

**Spotlight
Initiative**
*To eliminate violence
against women and girls*

Africa Regional Programme:

Annual Narrative Progress Report

1 January 2022 - 31 December 2022

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:





Programme Title & Programme Number

Programme Title: Africa's Response to Addressing VAWG, SGBV, HP, SRHR including FGM and Child Marriage
MPTF Office Project Reference Number:¹ 0119124

Priority regions/areas/localities for the programme

N/A

Recipient Organization(s)

- UN Women
- UNDP
- UNFPA
- UNICEF

Key Partners

- 1) African Union
- 2) UNECA
- 3) UNDCO
- 3) Academia
- 4) Regional intergovernmental entities/RECs
- 5) Regional NGOs, national CSOs

Programme Cost (US\$)

Total Phase I budget, and (where OSC approved) Phase II budget as per the Spotlight CPD/RPwD: \$26,982,281

Phase I and (where OSC approved) Phase II Spotlight funding:² \$25,620,000

Agency Contribution: \$1,362,281

Spotlight Funding and Agency Contribution by Agency:

Programme Start and End Dates

Start Date: 13.07.2020

End Date: 31.12.2023

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Name of RUNO	Spotlight Phase I (+ II, where OSC approved) (USD)	UN Agency Contributions (USD)
UN Women	3,454,656.00	253,352.00
UNFPA	10,625,993.00	525,119.00
UNDP	2,134,478.00	196,000.00
UNICEF	9,404,872.00	387,810.00
TOTAL:	25,620,000.00	1,362,281.00

¹ The Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office Project Reference Number is the same as that on the notification message. It is also referred to as 'Project ID' on the project's factsheet page at the MPTF Office GATEWAY.

² The Spotlight contribution refers to the amount transferred to the recipient UN organizations, which is available on the MPTF Office GATEWAY.

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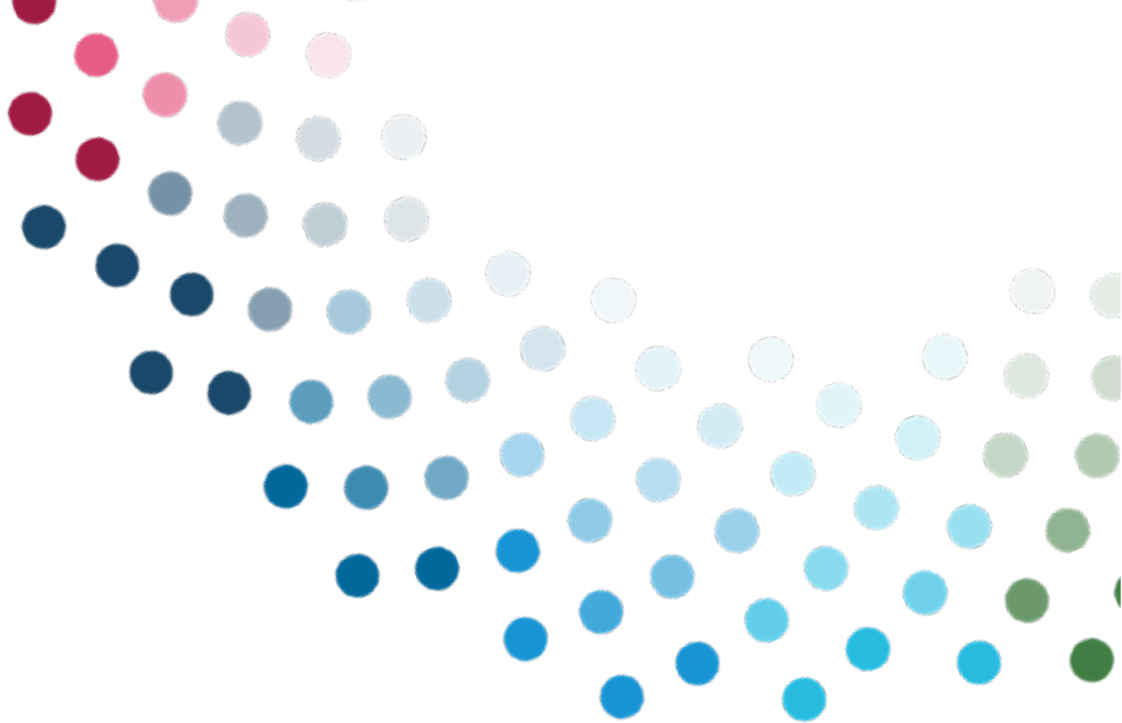
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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights/Banjul Commission
ACT	Assess and Ascertain, Consider and Context, Track and Triangulate
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Center
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CISP	International Committee for the Development of Peoples (INGO)
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSO	Civil society organization
CSRRG	Civil Society Regional Reference Group
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESARO	East and Southern Africa Regional Office
EVAGW	Ending violence against women and girls
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GBV	Gender-based violence
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MTA	Mid-term assessment
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHRC	National human rights commission
NHRI	National human rights institution
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights

PME	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
PSH	Partners in Sexual Health
REC	Regional economic community
RUNO	Recipient United Nations organization
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SIARP	Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme
SOAWR	Solidarity for African Women's Rights
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WCARO	Western and Central Africa Regional Office
WHRD	Women human rights defender





Executive summary

The Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme (SIARP) is a ground breaking global partnership between the United Nations and the European Union. The African regional programme introduced the global initiative with the African Union with a continental scope that enhances a regional approach to ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) and sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices and strengthening sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The regional programme prioritizes strengthening existing strategies and initiatives, such as the African Union Gender Strategy 2017–2027, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063, and the Maputo Plan of Action for the Operationalization of the for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Continental Policy Framework (2016–2030).

The regional programme works through two streams (stream I and stream II), both of which contribute to achieving results under outcome 1, policies and legislation; outcome 5, data; and outcome 6, women’s movements and civil society. Both streams promote and protect the rights of women and girls by providing support to the African Union Commission, through investment in regional women’s rights organizations and civil society actors, to enhance existing capacities and mechanisms for eliminating VAWG and harmful practices (such as child marriage and female genital mutilation) and promoting SRHR, life skills education and empowerment. The recipient UN organizations (RUNOs), namely UN Women, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), are responsible for implementing the programme and accountable for the overall results of the regional Spotlight Initiative.

This reporting period was characterized by several socio-political shifts. Election-induced political unrest, internal conflict, climate change and the outbreak of specific epidemics (Ebola) disrupted its implementation. On the positive side, the reporting period was an inspiring season for the African Union, member states, regional and local civil society organizations (CSOs) in advancing ending violence against women and harmful practices. Various high-level regional consultations and conferences enabled SIARP to reposition ending VAWG and harmful practice agendas to ensure the sustained accountability of the African Union and member states for implementing regional instruments. The regional programme used the post-COVID-19 period positively to accelerate its implementation as most of the restrictive measures were lifted.

This report provides an overview of the achievements and progress made by the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme (SIARP) in 2022. The programme has been catalytic in mobilizing recipient United Nations organizations (RUNOs), key regional partners and civil society organizations (CSOs) to combine their expertise and technical capabilities to provide effective, comprehensive and coherent support for a regional approach to ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) and harmful practices and strengthening sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The programme’s implementation focused on strengthening legislation and policy processes on ending (EVAWG), harmful practices and SRHR, generating good-quality and reliable data, and supporting women’s movements and relevant CSOs. The implementation was also guided by the African Union’s Agenda 2063, the priorities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and the Maputo Plan of Action for the Operationalization of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Continental Policy Framework, as well as other key regional instruments.

The programme has achieved many significant milestones that have set the stage for stakeholders strengthening collective efforts to fully attain the results planned across three pillars. In 2022, increased collaboration among UN agencies in line with UN reform efforts resulted in better coordination and more effective implementation of the programme.

In keeping with the major principle of the Spotlight Initiative of 'leave no one behind', SIARP engaged stakeholders in strengthening multi-sectoral and multilevel partnerships in programme implementation. As a result of the implementation of activities by the CSOs, new partnerships were fostered with national CSOs to reach marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as adolescent girls, young women, young boys and men, and people with disabilities.

Throughout 2022 the African Union was central to advancing the goals of the programme and engaged with SIARP through various mechanisms. The African Union actively participated

in strategic decisions on the implementation of SIARP at the level of the regional steering committee and stream I steering committee. The African Union was also involved in the process and participated in many activities held during the year. This level of active engagement provided an opportunity to update information on the progress being made and further strengthen the collaboration.

With regard to the sustainability of the regional programme, a sustainability outline was presented to the regional steering committee members and further guidance was provided to develop a sustainability strategy. Key promising initiatives of the regional programme are identified for each pillar, including the African Union harmful practices accountability framework, the regional EVAWG action plan, the training manuals on shadow and alternative reports and a training curriculum on VAWG data collection and analysis. The sustainability strategy is under development, and institutions will be consulted, including the relevant African Union structures, the European Union, the regional and national CSOs, member states, regional economic communities (RECs) and men's and youth networks, on sustaining the regional key initiatives.

Results across pillars



Pillar 1: Policy and legislation

Under both streams, SIARP strengthened the capacity of national and regional government, regional CSOs and other partners to assess gaps, draft new and/or strengthen existing legislation and policies and enforce existing legislation on ending sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage, in line with international human rights standards. To achieve this, in 2022 the regional programme supported and collaborated with the African Union Commission, regional CSOs and government partners in finalizing and rolling out regional evidence-based mapping and assessment, an African Union harmful practices accountability framework and a continental report on FGM. The initiative also included the development and implementation of national action plans and funding for EVAWG in Africa.

