



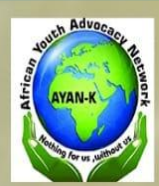
# AYAN KENYA

# ANNUAL REPORT - 2023

**Reporter:** AYAN Communications Team

**Date:** 31/03/2024





# FOREWORD

As we reflect on the journey of AYAN (African Youth Advocacy Network) Kenya throughout the year 2023, we are reminded of the profound importance of ensuring equitable access to comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services for all young people. In the context of Kenya, where young women, adolescent girls, and gender sexual minorities often face systemic barriers and discrimination, this imperative is particularly urgent and pressing.

The AYAN Kenya 2023 Annual Report serves as a testament to our organization's unwavering commitment to advancing SRHR for young women, adolescent girls, and gender sexual minorities in Kenya. In a landscape marked by entrenched societal norms, stigma, and discrimination, we recognize the critical role that access to accurate information, quality healthcare, and supportive services plays in promoting the health, autonomy, and well-being of individuals within these marginalized groups.

Throughout the past year, AYAN Kenya has worked tirelessly to address the SRHR needs and priorities of young women, adolescent girls, and gender sexual minorities, through a multi-faceted approach that encompasses advocacy, education, service referrals, and empowerment. From advocating for policy change and community sensitization efforts to advocating for youth-friendly healthcare facilities and providing comprehensive sexuality education, our initiatives have sought to create an enabling environment where all young people can exercise their sexual and reproductive rights with dignity and autonomy.

Importantly, this report shines a light on the remarkable resilience, courage, and agency of young women, adolescent girls, and gender sexual minorities in Kenya. Despite facing systemic barriers and societal pressures, these individuals continue to assert their rights, advocate for change, and drive progress within their communities. Their voices and experiences are at the heart of our work, guiding and inspiring us to redouble our efforts in the pursuit of SRHR justice and equity.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our partners, donors, staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries for their unwavering support and dedication to advancing SRHR in Kenya. Together, we will continue to work tirelessly towards a future where all young people, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, have the knowledge, resources, and support they need to lead healthy, fulfilling lives, free from discrimination and violence.

Thank you for your commitment to SRHR and to the well-being of young people in Kenya.

**Sincerely,**

**Executive Director**

**AYAN Kenya**

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Dear Valued Stakeholders,

As we reflect on the AYAN Kenya 2023 Annual Report, we are acutely aware of the critical importance of ensuring access to comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services for young women, adolescent girls, and gender sexual minorities in Kenya. Across the country, individuals belonging to these marginalized groups face unique challenges and barriers to accessing quality SRHR care, often due to societal stigma, discrimination, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure.

At AYAN Kenya, we recognize SRHR as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of gender equality, social justice, and sustainable development. We are committed to addressing the SRHR needs of all young people, irrespective of their gender identity, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status, and to creating an enabling environment where they can make informed choices about their bodies, health, and well-being.

In 2023, AYAN Kenya redoubled its efforts to promote SRHR awareness, education, and access, particularly among young women, adolescent girls, and gender sexual minorities. Through targeted advocacy campaigns, community outreach initiatives, and partnerships with healthcare providers and civil society organizations, we worked to dismantle barriers to SRHR information and services and empower individuals to assert their sexual and reproductive rights.

As we look to the future, the board of AYAN Kenya remains committed to advancing SRHR for all young people in Kenya, with a particular focus on those who are most marginalized and vulnerable. We recognize that achieving meaningful progress in this area requires multi-sectoral collaboration, political will, and sustained investment in evidence-based interventions that prioritize the needs and rights of young people.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our partners, donors, staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries for their unwavering support and dedication to advancing SRHR in Kenya. Together, we will continue to work tirelessly towards a future where all young people have the knowledge, resources, and support they need to lead healthy, fulfilling lives, free from discrimination and violence.

