



STRETCHERS
Youth Organization
Building Youths and women capacities.

20 ANNUAL 25 REPORT



FOR
**YOUNG
PEOPLE**
BY **YOUNG
PEOPLE**

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Acronym	Definition
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AFOSI	Action for Sustainability Initiative
AYP	Adolescents and Young People
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CPA	Community Peace Advocate
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
ICFP	International Conference on Family Planning
IWD	International Women's Day
KAP	Kujenga Amani Pamoja
KCIC	Kenya Climate Innovation Centre
MHL	Mental Health Literacy
MYPOA	Mentoring Youths for Positive Opportunities and Advancements
OAY	Organisation of African Youth
OCA	Organisational Capacity Assessment
OCS	Officer Commanding Station
PCVE	Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism
SCDO	Strategic Community Development Organisation
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SYO	Stretchers Youth Organisation
SYV	Sheria ya Vijana
TAYO	The Amplifiers Youth Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme





Message from the Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Stretchers Youth Organization, I am honored to present our 2025 Annual Report, a document that captures not just what we have done, but who we are becoming as an organization committed to Kenya's youth development agenda.

The year 2025 was a year of reckoning and renewal. Across Kenya and the African continent, young people continued to assert their rightful place at the table of governance, health, and social development. At SYO, we witnessed this assertion firsthand, in the voices of girls at the 7th Girl Summit in Mombasa, in the peace dialogues held by youth champions in Kwale County, and in the quiet, transformative moments within mentorship sessions across our community programmes.

As a Board, our role is to ensure that the strategic direction of SYO remains faithful to its founding mission: to enhance and promote a healthy, equal, just, and inclusive environment for youth through capacity building, advocacy, and information sharing. I am proud to report that in 2025, our leadership team, under the able stewardship of the Executive Director, not only remained faithful to this mission, they expanded its reach in ways that inspire all of us.

2025 saw SYO deepen its engagement across six pillars: Health and Wellbeing, Democracy and Good Governance, Human Rights and Gender Mainstreaming, Mental Health, Climate Action, and Access to Justice. These pillars are not siloed, they are woven together by a singular recognition that the challenges young people face are interconnected, and that real change requires holistic, rights-based responses.

I am particularly proud of the policy milestones SYO contributed to in 2025. The development of Kwale County's Policy Brief on peace and conflict prevention, SYO's contribution to the National Strategy to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism (2025–030), and the continued advocacy for sanitary pads allocation in county budgets are evidence that SYO is not merely a service provider, we are a policy influencer.

The Board remains committed to ensuring strong governance, financial accountability, and strategic oversight as we prepare to enter our next strategic planning cycle. We will continue to invest in institutional systems, people, and partnerships that position SYO for sustainable impact.

To our donors, partners, staff, and above all, the young people and communities we serve, thank you. Your trust is our greatest resource. Your resilience is our greatest inspiration.

Ezekiel Kodonde
Chairperson, Board of Directors
Stretchers Youth Organisation



Message from the Executive Director

As I reflect on 2025, I am filled with profound pride and a deep sense of responsibility. This report is our account to the communities we serve, the partners who trust us, and the young people who inspire every decision we make at Stretchers Youth Organization.

2025 was a year defined by depth. We did not just expand our numbers, we deepened our roots. In Mombasa's informal settlements, in the shores of Kwale County, in school classrooms and community halls, SYO's programs reached some of the most vulnerable and marginalized young people with services, knowledge, and platforms that many of them had never before accessed.

Seven initiatives formed the backbone of our 2025 work: WE LEAD, MYPOA, Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP), the Zinduka Project, Sheria ya Vijana, Access to Justice, and the Girl Summit. Each project addressed a distinct yet interconnected dimension of youth exclusion, from SRHR and mental health, to peacebuilding, legal empowerment, green economy transitions, and girls' leadership. Together, they embody our conviction that youth development must be holistic, participatory, and driven by young people themselves.

A defining highlight of the year was the 7th Edition of the Girl Summit, held on 20 November 2025 at the Kenya School of Government, Mombasa Campus. Over 500 young girls and women gathered under the theme 'Empowered Girls, Resilient Communities: Unlocking Coastal Opportunities through Innovation and Inclusion.' Their voices clear, urgent, and visionary reminded every policymaker and leader present that girls must not just be talked about; they must be talked with.

I am also proud of the structural impact we are making. SYO's contributions to the Kwale County Policy Brief on peacebuilding, to national counter-extremism strategies, and to county budget advocacy for sanitary pads are evidence that our work transcends individual beneficiaries and reaches the architecture of policy itself.

To our dedicated team, thank you for your tireless commitment. To our partners and donors, your confidence in SYO is a partnership we do not take lightly. And to the communities we walk alongside, your strength is what makes this work possible and meaningful.

We look forward to 2026 with renewed energy and clear purpose.

Dickson Obonyo
Founder & Executive Director
Stretchers Youth Organization



All our programs are geared towards contributing to 7 sustainable development goals (SDGs). We contribute to:

- **SDG 3. Good Health & Well-Being**
- **SDG 5. Gender Equality**
- **SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Development**
- **SDG 10. Reduced Inequalities**
- **SDG 13. Climate Action**
- **SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**
- **SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals**





Organizational Background

Stretchers Youth Organization (SYO) is a membership, Youth-led community-based organization that was founded in 2011 to enhance and promote a healthy, equal, just and inclusive environment for youths through capacity building, advocacy and information sharing for sustainable development. The organization works in the coastal counties of Kenya, primarily Mombasa and Kwale with a growing presence in Nairobi, Kisumu, and Siaya counties.

From our founding in 2011, SYO has grown from a grassroots initiative into a nationally recognized leader in youth empowerment, sexual and reproductive health advocacy, legal empowerment, peacebuilding, leadership and governance, and community-driven social transformation. Our journey over more than a decade reflects the evolution of Kenya's youth development landscape, with SYO consistently at the forefront of emerging trends, innovative approaches, and systemic solutions to challenges facing young people.

What began as a response to gaps in sexual and reproductive health services has expanded into a comprehensive ecosystem addressing the interconnected challenges young people face: from mentorship and mental health support to legal empowerment, peace-building, and civic participation. This evolution demonstrates our unwavering commitment to holistic youth development —one that recognizes young people as complete human beings with diverse

needs, unlimited potential, and the capacity to drive transformation in their own communities.

Catalyzing Community Transformation Through Youth-Led Action

Through six strategically designed flagship projects and a robust network of strategic partnerships spanning government, grassroots community Organizations and civil society organizations, SYO catalyzed sustainable transformation in the lives of thousands of adolescents and young people in 2025, establishing new paradigms for youth-centered development across Mombasa and Kwale counties.

6 Projects	10+ Grassroots Orgs Supported	3 Strategic Focus Areas	14+ Strategic Partnerships
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Elevating Youth as Architects of Change

Our 2025 achievements represent more than programmatic success, they embody a fundamental shift toward recognizing young people as primary agents of social change, policy contributors, and community transformation leaders. From coastal communities in Kwale to urban centers in Mombasa, SYO has demonstrated that when youth voices are amplified, authentic participation is facilitated, and community-driven solutions are prioritized, extraordinary change becomes not just possible but inevitable.

