



SHINE

THRIVES

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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THE PROBLEM

While girls' rights and education have made huge gains over the last decade, COVID-19 has exposed the gaps in this progress. Deeply ingrained patriarchy and social norms have intensified, and continue to dictate women and girls' access to opportunities, economic security, safety, and freedom. Schools, homes, communities, and institutions perpetuate gender-biased attitudes and beliefs, which lead to poor health, educational, and economic outcomes—holding back development for Uganda as a whole. COVID-19 has shown us that progress can not be taken at face value and girls need to be at the forefront of recovery efforts, leading the way forward.

OUR ROLE

Since 2012, Girl Up Initiative Uganda has supported girls and young women to dream big and advocate for their rights. As a Ugandan and women-led organization, we believe that local action is the only way to bring about sustainable, community-minded change. Based on intersectional feminist and human rights theory, our synergistic programs tackle gender inequalities head-on. We do this through developing the leadership and advocacy potential of vulnerable girls and young women; disrupting gender-insensitive pedagogy within schools; and sharing critical knowledge on youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (YSRHR).

THE SOLUTION

We believe that band-aid approaches to gender inequalities just won't do anymore—we must re-invent systems, not treat symptoms. By engaging entire communities, we acknowledge that real change is dynamic, complex, and requires collective action. Transformative impact is possible when long-term investments are made in girls' education as well as in communities that understand the vital importance of educating and uplifting their girls.



VISION MISSION MISSION

Our Vision:

A gender-equal world where girls thrive and lead.

Our Mission:

To build a vibrant movement of girls and young women through transformative leadership, sexual and reproductive health education, and skills development.

CORE VALUES

Sustainability.

Our holistic model and curricula equip girls, boys, and women to challenge negative gender norms and know their human rights. They grow the leadership abilities to share knowledge and create their own movements to enhance gender justice within their communities.

Engagement & Proximity.

97% of our staff team are members of the communities they serve, giving them an intimate and unique insight into the challenges youth face day-to-day.

Community Collaboration.

We work in close partnership with schools, communities, and young people to co-create relevant, impactful programs based on the ever-changing needs of women and girls in our communities.

Inclusivity.

We believe in the extreme value of girls and young women—in all of their diversity. We recognize that without including all, we are leaving everyone behind.

A LETTER FROM OUR LEADER

Despite 2021 being yet another destabilizing year living with COVID-19, the air was thick with transformation, optimism, and creativity. Thanks to our global network of partners and friends, we were able to adapt our programs, advocate loudly for the rights of girls and young women, and invest in localization and collective action. We remained grounded in gratitude—grateful for the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with our community stakeholders so that our girls and women are supported to not only survive, but thrive.

As schools remained closed, we understood the urgent need for an education-focused intervention for young people and adolescents, especially those in vulnerable living situations. Together, with our partner teachers, we co-created the Community Classrooms Project to support out-of-school learners with critical knowledge and skills to remain safe and engaged in their education while at home. Creating this project was necessitated by the inaccessibility of digital learning for resource-scarce communities, an often-forgotten reality faced by so many during this time. Thanks to this project, we reached 1,200 adolescents with vital community-based learning amidst this education crisis.

This year, we began the implementation of our five-year advocacy project, She Leads, in partnership with Terre des Hommes Netherlands. She Leads opened our eyes to the importance of supplementing on-the-ground programming with girl-led advocacy efforts, ensuring that our influence is multi-level, cohesive, and deliberate. In just one year, this project amplified messages surrounding the inclusion of girls and young women in decision-making processes and gave us an entry point into key, national-level engagements. As we deepen our advocacy expertise over these next four years, we look forward to carving out meaningful space for girls' input in pandemic recovery policies.

While we look ahead to the light at the end of this COVID-19 tunnel, we hope that the transformations taking place across the globe—for racial justice, gender equity, and the decolonization and localization of international development—remain with us. Girl Up Initiative Uganda will continue to break the status quo by putting power in the hands of our communities and young people so that they lead the way forward. We are optimistic that we will play an integral role in shifting the power, and we count on the support of those who believe in our work to realize this necessary transformation.

Throughout the highs and lows—and everything in between—we continued to recognize that without challenges, there is no growth. And we could not grow without you. We are stronger together.