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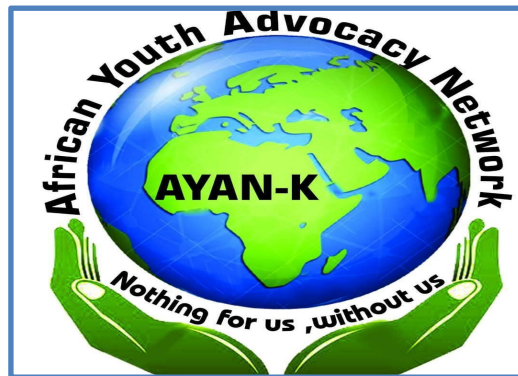
**Sincerely,**

**Ms. Janice Njoroge**

**Chairperson | Advisory Board**

**AYAN Kenya**

# CONTENT



**01** 2023 Work Review

**02** Intervention highlights

Work achievements

**03** Challenges & solutions

**04** Success Stories

**05** Lessons Learnt

**06** Acknowledgements

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

## Work review

The intent behind this report is to give an overview of the actions undertaken at AYAN Kenya in the Financial Year 2023, and to share the highlights and some of the accomplishments of our efforts during this period with our beneficiaries, partners, donors, friends, and others who might be interested. Looking back on the year, it is clear that the anti gender groups has transformed the way we work — but it did not change our commitment to creating the conditions for access to sexual and reproductive health and rights through the acknowledgment that our health is shaped by our mission, our vision, our rights, our people, our values, and our knowledge. During this period, AYAN Kenya has advocated for sound, constitutional, rights compliant policies and legislative frameworks on the right to health; This strategy also promoted engagement in meaningful partnerships

# Intervention Highlights

## Access to Safe Abortion Care Services

**Access to  
safe abortion  
is a human  
right.**

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AYAN Kenya remains committed to ensuring that any beneficiary in need of abortion services receives safe and quality Sexual and Reproductive Health Care (SAC) services. Throughout the year, AYAN supported a total of 36 individuals through community outreaches and conversations focused on responding to abortion needs. Of these cases, 11 were failed or incomplete abortions, and all were provided with the

necessary medical assistance.

A concerning trend observed during these interventions was the use of unsafe and harmful methods by young women and girls attempting to terminate pregnancies. These methods included ingesting detergents, Jik, traditional concoctions, and concentrated tea leaves, posing serious health risks.

In response, AYAN Kenya not only facilitated safe abortion services but also provided comprehensive psychosocial support to address the emotional needs of the beneficiaries. Post-abortion care, including the provision of contraceptives, was offered to prevent future unintended pregnancies. Additionally, beneficiaries were linked to youth programs like DREAMS, ensuring they received holistic care and continued support beyond the immediate medical needs.

## Kisumu County Stakeholders Meeting



AYAN Kenya convened a stakeholder meeting that brought together 25 participants, including representatives from various organizations, religious leaders, and key stakeholders from Kakamega, Busia, Nakuru, and Siaya Counties. The meeting focused on addressing emerging issues related to LGBTQ+

access to healthcare and the need to combat stigma and discrimination towards Gender and Sexual Minorities (GSM). Religious leaders, who play influential roles in their communities, committed to leading movements that promote inclusion and equal treatment for GSM individuals.

A key discussion point was the safety and security challenges faced by GSM persons, particularly in accessing healthcare without fear of discrimination or harm. The meeting highlighted the importance of sensitizing healthcare workers and implementing local security measures to protect GSM individuals. Stakeholders contributed ideas on creating inclusive and safe healthcare environments while fostering supportive community networks.

The meeting concluded with the development of an action plan to reduce stigma, enhance healthcare access, and strengthen safety protocols for GSM individuals, marking a significant step towards building more inclusive communities and healthcare systems across the represented counties.

# Homabay County Stakeholders Meeting



## Objectives

- ✓ To assess the current Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) challenges facing young girls, adolescents, and Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM) in Homabay County.
- ✓ To conduct comprehensive mapping and documentation of SRHR issues within the county.
- ✓ To develop a mitigation strategy that addresses these challenges in a sustainable and impactful manner.

