:** with support from Defenders Coalition, the WILD Feminists Network was supported through a two day debrief workshop that really helped facilitate the process of healing, stress management and provide tools for emotional and mental wellness for members as we continue engaging in traumatic community work.

On 8th December, the network held a webinar: Investing in Grassroot Feminists Movements featuring a panel of feminists with experience in resource mobilisation and movement building. The panel discussed the challenges of building a strong and feminist movement, resource mobilisation, sustainability and the impact of lack of investments in feminist movements as a GBV prevention strategy. This webinar reached 15 participants.

We were able to facilitate security training for the members on both physical and digital security and implement measures to foster safety. We also strengthened our resource mobilisation efforts and applied for four WILD Network proposals. We are grateful for all the opportunities that the network was exposed to including invitations to national and high-level meetings and we hope to build on this momentum in 2024. Total impact for this program can be summed as:

- **Trauma Healing:** 40 beneficiaries/participants in a retreat, debrief sessions and women's circles
- **Capacity building:** 11 beneficiaries from security training
- **Solidarity and joint advocacy:** 115 participants in 3 key national campaigns (#16daysofActivismagainstGBV, #KatibaAt13 and #HumanRights75 / #UDHR75 / #HR75)
- **Resource Mobilisation:** prepared and submitted 4 funding proposals for WILD

## B. Organizational Strengthening

### 1. Strategic Plan Development:

In a very exciting Milestone, Teenseed Unveils Its Inaugural Strategic Plan (2022-2027). We are thrilled to announce a significant achievement at Teenseed—the completion of our first-ever strategic plan for the years 2022-2027. This important undertaking is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the Teenseed Board of Directors, Executive Director, supportive friends, and insightful consultants. Crafted with love and sweat, the strategic plan is poised to be a guiding force, shaping Teenseed's focus areas, operations, and programs. We firmly believe that the successful implementation of this strategic plan will enhance Teenseed's impact in the communities it serves. It could also elevate the organization's influence within the civil society space. It will also help strengthen Teenseed's engagement with its various stakeholders and improve the organization's strategic focus, resource allocation and utilization. This in turn could improve both effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. Throughout the process, we engaged our team of volunteers, beneficiaries, and the community at large by presenting draft versions of the strategic plan. Their valuable feedback has been incorporated into subsequent drafts, ensuring a plan that resonates with and serves the needs of our community. In July 2023, we were able to do a soft launch of the strategic

plan with our partners Thistle Farm and the Isabel Allende Foundation. As we proudly commemorate a decade of registration and community service in 2024, the launch of this strategic plan will be a significant milestone. To enhance accessibility, we are working on a condensed version of the plan and translations into local languages, Swahili and Sheng. This strategic plan is not just a document; it is a blueprint for a future where Teenseed continues to make a positive impact and remains a beacon of transformative community engagement. We are eager to unveil and launch this strategic plan in 2024, and we invite everyone to join us in celebrating this momentous occasion.

### 2. Operational Growth:

Teenseed underwent remarkable expansion by welcoming six dedicated volunteers into pivotal roles. This strategic augmentation included the integration of a social worker, education program lead, admin and operations officer, programs coordinator, finance manager, and a house mother. Noteworthy was the elevation of the finance manager and programs coordinator to senior management, leading organizational restructuring. This growth substantially bolstered our operational capabilities, ensuring enhanced care for beneficiaries and the wider community. We also fostered partnerships with skilled professionals who volunteered their expertise in crucial areas such as human resources, programs, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation.

### 3. Well-being and Resilience Training:

In September 2023, Teenseed collaborated with the Greens Strings Network to conduct a week-long capacity-building, Well-Being and Resilience framework (WeBR) training program focused on emotional well-being, resilience, and healing. This initiative brought together all staff, volunteers, community CBOs and addressed the trauma and emotional complexities associated with community work. By integrating care practices, including mental health days, centering circles for emotional support, psychosocial support for volunteers, and regular team debriefs, we cultivated a workplace centred on wellness. This approach not only addressed trauma within the community but also empowered volunteers to operate from a foundation of rest, rejuvenation, care, and stability.