With joy and immense gratitude,

Monica Nyiraguhabwa
Co-Founder & Executive Director

IMPACT

261

GIRLS MENTORED THROUGH THE BIG SISTER NETWORK

372

SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE SUPPORTED

57

YOUNG WOMEN TRAINED IN SEWING AND DESIGN

LIVES IMPACTED
155,413
TO DATE

1,000

GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN TRAINED IN ADVOCACY

555

YOUTH ACCESSING SRHR SERVICES

8,113

REACHED THROUGH COVID RESPONSE EFFORTS

19

COMMUNITY HANDWASHING STATIONS INSTALLED

60

ACTIVE CITIZENS TRAINED

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



5 GENDER EQUALITY



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



COVID-19 RESPONSE

In 2021, the pandemic raged on. Country-wide lockdown measures, dusk-to-dawn curfew, and school closures exacerbated challenges and created new barriers to gender equity, girls' education and safety, and financial stability for vulnerable community members. We had our ear to the ground to stay alert to the immediate and evolving needs of adolescents and young people and quickly innovated to respond. As families struggled to have basic needs met, levels of gender-based violence and child neglect increased, as well as rates of sexual exploitation of young girls and women—leading to the stark rise in teenage and early pregnancies. Our COVID-19 response in 2021 took a three-pronged approach:



**EDUCATIONAL
SUPPORT**

1,200

**Students in
Community
Classrooms
Project**

**EMERGENCY &
PSYCHOSOCIAL
SUPPORT**

372

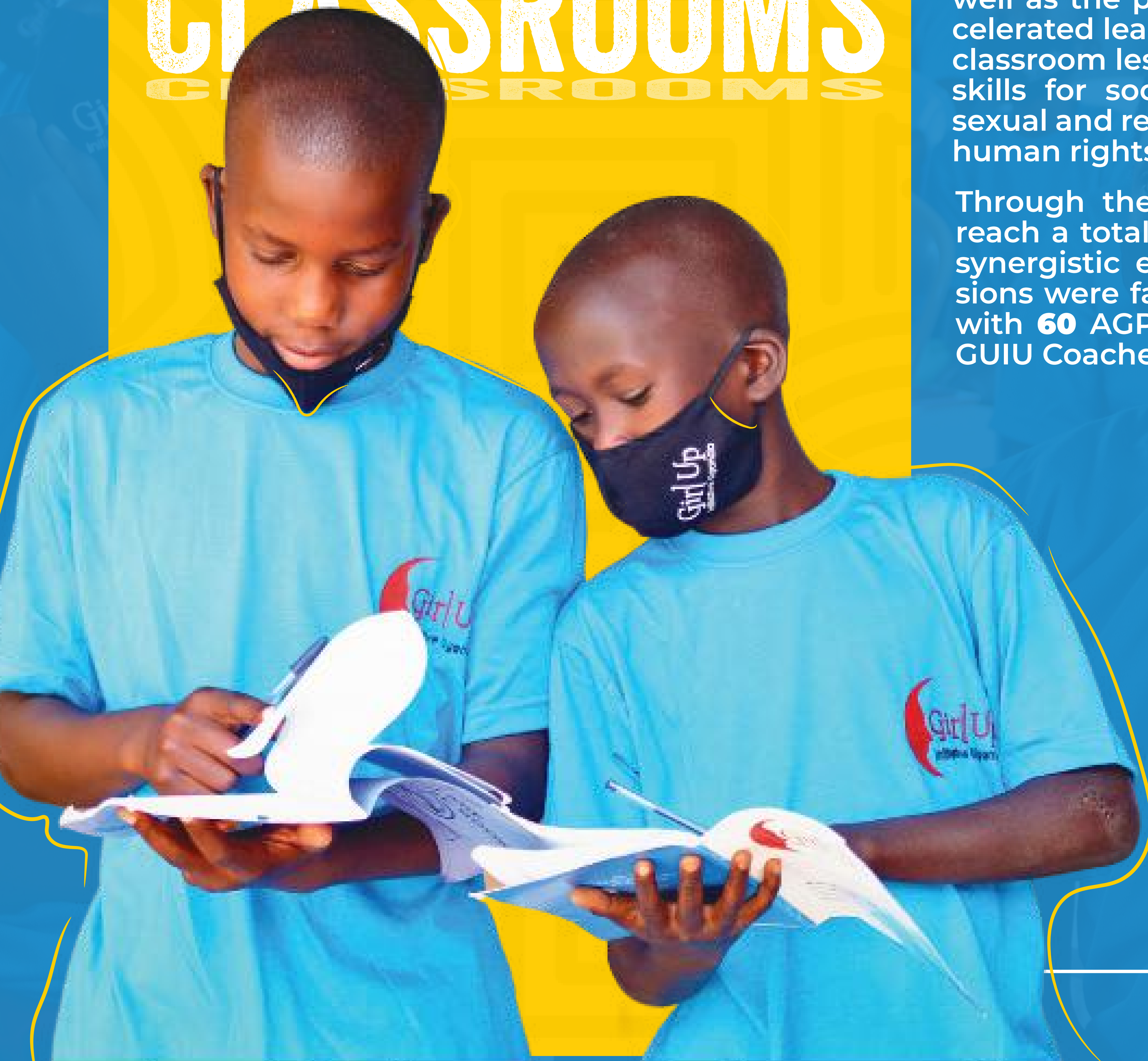
**Emergency
cases
supported**

**FOOD
RELIEF**

1,500

**Relief
Packages
Distributed**

COMMUNITY CLASSROOMS



In re-thinking our in-school Adolescent Girls Program and Boy Champions Project, we co-created the Community Classroom Project to support out-of-school adolescents and stagnant teachers after the second curfew lifted. This responsive project—born from a Teachers’ Meeting—took into account the inaccessibility of digital learning platforms for resource-scarce communities, as well as the prolonged gap in classroom-styled learning. This accelerated learning intervention combined ‘traditional’ classroom lessons with AGP and BCP curricula, which focused on skills for social protection, gender-based violence prevention, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), confidence-building from a human rights lens, and autonomy.

Through the Community Classroom Project, we were able to reach a total of **1,200** vulnerable, out-of-school adolescents with synergistic educational and human rights-based learning. Sessions were facilitated in **13** community locations in collaboration with **60** AGP and BCP-trained teachers with the support of six GUIU Coaches to complete a total of **205** sessions.

“ Before the Community Classrooms Project, we teachers were receiving phone calls from concerned parents, whose children were at home. Now they are calling to appreciate the level at which their children are progressing in their learning. ”

- Isaac, Teacher

OUR CORE PROGRAMS

1 ADOLESCENT GIRLS PROGRAM

Our flagship Adolescent Girls Program is an in-school program that aims to increase the autonomy of young girls to make informed and healthy choices about their bodies and futures, and be confident, thriving leaders—even within patriarchal environments.

3 BIG SISTERS NETWORK

The Big Sisters Network ensures that AGP alumni continue to access girl-friendly education, and stay involved and engaged after they have graduated from the AGP training program. The network offers the space, mentorship, and time for emerging girl leaders to build their self-confidence and positively transform their lives.

2 BOY CHAMPION PROGRAM

The Boy Champions Project, which complements the AGP, reaches out to in-school adolescent boys with critical knowledge and information to challenge deeply-held gender normative attitudes and beliefs, and improve their knowledge around sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV).

4 MAZURI DESIGNS HUB

Mazuri Designs Hub is a social enterprise business aimed at enhancing the economic empowerment of vulnerable, out-of-school young women and girls through vocational training in fashion, design, and tailoring. Throughout this course, our trainees are equipped with vocational, financial, and entrepreneurial training sessions to facilitate economic independence while also promoting confidence, self-empowerment, and important life skills.

BIG SISTERS NETWORK

The Big Sisters Network is a program that ensures that our flagship Adolescent Girls Program (AGP) alumni continue to access girl-friendly education, and remain involved and engaged in leadership roles after they have graduated from the AGP training program. This mentorship-focused program offers the space, environment, and time for emerging girl leaders to build their self-confidence and positively transform their lives and communities through knowledge, leadership, and skills building. Through girl-led advocacy, we are disrupting the patriarchal social structure and limiting gender norms that prevent girls from voicing their opinions and needs.

A key component of the Network is our annual Big Sisters Camp. The Big Sister Camp is a safe space where girls receive additional education, mentorship, and support from the different GUIU Coaches and also get an opportunity to interact with, and inspire, each other. This year, we brought together 261 girls from 14 of our partner schools for four days of inspiration and joy.

“In this pandemic, a lot is happening to these young girls. Just knowing that they are here with us in this space, learning from each other, inspiring each other, is a blessing. I have been impressed and challenged by their brilliance and resilience, that amidst all of their challenges they are still able to inspire.”

- Clare Tusingwire,
Head of Programs

“You have to get to know your values—know what you stand for, know what you want. If you have those values and know them deeply you can be a good leader.”