## Report:

During a critical meeting aimed at addressing the ongoing SRHR challenges in Homabay County, key stakeholders came together to assess the situation affecting young girls, adolescents, and SGM individuals. The discussion highlighted several pressing issues, including limited access to SRHR services, high rates of unsafe practices, and persistent stigma and discrimination towards SGM individuals. Participants emphasized the need for comprehensive mapping and documentation of these challenges to create a clear picture of the county's SRHR landscape.

One of the key findings was the failure of the policy development process at the county level, attributed to gaps in coordination, limited involvement of grassroots organizations, and a lack of clear ownership from both government and community stakeholders. This has hindered the successful implementation of policies aimed at improving SRHR outcomes.

To begin addressing these challenges, stakeholders recognized the need for stronger collaboration between county officials and partner organizations. A co-creation approach was proposed, emphasizing the importance of involving all relevant parties in the planning, decision-making, and implementation stages. This would not only foster a sense of ownership but also ensure the commitment of resources and the sustainability of SRHR interventions. The meeting concluded with a consensus that co-creation and active engagement across all levels would be key to overcoming the challenges and creating lasting change in Homabay County.

# Migori County Stakeholders Meeting



The meeting in Migori County focused on three critical areas to address Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues affecting young girls, adolescents, and Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM). The first key area involved conducting a situational analysis to assess the current SRHR challenges in the region, with particular attention to

barriers in access to services and the stigma surrounding SGM individuals. Secondly, participants worked on mapping likeminded Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and stakeholders to create a network that would foster collaboration and enhance the effectiveness of SRHR interventions. Lastly, a needs assessment was conducted to identify capacity gaps, particularly in the areas of policy and advocacy.

Several key recommendations emerged from the meeting. First, participants underscored the importance of holding frequent stakeholder meetings to maintain momentum and encourage collaboration. Additionally, it was agreed that a formal CSO network should be established, with AYAN Kenya taking the lead. This network would allow for greater coordination and joint efforts in addressing SRHR issues.

The meeting also highlighted the need for comprehensive training for CSO network members, focusing on understanding the policy environment, and how to engage effectively in advocacy work. A joint advocacy approach was recommended, with the county government spearheading efforts and committing resources to ensure ownership and sustainability. Lastly, participants called for training in budget advocacy, particularly in areas related to domestic health financing, to enhance CSO engagement

in policy processes and ensure better allocation of resources for SRHR programs in Migori County.

# Community Conversations and Outreaches



AYAN Kenya, through its Youth Volunteer Advocates, successfully conducted 46 community conversations (CCs) over the past year, reaching a total of 1,697 young people. These community engagements served as a vital platform for addressing key Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues, with participants including 952 females, 599 males, and 146 individuals identifying as Gender and Sexual Minorities (GSM).

The key topics covered during the community conversations included safe abortion, contraceptives, menstrual health, mental health, sexual violence, and HIV/STI prevention and treatment. These conversations created an open and safe space for young people to ask questions, express concerns, and access accurate information and services related to their sexual and reproductive health.

As a result of these interventions, AYAN Kenya was able to provide crucial SRHR services to many of the beneficiaries. A total of 376 adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) received their desired contraceptive method, helping them make informed choices about their reproductive health. Additionally, 117 individuals received mental health and psychosocial support, addressing issues such as depression, anxiety, and trauma. Moreover, 249 beneficiaries underwent HIV testing and STI screening, with 107 individuals who tested positive for STIs being linked to appropriate treatment services.

The community conversations and service provision demonstrated AYAN Kenya's continued commitment to improving SRHR outcomes for young people, particularly marginalized groups, ensuring they have access to the information and support they need to lead healthy lives.