SIARP successfully mobilized regional partners, the African Union Commission and CSOs to support high-level advocacy missions in 10 countries for the ratification, domestication and enforcement of the Maputo Protocol and general implementation of regional harmful practices initiatives by member states. The high-level country missions in Egypt and Morocco have resulted in the respective CSOs and governments working together to ratify the protocol

and in another eight countries to review the status of implementation of the child marriage initiative using general guidance from the African Union perspective.

SIARP successfully implemented a participatory approach to developing and validating a facilitators' training manual to strengthen the capacity of regional partners and CSOs. The manual is used for cascade training of trainers and successive training of parliamentarians and CSO representatives to encourage member states to draft and review laws and policies related to women's rights groups, CSOs and human rights defenders.

SIARP in partnership with the African Union Commission developed and validated the first-ever regional action plan for Africa with a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework on EVAWG. It will guide regional partners in implementing global and regional commitments as strategies and actions on EVAWG. The action plan is the result of an extensive internal and external collaborative process with a broad range of organizational, continental and international stakeholders.

SIARP supported the development of the model guide and guidelines for establishing systems/protocols to support

and protect the rights of women's rights and human rights defenders and to prevent VAWG-related extrajudicial executions and prosecutions. The guide will provide legal protection for women human rights defenders (WHRDs) as they are vulnerable to various kinds of abuse and retaliation.



Pillar 5: Data

SIARP in partnership with the African Union Commission developed a standardized and harmonized data collection toolkit on VAWG, harmful practices and SRHR to ensure the production of good-quality, reliable and timely data aimed at informing policy development, evidence-based decision-making and advocacy.

The capacity of 121 key regional and national partners' capacity to collect, analyse, and use data related to SGBV, child marriage and FGM in line with international and regional standards was strengthened, with the objective of informing laws, policies and programmes.



Pillar 6: The women's movement

In 2022, accelerating the efforts made in the previous year, the programme increased the investment, engagement, and technical and financial support to enhance the capacity of women's rights groups, CSOs and networks, including those representing youth and vulnerable groups, to get a platform to effectively influence and advance progress on gender equality and women's empowerment and VAWG, including SGBV and harmful practices. Under both streams, the programme collaborated with 27 regional and local CSOs by establishing formal implementation agreements that in turn reached nearly 230 grassroots CSOs in various capacity enhancement initiatives. The engagement of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CSRRG) was also enhanced, providing advisory and advocacy support for the regional programme. The regional programme also disbursed nearly 25 per cent of its programme cost to the 27 CSOs, which will further increase in 2023 as cash replenishment was stalled for quite a few months.

The programme drafted and shared five jointly agreed recommendations adopted from multi-stakeholder dialogues convened by women's rights groups and the relevant CSOs with relevant government/intergovernmental/regional authorities and the African Union. The agreed recommendations are discussed below in detail.

Three rounds of regional platforms have been created for CSOs and women's rights groups to share knowledge,

The regional programme has also successfully mobilized 111 media personnel and journalists to enhance their capacity to help end VAWG and harmful practices through reporting, advocacy and other media coverage. This capacity enhancement has resulted in various news and media coverage of same.

The 2021 African Union gender scorecard report was validated and endorsed by the member states – as part of efforts to promote data availability and adequate monitoring of progress, UN Women, in collaboration with the African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), supported the development of the 2021 African Union gender scorecard report and the finalization of the African Union Gender Observatory.

network and jointly advocate on gender equality and women's empowerment and EVAWG.

The culture of promoting innovative solutions to ending FGM and harmful practices has continued in this reporting period, and 12 additional innovative solutions have been selected and promoted, focusing on facilitating FGM case referral systems and addressing the mental health effects of early marriage.

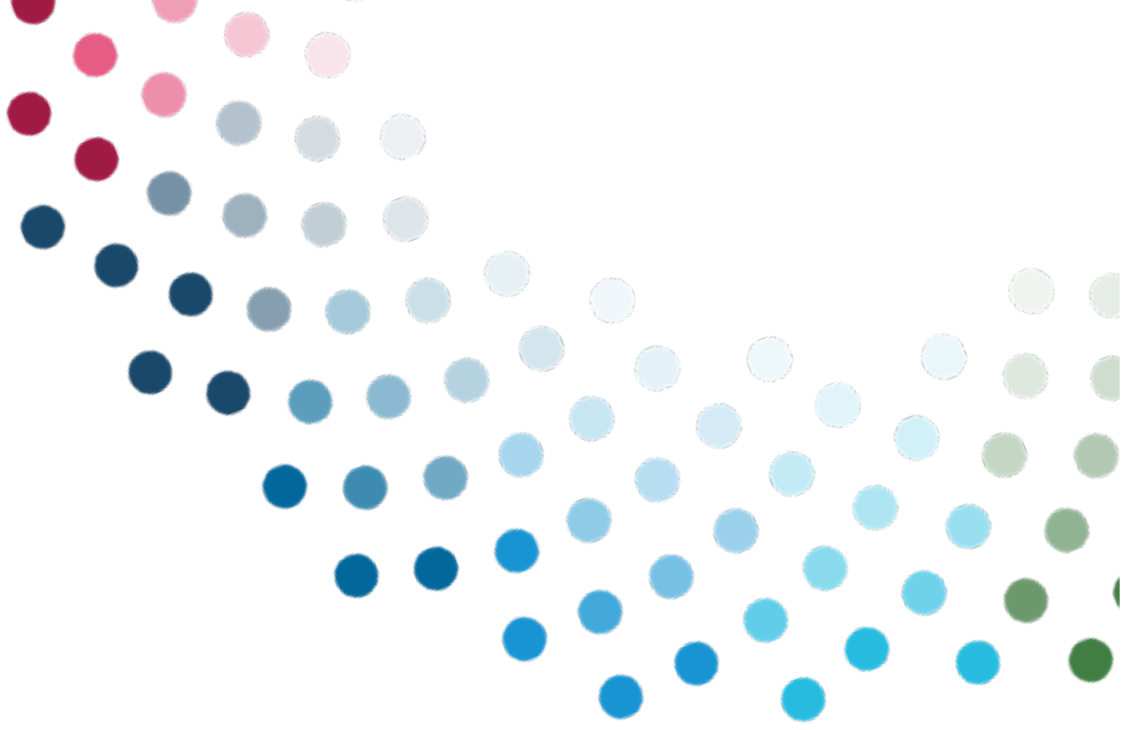
Operationally the regional programme conducted regular regional and stream-level steering committee meetings to review and guide the overall implementation of the programme. The mid-term assessment (MTA) has been conducted; this showed the programme's good status and indicated a few areas to be improved in the remaining implementation period, including coordination and synergy of implementation, alignment of regional result indicators and engagement of more local CSOs. Financially, by the end of the 2022, the regional programme was at 56 per cent of its delivery of the total programme cost. As 2023 is the final year of the regional programme, it will focus on consolidating what has been started, sustaining key regional initiatives and ensuring the effective closure of the programme with appropriate documentation.

“Spotlight has made significant progress in establishing vital policies to protect women and girls in Africa. It is crucial that we implement these policies.”



*H.E. Ambassador Minata
Samate Cessouma*

*The African Union Commissioner
for Health, Humanitarian Affairs
and Social Development*



Contextual shifts and implementation status

The reporting period was a year of new shifts and developments for some countries in Africa. The easing of COVID-19-related restrictions by the World Health Organization and by most governments in Africa provided a fresh stimulus to accelerate the implementation of SIARP in 2022. However, the remaining effects that mainly result from restrictive measures, including significant increase in gender-based violence (GBV), early marriage³ and FGM⁴, are still challenges that most member states and the African Union continue to mitigate through various post COVID-19 response mechanisms. There is also a burden on many governments due to constrained budgets, as the programme requires continual investment in health-care systems and social services.

Inflation was exacerbated by the Russia–Ukraine war resulting in rising crude oil prices, sanctions on wheat and sunflower oil and disrupted supply chains. Africa is heavily reliant on food imports from both countries, and the continent is already experiencing price shocks and disruptions in the supply chain of these commodities. Notably, inflation has created a double burden for women and girls as they tend to be the main providers and caregivers for their families⁵. Evidence from previous economic shocks shows that women who lose their financial independence or have reduced earnings are more likely to be pushed into

sexual exploitation or trafficking. This may negatively affect the promotion of SRHR services.

In Ethiopia, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sahel region, conflict has compromised democratic and development progress. While the conflict in northern Ethiopia was resolved at the end of 2022 with a peace deal that created an enabling environment for humanitarian activities, including supporting GBV survivors, the Sahel region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are still in conflict. The continuation of coups d'état in Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau posed a worrying security situation and a threat to peaceful and democratic transition. Women and girls in conflict areas are most vulnerable to GBV and require special protection measures.

In addition, programme activities continued to be affected by several humanitarian and political challenges, including health emergencies and natural disasters exacerbated by the effects of climate change. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) had to postpone in-person training on rolling out the social norms programming and measurement guidelines because of an Ebola outbreak in Uganda. Political instability in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali continued to disrupt support for programme implementation in those countries.

³ <https://data.unicef.org/resources/covid-19-a-threat-to-progress-against-child-marriage/>

⁴ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_impact_brief_for_UNFPA_24_April_2020_1.pdf

⁵ How the Russia–Ukraine conflict impacts Africa.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) InnoHack 2021 incubation-stage country field visits had to be postponed until 2023 because of the elections in Nigeria and the Ebola outbreak in Uganda. Political instability in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali continued to disrupt support for programme implementation in those countries, especially the work done by implementing partners such as the Italian Association for Women in Development (AIDOS). The second International Conference on FGM was also postponed until 2023 because of other commitments of the government of the host country, Tanzania.

Despite the challenges, the programme has continued to deliver comprehensive and integrated solutions to end VAWG and harmful practices and promote SRHR. The programme under both streams promoted and protected the rights of women and girls by providing support to the African Union Commission, through enhancing the capacity of regional partners on laws and policies, investing in regional women's rights organizations and civil society actors to enhance existing capacities and mechanisms for eliminating VAWG and harmful practices (such as child marriage and FGM) and promoting SRHR.