- Pauline, Big Sister

MAZURI DESIGNS HUB

88%

reported advanced skills in business management

72%

graduated with high belief in themselves and their abilities

61%

increased their income by selling sewing products

“I came here when I didn’t know anything about tailoring. I was told to come and start, and the Coaches welcomed me. I was so excited to touch the sewing machine! At first, we started practicing making straight lines. But I was very happy and excited to make my first top using paper before moving on to the fabric. When we transferred using the real kitenge material, I made my first outfit—all by myself. We then learned to make a lot of things like bangles, bags, and reusable pads. During the lockdown, I borrowed a friend’s sewing machine and was able to make reusable pads and sell them at a fair price. From the skills I have got here, I am able to start up my own tailoring business or workshop. My plan is to start up a small workshop in my home village of Mutungo. Now, using the money I am making selling my products, I want to go and source a sewing machine in town so that I am able to buy it for myself later. I appreciate the Coaches for their supportive spirit toward us in learning. I will come back for more guidance in the future, as they welcomed us to always return if we need to.”



Namara Patience,
20 years old
Mazuri Designs Hub
Graduate

SUCCESS STORY

NI-YETU YOUTH PROGRAM

The Ni-Yetu Youth Program aims to create a vibrant, inclusive, and youth-led civil society that is resilient and holds itself and the state accountable for child protection and sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially for girls and young women. Ni-Yetu targets young people, ages 13 to 24, living in urban slum communities of Kampala to prevent gender-based violence, improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and promote gender equality. The program is led by Plan International Uganda, with GUIU as the local implementing partner in Kampala. The Ni-Yetu Youth Program draws upon various youth-led elements to drive holistic change within communities:

4 COMMUNITY-BASED
HEALTH CAMPS
555 youth
accessing
services

24 RADIO
TALKSHOWS

240 COMMUNITY
DIALOGUES

17 DRAMA
PERFORMANCES
2887 community
members
reached

“HIV DOES NOT DEFINE WHO YOU ARE. EMBRACE WHO YOU ARE; LEARN WHO YOU ARE. WE HAVE THE POWER AND ENERGY TO STRIVE HIGHER FOR GREATER HEIGHTS.”

Rubuna Nagai is an ambitious, vibrant young woman who is a Campus Ambassador under The Ni-Yetu Youth Program at Kyambogo University pursuing a degree in Adult and Community Education. As a young person living with HIV, she struggled to accept her health status but found strength through sharing her story with others with the hope to destigmatize HIV. She found confidence during her peer educator training under the program and is now equipped with the knowledge and tools to encourage other young people to take charge of their health. She now dreams big, and advocates to see a future where young people are supported to be proud of who they are and believe in themselves.

“I now understand that as young people we need to take action and collectively innovate solutions to the problems in our communities. I am now, more than ever, committed to serving young people in my community and I am grateful for GUIU Coaches who have helped me refocus myself so I am better able to serve.” She counts herself lucky to be part of a program that has provided a big platform for her to share her story of hope with young people.



YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

Rubuna Nagai
Ni-Yetu Program
College Ambassador

SHE LEADS PROJECT

In 2021, we began the five-year She Leads Project, in partnership with Terre des Hommes Netherlands, as the national lead implementing partner. The main objective of She Leads is to increase sustained influence of girls and young women (GYW) in decision-making and transform negative gender norms in formal and informal institutions. Through She Leads, we are creating opportunities for young advocates to access and meaningfully engage in key civic and political spaces at the local, district, and national levels.

She Leads targets three core domains:

1 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION & GYW DOMAIN

This domain recognizes and acknowledges that sustained change must be led by girls and young women hand-in-hand with local, grassroots actors. By building the capacities of trusted community structures, systems change is able to occur from the ground up.

30

community leaders trained in gender-inclusive decision-making strategies

2 INSTITUTIONAL / POLITICAL DOMAIN

This domain takes into account the vital role of decision-makers and institutional structures in creating local and national policies and laws. These governing policies have the potential to support GYW in their diversity

10000

girls and young women & 20 CSO partners trained in feminist-minded advocacy and influencing principles

3 SOCIAL DOMAIN

This domain focuses on demystifying negative gender-based and age-based social norms, behaviors, and attitudes that limit