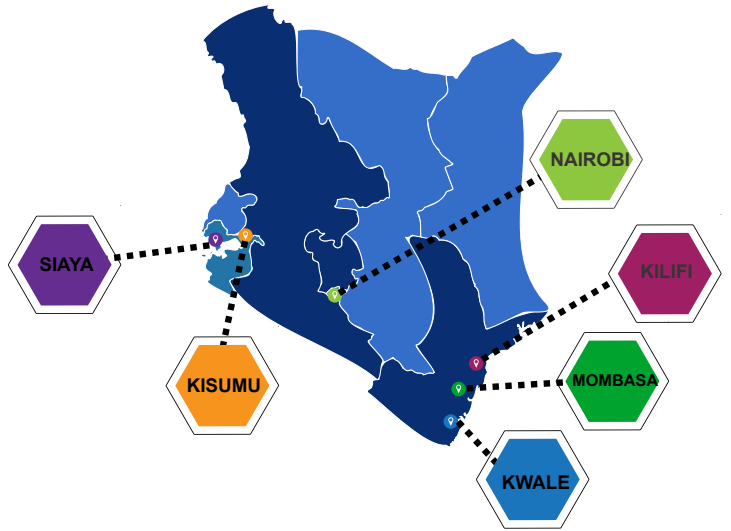
Evidence of Systemic Impact

The 7th Edition of the Girl Summit, held at the Kenya School of Government in November 2025, brought together hundreds of girls, young women, policymakers, and civil society stakeholders under the theme 'Empowered Girls, Resilient Communities: Unlocking Coastal Opportunities through Innovation and Inclusion.' This landmark gathering represents a generational shift in how communities and government entities approach girls' empowerment and youth programming along the Kenyan coast.

Through the EU-funded Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP) project, SYO strengthened peacebuilding mechanisms across Kwale County, contributing to the development of a County Policy Brief on peace and conflict prevention and participating in the National Strategy to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism (2025–030). These systemic contributions extend far beyond individual project outcomes, embedding youth perspectives into the policy fabric of Kenya's governance architecture.

Our Geographic Footprint

SYO's primary operations are concentrated in Mombasa and Kwale counties along the Kenyan coast, with project-level presence in Nairobi, Kisumu, and Siaya counties.



STRATEGIES

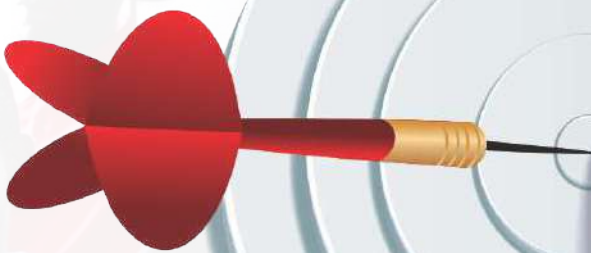
Our Strategies



Meaningful Youth Inclusion and Engagement among youth and women in decision making platforms.



Policy & Budget advocacy on progressive policies and laws affecting the youths and women in Kenya and beyond.



Delivery of innovative programmes to increase access to the most vulnerable and marginalized communities through ADR, Intergenerational Dialogues, Open Mic, Community Talking Box etc.

Strategic Partnership, Collaboration and Networking with strategic partners, the Kenya national and county governments

Our Focus: The Largest Young Generation in History

SYO's work is grounded in the profound recognition that we are serving the largest young generation in human history —a generation facing unprecedented challenges but possessing unlimited potential to reshape society. Kenya's youth demographic dividend represents both opportunity and responsibility: opportunity to harness youthful energy, innovation, and leadership for national transformation; responsibility to ensure that systemic barriers don't prevent this generation from realizing its full potential.

Our target audience consists of adolescents, young people, and women aged 10–35, with a particular focus on those who experience multiple forms of marginalization. We uphold non-discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or socioeconomic status, while prioritizing young women, girls, and youth with disabilities facing intersectional barriers



Our Approach: The SYO Model

SYO's work is centered on human rights and hope based approach that ensures all programming upholds the principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, and empowerment. We use a Community of Action model, building networks of youth-led organizations working together to achieve collective outcomes rather than competing in isolation.

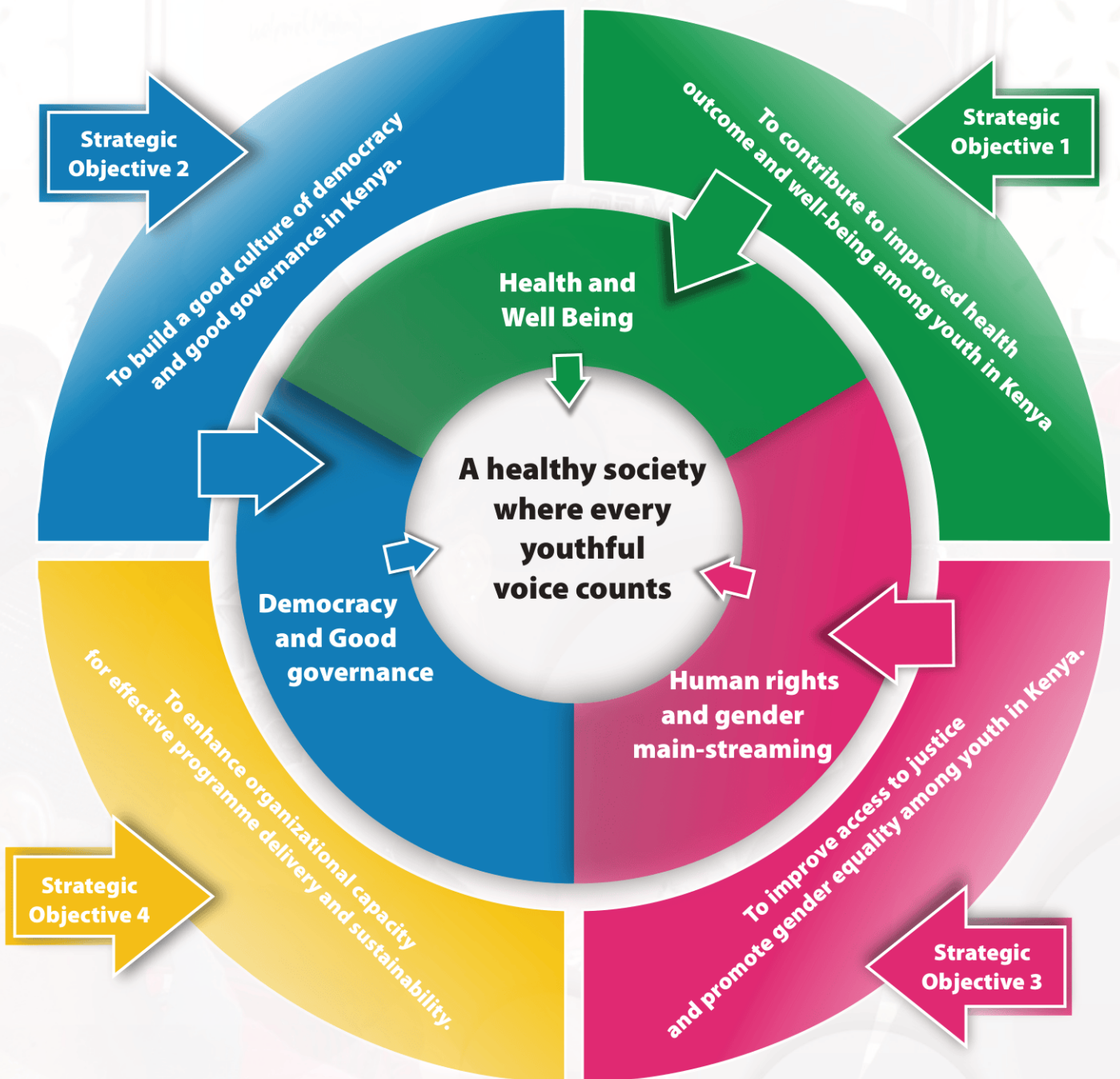
IF young people have knowledge, skills, platforms, and supportive systems...