### 4. Mid-year Programs and Operations Review:

Teenseed initiated a comprehensive week-long review of our programs in June 2023, engaging a consultant and involving all staff and volunteers. This resulted in the incorporation of two new programs with outlined implementation plans. Existing programs underwent scrutiny, providing insights into successes and areas for improvement. The review kickstarted a deliberate capacity-building plan for monitoring and evaluation, enhancing our reporting system, and fostering improved community engagement.

## 5. Team Building:

A concentrated effort on team dynamics saw Teenseed undergo group counselling and team debrief sessions in November 2023. These initiatives equipped the team with valuable conflict resolution skills and procedures, ensuring that Teenseed remains a conducive and supportive working environment. Staff and Volunteers were encouraged to recognize their personal responsibility in maintaining this positive atmosphere and enhancing teamwork.

## 6. Organisational Capacity Assessment:

With support from The Mangrove Collective, we conducted an organisational capacity assessment with a leading consultant in October 2023. This collaboration illuminated priority gaps and resulted in an action plan to address them. As we look forward to 2024, we aspire to implement this organisational capacity-building plan, positioning Teenseed as a leading community-based organisation in prevention and response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence, and empowering women and girls in sexual reproductive health and rights leadership.

## Leadership & Staff

### Secretariat

Teenseed's day to day operations are run by a small, professional secretariat. The following are the current members of the Secretariat;

- Winny Obure – Founder and Executive Director
- Nyaguthii Kioi – Programs Coordinator
- Zawadi Antony - Freedom From Violence Program Lead
- Shildah Kegeshi - WEE Program Lead
- Maureen Gift - WAGE Program Lead
- Quinter Faith - Adolescents SRHR Lead
- Susan Muinde - Social Worker
- Tonny Elvis - Media and Communication
- Victor Rhateel - Documentation & Reporting
- Antony Maingi - Finance
- Zenna Milulu – Accountant
- Moraa Mwamba – Admins and Operations Lead
- Sharon Adema - House Mother

### Advisory Board

Teenseed is governed by an Advisory Board. The following are the current members of the Board;

- Nerima Were – Chair
- Caroline Ndede – Executive Committee Rep.
- Bridget Musungu – Research and Programs
- Mshai Mkoji – Women & Girls' Rights and Advocacy
- Winny Obure – Board Secretary & Executive Director

### Community & Volunteers

- Male champions for change
- Adolescent girls advisors
- Women business mentors

## Spotlight:

### Tonny Elvis - Staff of the Year!

We are proud to announce the recipient of Teenseed's Most Dedicated Staff of the Year Award for 2023: Tonny Elvis, who heads our Media and Communications department was overwhelmingly voted for the award. Tonny's exceptional dedication shone brightly throughout the year as he tirelessly documented our organization's activities with precision and timeliness. Beyond his duties in media, he demonstrated steadfast support for all programs, showcasing commitment to our mission. Particularly noteworthy was his leadership in coordinating the Male Champions of Change initiative against gender-based violence, showcasing his passion for social impact. Tonny's contributions embody the values and spirit of Teenseed, and we extend our heartfelt congratulations for this well-deserved recognition.



## Challenges and Learnings From 2023

We experienced a number of challenges which are worth reflecting on going forward. The most significant challenge was the entrenched negative cultural norms and practices.

Patriarchy remains a big challenge in confronting gender violence, marginalization, inequalities and exclusion. However, we discovered the intractable challenge of another form of entrenched negative cultural norms and practices. This is the culture of silence and resistance to justice by victims due to a complex range of social and economic issues. These include economic dependency on the perpetrators, harmful attachment and family coercion. One form of family coercion is driven by “*kuficha aibu*”, this means covering up to protect the family from social ridicule and largely leads to “*kangaroo courts*” -settling criminal cases out of court.

This challenge of negative cultural norms and practices is significant because it is a major obstacle to social transformation and ending gender violence. Transformation and ending gender violence requires good policies and laws. But it also requires a cultural revolution, meaning a complete shift from these negative cultural norms and practices that undermine the dignity, wellbeing and progress of women and girls in all their diversities.

**What we learnt:** That we have to focus on the underlying and systemic causes of SGBV even as we deepen our ongoing work in combating this scourge within the communities.