Indicator	Beneficiaries Reached
Total Participants	1,697
Females	952
Males	599
Gender and Sexual Minorities (GSM)	146
AGYW receiving contraceptives	376
Mental Health/Psychosocial Support	117
HIV Test and STI Screening	249
Linked to STI Treatment	107

## Pride Month Celebration - Homabay



As part of its commitment to human rights and inclusivity, AYAN Kenya actively supported and facilitated Pride Month celebrations in Homabay County. Despite the challenging environment and

growing hostility towards Gender and Sexual Minorities (GSM), AYAN Kenya remained steadfast in promoting equality and dignity for all individuals. The Pride event provided a safe space for reflection on the progress made, the current challenges faced, and a collective vision for a more inclusive future.

AYAN Kenya's participation in Pride Month aligned with its broader mission to advocate for the rights of GSM persons, fostering dialogue and solidarity among communities. The celebration was an important platform for highlighting the ongoing struggle for recognition and acceptance, while also affirming the organization's dedication to advancing human rights in a context where these rights are often under threat.

By supporting this event, AYAN Kenya reinforced its role as a champion for marginalized populations, continuing to push for a future where diversity is celebrated, and everyone has access to equal opportunities and protection under the law.

# IDF and IDAHOT Celebrations

In May, AYAN Kenya proudly supported and hosted events for both the International Day for Families and the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOT) in Kisumu County. These events served as an opportunity to celebrate the diversity within families and the unity found in the diversity of Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM).

The International Day for Families highlighted the importance of family as a foundational unit in society, while emphasizing inclusivity and acceptance of all family structures, including those involving SGM individuals. Participants were encouraged to reflect on the value of diverse family dynamics and the role of families in promoting a culture of support, love, and understanding.



In parallel, the IDAHOT event addressed the ongoing challenges faced by SGM individuals due to discrimination, stigma, and violence. It was a moment to stand in solidarity with SGM communities, raise awareness about their struggles, and advocate for their rights. The event also celebrated the courage of those who

challenge homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia, while calling for greater protection and equal rights for SGM individuals.

Through these events, AYAN Kenya reaffirmed its commitment to fostering inclusive communities, celebrating diversity, and promoting unity in the face of adversity.

## Policy Protests



During this reporting period, AYAN Kenya convened a total of 27 grassroots organizations across Siaya, Homabay, Migori, and Kisumu counties to address critical issues related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and family inclusivity. The convenings served as platforms for these organizations to collaborate, share insights, and advocate for the inclusion of marginalized voices in national policy discussions.



One of the key outcomes of these engagements was the drafting of two protest letters addressing the exclusion of key stakeholders, including grassroots organizations and marginalized communities, during the review of the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (NASHR) Policy and the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection.

The letters emphasized the importance of inclusivity in policy-making processes and called for the recognition and protection of the rights of all individuals, especially adolescents, women, and Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM).

By mobilizing grassroots organizations and taking a stand through formal protest, AYAN Kenya demonstrated its leadership in holding the government accountable and ensuring that SRHR and family policies reflect the needs and rights of all citizens, particularly those who are often overlooked in national dialogues. These actions underscored AYAN's commitment to advocacy, equity, and justice in policy development.

# Narrative and Data - SDG 4 (Quality Education)

## Narrative:

In 2023, AYAN Kenya expanded its educational and empowerment initiatives to address the intersecting challenges of unemployment, climate change, and limited healthcare access among marginalized populations. Building on the successes of 2022, we deepened our partnerships with Ajira Digital and KYEOP, creating seamless referral pathways for beneficiaries to access complementary services.

## Vulnerabilities and Selection Process:

The selection process targeted young women and SGMs in informal settlements and rural areas, particularly those affected by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We identified beneficiaries through community sensitization forums, youth groups, and health facilities. Special consideration was given to individuals with disabilities, survivors of sexual violence, and those at risk of exploitation.

## Integration and Referrals:

- **Ajira Digital:** Beneficiaries were enrolled in specialized digital skills programs, including content creation, data entry, and transcription, enabling them to participate in the digital economy.
- **KYEOP:** Participants interested in entrepreneurship were referred to KYEOP, which provided business grants, mentorship, and skills training for launching small enterprises.