AND communities, government, and duty-bearers are engaged and accountable...

THEN young people lead transformation in health, governance, justice, climate change and peace.

ULTIMATELY: A healthy society where every youthful voice counts.

Thematic Areas & Strategic objectives



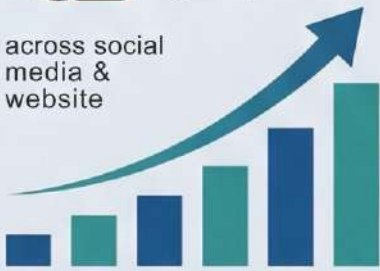
SYO 2025 AT A GLANCE

Driving Impact Across Health, Justice, Peace, Mental Health, Governance, Climate, and Empowerment

DIGITAL REACH & ENGAGEMENT

 **560,000**
PEOPLE REACHED
digitally

across social
media &
website



 **1.8M+**
CAMPAIGN
IMPRESSIONS




NATIONAL TV
FEATURES


234K WEBSITE
VISITS


6
NATIONAL
TV FEATURES


234,432
WEBSITE
VISITS

PROJECTS & SUPPORT



6 PROJECTS
DELIVERED
WE LEAD, Access to Justice,
Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP),
MYPOA, Sheria ya Vijana, &
Zinduka



30+
LEGAL CASES
HANDLED
15+ CASES
SUPPORTED IN
SMALL CLAIMS
COURT



10+
GRASSROOTS
YOUTH-LED
ORGANISATIONS
SUPPORTED
THROUGH
MENTORSHIP &
SUB-GRANTS



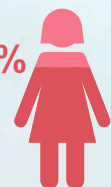

EMPOWERMENT & CONVENING



500+
GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN
CONVENED
AT THE 7TH ANNUAL
GIRL SUMMIT



4,800+
People Reached

58%  42% 

KEY POLICY MILESTONE

- 01 Contributed to Kwale County Policy Brief on Peace and Conflict Prevention
- 02 Participated in National Strategy to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism (2025–2030)

Core Programming

Health and Well-being

Creating demand for and ensuring access to comprehensive, youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, including mental health, while challenging cultural, policy, and systemic barriers that limit young people's ability to make informed decisions about their bodies and futures. This includes addressing the intersectionality of climate change impacts on health outcomes, recognizing how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized youth's physical and mental well-being.

Democratic and Good Governance

Strengthening democracy through meaningful youth participation in governance processes, policy development, and decision-making structures while building young people's capacity to hold leaders accountable and advocate effectively for their needs. This connects directly with peace building and conflict transformation by fostering youth-led conflict resolution, community dialogue, and violence prevention while transforming former combatants into peace ambassadors and community leaders for sustainable democratic processes.

Human Rights & Gender Mainstreaming

Promoting fundamental human rights with particular attention to gender mainstreaming, challenging discrimination based on age, gender, disability, HIV status, and other forms of marginalization while creating inclusive spaces where all young people can participate fully in society. This integrates legal empowerment and access to justice by ensuring vulnerable populations, particularly young people, have access to legal services, understand their rights, and can navigate justice systems effectively while working to reform legal frameworks that perpetuate inequality.



WE LEAD Programme

Stretchers Youth Organization (SYO) continued implementing the WE LEAD Program in 2025, focusing on strengthening the leadership and participation of young women, girls, and marginalized right-holders in decision-making processes affecting their health, dignity, and rights.

Despite the shorter implementation period, SYO maintained strong engagement with right-holders, healthcare providers, county leadership, and national stakeholders to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equality, and accountability in public health systems.

The program prioritizes grassroots leadership, policy engagement, and community-driven advocacy, ensuring that young people and marginalized groups are not only beneficiaries but also active participants in shaping policies and services that affect their lives.

Key Impact Highlights

Strengthening Youth Influence in County Health Governance

For the first time, advocacy efforts led by right-holders resulted in the Mombasa County Assembly Health Committee conducting oversight visits to all six youth-friendly health centers in the county.

This milestone followed concerns raised by young people during a community listening session supported by SYO. As a result:

- The County Assembly developed formal recommendations to the County Executive to improve youth-friendly services.
- Youth voices directly influenced policy oversight and service delivery discussions within county government structures.

This represents a significant shift toward greater accountability and youth inclusion in health governance.





Grassroots Women Leaders Transitioning from Advocacy to Funding

A newly formed grassroots group, Women Space for Empowerment, established by right-holders under the WE LEAD Program, achieved a major milestone by securing its first funding grant. The group is now implementing community initiatives addressing:

- Gender-based violence (GBV)
- Reproductive health awareness for girls and young women

This transition from advocacy training to funded community action demonstrates the program's effectiveness in building sustainable grassroots leadership and locally driven change.

Amplifying Community Voices in National GBV Policy Discussions

Through SYO's support, right-holders successfully submitted a memorandum to the National Technical Working Group on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. At a national public forum, they presented community-driven recommendations to strengthen government responses to GBV and femicide in Kenya. This engagement:

- Elevated grassroots perspectives into national policy discussions
- Strengthened the role of community advocates in shaping national responses to violence against women and girls

Looking Ahead

SYO remains committed to sustaining these gains by:

- Strengthening youth leadership and grassroots advocacy
- Deepening engagement with county and national duty bearers
- Supporting community-led initiatives addressing SRHR and gender justice

Through the WE LEAD Program, SYO continues to demonstrate that when young people and marginalized groups are empowered with knowledge, platforms, and support, they become powerful drivers of social change.

Access to Justice Project

The Access to Justice Project, implemented by Stretchers Youth Organization (SYO) with support from Kituo cha Sheria and funding from UNDP, aims to promote equitable access to legal information and justice services for vulnerable and marginalized communities in Mombasa County. Across many communities in Mombasa County, vulnerable populations—including low-income families, women, youth, and informal workers—often struggle to access justice due to limited legal awareness, high legal costs, and weak connections with formal justice institutions. These barriers frequently leave individuals unable to resolve disputes involving debts, rent, small business transactions, and community financial agreements.

The Access to Justice Project was designed to bridge this gap. The project strengthens community legal empowerment, promotes the use of Small Claims Courts and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), and supports vulnerable individuals in navigating Kenya's judiciary systems, including the digital e-filing platform.

Key Impact in 2025

3.2.1 Expanding Justice for Vulnerable Communities

In 2025, the project documented and handled over 30 legal cases through SYO's Social Justice Department, addressing disputes such as debt recovery, rent arrears, financial conflicts within community savings groups, and withheld housing deposits.

Additionally, the project supported community members to file more than 15 cases in the Small Claims Court, enabling vulnerable individuals to pursue justice through an affordable and efficient legal process designed for disputes under Ksh. 1,000,000.