This reporting period was also characterized by relevant positive developments, such as the ratification of the [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa](#) by the Saharawi

Arab Democratic Republic. The country became the 43rd African state to ratify the protocol and commit to advancing the reality of the rights of women, gender equality and women's empowerment in that country. Saharawi deposited the instruments of ratification with the African Union Commission on 29 April 2022⁶.

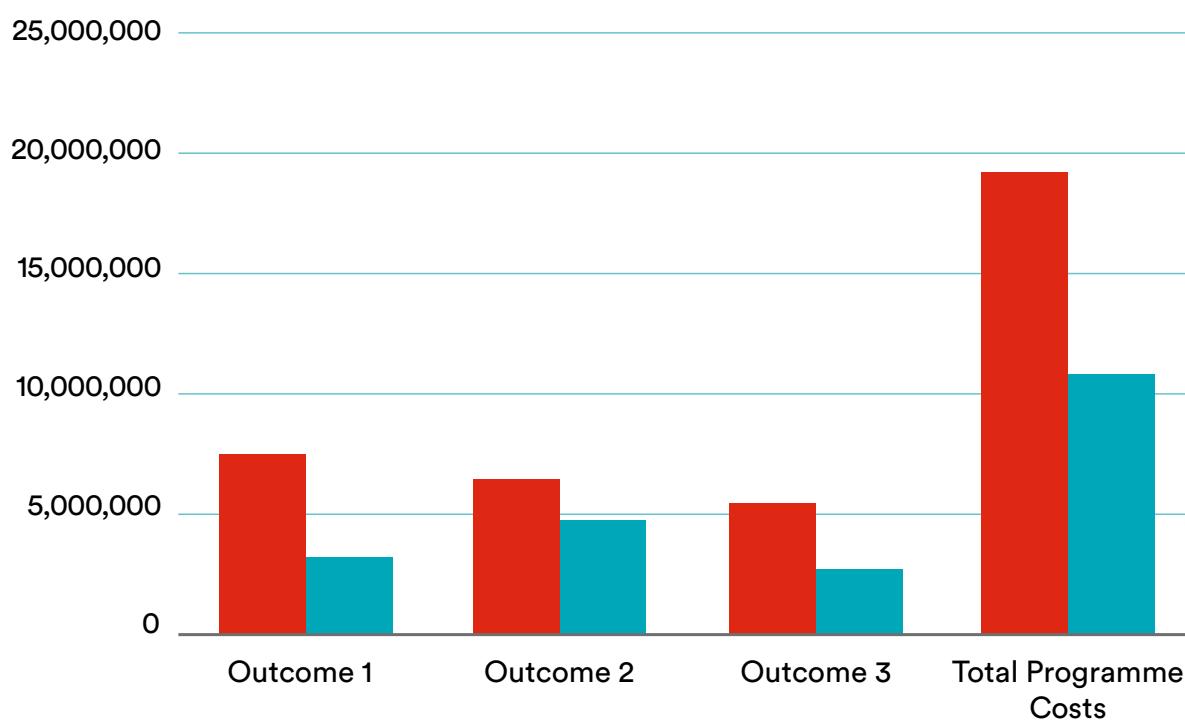
It was also during this reporting period that the government of Sierra Leone approved a safe motherhood bill that includes a range of critical provisions to ensure the health and dignity of all girls and women of reproductive age. This was announced during the [10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights](#) in June 2022, of which SIARP was one of the co-conveners.

Another positive development in 2022 was reported during the 79th UN General Assembly session, which was the General Assembly's Third Committee adopting a resolution⁷ to end FGM (Resolution A/C.3/77/L.18/Rev.1) led by the Government of Burkina Faso and with 122 co-sponsors from around the world. The resolution requests that the UN Secretary-General submits to the General Assembly, at its 79th session, an in-depth, multidisciplinary, evidence-based report, with accurate and updated data. It will analyse root causes, progress made to date, and challenges and needs, and provide action-oriented recommendations for eliminating FGM.

⁶ <https://soawr.org/2022/05/04/the-saharawi-arab-democratic-republic-has-ratified-the-maputo-protocol/>

⁷ A/C.3/77/L.18/Rev.1 (undocs.org)

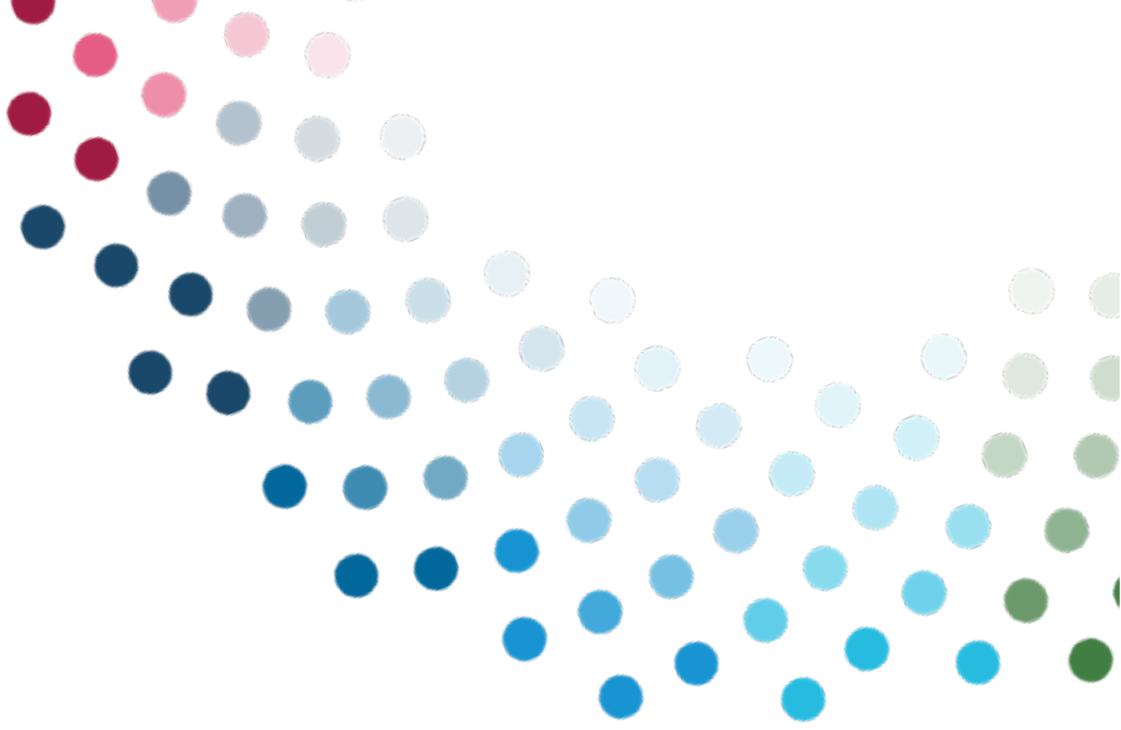
Implementation progress by outcome area



Spotlight Initiative – outcome area	Implementation progress as at 31 December 2022
Outcome 1: Legal and policy framework	42%
Outcome 5: Data	72%
Outcome 6: The women’s movement	56%
AVERAGE	56%

As the above chart and table show, by the end of December 2022 the regional programme utilization rate is 56% of the total allocated programme fund.

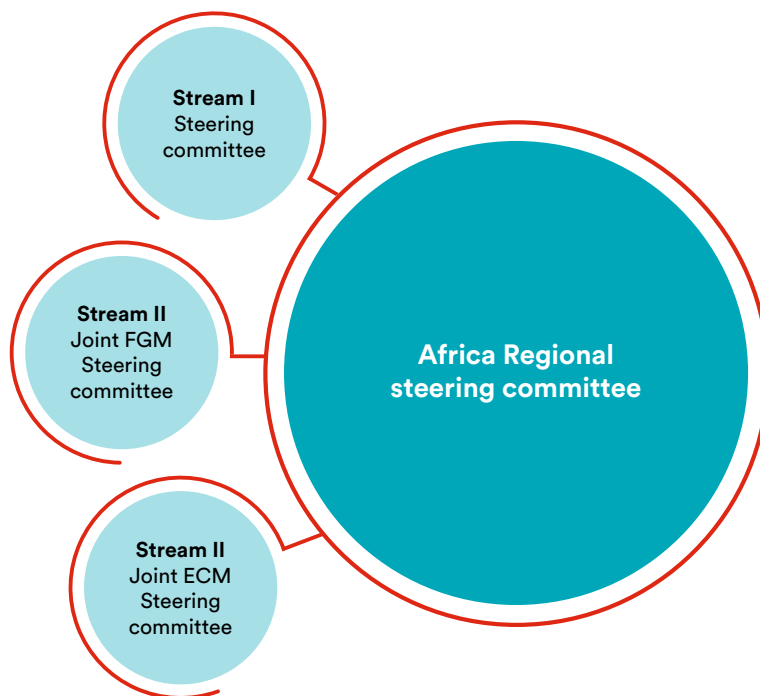




Programme governance and coordination

In 2022, the governance bodies of the regional programme were actively engaged at different times and at different levels. Both regional- and stream-level steering committees conducted biannual meetings and provided guidance, oversight and recommendations, mainly on expediting delivery, fostering coordination and synergy

between streams and with stream I country programme implementation, and putting in place procedures. Details of member composition and the roles and responsibilities of each stream committee are given in the [2021 Africa Regional Programme Annual Narrative Progress Report](#).