30

national stakeholders engaged in inclusive policy-making strategies

SHE LEADS PROJECT

“

I was once a shy, quiet girl with low self-esteem. Coming from an underprivileged background in Lungujja, I dropped out of school when I became pregnant, and as time passed, I feared speaking in spaces where educated people sat. As a house help, I never looked at myself as anyone who would be given a platform to speak, my thoughts not valuable. One day, a life-changing opportunity came to me when I was chosen to be a representative of girls and young women in Lungujja through the She Leads Project. I was nervous, but so happy to be invited to sit at the same table as well-educated people when I, myself, am not educated. Now, I have attended many workshops, learned many things, and even appeared in newspapers and television shows to speak about my experiences and how positive change can improve the lives of girls like me. I was even asked to be one of the representatives at the She Leads National Advocacy Desk. I have learned to fight for my rights and for other girls whose voices are not listened to. Now, I am strong. I am confident. And I am grateful. I have learned how to use social media as a tool for advocacy and influencing, and have learned how to tell my story to change the future for other underrepresented, under-educated girls in Uganda. Thanks to the self-belief I gained in She Leads, I decided to resume my education. I am now taking adult learning classes, while also taking a certificate course in IT.

”

SUCCESS STORY

Shivan

She Leads Advocate

DREAM TEAM



Monica Nyiraguhabwa;
Executive Director
Clare Tusingwire;
Head of Programs
Marion Achom;
Senior Program Officer, Adolescent Girls Program
Jane Tushabe;
Finance and Administration Officer
Teopista Nakiguli;
Accountant
Allan Denis Zziwa;
Program Officer, MEL
Emmanuel Akabwai;
Program Officer, Boy Champions Project
Kevin Prossy Nabukalu;
Program Officer, She Leads & Human Resources
Miriam Akera;
MEL Officer, She Leads
Mia Serpico;
Development and Communications Associate

Hajara Namuyimbwa;
Program Officer, Adolescent Girls Program
Joan Atimango;
Program Officer, Big Sisters Network
Ivan Kenneth Opio;
Media and Communications Officer
Dorothy Nafula;
Program Officer; MEL
Shallon Nayebare;
Program Officer, Ni-Yetu Youth Program
Clare Natukunda;
Program Officer, Ni-Yetu Youth Program
Ekel Fiona;
Program Assistant
Sharon Kisuki Naigaga;
Program Associate for Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Counseling
Innocent Komugisha;
Senior Seamstress, Mazuri Designs Hub

Annet Kyokutamba;
Senior Seamstress, Mazuri Designs Hub
Miriam Kabayo;
Seamstress, Mazuri Designs Hub
Annah Kanowomugisha;
Seamstress, Mazuri Designs Hub
Susan Nantale;
Seamstress, Mazuri Designs Hub
Jackeline Akedi;
Seamstress, Mazuri Designs Hub
Isaac Anguyo;
Transportation Officer
Michael Oonyu;
Security Officer

Uganda Board

Enid Nambuya
Brian Denis Sekayombya
Kagoya Hawa
James Oromait; President
Saidi Alikwani