3.2.2 Strengthening Community-Based Legal Support Systems

The project invested in grassroots legal empowerment by training community actors—including community paralegals, chiefs, administrative officers, and religious

leaders—to identify legal issues, provide basic legal guidance, and refer cases to appropriate justice mechanisms.

These trained actors are now serving as community justice connectors, helping bridge the gap between marginalized communities and the formal legal system.

3.2.3 Bridging the Digital Divide in Access to Justice

A major barrier to justice in Kenya's courts is the mandatory digital e-filing system, which many community members struggle to navigate. Through the project, community actors were supported to create and use judiciary e-filing accounts, enabling them to assist others in submitting cases and accessing court services. This intervention significantly improved digital access to justice for grassroots communities.



TRANSFORMING LIVES: A JUSTICE VICTORY

One of the project's most significant successes occurred on 5 November 2025, when a claimant supported by the project won a court judgment of Ksh. 101,059 plus Ksh. 7,000 in costs in a debt recovery case. During the proceedings, the respondent attempted to dismiss the claim by falsely alleging a personal relationship with the claimant as justification for non-repayment. Through legal support and case preparation, the claimant successfully challenged these claims in court and secured justice.



National Recognition

In March 2025, the Access to Justice Legal Empowerment Report was officially launched by Chief Justice Emeritus David K. Maraga, who recognized the critical role of community paralegals in expanding access to justice in Kenya.

Looking Forward

The Access to Justice Project demonstrates that community-driven legal empowerment can transform how marginalized communities access justice. By strengthening grassroots legal support systems and connecting communities with formal justice institutions, the project ensures that justice becomes more accessible, affordable, and responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens.

Stretchers Youth Organization remains committed to expanding this model to reach more communities and strengthen people-centered justice systems across the Coast region.

Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP) Project

The Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP) Project is a regional peace building initiative implemented across Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique with financial support from the European Union. The project focuses on strengthening peace building mechanisms, enhancing collaboration between communities and institutions, and addressing drivers of conflict in vulnerable coastal border regions.

The targeted regions face several structural challenges including youth marginalization, social tensions, economic inequality, and cross-border security risks. These factors often contribute to community disputes, mistrust of institutions, and vulnerability to crime and violent extremism.

In Kenya, the project is implemented by WeWorld in partnership with Stretchers Youth Organization (SYO) in Kwale County, focusing on strengthening grassroots peace structures and

promoting inclusive participation in governance and community decision-making.

Through community dialogue forums, youth engagement platforms, capacity-building activities, and collaborative peace building mechanisms, the project empowers communities to address conflicts proactively and build sustainable local peace systems.

Geographic Scope

The KAP project operates across three countries in the coastal region of East Africa. In Kenya, interventions are concentrated in Kwale County specifically within:

- Matuga Sub-County
- Msambweni Sub-County
- Lunga Lunga Sub-County

These areas have historically experienced community disputes related to land conflicts, youth unemployment, gender-based violence, and security tensions, making them key areas for targeted peacebuilding interventions.





Key Achievements in 2025

Strengthening Community Peace Infrastructure

The project formalized collaboration with Community Peace Advocates (CPAs) through signed Memorandums of Understanding, recognizing their role as frontline actors in conflict prevention and mediation. As a result, CPAs have now been integrated into Sub-County Peace Committees, where they work alongside local administration, security actors, and community leaders to monitor emerging conflicts and promote dialogue-based solutions.

Building Local Capacity for Conflict Resolution

In 2025, the project delivered Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) training to CPAs and village elders, equipping them with practical skills in mediation, negotiation, and dialogue facilitation. Additional capacity-building sessions focused on:

- Conflict Sensitivity
- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) awareness
- Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)

These trainings strengthened the ability of local leaders to mediate disputes early and prevent escalation of community tensions.

Promoting Inclusive Governance and Youth Participation

The project facilitated intergenerational and youth dialogue forums across several wards including Dzombo, Mwereni, Ramisi, and Ukunda. These dialogues created platforms where community members, youth, local leaders, and security actors could openly discuss community concerns and identify collaborative solutions. Through these engagements, the project helped build greater trust and cooperation between communities and government institutions.

The project facilitated intergenerational and youth dialogue forums across several wards including Dzombo, Mwereni, Ramisi, and Ukunda. These dialogues created platforms where community members, youth, local leaders, and security actors could openly discuss community concerns and identify collaborative solutions. Through these engagements, the project helped build greater trust and cooperation between communities and government institutions.

Impact on Communities

Improved Community Trust: Dialogue forums have strengthened relationships between citizens, security actors, and traditional leaders, reducing mistrust and improving collaboration on local security matters.

Stronger Conflict Prevention Systems: Through the training of CPAs and village elders, communities now have trusted local mediators who can respond quickly to emerging disputes.

Empowered Community Leadership: Community volunteers and youth leaders are increasingly recognized as active contributors to peacebuilding and local governance processes.





Stories of Change

HEALING TRAUMA AND PREVENTING FUTURE VIOLENCE

In Bongwe Gombato, a widow who lost her husband during security operations in 2014 shared her story publicly for the first time during a KAP dialogue forum. For years she lived with trauma and fear, unable to speak openly about her experience. The dialogue created a safe environment where she was able to share her story in front of community elders and police officers. Her testimony revealed how the trauma had deeply affected her children, who were at risk of joining juvenile criminal gangs due to anger and loss. Through the project's safe dialogue spaces and psychosocial support, the family began a process of healing, helping prevent the cycle of trauma and violence from continuing to the next generation.

FROM GANG MEMBER TO COMMUNITY ROLE MODEL

Said Ali, once a member of the 'Boto Land Gang,' described how lack of opportunities and peer pressure led him into criminal activities. Through engagement with the KAP project's youth initiatives, he was able to leave gang life and rebuild his future. Today, Said works as a professional plumber and actively mentors other young people in his community, encouraging them to pursue constructive paths. His story demonstrates how community-based interventions can transform the lives of at-risk youth and strengthen long-term peace.

REBUILDING TRUST BETWEEN POLICE AND COMMUNITIES

During one of the dialogue sessions, Deputy OCS Abbas Otondi participated in an open discussion with community members. In a powerful moment of accountability, he acknowledged the need for stronger collaboration between security agencies and local communities. He emphasized that security cannot be achieved through enforcement alone, but requires cooperation between police, parents, youth, and community leaders. These dialogues have helped transform relationships between law enforcement and communities from confrontation to collaboration.

GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP DRIVING COMMUNITY CHANGE

Patience, a Community Peace Advocate from Lunga Lunga, used digital platforms to raise concerns about how transport costs and limited information were preventing vulnerable residents from accessing government services. Her advocacy reached the area Member of Parliament, who responded by organizing additional Huduma Mashinani outreach services in the community. Patience's initiative highlights how empowered community members can influence local decision-making and ensure services reach those who need them most.

Looking Forward

As the project enters its final phase, the Kujenga Amani Pamoja initiative will continue to strengthen community peace mechanisms, deepen collaboration between institutions and citizens, and support locally led solutions to conflict. By empowering community leaders, youth, and local institutions, the project is helping build more resilient communities capable of preventing conflict and sustaining peace in the long term.