A. Regional- and stream-level steering committees

I. SIARP REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

The SIARP regional steering committee was established in 2021 and conducted its first meeting in May of that year. The second meeting took place on 15 March 2022. That meeting was attended by all 14 members of the committee and 30 additional technical observers. Representatives from the CSRRG also participated in the regional steering committee meeting for the first time. During the meeting, the 2021 results of the programme, communication visibility strategy, no-cost extension and 2022 deliverables were discussed. The recommendations from the deliberations included:

- Urgently address the burden of SGBV in the post-COVID-19 era.
- Finalize and roll out the communication and visibility strategy and communication implementation plan of the regional programme.
- Extend the regional programme to the global end date of the Spotlight Initiative of 31 December 2023.
- Strengthen synergies between regional and country programmes. As part of this recommendation, the regional programme conducted the first in-person programme review and planning workshop with representatives from

all eight Spotlight implementing countries to strengthen the synergy between the regional and country programmes in June 2022.

The regional steering committee convened its third meeting on 13 September 2022. The meeting was attended by 14 members and an additional 20 technical observers. The committee reviewed the results of the regional programme, key findings and recommendations of the MTA, including the draft sustainability outline.

Taking into account the messages from the MTA findings, members indicated the need to cascade and implement key recommendations. By the end of 2022, these recommendations have been incorporated into a follow up table and their translation into action will be closely monitored.

Members appreciated the overall progress, specifically the finalization and initial implementation of the communication and visibility strategy that was to be realized in the remaining implementation period. Members also discussed the status of the no-cost extension approval and recommended to finalize it to maintain the pace of implementation. Members also provided guidance on finalizing the sustainability plan of the programme that will be tabled at the next (fourth) Regional Steering Committee meeting.

II. SIARP STREAM I STEERING COMMITTEE

The SIARP stream I steering committee was established at the beginning of 2022 and comprised members from stream I implementing agencies (regional directors of UN Women,

UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF), the European Union Delegation to the African Union, the African Union Commission, represented by the Women Gender and Youth Directorate Director, and the CSRRG.



FIGURE 1 SIARP STREAM I STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The committee conducted its first virtual meeting on 7 April 2022, which was attended by 10 members of the committee and 12 alternative members. During the meeting, the terms of reference of the stream I steering committee, the 2021 results of stream I, and the 2022 stream I annual work plan were presented and discussed. The following action points were agreed:

- Focus on presenting the results and observed changes in the programme.
- Build on areas of complementarity and synergy across the pillars, with links between stream I and stream II.
- Institute acceleration measures to fast-track implementation.
- Use flexibilities in the approved work plan to address challenges such as limited staffing.
- Strengthen the coordination mechanisms with the African Union Commission.
- Enhance the engagement of CSOs across all pillars and support their collaboration.

The committee conducted its second meeting (hybrid) on 17 November 2022 in Addis Ababa. The committee was represented by seven stream I steering committee members and 11 alternative members. The committee reviewed the implementation status of the recommendations from the first meeting, including the development of an acceleration plan, the positive collaboration between streams and the increasing engagement of CSOs, including the CSRRG, in the implementation of SIARP, all of which were well accepted by members.

The committee reviewed the key results of the 2022 stream I interventions and recommended that implementers focus on identifying and tracking changes resulting from the ongoing support rendered by the programme, particularly the capacity-building training provided to various stakeholders.

The committee provided guidance on the importance of documenting specific promising practices of the programme, the need to kick start the conversation on an exit and sustainability strategy and the aspect of resource mobilization. Following the European Union Delegation's request to be closer involved in the day to day management of the programme, it was agreed to strengthen communication and engagement with the European Union Delegation – notably by including the Delegation technical staff in the regular coordination meetings held between the RUNOs and the AUC. The fourth stream I steering committee meeting is scheduled for May 2023.

III. SIARP STREAM II – END FGM – STEERING COMMITTEE

Stream II of SIARP continued to use the governance structures of both the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage and the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM.

The steering committees for both programmes provide strategic guidance for and oversight of the overall management and functioning of the programmes. The steering committee of the Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM convened on 27 April 2022 with the participation of UNFPA, UNICEF, SIARP programme coordination unit (PCU), and the donors. The SIARP stream II FGM achievements of 2021 included the regional programme supporting countries to criminalize FGM and develop a costed action plan on FGM (14/17 countries), the development and endorsement of the African Union harmful practices accountability framework, support for men's and boys' networks, the FGM report and FGM scorecard, the publishing of the book *I Belong to Me*, the implementation of FGM innovation challenge initiatives and the establishment of the Global Youth Consortium; these were also underlined during the meeting. Among the action points for the joint programme was sharing the knowledge products on engaging men and boys.

The second steering committee meeting of the joint programme convened on 14 October 2022 in Senegal and was preceded by a donors' field visit to the South of Senegal to monitor programme's activities. All the developments regarding 2022 activities were shared. In both steering committee meetings, all the achievements were shared with the participants, and the activities that will be implemented in 2023 were discussed, such as the second International Conference on Elimination of FGM, the Innovation Forum, and the 2023 innovation challenge on FGM. The implementation strategy of the accountability framework was also discussed, and members urged that the framework be finalized and rolled out in 2023. Accordingly, the first meeting with African Union Organs about the African Union accountability framework took place in December 2022, and the other recommendations were integrated into the 2023 annual work plan.



FIGURE 2 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS DURING FIELD VISIT

IV. SIARP STREAM II – END CHILD MARRIAGE – STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee for the Global Programme to End Child Marriage convened twice. On 22 February 2022 a virtual meeting provided thought leadership on the current programming context, the vision of ending child marriage for 2022–2023 and the resources needed to meet the vision, advocacy approaches to ending child marriage, the issue of intersectionality and the inclusion of young people whose

voices need to be heard, and the application of gender-transformative programming across all Spotlight Initiative programmes. The committee convened its second meeting of the year on 28 November. This followed the donors’ field visit to India, and key global programme achievements were reviewed, including the Spotlight Initiative, and mapping was recommended of countries and sectors where engagement with/influence on implementation and advocacy remain a challenge.

B. Civil Society Regional Reference Group

In addition to the standard partnership of CSOs as implementing partners, and to further strengthen the role of civil society in the Spotlight Initiative, SIARP set up the CSRRG in February 2022. The members of the CSRRG were selected by a civil society expert committee in collaboration with representatives from the African Union Commission, the European Union Delegation, the regional programme coordination unit and UN Women.

The CSRRG is a pan-African body of experts with a triple function: to harness civil society expertise and inform the implementation of SIARP, both as advisers to SIARP and as advocates for and partners in the realization of its objectives. In so doing, the group contributes to national and continental efforts to address VAWG and harmful practices, including vulnerable groups as defined in the programme document, which is key to responding to Agenda 2030’s aim to ‘leave no one behind’. The composition of the CSRRG (see the [members’ profiles](#)) takes into account geographical, language, gender and

age representation and includes representatives of faith and traditional leaders.

The group conducted its first in-person meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, from 20 to 22 April 2022 and drafted its annual work plan with four main focus areas: institutional strengthening of the CSRRG, communications and visibility, advocacy and increasing investment.

The CSRRG enthusiastically engaged in the programme’s implementation and provided advisory, technical and monitoring support to both streams. For example, CSRRG was represented at different events and in consultations and platforms organized by the programme, such as a regional CSO knowledge sharing forum, a validation workshop on the regional action plan for Africa on EVAWG with a monitoring and evaluation framework, the 2022 Eastern and Southern Africa regional CSO and women’s movement forum on EVAWG in Africa, and a Spotlight Initiative global learning symposium.



FIGURE 3 AFRICA REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

review output level results and adjust implementation set-up as and when necessary.

The CSRRG was also represented by their chairperson, who facilitated the session ‘Engaging a Regional Response: Experiences from the Africa Regional Programme’ during the Global Learning Symposium held from 16 to 18 September in Cancún, Mexico. Furthermore, the CSRRG chairperson was one of the panellists for the CSO movement ‘Overcoming barriers to grassroots inclusion’ that created an environment enabling the group to interact with representatives of both the global and the national civil society reference group.

Additionally, with the global theme for the 2022 16 days of activism against GBV ‘UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls’, CSRRG hosted a webinar to provide a forum for dialogue between grassroots CSOs, civil society reference groups, RUNOs, the African Union Commission, government representatives and traditional/religious leaders in the region to:

- Mobilize all relevant stakeholders to reflect on how far the

and systems, with a focus on participation, funding mechanisms, disbursement and implementation of CSO engagement, the group started developing a CSO monitoring report/scorecard. Guided by the Spotlight monitoring toolkit, during the reporting period rounds of meetings were conducted with CSRRG to introduce the monitoring toolkit and select indicators. Accordingly, the CSRRG selected 15 indicators to serve as guidance and inspiration for the monitoring process by taking stock of what is working well and what is not, and where the regional programme can do better in its efforts to be a model fund for EVAWG without leaving anyone behind. The data collection is **under way**, with the final report expected in the first quarter of 2023.

Although the group started full implementation late, the ongoing collaboration with member states and regional and national CSOs enables the group to expand its advocacy initiatives horizon. More concrete actions of the group to sustain key Spotlight Initiatives are under discussion as part of the ongoing sustainability strategy development.

C. Inter-agency coordination, technical committees and other governance mechanisms

Implementation as ‘one UN’ has been greatly enhanced through the roll-out of SIARP. This continues to be facilitated through dedicated spaces for coordination and joint planning such as monthly stream meetings and monthly technical coordination meetings. SIARP has continued to capitalize on these platforms for collaboration among

RUNOs and with implementing partners. As a follow-up to the MTA, SIARP established and strengthened coordination mechanisms for each stream and pillar. A detailed joint work plan was developed for pillar 1 to guide the implementation and monitoring of planned activities. A monthly technical coordination mechanism was established for pillar 1 among

RUNOs (UNDP and UN Women) and key implementing partners (Women and Law in Southern Africa, Equality Now and FEMNET (the African Women’s Development and Communication Network)) to ensure effective collaboration and maximize efforts. This enabled RUNOs to effectively coordinate interventions including the regional mapping and assessment of the status of the domestication and enforcement of human rights instruments on EAWG, which focuses on establishing a baseline for the regional programme.