## Programs Offered:

Training programs included tailoring, climate-smart agriculture, ICT, and entrepreneurial skills. Climate-smart solutions were incorporated into the agribusiness curriculum, empowering participants to adapt to environmental challenges while improving food security. SRHR education remained a key component, integrated into every vocational program.

## Quantitative Data for 2023:

- **Number of participants enrolled in vocational and adult education:** 200
- **Vocational training completion rate:** 100% (200 individuals)
- **Participants referred to Ajira Digital for digital skills training:** 600
- **Participants referred to KYEOP for entrepreneurial support:** 300
- **Percentage of participants reporting improved employability within 6 months of training:** 75%
- **Number of beneficiaries receiving integrated SRHR education:** 5400

**Short-term Outcomes:**

- Increased access to digital and entrepreneurial skills through collaboration with Ajira Digital and KYEOP.
- Enhanced employability and job readiness for young people and SGMs.
- Improved health literacy and access to SRHR services among participants.

**Long-term Impact:**

By integrating vocational education with SRHR and mental health support, AYAN Kenya empowered marginalized groups to achieve economic independence and lead healthier lives. Partnerships with Ajira Digital and KYEOP further strengthened these efforts by providing pathways to sustainable livelihoods in both traditional and digital economies.

**Community Changes Observed:**

- Increased representation of SGMs and young women in economic activities.
- Growth of community-led enterprises supported by program graduates.
- Reduction in stigma and discrimination through greater health and digital literacy.

## AYAN Kenya in the International articles

AYAN Kenya's dedicated efforts to advance Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) have garnered international attention, as evidenced by a feature article written by Sian Norris in The Ferret, a UK-based journalism outlet. The article, titled "Aunty Jane: Kenya helpline access safe abortion," highlights AYAN Kenya's initiatives aimed at providing safe abortion services and comprehensive support to vulnerable populations in a context marked by restrictive laws and social stigma.



In the piece, Norris delves into the critical role AYAN Kenya plays in navigating the complex landscape of reproductive health in Kenya. The organization's helpline, affectionately known as "Aunty Jane," serves as a vital resource for individuals seeking safe abortion services, offering guidance and assistance in accessing care that is often hard to come by. The feature outlines how AYAN Kenya addresses the urgent needs of young women and girls who may resort to unsafe methods of terminating pregnancies due to a lack of accessible and reliable information.

The article not only showcases AYAN Kenya's direct service delivery but also underscores the organization's commitment to advocacy and education. It discusses the community conversations and outreach programs that AYAN conducts to raise awareness about SRHR, safe abortion, and mental health. These initiatives empower individuals to make informed choices about their bodies and health, ultimately contributing to a reduction in stigma surrounding reproductive health issues.

Norris highlights the significant challenges that AYAN Kenya faces in its mission, particularly within an enabling environment that often marginalizes the voices of Gender and Sexual Minorities (SGM) and limits access to essential healthcare services. Despite these obstacles, AYAN Kenya remains steadfast in its commitment to advocating for inclusive health policies and practices that respect and uphold the rights of all individuals.

This coverage by The Ferret not only elevates AYAN Kenya's work on a global platform but also serves to inform and engage a wider audience in discussions about reproductive rights in Kenya. By bringing attention to the organization's resilience and the critical need for safe and accessible health services, the article encourages solidarity and support from international allies and advocates.

The recognition from The Ferret stands as a testament to AYAN Kenya's unwavering commitment to promoting human rights, health equity, and social justice, even in the face of adversity. It emphasizes the importance of continued advocacy and collaboration to ensure that all individuals can access the healthcare they deserve, free from discrimination and fear.

## Documentary of AYAN's work

To effectively document the impact of AYAN Kenya's activities and to advocate for the creation of more supportive policies, particularly regarding access to safe abortion services, the organization collaborated with a private documentary media group. This partnership aimed to highlight the harrowing experiences faced by girls and young women (GYWs) following unplanned pregnancies, emphasizing the urgent need for systemic change.