Mentoring Youths for Positive Opportunities and Advancements (MYPOA) Project

The Mentoring Youths for Positive Opportunities and Advancements (MYPOA) is a strategic initiative implemented by Stretchers Youth Organization (SYO) with support from Population Connection to empower Adolescents and Young People (AYP) in Mombasa County. The project is designed to strengthen the capacity of young people to become active, responsible, and productive members of their communities. The project focuses on equipping youth with the knowledge, skills, and mentorship necessary to navigate social and economic challenges while enabling them to pursue opportunities that contribute to their personal development and community wellbeing.

The project focuses on identifying and supporting grassroots youth-led and youth-serving organizations that are deeply embedded within local communities but often lack the financial resources and technical capacity needed to expand their work and impact. While these organizations play a crucial role in addressing pressing community challenges, limited access to funding and institutional support often restricts their ability to scale their interventions.

Through sub-grants, mentorship, and capacity strengthening, the MYPOA project aims to build a stronger civil society ecosystem in Mombasa County. The initiative specifically addresses critical issues affecting young people, including:

- **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing**
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

By investing directly in grassroots actors, the project strengthens youth leadership and community-driven solutions that respond to real local needs.

The Importance of Investing in Grassroots Organizations

Hyper-Local Knowledge and Impact

Grassroots organizations possess a deep understanding of the social, cultural, and economic realities within their communities. Their close proximity to the communities they serve enables them to design interventions that resonate with local populations and address sensitive issues such as SRHR, mental health, and gender-based violence in culturally relevant ways.

Reaching Underserved Communities

Many grassroots organizations operate in informal settlements and marginalized neighborhoods where larger national or international NGOs often have limited presence. Through these local networks, the MYPOA project ensures that vulnerable adolescents and young people are not left behind.

Building Sustainable Youth Leadership

The project empowers young leaders to manage resources, implement programs, and advocate for policy change within their communities. By strengthening their leadership capacity, MYPOA contributes to building a sustainable generation of community champions and advocates.

Encouraging Innovation and Creative Engagement

Small organizations are often more flexible and innovative in their approaches. Several MYPOA-supported groups used sports, arts, storytelling, and peer dialogue platforms to engage young people on sensitive topics, creating safe spaces for open discussions on issues that are often stigmatized.



Supported Grassroots Organizations

Through a competitive selection process that included an Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) and project pitching sessions, the MYPOA project supported ten youth-led and youth-serving organizations across Mombasa County. These organizations include:

- **SLEAK Community Organization**
- **Her Narrative CBO**
- **Elimu Care CBO**
- **Jivunie Creatives Youth Group**
- **New Dawn Youth Africa Organization**
- **SEYA Youth Organization**
- **Strategic Community Development Organization (SCDO)**
- **Ushauri Safisha Pwani Youth Organization**
- **Women Space for Empowerment CBO**
- **The Amplifiers Youth Organization (TAYO)**

Each organization brought unique expertise and innovative approaches to addressing youth-related challenges. Their interventions ranged from art-based advocacy and street-based focus group discussions to mental health support programs for young mothers and awareness campaigns addressing gender-based violence.

Collectively, these grassroots initiatives reached hundreds of adolescents and young people across Mombasa County with critical life-saving information, community support, and advocacy platforms.





Nature of Activities and Program Impact

Community Awareness and Engagement

Several organizations implemented community dialogues, peer education sessions, and focus group discussions to address SRHR awareness, mental health stigma, and gender-based violence prevention. For example, New Dawn Youth Africa conducted street-based discussions with boda boda riders and youth, challenging misconceptions that mental health struggles represent weakness and promoting access to support systems.

Creative Youth Engagement Platforms

Creative methods proved effective in engaging young people on sensitive topics. SLEAK Community Organization used poetry, painting, and football tournaments to raise awareness about SGBV and child protection. These activities allowed young people to engage in conversations about violence prevention and healthy relationships in an accessible and relatable way.

Similarly, Jivunie Creatives Youth Group used arts and talent-based activities to create dialogue spaces where young people could openly discuss sexual and reproductive health issues.

Empowering Young Mothers

Several organizations focused on supporting young and expectant mothers, who often face stigma, social exclusion, and limited access to health information. Her Narrative CBO, Women Space for Empowerment, and Strategic Community Development Organization (SCDO) organized health education sessions, peer support activities, and empowerment programs that equipped young mothers with the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about maternal health, family planning, and personal wellbeing.

Strengthening Community Referral Pathways

Organizations such as SEYA Youth Organization strengthened local networks that connect young people to SRHR services and gender-based violence support systems, ensuring that those in need can access professional assistance.

Integrating Health and Community Wellbeing

Ushauri Safisha Pwani Youth Organization integrated environmental hygiene activities with health awareness campaigns, promoting a holistic approach to community wellbeing that links clean environments with improved public health outcomes.

Human Interest Stories and Transformative Impact

TRANSFORMING CONVERSATIONS: THE 'HEALTHY GOSSIP' INITIATIVE

One of the most innovative interventions was the 'Healthy Gossip' sessions organized by Elimu Care CBO. By transforming the concept of gossip —often viewed negatively —into a constructive dialogue platform, the organization created safe spaces where young people could openly discuss topics such as relationships, consent, and personal boundaries. The sessions resulted in a noticeable shift among participants, with many young people reporting increased confidence in setting healthy boundaries within their relationships, reducing their vulnerability to emotional and physical abuse.

BREAKING STIGMA THROUGH ART AND STORYTELLING

SLEAK Community Organization demonstrated the power of storytelling and creative expression in addressing stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and mental health. During one evening storytelling session, young participants shared personal experiences of discrimination and mental health struggles. The session concluded with a collective moment of reflection and solidarity, creating a powerful sense of community support. This experience demonstrated how art and storytelling can break silence around sensitive issues more effectively than traditional lecture-based approaches.

RESTORING CONFIDENCE AMONG YOUNG MOTHERS

Young and expectant mothers often face social stigma, isolation, and emotional stress, making them particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges and gender-based violence. Through targeted programs implemented by Strategic Community Development Organization (SCDO) and The Amplifiers Youth Organization (TAYO), young mothers participated in role-playing exercises, peer discussions, and empowerment sessions. Participants reported renewed confidence and improved self-worth, while TAYO's legal awareness sessions also equipped expectant mothers with knowledge about their rights and mechanisms for reporting gender-based violence, ensuring that they are better prepared to protect themselves and their families.

Conclusion

The MYPOA Project demonstrates that investing in grassroots organizations is one of the most effective strategies for addressing complex social challenges affecting young people. By strengthening youth-led organizations, supporting innovative community engagement approaches, and empowering vulnerable groups such as young mothers, the project has significantly contributed to advancing sexual and reproductive health rights, mental wellbeing, and gender equality in Mombasa County.

Through continued collaboration with grassroots actors, the MYPOA initiative is building a sustainable network of youth leaders and community advocates who are driving positive social change from within their communities.



Sheria ya Vijana (SYV) Project

Sheria ya Vijana is a three-year, European Union co-funded initiative designed to empower, engage, and connect young Kenyans to actively lead and participate in the green and digital economic transitions, while shaping the policies and governance structures that govern these transitions. Kenya's green and digital transitions represent the most significant economic transformation of the coming decade yet young people, who make up 75%+ of Kenya's population, risk being left behind. In coastal Kwale County, youth unemployment is acute, with limited access to formal employment, enterprise development resources, or meaningful governance spaces.