In addition, complementarity and synergy in the implementation of various activities were ensured, including advocacy and capacity-building initiatives on the ratification, domestication and enforcement of human rights instruments. UNDP and UN Women collaborated on the planning and implementation of activities related to drafting and reviewing laws and policies that protect WHRDs, while UN Women and UNFPA jointly planned and implemented the three rounds of training on coordinating data on EAWG.

Such coordination has gone beyond the Spotlight initiative and resulted in stronger synergy with the UNDP regional project on advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa and the UN Women Spotlight Initiative intervention on building journalists’ capacities on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Maputo Protocol. Overall, the coordination provided the space for discussion and oversight of programme implementation by contributing to effective strategic decision-making.

Similarly, stream II leads (UNICEF and UNFPA) continued their work as partners in the stream II ending child marriage and FGM SIARP to promote cooperation around accountability for affected girls and women at the inter-agency level. UNICEF and UNFPA–SIARP technical experts embedded in the African Union Commission continued to contribute to the continental campaign against harmful practices by influencing policy and technical guidance. The creation of the inter-agency coordination monthly meetings with the African Union Commission’s participation is a positive outcome in operationalizing the SIARP work plans. Both UN agencies continued to hold coordination meetings with their shared implementing partners, such as Girls Not Brides and the Population Council, to inform and consult on the ongoing global and regional legislative and gender-transformative interventions pertinent to ending child marriage.

Different convening facilitated by the SIARP coordination unit has strengthened communication, coordination and delivery between stream I and stream II. This was realized during joint stream I and stream II quarterly coordination meetings, regional steering committee preparation meetings, the joint annual review and planning workshop, various MTA validation meetings, joint representation at the regional conferences (e.g. 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights and Global Learning Symposium), the joint review of result indicators and monthly communication team meetings.

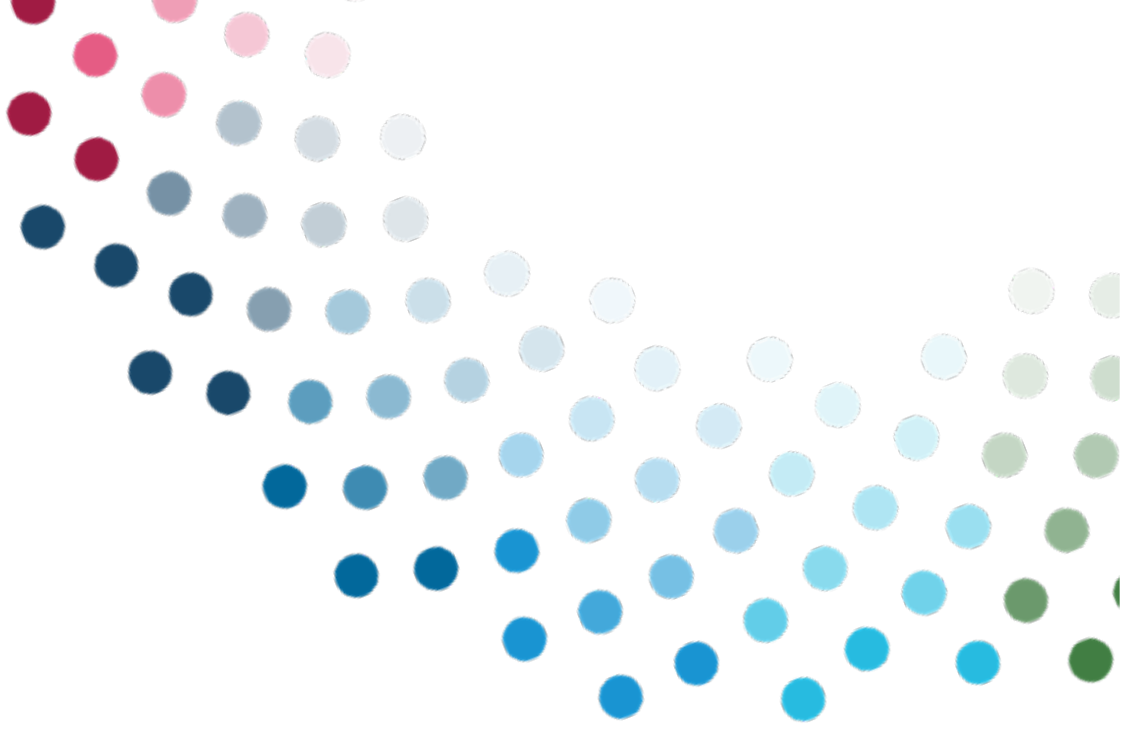
All the aforementioned inter-agency coordination enabled the regional programme to align implementation with the regional-level initiatives and resulted in the efficient and effective delivery of joint commitments.



Ending FGM will take a long time and this needs real commitment. We also need a political decision.



*Awa Mah Camara
Journalist, National TV station
(ORTM), Mali*



Programme partnerships

A. African Union Commission

SIARP was designed in close consultation and collaboration with the African Union Commission. The role of the Commission extends beyond being the principal co-signer of the regional programme, and the entire implementation is coordinated with two directorates of the Commission – Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development Directorate and Women, Gender and Youth Directorate – under the leadership of the Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) Commissioner. The Commission

chairs the regional steering committee at commissioner level and the department head is the chairperson of the stream I steering committee that actively steers the biannual committees effectively with oversight and guidance, as described in the above governance section of this report. As highlighted, all implementing agencies through their African Union liaison offices have seconded qualified experts to the Commission to facilitate SIARP implementation.



In 2022, SIARP worked in close collaboration with the African Union Commission in the development, validation and launch of key regional strategic documents, including:

- The regional evidence-based mapping and assessment report on the status of domestication and enforcement of human rights instruments
- Regional action plan for Africa with an M&E framework on EVAWG and a facilitators' training manual on the ratification and domestication of human rights instruments on EVAWG
- Facilitators' training manual on shadow or alternative reporting on the situation regarding the rights of women and girls in Africa

- Model guide and guidelines on the protection of WHRDs in Africa
- Commemoration of Zero Tolerance Day for FGM (6 February)
- Roll-out of the African Union’s accountability framework on the elimination of harmful practices
- Media training on FGM for journalists and a standardized and harmonized data collection toolkit on VAWG, harmful practices and SRHR
- Development and launch of a report and scorecard on FGM, GBV and human rights.



FIGURE 4 VICTORIA MALOKA AT A CSO FORUM MEETING HELD IN DAKAR. © UN WOMEN

The commitment of the department ranges from planning, preparing resource materials, selecting participants and co-facilitating to report writing about capacity-building interventions and co-hosting various events organized by the programme (the CSO knowledge sharing forum, training sessions on EVAWG data coordination and consultation with traditional and religious leaders). Furthermore, the strong coordination provided guidance on how SIARP activities should be linked with established African Union Commission initiatives and priorities to strengthen the ownership and achievement of overall results, for example revamping the gender observatory to include additional indicators relating to VAWG/SGBV/harmful practices/SRHR, training member states and providing technical and financial support for operationalizing and supporting the African Union Commission in drafting the 2021 gender scorecard report.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the African Union Commission’s Women, Gender and Youth Directorate, Equality Now – Solidarity for African Women Rights Coalition (SOAWR) and various actors, the programme conducted ratification missions to Egypt and Morocco to advocate the adoption of the Maputo Protocol. The two countries are among 12 in Africa that have not acceded to the women’s rights treaty. The mission in Morocco that

took place from 1 to 4 November 2022 was led by the first vice-chairperson of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Bureau, Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuzo. The Equality Now – SOAWR delegation in collaboration with the African Union Commission Women, Gender and Youth Directorate also had a consultation meeting with several Egyptian civil society actors and media personalities resulting in an agreement to advocate the ratification of the protocol. The event was officiated by the chairperson of EVE Future and Secretary-General of the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education.

SIARP under stream II interventions supported high-level consultative engagements with national human rights commissions (NHRC/I) in East and Southern Africa, covering eight countries⁸. A workshop with 45 participants, including representatives from 11 member states, CSOs, African Union Organs, UN agencies and international organizations, aimed to strengthen the capacity of the national human rights institutions (NHRIs) to effectively contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3 to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and FGM, by 2030 in Africa. The workshop also aimed to review the current country progress on the Campaign to End Child Marriage, the implementation,

8 Madagascar, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, South Sudan and Ethiopia.

monitoring and evaluation of the NHRCs, the documentation of emerging and promising practices, and the identification of areas of technical assistance where the African Union and its partners can provide support in accelerating country-level action plans. A key outcome of the meeting was valid recommendations generated by NHRC representatives on adapting the reporting checklist of the African Union's accountability framework on harmful practices (child marriage and FGM). These recommendations guide the strengthening of data collection, reporting and monitoring of NHRC-led campaign support and implementation among member states. Support was also provided for the African Union Commission to convene a south-to-south exchange on understanding how the Commission's campaign to end child marriage has impacted the implementation of national action plans and strategies to end child marriage in the countries from which the 140 participants attended. The key takeaway from this workshop was the reinforcement of multi-sectoral platforms and the enhancement of accountability mechanisms at regional and country level to address child marriage and other harmful practices.

SIARP supported the African Union Commission in initiating a partnership with Child Helpline International with the objective of strengthening collaboration in implementing integrated child protection systems and early warning detection. It will also contribute to the expansion of helpline services in Africa and provide an opportunity to scale up services.