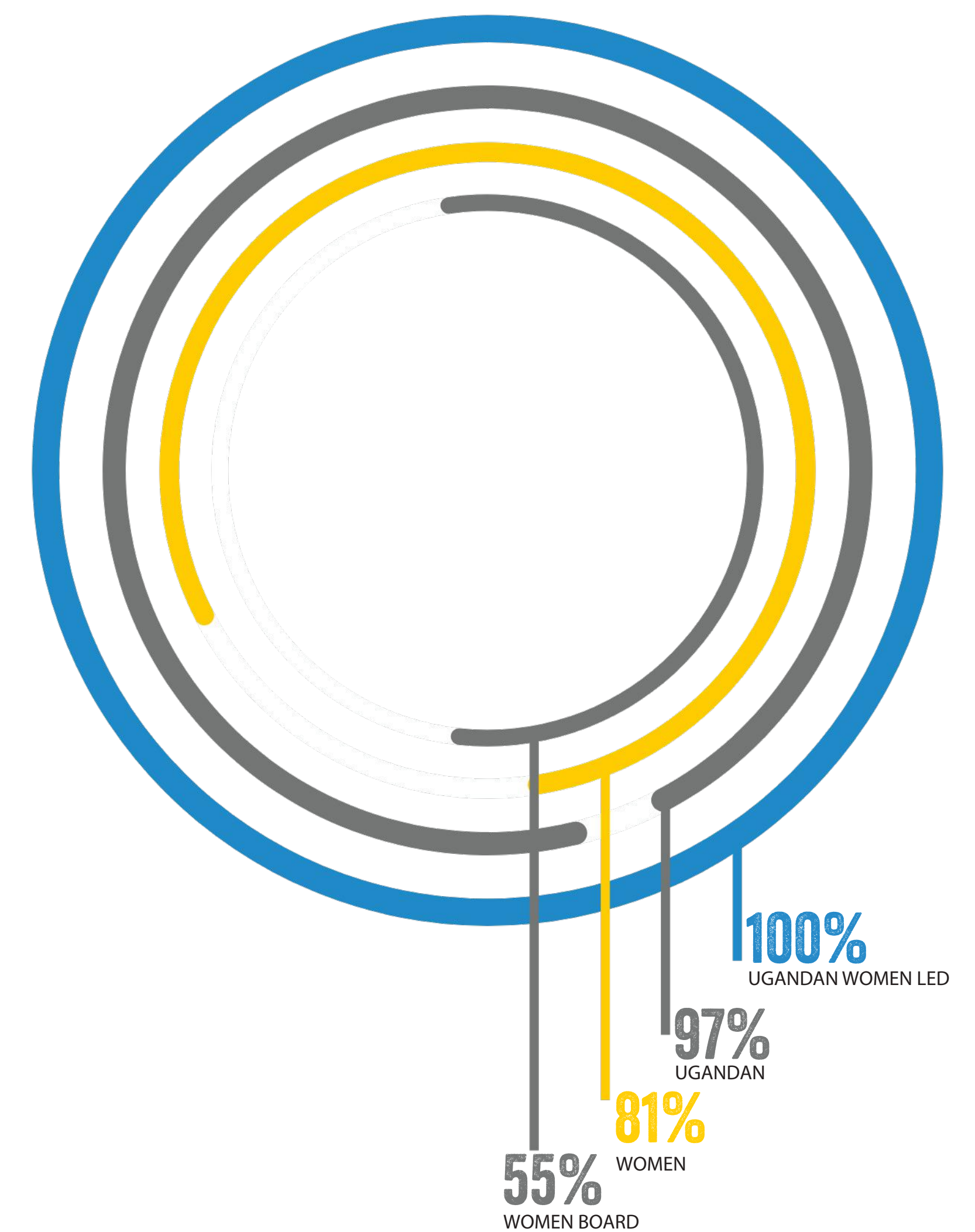
Joseph Okwenje

US Board
Sofie Fredlund-Blomst
Harvey Wolf
Kimberly Wolf
Sasha Mostofi-Jorgensen
Hilary Haber

Volunteers

Bob Musasizi;
Mazuri Designs Hub
Paul Eliko;
MEL

Ambrose Lule;
Finance and Administration



APPRECIATION

Anonymous Donors
Individual Donors
AMPLIFY Girls
Arthur B. Schultz Foundation
British Council
Catherine Bertini Trust Fund for Girls' Education
Co-Create Your Success
Elma Philanthropies
Girls Opportunity Alliance
Imago Dei Fund
Limitless Women
Meredith Alexander Foundation
Plan International Uganda
Roy A. Hunt Foundation
Segal Family Foundation
Snowbird Foundation
Stone Family Foundation
Terre des Hommes Netherlands
The International Foundation
The Share Trust
Thriving Women in Business
Utopia Foundation
Viveros Family Foundation
WomenStrong International

FINANCIALS

2021 REVENUES (USD)

Foundations :	\$397,802
Individuals :	\$74,754
International NGOs:	\$ 270,383
Income-Generating Activities:	\$6,925
Bank Interest:	\$6,094