The second key challenge was the emergence of new forms of security threats and attacks. Digital technologies have brought immense benefits to our work and to the populations we serve. These benefits range from money transfers, business transactions, online research and to ordinary communication. However, the downside is the emergence of Technology-facilitated violence (TFV) and Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). Kenya experienced a spike in femicide during the year, a significant number that were TFGBV. This sparked a nationwide outcry and massive demonstration.

Teenseed and some of the beneficiaries experienced both physical and online security threats and attacks. While physical threats were targeted at our shelters, the online security threats and attacks were directed at the Teenseed staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. Some of the threats and attacks included our girls safe house, hacking of our official emails and social media platforms.

**What we learnt:** We must pay more attention to the evolving nature of GBV and SGBV. This means that we must focus attention on TFV and TFGBV even as we continue engaging against the more traditional forms of violence.

The third key challenge was balancing between community needs and resource constraints. This is multifaceted. One, as 2023 was a difficult financial year for communities in Kenya, cases of GBV, femicide and IPV are on the rise. Two, the new government policy targeting forceful demolition of urban informal settlements directly affect Kiambu because it is an informal settlement. This created deep unrest and fear among residents, many of whom might look up to Teenseed for support. This could also disrupt Teenseed's operations and investments in social transformation. Third,

most of the rural communities that we worked in are based in hard to reach areas including

islands in Lake Victoria most of which were severely affected by floods, high teenage pregnancies, child marriages and Malaria, needing more than SRHR interventions. Finally, our very success has resulted in increased demand for our services. However, our resource base remains constrained as it is extremely difficult to fundraise as a community-based organization. For whatever reasons, most funders have erroneous perceptions of community-based organization that constrain the range and level of support available.

**What we learnt:** Teenseed must continue being creative and innovative in resourcing its work. It must build the resilience to serve and serve effectively in all seasons. The most important resource is the social capital which accounts for the majority of our success. Thus, we learnt that our communities are our most important resource and we cannot compromise our relationship with the communities we serve. We must continue finding ways to balance their needs and their critical role as a resource. This is important as we found community needs, pain points and expectations and funder focus and expectations can be at sharp variance. We must continuously work on making these key stakeholders understand and appreciate the complex and dynamic context of our work.

## Interventions Going Forward

From the challenges and lessons, we have prioritized the following going forward;

- **Deepen our engagement with our communities:** We shall engage our community members and beneficiaries in understanding that there's need to focus on addressing systemic issues that are the root causes of most of the inequalities that exist.
- **Deepen mobilization of community resources for development work:** We will also need to explore and appreciate the community resources that the communities can benefit more from their self-improvement and social transformation.
- **Diversify our funding:** We managed to secure only 24% of the required budget for 2023. This represents significant funding gaps which made it hard to respond to critical community needs in 2023. One way to address this challenge will be through diversification of funding. We shall therefore focus on diversifying our resource base even as we optimize our existing partnerships and resources.
- **Invest in Sustainability:** We recognizes that ending violence requires a long-term commitment and investment in strategic interventions. We shall therefore build sustainability into all our programming and organizational development plans and work. Teenseed and the communities it serves must think, plan and work long term.
- **Address capacity gaps and invest in systems strengthening:** We shall focus especially on policies and procedures for staff and volunteers to deliver programs effectively; strengthening our information technology systems and capacities; and establishing a suitable Monitoring and Evaluation system for tracking and reporting on our impact more effectively

## Our Partners & Donors

We express our gratitude to the entire Teenseed community, including beneficiaries, the community team members, volunteers, partners, consultants, friends and donors, for your unwavering support throughout our endeavours. Your collaboration has been instrumental in our achievements, bringing us closer to the realisation of our vision. As we look to the future, we aspire to continue this impactful work with you. We understand the comprehensive effort required in this work. Your invaluable contributions make all of this possible, and we extend our sincere appreciation for your continued commitment.



### With Special thanks for your continued support and partnership:

- Achieng Akena
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- Maisha Girls Safehouse
- Senior Chief, Kiambiu Location
- Joy of Troy SDA Church
- Holy Ghost Foundation Ministry
- Holy Trinity Church, Kiambiu
- Kamukunji Subcounty offices (Education, Children, & GBV)
- Kiambiu Police Post



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## Our USA Fiscal Sponsor Details

Name of physical sponsor: Myriad USA  
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