Sheria ya Vijana directly addresses this exclusion, equipping young people in Kwale with the tools, platforms, and confidence to not just participate in the green and digital economy, but to shape it. For SYO, this project represents the convergence of our core DNA in youth civic empowerment with a transformative new frontier in green economy leadership.

The project operates in Nairobi and Kwale counties —two geographically and economically distinct environments that together reflect Kenya's complex youth development landscape. Kwale County, with its coastal economy and significant youth unemployment, is the primary operational area for Stretchers Youth Organization (SYO) as the implementing partner responsible for Local Youth Forum establishment, civic engagement, and grassroots advocacy.

Consortium Partners

- **Barnfonden (BF) —Lead Partner**
- **We World**
- **Organisation of African Youth (OAY)**
- **Action for Sustainability Initiative (AFOSI)**
- **Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC)**
- **Stretchers Youth Organisation (SYO)**

As of the 2025 Annual Report, the Sheria ya Vijana project was in its inception phase, covering the period April–ecember 2025. This phase focused on project mobilisation, stakeholder mapping, youth leader identification, Local Youth Forum establishment, and foundational capacity building in Kwale County. Full programmatic implementation commences in 2026.



Zinduka Project

The Zinduka Project, implemented by Stretchers Youth Organization (SYO) with support from the Swahilipot Hub Foundation, is a youth-centered mental health initiative designed to support out-of-school and unemployed youth aged 15–5 in Mombasa County.

The project responds to the growing mental health challenges facing young people, including unemployment stress, social stigma, limited access to psychosocial support, and lack of awareness about mental health services. Many young people in marginalized communities struggle silently with mental health issues due to cultural stigma and lack of safe spaces for dialogue.

The Zinduka Project therefore aims to:

- Increase mental health awareness and literacy among youth
- Reduce stigma associated with mental illness
- Create safe spaces for dialogue and healing
- Empower young people to discover their talents and build resilience
- Strengthen youth participation in community wellbeing initiatives

Through community engagement, training sessions, and digital youth platforms, the project supports young people to improve their mental wellbeing while also becoming advocates for mental health awareness in their communities.





Project Reach and Impact (September –December 2025)

Between September and December 2025, the Zinduka Project achieved significant outreach and measurable progress in promoting mental health literacy and youth empowerment in Mombasa County. These youth participated in structured training sessions, dialogues, and empowerment activities aimed at improving their understanding of mental health and developing coping mechanisms.

Mental Health Literacy Training

A key milestone of the project was the three-day Mental Health Literacy (MHL) training conducted for 20 selected youth leaders. The training focused on:

- Understanding common mental health disorders
- Recognizing early warning signs of mental health distress
- Developing coping mechanisms and peer-support strategies
- Challenging stigma and misconceptions surrounding mental illness

Participants reported a significant improvement in their understanding of mental health issues, with many expressing greater empathy and readiness to support peers experiencing emotional or psychological challenges. The training also contributed to reducing stigma associated with mental illness, encouraging participants to openly discuss mental health concerns within their communities.

Digital Youth Engagement

The project introduced a youth database platform, enabling young people to register and access opportunities related to training, mentorship, and community engagement activities. This digital integration improved the project's ability to track participation, sustain engagement, and connect youth to future programs and resources, strengthening long-term impact and youth network development.

Community Awareness Events

World Contraceptive Day: The project engaged 107 young people in discussions focused on informed health choices, reproductive health awareness, and responsible decision-making.

Girl Summit: A major highlight of the project was the Girl Summit, which attracted 195 participants, primarily young women and girls. The summit created a platform for discussions on gender equality, mental health challenges faced by girls, and the importance of youth leadership. The event encouraged many participants to aspire to leadership roles and actively participate in community development initiatives.

Jamhuri Day Youth Engagement: During the Jamhuri Day celebrations, the project convened 78 youth participants in activities that promoted national unity, civic responsibility, and youth participation in nation-building.



Human Stories of Transformation

CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR HEALING

One of the most powerful outcomes of the Mental Health Literacy training was the creation of safe spaces where young people could openly share personal experiences and struggles. During group discussions, participants shared stories of anxiety, family pressure, unemployment stress, and social stigma. The supportive environment created during the sessions helped participants feel heard and understood. Many participants expressed that this was the first time they had openly spoken about their mental health challenges, demonstrating the importance of safe dialogue platforms in promoting healing and emotional wellbeing.

YOUTH BECOMING MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS

Following the training sessions, several participants began to see themselves as mental health advocates within their communities. Participants reported increased confidence in their ability to support peers facing emotional distress, initiate conversations about mental health, and challenge stigma within their social networks. These young leaders are now playing a key role in spreading mental health awareness and encouraging others to seek support.

BREAKING GENERATIONAL STIGMA

Another significant impact of the project was the commitment of participants to extend mental health awareness beyond the training environment. Many youth reported sharing the knowledge gained from the project with family members, friends, and school peers, helping challenge long-standing cultural myths that associate mental illness with weakness or shame. This ripple effect demonstrates how youth-led mental health advocacy can transform community perceptions and encourage supportive attitudes toward mental health care.

EMPOWERING YOUNG GIRLS

The Girl Summit emerged as one of the most transformative project activities. During the event, 152 young women actively participated in discussions on women's rights, mental health, and leadership opportunities. Many participants expressed renewed confidence and motivation to pursue leadership roles in their communities. The summit not only promoted gender equality but also reinforced the importance of empowering young women to become change-makers within their communities.

Conclusion

The Zinduka Project has demonstrated that youth-centered mental health initiatives can significantly improve mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and empower young people to support one another. By combining training, community dialogue, digital engagement, and youth-led advocacy, the project has created meaningful platforms for young people in Mombasa County to address mental health challenges collectively. As the project continues to grow, the young participants trained through the initiative will play a critical role as mental health champions, advocates, and community leaders, contributing to a more supportive and resilient youth population.

The Girl Summit

The 7th Annual Girl Summit, held on 20 November 2025 at the Kenya School of Government —Mombasa Campus, served as a major platform for advancing the empowerment of girls and young women across the coastal region of Kenya.

Organized by Stretchers Youth Organization (SYO) in partnership with the Kenya School of Government and other key stakeholders, the summit brought together over 300 participants, including adolescent girls and young women from coastal counties, government representatives, civil society organizations, development partners, and community leaders.

The summit was guided by the theme: "Empowered Girls, Resilient Communities: Unlocking Coastal Opportunities through Innovation and Inclusion."

The event aimed to create a safe and inclusive platform where girls could openly discuss the challenges affecting their lives and work alongside policymakers and community leaders to identify practical, community-driven solutions. The summit responded to persistent barriers faced by girls in the coastal region, including restrictive gender norms, limited access to essential services, and exclusion from decision-making processes. By convening diverse stakeholders, the event strengthened dialogue and collaboration around strategies to advance gender equality and youth leadership.

Importance of the Summit

The Girl Summit plays a critical role in strengthening advocacy and engagement around issues affecting girls and young women in the coastal region.

Firstly, the summit provides a safe space for girls to share their lived experiences, enabling policymakers and leaders to better understand the realities faced by young women in their communities.





Secondly, the summit promotes inclusive dialogue between youth and decision-makers, ensuring that the voices of girls are considered in policy discussions and development initiatives.

Finally, the summit serves as a platform for innovation and collaboration, encouraging participants to develop creative solutions that can address challenges affecting girls and young women across coastal communities.