Currently, helpline services are available in only **22 countries** in Africa, representing less than **50 per cent** of the potential uptake.

Additionally, SIARP supported the African Union's efforts to enhance policy and legislation reforms through the adoption of instruments by the specialized technical committees as a push factor for member state-level implementation. The Fourth Ordinary Session of the African Union Strategic Committee on Social Development Labour and Employment (STC-SDLE-4) was held from 4 to 8 April 2022. Under the theme 'Building Forward Better Well Being and Living Standards in Africa', the HHS Commissioner presented key strategies on ending harmful practices to the experts' meeting, which were endorsed and forwarded to the ministerial meeting for adoption. Accordingly, the following HHS strategies and action plans were adopted:

- African Union strategy and action plan on strengthening regional and national capabilities addressing ending online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) (2020–2025)⁹
- Campaign to End Child Marriage strategy (2019–2023)
- African Union Saleema initiative on eliminating FGM campaign strategic plan (2019–2023)
- African Union accountability framework on the elimination of harmful practices¹⁰.

The ministerial meeting, which had representation from over 36 member states, adopted the four key strategic instruments of the Campaign to End Child Marriage and Eliminate FGM, including the OCSEA strategy and action plan and accountability framework.

CASE STUDY: PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

SIARP engagement with regional economic communities

At the sub-regional level, the programme closely engaged with regional parliamentarians and RECs, including the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and East African Community (EAC). Some of the common actions SIARP implemented with RECs include capacity building of VAWG data collection, validation of regional action on EAWG, finalization and roll-out of the African Union accountability framework, and implementation of the SADC model law. This has not only ensured that the programme activities are informed by the experiences and priorities of regional partners but has also increased their capacity on gender mainstreaming, evidence generation on the state of EAWG and eliminating harmful practices in the region, drafting and reviewing laws and policies, and the accountability of RECs and member states on regional commitments. This intentional collaboration with RECs also enhanced the lobbying, advocacy and negotiation process to effectively influence member states to deliver on their commitments to ending VAWG, including SGBV and harmful practices.

⁹ 41106-wd-OCSEA-_Programmatic_Response_Plan_for_2021-_ENGLISH.pdf (au.int)

¹⁰ 41106-wd-AU_ACCOUNTABILITY_FRAMEWORK_ON_THE_ELIMINATION_OF_HARMFUL_PRACTICES-_ENGLISH.pdf

At the national level, the programme strengthened collaboration with member states' ministries of gender/women's affairs, NHRIs and national statistics bureaus through technical support and engagement in capacity-building initiatives.

Through all these activities that have been collaborations with the African Union Commission, it is evident that the ownership of the Commission for SIARP has been enhanced in comparison with the first year of the

B. Civil society organizations

In this reporting year, SIARP sustained the partnership created with CSOs in the previous year and extended further partnerships with additional regional and national CSOs. The following sections cover how the programme works with regional and local/grassroots organizations.

I. AFRICAN COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS:

In the East and Southern Africa Region (ESAR), SIARP continued to collaborate with the African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL-RfP) to engage with prominent faith leaders in the Campaign to End Child Marriage and FGM in the region and to expand the roll-out of the Faith for Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities initiative in the region. This is a global partnership between UNICEF, Religions for Peace and the Joint Learning Initiative on Local Faith Communities (JLI), knowledge partners and the umbrella membership organization of faith-based organizations and academic partners. In 2022, the partnership's training of trainers was supported in six countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The training leveraged the 'mind and heart' dialogue methodology to engage faith communities to deepen discussions on challenging topics such as child marriage. The methodology includes diverse voices, strengthens experiential learning, and challenges unbalanced power relations and structures. Following the virtual regional consultation 'Faith & Culture' in April 2022, where over 130 senior religious leaders from seven ESAR countries signed a pledge to support the ending child marriage and Saleema campaigns, a second convention of faith leaders on cross-border FGM was hosted by the UNFPA Tanzania Country Office, in Arusha in late June 2022, in collaboration with the regional offices and the ACRL. A declaration was signed by participants to appeal to religious leaders in cross-border districts across Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania to engage communities with ending FGM, stay vigilant and report cases. Through UNICEF ESARO's collaboration with the ACRL, in 2023, specific in-country engagement will be prioritized in cross-border counties (e.g. Ethiopia–Kenya, Kenya–Tanzania) to strengthen the faith engagement approach in these communities.

programme's implementation. The year also witnessed staff shortages at the Commission and competing priorities that challenged the speed of implementation. The programme's seconded experts provided all the required support to mitigate the challenge. Most of the activities were initiated and led by the African Union Commission with financial and technical support from SIARP that will strengthen the fundamental structure and ensure the sustainability of SIARP-initiated interventions.

II. GIRLS NOT BRIDES:

SIARP finalized a partnership agreement with Girls Not Brides that had been initiated in 2021. This partnership aims to support capacity building of CSO coalition members in gender-transformative approaches. This partnership lays the foundation for a scaled-up programme on gender-transformative approaches, with particular focus on Mozambique and Nigeria (this partnership agreement on scaling up gender-transformative programming is aligned with the February 2022 steering committee recommendation).

III. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLES/CISP:

A partnership agreement was signed between SIARP (UNICEF ESARO) and the international development non-governmental organization (NGO) CISP on social norms capacity building, mentorship and measurement. Accordingly, CISP organized training on social norms programming and measurement across Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi and Somalia for over 150 government, UNICEF and UNFPA country offices, local CSOs and representatives from local academia. Three additional training sessions are planned in Kenya (additional counties), South Sudan and Uganda in 2023. A social behavioural change baseline has also been completed in two counties in Kenya on FGM and child marriage through the partnership. Through the Spotlight Initiative, funding was secured to expand the collaboration and to extend the training in Kenya (additional counties), South Sudan and Uganda and convert the training package into a series of two short courses to be delivered to postgraduate students and practitioners from eastern Africa in collaboration with the University of Nairobi. In addition, through the 2023 collaboration, UNICEF ESARO will leverage CISP's 'art for social change' methodology, developed and implemented in Somalia and Kenya since 2014, with the aim of working with vulnerable groups, including women and girls, to promote more resilient, inclusive and peaceful communities.

IV. ITALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT:

UNFPA signed an implementing partner agreement for five years to work on FGM. The work plan of the project directly contributes to SIARP and the initiatives of the UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM. The aim of the partnership is to accelerate change, with the primary focus being implementing and strengthening a community of practice (COP) for mutual learning. GAMS Belgium, which works for the abolition of FGM, will work with AIDOS to moderate different discussions in two languages through blog posts, podcasts and webinars. The second important activity will be building the capacity of AIDOS partners and CSOs in one country in West Africa on gender-transformative approaches to end FGM. This activity was realized through two channels: physical meetings/training and the production of videos. Three thematic discussions (1, education and FGM; 2, innovative financing to end FGM; 3, access to services) and four webinars and physical training sessions in Senegal on gender-transformative approach were organized for 65 new members, all female, of the COP. The COP team contacted anti-FGM stakeholders who might be interested in joining the community through mailings and social media to ensure a good representation of the anti-FGM sector and a variety of members.



Thirty-two members from 19 countries have joined the COP; at the end of September 2022, the COP Google group had 555 members (up from 524 in December 2021) and 252 experts were visible on the map (<https://copfgm.org/site-membres>).

V. GLOBAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN:

This campaign has been an implementing partner of the Global Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM. It directly funds frontline local organizations working to end FGM and child marriage across Africa. Working directly or with the joint programme, the Global Media Campaign reached over 1,000 local organizations. The campaign has an open-source digital localization directory of local organizations working on ending FGM and child marriage. In 2022, the Global Media Campaign partnered with SIARP stream II on FGM to hold media training for more than 30 media practitioners from East and Southern Africa. The training was on sensitive reporting on harmful practices and brought together 51 media practitioners and scholars from 10 countries: Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan and Somalia.

VI. AFRICAN TECHNOLOGY HUB:

In 2022, the Innovation Challenge organized by SIARP (UNFPA ESARO) and UNFPA headquarters worked with hubs across the continent with the support of a continent-wide hacklab called AfriLabs. This is a network organization that has supported innovation centres across African countries since 2011 and was founded with the mission of building a community around the rapidly emerging technology hubs in Africa. The ‘Hubs Hack’ engaged incubator and accelerator hubs across Africa to tap into their resource of innovators and innovation solutions to pitch the best solutions to ending FGM in Africa. Each hub ran an internal selection process and submitted its innovation solutions to the continental challenge. The best two solutions received funding and business support to be taken to the next level. AfriLabs coordinated all the hubs and innovators, as well as the incubation of 2021 winners in 2022.

VII. EQUALITY NOW:

This organization works with SIARP under stream I to achieve legal and systemic changes that address violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world, including Africa (13 countries), with a focus on ending sexual violence, harmful practices (child, early and forced marriage, FGM, etc.), discrimination in law and sex trafficking. It also hosts the SOAWR coalition, a network of 63 CSOs working to accelerate the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol. SIARP collaborated with Equality Now to implement the following activities:

- Mapping and assessment report on the status of domestication and enforcement of human rights instruments and the development and implementation of national action plans and financing on EVAWG in Africa
- Building the capacity of regional partners and CSOs for the ratification and domestication of human rights instruments related to EVAWG
- Supporting CSOs in establishing systems/protocols to support and protect the rights of women’s rights defenders and to prevent VAWG-related extrajudicial executions and prosecutions
- Supporting advocacy initiatives by regional partners including the African Union Commission and CSOs to advocate the ratification, domestication and enforcement of regional instruments, including the Maputo Protocol, by member states
- Supporting the development and roll-out of the first-ever regional action plan for Africa with an M&E framework on EVAWG
- Building the capacity of CSOs/women’s rights movements on the drafting and submission of periodic reports about the rights of women and girls in Africa.