During this initiative, six beneficiaries of AYAN Kenya were interviewed, sharing their personal stories and insights into the challenges they encountered. These interviews provided a poignant glimpse into the realities faced by GYWs, including the emotional and physical toll of navigating unplanned pregnancies in a restrictive environment. The documentary captures their struggles, the stigma they experience, and the desperate need for accessible, safe reproductive health services.

The insights gathered through these interviews are not only crucial for raising awareness about the issues at hand but also serve as powerful testimonies that underscore the necessity for policies that prioritize the health and well-being of young women. By showcasing the experiences of these beneficiaries, AYAN Kenya aims to foster empathy and understanding among policymakers and the wider public, driving home the message that safe abortion services are essential for safeguarding the health and rights of young women.

The documentary, accessible through [the provided link](#), serves as a vital tool for advocacy, highlighting the real-life implications of policy shortcomings and the critical need for compassionate, youth-friendly services. AYAN Kenya remains committed to amplifying these voices and advocating for a healthcare system that respects and responds to the needs of all individuals, ensuring that no one is left to endure the horror of unplanned pregnancies alone.

# Challenges and Solutions



During the 2023 Financial Year, AYAN Kenya encountered several challenges that impacted its ability to effectively deliver services and advocate for the rights of young women, adolescents, and Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM). Key challenges included:

**Limited Funding:** Insufficient financial resources constrained the scale and scope of programs, particularly those related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and safe abortion services. This limitation affected outreach efforts, training programs, and the availability of essential support services.

**Stigma and Discrimination:** Widespread stigma surrounding reproductive health issues, particularly safe abortion, posed significant barriers to accessing care. Many young women and girls resorted to unsafe methods due to fear of judgment and societal backlash.

**Policy Exclusion:** AYAN Kenya faced challenges in influencing policy development, particularly regarding the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (NASHR) Policy and the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection. Grassroots organizations and marginalized communities were often excluded from critical discussions.

**Capacity Gaps:** There was a noted need for capacity building among stakeholders in policy advocacy and understanding the health financing landscape, limiting effective engagement in policy processes.

## Solutions Implemented

In response to these challenges, AYAN Kenya implemented several strategic solutions throughout the year:

**Diversified Funding Strategies:** To address limited funding, AYAN Kenya sought partnerships with various stakeholders and explored alternative funding sources. This included engaging with international donors and leveraging community support to sustain ongoing programs.

**Community Engagement and Education:** AYAN conducted community conversations and outreach programs to raise awareness about SRHR, safe abortion, and mental health. These initiatives aimed to reduce stigma and empower individuals with information, helping to normalize discussions around reproductive health.

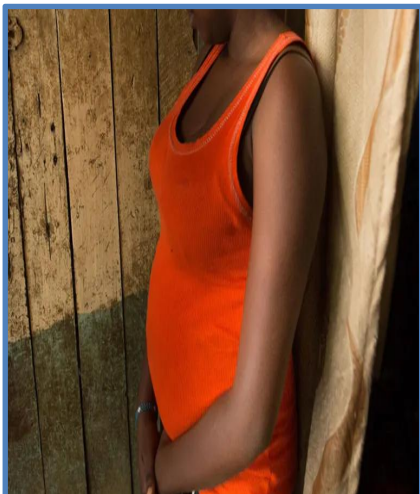
**Advocacy and Networking:** AYAN Kenya convened 27 grassroots organizations to create a coalition advocating for inclusive policy-making. This coalition produced protest letters demanding the inclusion of marginalized voices in the review of key health policies. Regular stakeholder meetings were established to foster collaboration and collective advocacy efforts.

**Capacity Building Initiatives:** Training programs were organized to equip grassroots organizations and stakeholders with knowledge about the policy environment and advocacy processes. This aimed to enhance their capacity to engage effectively in policy discussions and promote domestic health financing.