Key Thematic Discussions and Outcomes

The summit focused on four key thematic pillars that are critical to advancing the empowerment and wellbeing of girls and young women.

Access to Justice and Participation

Participants emphasized the importance of improving legal literacy among girls and young women so that they are aware of their rights and available support mechanisms. Discussions highlighted the need to remove barriers that prevent girls from participating in local governance structures and community decision-making processes. Participants called for stronger collaboration between civil society organizations and government institutions to ensure girls have meaningful opportunities to engage in leadership and policy dialogues.

Climate Action and Gender

The summit also highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls, particularly in coastal communities where livelihoods often depend on natural resources. Participants explored innovative solutions such as girl-led mangrove restoration initiatives, urban farming, and environmental awareness campaigns, emphasizing the role that young women can play as leaders in climate action and environmental sustainability.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Mental Wellbeing

Another key focus of the summit was the need to strengthen access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. Participants stressed the importance of integrating mental health awareness into schools and community programs, recognizing the growing mental health challenges faced by adolescents and young people. The discussions reinforced the need for holistic approaches that address both physical health and emotional wellbeing, ensuring that young women can make informed decisions about their lives and futures.

Leadership and Technology

The summit also explored how innovation and digital technology can help bridge gender gaps and expand opportunities for girls. Participants discussed strategies to encourage girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and emphasized the importance of digital literacy in strengthening youth leadership and civic participation.

Human Stories of Transformation

A TRANSFORMATIVE SPACE FOR GIRLS' VOICES

One of the most powerful aspects of the summit was the opportunity it created for girls to share their personal experiences and challenges directly with policymakers and community leaders. For many participants, this was the first time they had spoken openly about issues affecting their lives, including gender-based discrimination, barriers to education, and limited opportunities for leadership. The summit therefore served as a transformative space where girls who previously felt silenced were empowered to express their ideas and aspirations for their communities.

RESILIENCE AND CREATIVITY AMONG YOUNG WOMEN

Despite the challenges posed by deeply rooted gender norms and limited autonomy, the girls who participated in the summit demonstrated remarkable creativity and resilience. During group discussions, participants proposed innovative community solutions addressing issues such as gender-based violence, youth unemployment, environmental sustainability, and access to education. Their contributions reinforced the importance of recognizing girls not only as beneficiaries of development programs but also as active leaders and problem-solvers within their communities.

EMPOWERING ONE GIRL, TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

A key message that emerged from the summit was the recognition that empowering one girl can transform an entire community. Participants, policymakers, and partners collectively affirmed that investing in girls' education, leadership, and wellbeing has a ripple effect that strengthens families, communities, and future generations.

Action-Oriented Commitments

The summit concluded with several practical action points aimed at sustaining the momentum generated during the event. Participants agreed to establish a Coastal Girls Empowerment Working Group, which will coordinate advocacy efforts and strengthen collaboration among organizations working on girls' empowerment in the region.

Additionally, a WhatsApp learning and mentorship community was created to facilitate continuous knowledge sharing, peer mentorship, and collaboration among girls who participated in the summit. These initiatives ensure that the summit serves not only as a one-day event but also as the foundation for ongoing engagement and collective action.

Conclusion

The 7th Annual Girl Summit reaffirmed the importance of creating inclusive platforms where girls and young women can actively contribute to shaping the future of their communities. By bringing together youth leaders, policymakers, civil society actors, and development partners, the summit strengthened dialogue on critical issues affecting girls while promoting innovative solutions and collaborative action. Through continued commitment and partnership, initiatives like the Girl Summit will continue to play a vital role in advancing gender equality, strengthening youth leadership, and building resilient communities across Kenya's coastal region.





OUR 2025 COMMUNICATION, VISIBILITY & PUBLICITY IMPACT

560,000

In 2025, SYO's social media presence across platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and the organisational website collectively reached an impressive total of 560,000 people. This extensive reach demonstrates the effectiveness of our digital strategies and the engagement of our audience across multiple channels.



In 2025, SYO had a total reach of 72,560, comprising 86.4% organic and 100% ad-driven reach. The organization posted 335 times, achieving a commendable engagement rate of 38.3%. Notably, the Facebook page experienced a surge in visits, with 16,876 interactions, and gained 580 new likes, marking a 36.2% increase.



Twitter emerged as a robust platform for SYO, recording a total of 410,465 impressions and an engagement rate of 9.6% out of 510 Tweet Posts. The organization gained 398 new followers, with 1,868 retweets, 11,243 likes, and 628 replies, indicating a strong and active community engagement.



Our total reach was 5,167 and a notable 89% increase in story engagement, demonstrating the effectiveness of visual content out of 453 posts shared. Profile visits amounted to 602, with 233 new followers. The gender distribution on Instagram was balanced, with 43.6% women and 56.4% men.



In 2025, our website attracted 234,432 visits, averaging 642 daily, showing consistent audience engagement. With 98,217 unique visitors, our digital presence continues to expand reaching diverse audiences.

Media Highlights

Stretchers Youth Organization experienced a transformative year in **2025**, strengthening its digital footprint across **Facebook, Instagram, and X** (formerly Twitter). The success of high-impact campaigns such as **#TGSMombasani**, which garnered over **1.8 million** and **1 million** impressions respectively, alongside continued mainstream media coverage, underscored the organization's growing influence in driving social change. While all platforms contributed to SYO's digital success, X emerged as the most engaging, fostering real-time dialogue on youth and gender issues. Facebook remained a strong platform for visibility, though it presents further opportunities for improving content engagement.

As the organization looks ahead, sustaining successful strategies, diversifying content tailored to each platform, and leveraging data-driven insights will be essential for deepening impact and reaching broader audiences. In 2025, SYO also significantly boosted its public visibility by taking part in the international conference **ICFP in Bogota, Colombia**. This provided a rare and valuable opportunity to engage in policy dialogue and highlight grassroots engagements. In addition, SYO made appearances on 6 national television stations, addressing pressing issues affecting youth and women, further affirming its role as a trusted voice in national advocacy and development conversations.

Media Links & Appearances

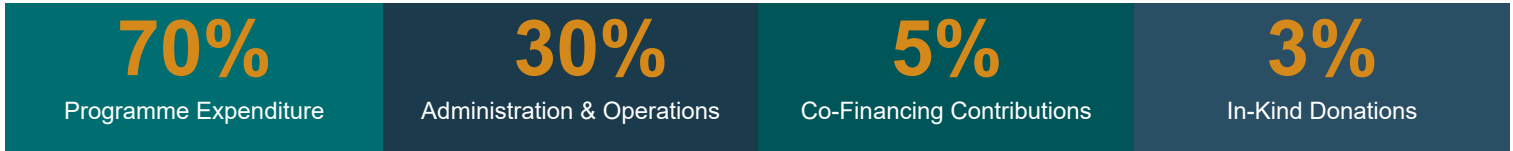
The following media appearances and coverage document SYO's national and international visibility in 2025:

- KTN NEWS — 'Warsha ya Mombasa yaangazia changamoto za usalama kwa wasichana':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFuh9Ssm-v8>
- KBC Channel 1 — Darubini II, 24th November 2025:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9V0mAzdq28&t=1193s>
- FIX TV — International Women's Day | #IWD2025:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lepb4sb1C1c>
- EBN TV — International Women's Day | #IWD2025:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGtsn5ZqmAk>
- #CoastYouthSummit2025:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2yyAtvUWmAk>



2025 RESOURCE ALLOCATION AT A GLANCE

In 2025, Stretchers Youth Organization maintained sound financial stewardship, ensuring the greatest proportion of every shilling received was directed toward direct community impact. The breakdown below presents a consolidated view of how resources were allocated across four key expenditure categories —reflecting our unwavering commitment to accountability, transparency, and putting young people first.