VIII. WOMEN AND LAW IN SOUTHERN AFRICA:

SIARP created a partnership with Women and Law in Southern Africa in 2021. The CSO has strong expertise in and resources for supporting evidence-based interventions that promote and protect women's and girls' rights through legal and policy reform and changes in discriminatory socio-cultural and economic practices. The purpose of the network is to contribute to sustained well-being of women and girls through action-oriented research in the socio-legal field and advocating women's rights. SIARP partnered with Women and Law in Southern Africa to build the capacity of regional partners and influence member states to develop, review, enforce and report on laws and policies to guarantee the ability of women's rights groups, CSOs and human rights defenders to advance the human rights agenda and accountability on eliminating VAWG and harmful practices.

IX. THE AFRICAN POPULATION AND HEALTH RESEARCH CENTER (APHRC)

Is a key regional African research institution and policy-focused think tank exploring questions of population health and well-being. SIARP (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women) partnered with APHRC to support the development and roll-out of a standardized and harmonized data collection toolkit on VAWG, harmful practices and SRHR. It engaged under pillars 1, 5 and 6 in collaboration with the Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS and Health Service Organizations and Population Council Kenya by bringing together civil society and community group voices from Africa to inform policies and improve programming on HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other health issues. APHRC has rolled out capacity-building training to engage local CSOs, national statistics officers and government service providers in enhancing their knowledge and skills on EAWG research protocol preparation, data collection and analysis.

X. PARTNERS FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

(PSH) is a regional, grassroots, youth-serving, non-profit organization that provides SRHR services, including those for HIV/AIDS and GBV, and advocates the domestication of SRHR policies. SIARP is partnering with Partners for Sexual Health under pillar 6 to support the CSRRG in various advisory and advocacy engagements and convening an annual regional CSO and women's movement forum on ending VAWG, SGBV/harmful practices and SRHR to influence African Union and global policy agendas on ending VAWG, SGBV/harmful practices and SRHR activities.

XI. THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK (FEMNET)

Is a pan-African feminist network at the forefront of informing and mobilizing African women and girls to participate in and influence policies and processes that affect their lives. FEMNET supported the implementation of one activity under pillar 1 and two activities under pillar 6:

- Strengthening the capacity of regional partners to advocate to and influence member states on the development and implementation of action plans and on increased financing through domestic resource mobilization and budget commitment for EAWG and including SRHR
- Convening an annual regional CSO and women's movement forum on ending VAWG, SGBV/harmful practices and promoting SRHR to influence the African Union and global policy agenda on ending VAWG, SGBV/harmful practices and promoting SRHR in West and Central Africa
- Providing technical assistance to regional men's and boys' networks on positive social norm changes and establishing network links with relevant African Union Commission departments.

XII. CONCERTATION OF COLLECTIVES OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION (COCAFEM/GL)

Is made up of 11 collectives of women's association led by women, comprising 1,861 associations working at grassroots level in three countries. The programme partnered with COCAFEM to:

- Support the regional dialogue between the African Union, regional CSO actors and member states to promote and advocate for an enabling legal and policy environment in which CSOs can operate and advocate for women's rights
- Strengthen the capacity of networks of regional CSOs (including networks of rural women, women living in conflict-affected areas, women with disabilities and women living with HIV/AIDS) to fast-track, monitor and report on the implementation of regional African Union instruments.

XIII. PARTNERSHIP WITH Y-ACT AND AFRIYAN

To run the digital #YouthPowerHub campaign, which aims to contribute to youth-led accountability action at national and regional levels. This initiative will ensure that the Nairobi Summit (ICPD+25) commitments are fulfilled during this SDG Decade of Action, with a focus on ending harmful practices. These partners will support

the implementation of two major activities under pillar 6: activity 6.1.5, support innovative regional youth-led initiatives and amplify young people's, particularly young women's and girls' engagement in policy dialogue on EVAWG, SGBV/harmful practices and SRHR through relevant African Union directorates and high-level meetings; and activity 6.1.11, build the capacity of national women's rights groups, youth movements and CSOs on social accountability to advocate and influence national-level responses in implementing policy commitments and legal provisions. In the next implementation period, the implementing partners have received funds (through the implementing agreement through Amref Health Africa) to mobilize youth-led organizations through the following three overarching streams:

- **Capacity building:** Foster education on youth-led social accountability through strengthening the capacity of young people in Africa to engage with AfriYAN chapters in implementing countries.
- **Grassroots mobilization and social accountability:** Support more than 40 youth champions in the development and implementation of individual work plans that will involve the mapping of key decision-makers for them to engage in the country, and record progress on the Youth Power Tracker.
- **Digital policy advocacy and engagement:** Drive social accountability efforts by building and promoting an online movement by deploying frequent social

XIV. FOURTEEN LOCAL CSOS PARTNERED WITH SIARP:

In this reporting period, SIARP learned lessons from the previous implementation year and deliberated on the recommendation from the MTA on the need to engage

C. European Union Delegation

In this reporting period, SIARP strengthened its existing partnership with the European Union and engaged in various regional events.

Representatives of the European Union Delegation were actively engaged during the entire CSRRG selection up to the inauguration event. Moreover, the engagement of the European Union at both Headquarters and Delegation levels, was maintained during the second and third regional steering committee meetings - notably with a representative from the Delegation as a member of the preparatory technical committee. The European Union

with local CSOs. Hence maximum effort has been exerted to engage grassroots CSOs so that specific deliverables trickle down to community level. SIARP under the end child marriage stream engaged 14 CSOs¹¹ under a small-scale funding agreement to advocate for efforts towards ending child marriage/FGM and harmful practices to influence positive change, including in government policy documents and guidelines. These CSOs committed to participate and started implementation in December 2022, which has increased the percentage of funding that goes to local CSOs. Some of the activities include:

- Youth-led research and synthesis of evidence illustrating how child marriages pose an impediment to the advancement of children's rights
- High-level local youth-led advocacy engagements with duty-bearers on eliminating harmful practices that perpetuate child marriages
- Development of coherent and coordinated multimedia advocacy campaigns for the elimination of harmful practices
- Dialogue sessions with traditional leaders on the protection of children and adolescents and the importance of birth registration
- Collaboration with journalists to develop a feature story on SRHR, FGM and child marriage
- Holding youth forums on FGM and child marriage and other harmful practices
- Online campaigns to commemorate key calendar days on FGM and ending child marriage
- Supporting young people to develop and submit a position paper with key recommendations on FGM and child marriage and other harmful practices.

was also actively engaged in the stream-level steering committee meetings to review results and provide sound strategic recommendations for the improvement of the regional programme. The INTPA G1 Unit in Brussels and the Delegation in Addis Ababa worked with the regional programme closely throughout the MTA, mainly in facilitating learning and following up on the implementation of recommendations.

The engagement of the European Union was also significant during the advocacy initiatives of the Saleema initiative and the launch of the Global Youth Consortium.

¹¹ Parent and Child Health Initiative, Development Communications Trust, Ethiopian Muslims Relief and Development Association, Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara, Youth Advocates, International Needs Ghana, Heal Global, Isa Wali Empowerment initiative, Trailblazer initiative, Men End FGM Foundation, Restless Development, Envision, Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative, and Generation Alive.

This active engagement demonstrated a timely flow of communication that strengthened collaboration and coordination.

Specifically, the European Union participated in the training of trainers for regional partners on how to advocate to and influence member states on the ratification, domestication, implementation and reporting of human rights instruments related to EVAWG and SRHR, which took place from 17 to 19 November 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Delegation also participated in the Spotlight CSOs Knowledge Sharing Forum on 6 and 7 July 2022 in Addis Ababa and in the launch of guidelines to support partnerships between the African Union Commission, faith-based organizations and communities of traditional leaders on 3 and 4 November 2022.

Additionally, the European Union Delegation participated in the SIARP dedicated side event entitled 'Breakthrough moments under Spotlight Initiative where resources and programming are powering civil society efforts to end violence against women and girls' at the 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights in Sierra Leone. In the spirit of enhanced partnership, SIARP presented and shared experiences with the local CSOs operating in Ethiopia during the 16 days of activism against GBV on 7 and 8 December in Addis Ababa, a two-day event organized by the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia and the European Union Delegation to the African Union. The opportunity created an enabling environment to establish a network with CSOs operating in Ethiopia, and to ensure that the regional programme expands and builds on its reach and impact.



FIGURE 5 STREAM I STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING – NOVEMBER 2022 – EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION

In addition to working with the European Union Delegation to the African Union, in this reporting period SIARP benefited from two meetings with Members of the European Parliament on 21 and 22 September 2022. These meetings were successfully convened and aimed to assess the strategic engagement of the UN, European Union and African Union on international efforts to eliminate FGM.

The engagement has started bearing fruit through the development of accountability frameworks on harmful practices, the promotion of innovation challenges to end FGM; building the capacity of the Global Youth Consortium to advocate against FGM; development of a handbook on FGM for journalists; and supporting youth challenges on

innovative approaches to harmful practices and mental health. These efforts are advancing accountability and strengthening human rights through the support of the Spotlight Initiative regional programme. The campaign for the elimination of FGM is included in human rights and political dialogues with member states and regional organizations and in regular consultations with civil society and human rights organizations.

Significant progress was also noted in mobilizing regional partners in support of the African Union Commission's mandate to coordinate a continental response on ending VAWG, GBV and harmful practices.

With the European Parliament delegation's focus on FGM, members were assured of the European Union's commitment to supporting the campaign on the elimination of FGM, and ensuring that it is included in human rights and political dialogues with member states and regional organizations and in regular consultations with civil society and human rights organizations.

The European Union (HQ) also participated in the donor field mission that was organised in Senegal in the context of the Steering Committee of the Joint Programme on FGM in October 2022.