**Documenting Impact:** AYAN Kenya collaborated with a documentary media group to capture the experiences of beneficiaries affected by unplanned pregnancies. This initiative aimed to showcase the need for friendly policies and services, using personal testimonies to drive home the importance of safe abortion access.

By addressing these challenges with targeted solutions, AYAN Kenya continues to advocate for the rights and health of young women, adolescents, and SGM, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are met in a supportive and inclusive manner.

### Jane's Journey – From Desperation to Empowerment



**Jane**, a 19-year-old from Homabay County, found herself in a dire situation when she discovered she was pregnant. With no family support and fearing societal judgment, Jane considered unsafe methods to terminate her pregnancy. She heard of dangerous and unregulated options, such as using detergents and traditional concoctions, and felt she had no other choice. Fortunately, through AYAN Kenya's community outreach and awareness programs, Jane was introduced to safe and reliable Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services.

With the support of AYAN Kenya's Youth Volunteer Advocates, Jane accessed quality post-abortion care after a failed attempt to self-terminate. She was provided with psychosocial support, post-abortion contraceptives, and was linked to a youth project under DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe), which helped her reintegrate into her community. Jane is now back in school, and through AYAN Kenya's mentorship program, she has become an advocate for safe reproductive health practices among her peers. Her story is one of resilience and empowerment, demonstrating the life-saving impact of safe, accessible reproductive health services.

### David's Story – Overcoming Stigma and Accessing Health Services as a Gay Man



**David**, a 25-year-old gay man from Kisumu County, faced severe stigma and discrimination within his community due to his sexual orientation. He lived in constant fear of being outed, which not only affected his mental health but also hindered his ability to access critical healthcare services, including HIV testing and treatment. Misinformation, cultural prejudices, and the criminalization of same-sex relationships left him feeling isolated and vulnerable.

Through one of AYAN Kenya's Pride Month initiatives in Homabay County, David was introduced to AYAN's Safe Space program, which provides a judgment-free zone for Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM) to access healthcare services.

David received HIV testing, STI screening, and psychosocial support through this initiative. He was also linked to a peer support group that allowed him to share his experiences and overcome the mental health challenges associated with living in an unaccepting environment.

Today, David is healthier and more confident in seeking the services he needs. He has also joined AYAN Kenya's movement, actively advocating for the rights of SGM individuals to access healthcare without fear of stigma or discrimination. His journey reflects the transformative power of inclusive healthcare initiatives and community support in breaking down barriers and saving lives.

*These personal success stories highlight the transformative impact of AYAN Kenya's interventions in Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, as well as its work with marginalized communities. By creating safe spaces and providing comprehensive support, AYAN Kenya is helping young people and SGM individuals reclaim their health, dignity, and futures.*

# Lessons Learnt



Throughout the 2023 financial year, AYAN Kenya implemented a wide range of programs and initiatives aimed at improving access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and supporting vulnerable populations, including young women, adolescents, and Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM). Several key lessons emerged from these activities, which will inform future program refinement and strategic adaptations:

## **The Power of Community-Led Approaches**

Our work in conducting 46 community conversations across various counties reinforced the effectiveness of grassroots, community-led interventions. Engaging local leaders, youth volunteer advocates, and community members helped build trust and foster open dialogue on sensitive topics such as safe abortion, HIV/STIs, and mental health. These conversations allowed for tailored solutions that resonated with the unique cultural and social dynamics of each community.

## **The Importance of Safe Spaces for SGM Individuals**

AYAN Kenya's work with SGM individuals, particularly through our Pride Month activities and engagement with religious leaders, highlighted the critical need for safe spaces where these marginalized groups can access healthcare services without fear of stigma or discrimination. Our interventions showed that when SGM individuals feel secure and supported, they are more likely to seek the services they need. In response, AYAN Kenya will expand safe space programs and further engage with religious and community leaders to reduce stigma and ensure inclusivity in healthcare.