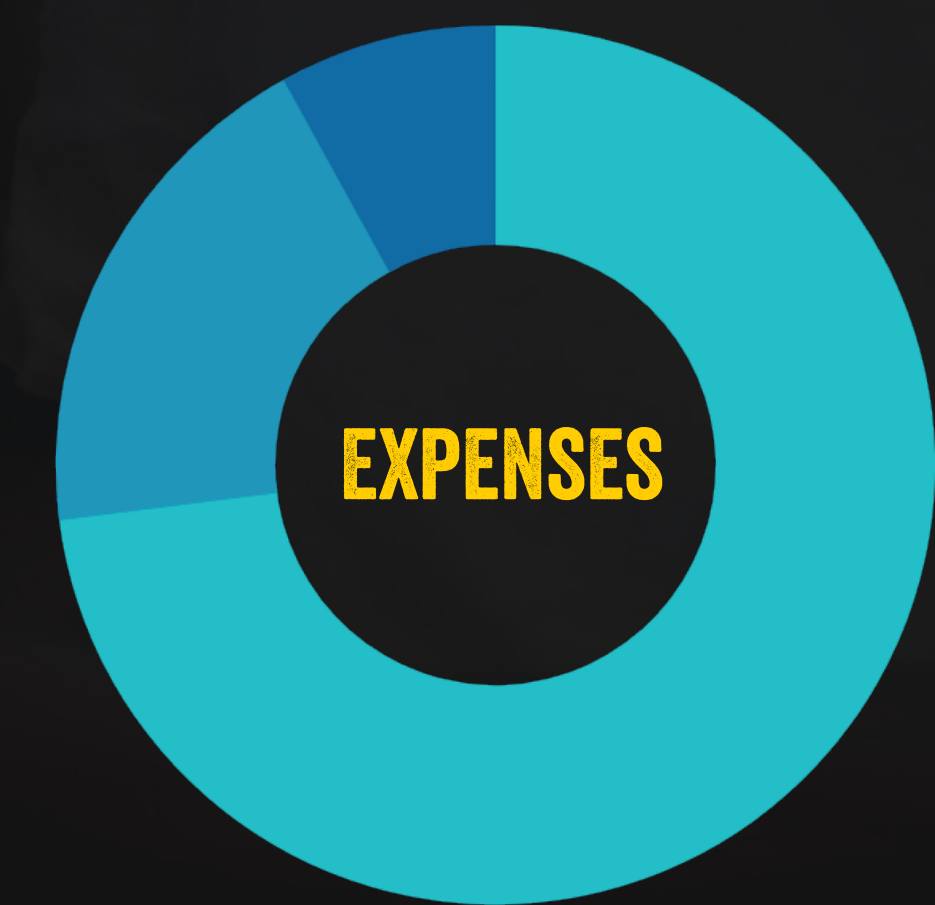
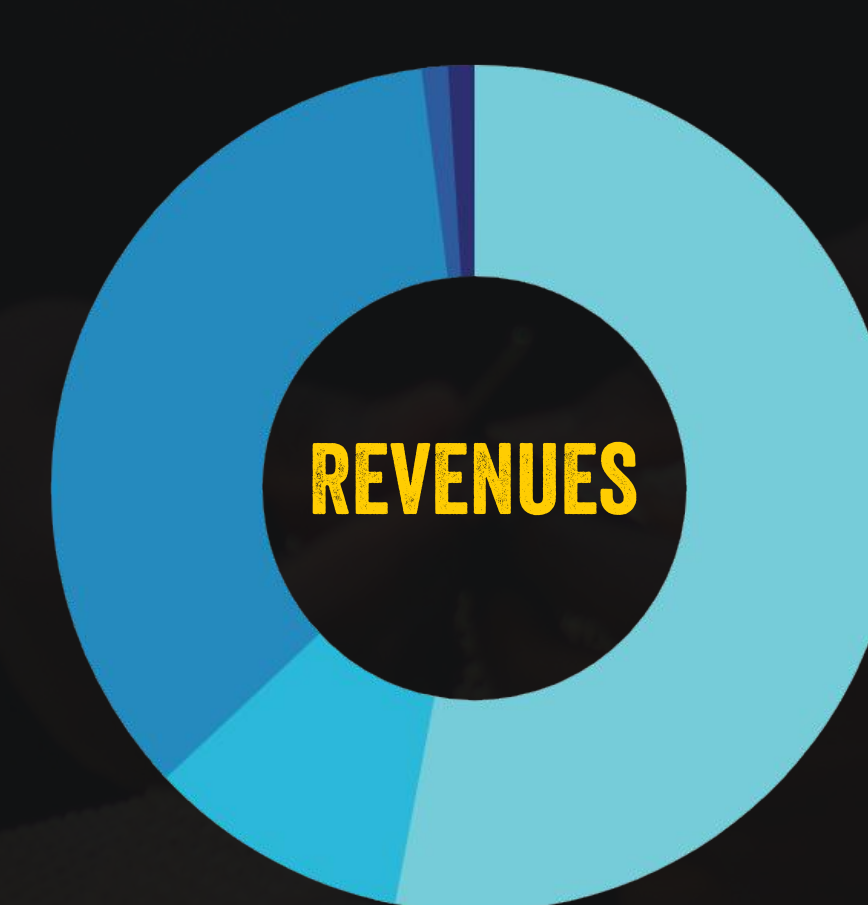
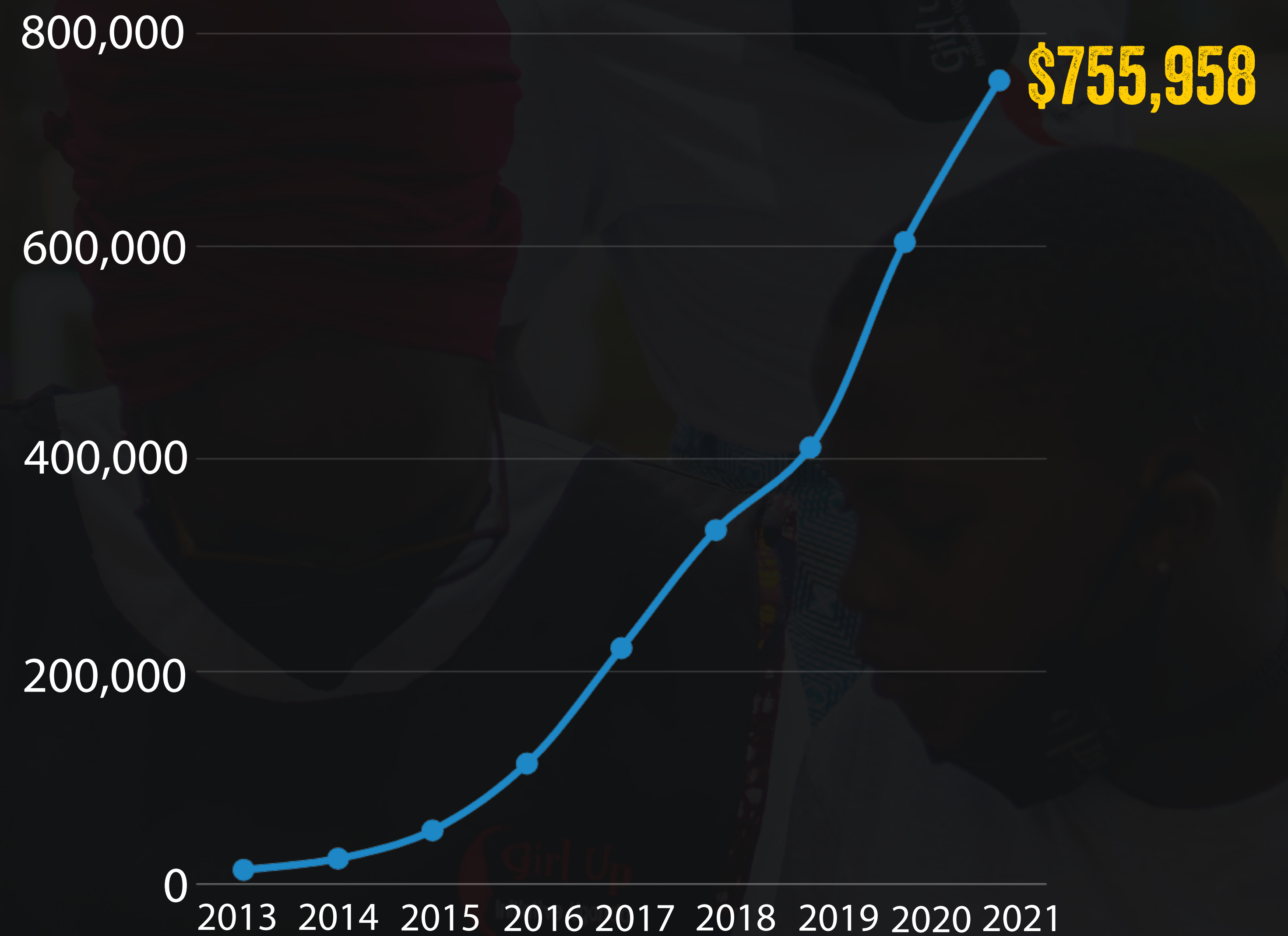
Total: \$755,958

2021 EXPENSES (USD)

Programs:	\$475,790
Administration:	\$126,874
US Expenses:	\$54,726

Total: \$657,389

Change in Net Assets: \$98,569



53% Foundations
35% International NGOs
10% Individuals
1% Bank Interest
1% Income-Generating Activities

73% Program
19% Administration
8% US Expenses



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