With **70%** of all resources directed to **direct programme** expenditure, SYO continues to demonstrate that donor investments are efficiently translated into tangible impact for young people and communities. **Administrative and operational costs** at **30%** support the institutional infrastructure necessary to maintain programme quality, ensure compliance, and sustain strategic direction. **Co-financing contributions** (**5%**) and **in-kind donations** (**3%**) reflect the growing confidence of partners and community stakeholders in SYO's model.

SYO operates with full financial transparency and maintains **robust internal controls**, including regular audits, donor financial reporting, and Board-level oversight of all expenditure. Detailed financial statements are available upon formal request.





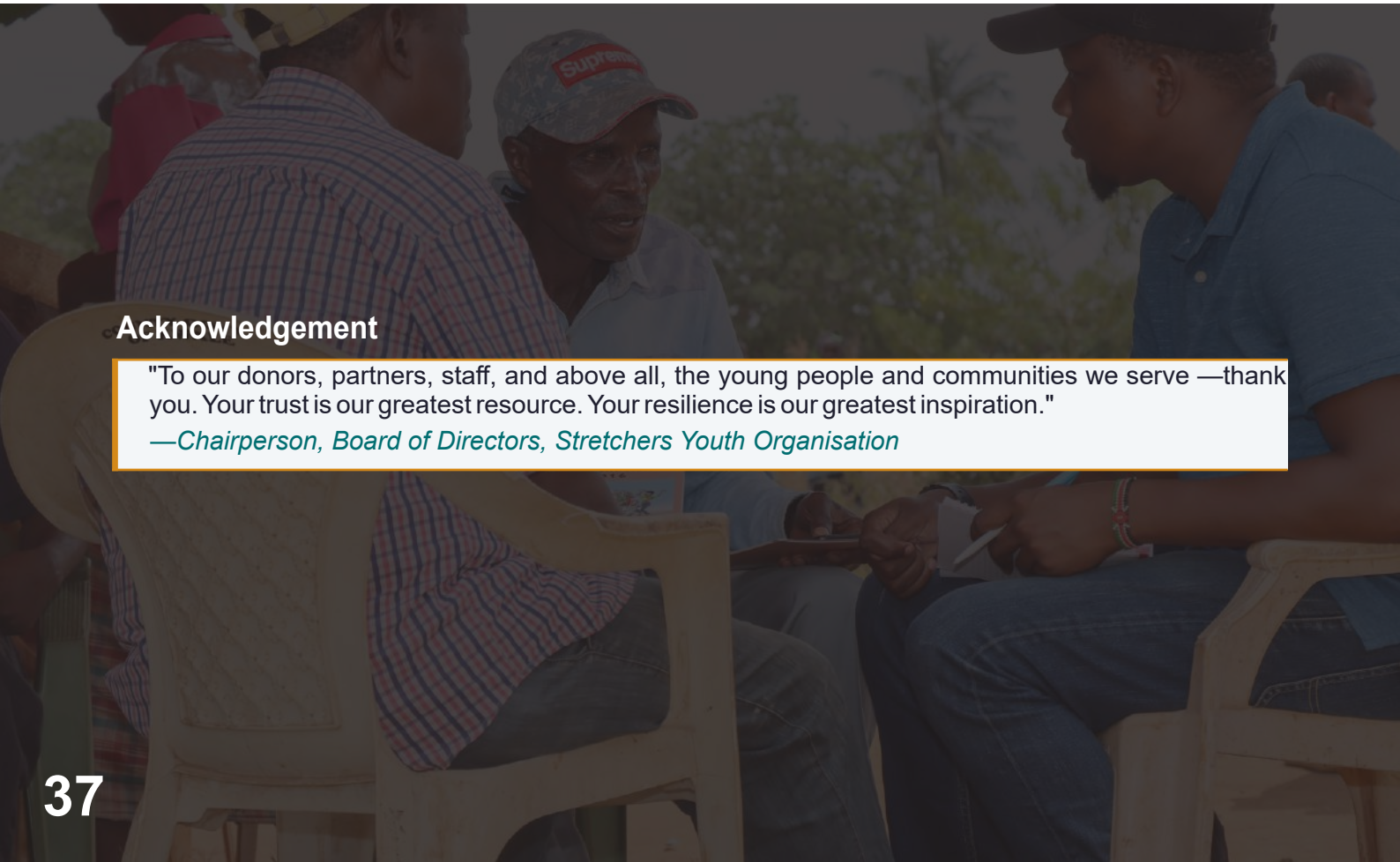
Our 2025 Partners

SYO's work is made possible through a rich ecosystem of partnerships spanning international development organizations, government institutions, civil society, and community-based actors. We are deeply grateful to every partner and funder who trusted us with their resources, networks, and expertise in 2025.

Partnership Principles

SYO's partnerships are grounded in mutual respect, shared values, and a commitment to community-centred development. We believe that sustainable impact is only possible when partnerships are built on:

- Transparency and regular communication
- Alignment of values around youth rights, inclusion, and accountability
- Complementary strengths that amplify collective impact
- Community participation at the heart of all programming decisions
- Long-term commitment to systemic change, not just project outputs



Acknowledgement

"To our donors, partners, staff, and above all, the young people and communities we serve —thank you. Your trust is our greatest resource. Your resilience is our greatest inspiration."

—*Chairperson, Board of Directors, Stretchers Youth Organisation*

NETWORK & AFFILIATIONS

Over 14 years, SYO has built a strong and diverse network of organisations, coalitions, and platforms that amplify its voice, expand its reach, and deepen the quality of its work. These networks connect SYO to local, national, regional, and global communities of practice.

Grassroots Organisation Network

Through the MYPOA Project and direct community engagement, SYO supported and collaborated with ten grassroots youth-led and youth-serving organisations in 2025, all operating in Mombasa County:

Organisation
SLEAK Community Organisation
Her Narrative CBO
Elimu Care CBO
Jivunie Creatives Youth Group
New Dawn Youth Africa Organisation
SEYA Youth Organisation
Strategic Community Development Organisation (SCDO)
Ushauri Safisha Pwani Youth Organisation
Women Space for Empowerment CBO
The Amplifiers Youth Organisation (TAYO)

National & Regional Networks

- Sub-County Peace Committees (Kwale County) —Community peacebuilding infrastructure
- National Technical Working Group on GBV and Femicide —Policy submissions and advocacy
- KAP Regional Consortium (Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique) —Cross-border peacebuilding
- Mombasa County Civil Society Network —Coordination and resource mobilisation
- Sheria Ya Vijana Consortium
- We Lead
- IBP Network

International Platforms & Affiliations

- Femnet







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#MainaAndKingangi
3,708 posts

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#handsofftanzania
2,994 posts

11 · Trending In Kenya
international cabal
2,849 posts
Trending with State of the Nation

12 · Trending In Kenya
The Girl Summit 2025
2,821 posts

13 · Trending In Kenya
Wamalwa Expelled
5,000 posts











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