## **Collaboration and Partnership as a Catalyst for Change**

The success of our programs was strongly tied to the partnerships we formed with various stakeholders, including county governments, local CSOs, and international organizations. These collaborations enabled us to leverage resources, knowledge, and networks to achieve greater reach and impact. The lesson here is clear: multi-stakeholder engagement not only enhances program outcomes but also ensures sustainability. Future efforts will focus on strengthening these partnerships and exploring new collaborations to address emerging SRHR needs.

## **Challenges of Limited Funding and Resource Allocation**

One of the major challenges faced during this period was limited funding, which affected our ability to scale up critical services, such as psychosocial support and post-abortion care. While AYAN Kenya was able to implement its programs effectively, the demand for services often exceeded available resources. This has underscored the need for intensified efforts in budget advocacy, particularly at the county level, to secure more domestic health financing and ensure continuous support for vulnerable groups.

## **Flexibility and Adaptation in Emergency Responses**

The ability to respond quickly to urgent SRHR needs, such as safe abortion services, demonstrated the importance of flexibility in addressing unpredictable and time-sensitive health challenges. Moving forward, we will advocate for more flexible funding models from donors to allow for rapid responses to emerging issues, particularly in health emergencies.

## **Capacity Building and Policy Advocacy as Key Enablers**

The capacity-building needs assessment conducted during our stakeholder meetings revealed that many local CSOs require training on policy advocacy and budget processes. This realization has prompted us to focus on building the advocacy capacity of grassroots organizations to engage more effectively with policy frameworks and influence budget allocations. AYAN Kenya will incorporate more capacity-building initiatives into future programming to empower local organizations and ensure they have the tools necessary to drive policy change at the county and national levels.

*In conclusion, while 2023 brought both successes and challenges, the key takeaways from our experiences will guide AYAN Kenya in refining its strategies and programs. By amplifying what worked well and addressing areas that require improvement, we aim to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of our future interventions.*

# Acknowledgements



AYAN Kenya extends its deepest gratitude to all our partners, donors, stakeholders, and supporters who contributed to the success of our work in 2023. Your unwavering commitment to our mission has empowered us to make a significant impact on the lives of young people, particularly girls, adolescents, and Sexual Gender Minorities (SGM), by advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) across Kenya.

We are especially grateful to the grassroots organizations, civil society partners, county governments, and community leaders for their collaboration in addressing the challenges faced by vulnerable populations. Your partnership has been instrumental in helping us deliver critical services, advocate for policy changes, and promote inclusivity in healthcare access.

We also acknowledge the dedication and hard work of our incredible staff, board members, and volunteers. Your tireless efforts and passion for the cause have been the driving force behind AYAN Kenya's accomplishments this year.

For more information about AYAN Kenya, to get involved, or to support our work, please reach out to us:

## Physical Address:

AYAN Kenya Headquarters,  
Kenya Off Aga Khan Road, Behind Royal  
City Garden Hotel, Milimani Estate,  
Kisumu, Kenya.

**Email:** [info@ayankenya.org](mailto:info@ayankenya.org)

**Phone:** +254727210860

**Website:** [www.ayankenya.org](http://www.ayankenya.org)

## Follow us on Social Media:

Facebook: [AYAN Kenya](#)

Twitter: [@AYANKenya](#)

Instagram: [@AYAN\\_Kenya](#)

## Call to Action

Together, we can continue to champion the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of young people, particularly in underserved and marginalized communities. We invite you to join us in our efforts to create a safer, healthier, and more equitable world for all.

## Get Involved:

- **Donate:** Help us expand our impact by contributing to our programs and services. Your support will directly benefit those who need it most.
- **Partner with Us:** We are always open to new collaborations. Reach out to explore how we can work together.
- **Volunteer:** Join our dedicated team of volunteers to help us bring about real change in communities across Kenya.

***Your involvement can make a difference. Let's work together to create lasting change!***