FIGURE 6 EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS WITH SIARP RUNOS

D. Cooperation with other (non-RUNO) UN agencies

SIARP collaborated with UNAIDS and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) during the continental African workshop on engaging with NHRIs in advancing SRHR and preventing harmful practices, which was held in Johannesburg on 6 and 7 December 2022. SIARP benefited from the active participation of the agencies and their substantive presentations with key populations and NHRI engagement with international human rights mechanisms, respectively. NHRI capacity building requires further partnership with UNDP, OHCHR and other UN entities to ensure that the required level of institutional support is provided and to enable the NHRIs to move forward with the substantive focus of UNFPA's methodology for monitoring SRHR and harmful practices.

SIARP supported the 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights. SIARP partnered with Purposeful and the African Federation for Sexual Health and Rights for the conference, which took place from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in Freetown, Sierra Leone, with the theme 'Accelerating the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence

in Africa'. The conference brought together more than 950 participants from 41 countries, comprising activists, governments, UN agencies, development partners and civil society from across the continent, to learn, connect and build partnerships to end VAWG.



FIGURE 7 SIERRA LEONE PRESIDENT BIO OF DURING THE 10TH AFRICA CONFERENCE ON SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS

As a principal partner and co-convenor, SIARP played a significant role in both the youth pre-conference and the main event by providing technical and financial support, including shaping the conference agenda, sponsoring the youth delegation and speakers and translating.

Representatives from Spotlight-funded youth initiatives such as the Global Youth Consortium Against FGM and the innovative initiatives to end FGM played key roles during the youth event, speaking on panels, interacting with high-level representatives from UN agencies and CSOs, and networking with other young people to build stronger youth networks to tackle violence against women and harmful practices. A call to action and youth manifesto was jointly developed at the youth pre-conference and later shared with high-level stakeholders including the vice-presidents of Liberia and Sierra Leone, government ministers, and representatives from UN agencies and the donor community.

In addition to participating in and contributing to different sessions, SIARP organized a dedicated side event entitled ‘Breakthrough moments under Spotlight Initiative where resources and programming are powering civil society efforts to end violence against women and girls’. The session objective included highlighting how SIARP has been engaging women’s rights organizations and CSOs to collectively advocate and work towards ending SGBV and harmful practices on the continent, analysing the legislative and policy environment on VAWG in Africa, shedding light on the civic space and political, legal and social environment in which CSOs, women’s rights organizations and WHRDs operate in Africa, and calls for action for increased investment in and an enabling environment for women’s movements, CSOs and women’s rights organizations and WHRDs at national and regional levels.

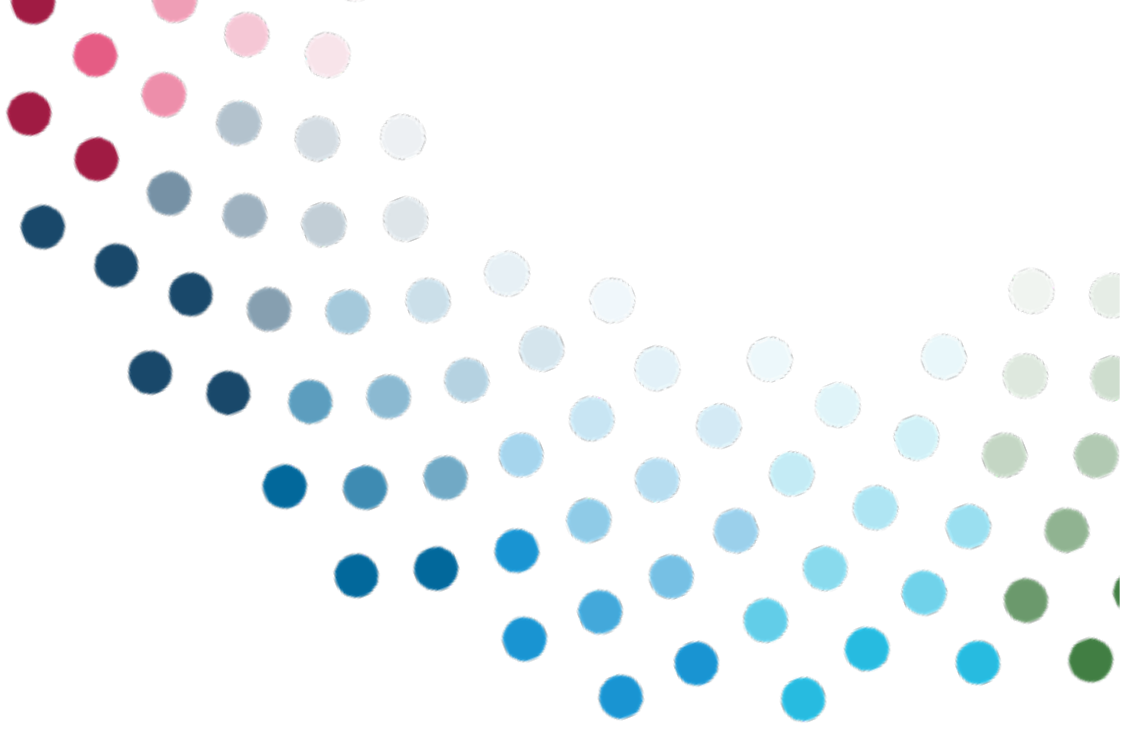
The session was opened by Ambassador Manuel Müller, Head of the European Union Delegation to Sierra Leone, who stressed that “gender equality is a core part of peace and security, economic prosperity, and sustainable development and hence the EU has made it one of its key priorities to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls”. He also affirmed the European Union’s readiness to continue supporting Africa-led initiatives and work closely with multilateral regional and bilateral partners, including civil society.

H.E. Amb. Minata Cessouma, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union Commission, expressed the African Union’s commitment to working closely with partners towards the elimination of VAWG and harmful practices. She underlined the importance of partnership and coordination among the different stakeholders and CSOs that are the drivers of change at the local level.

During the session, two key findings of studies conducted by SIARP’s CSO implementing partners (APHRC and Equality Now) were presented, focusing on the status of the civic space in Africa and the status of the implementation/enforcement of laws and policies on VAWG, followed by a panel discussion. The panel comprised representatives from RUNOs and CSOs and youth representatives, who shared insight into and experience of how the Spotlight Initiative has engaged with CSOs at both country and regional levels.

They also reflected on the opportunities and the challenges faced by CSOs, particularly WHRDs, in advocating the elimination of VAWG and the strategies recommended for development partners, UN agencies and other stakeholders to harness the potential of CSOs and women’s rights organizations to effectively advocate for women’s rights and eliminate VAWG across the continent.





Results

Capturing broader transformations across outcomes

- SIARP supported existing and new regional interventions on EAWG, ensuring sustainability through the sustained engagement of regional partners, local CSOs and the CSRRG. Analysis of the links between outcomes indicated

that, if each outcome area is well set out and implemented, it has a ripple effect on the successful implementation of another outcome, and vice versa.

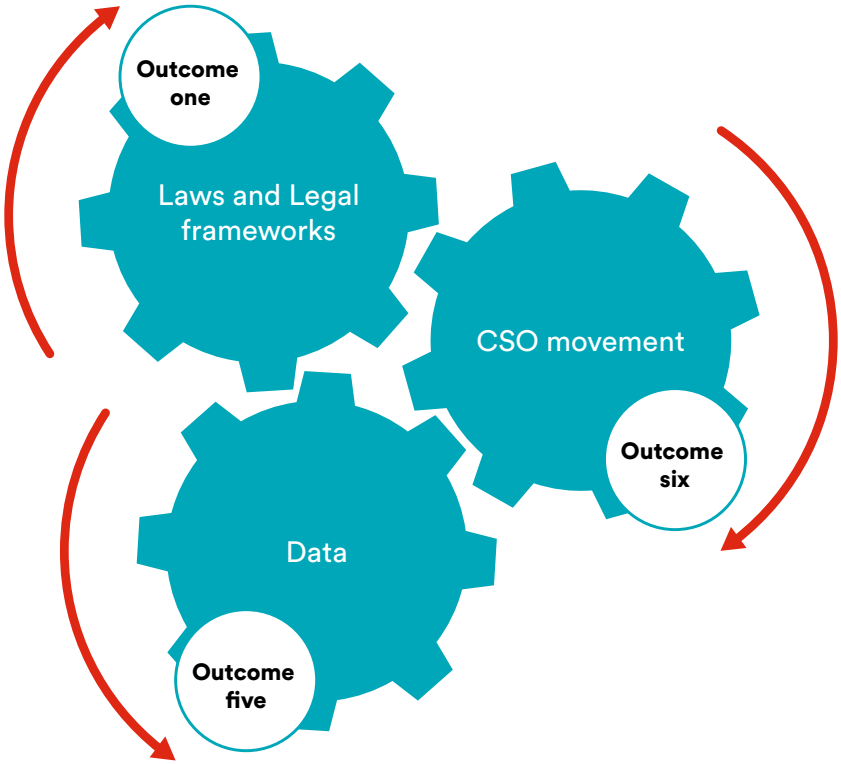


FIGURE 12 THE GEARING EFFECT OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERVENTIONS IN THE THREE OUTCOMES

The following are selected examples to show the complementarity of interventions completed in 2022 that bring comprehensive transformations across outcomes:

- The regional strategic frameworks and knowledge products developed under outcome 1 contribute to outcomes 5 and 6, as the interventions focus on the adoption and implementation of legal and policy frameworks on ending VAWG and harmful practices. For instance, the development of the first-ever evidenced-based regional action plan for Africa with an M&E framework on EAWG contributes to the other outcomes as it comprehensively addresses data from and engagement with CSOs on ending VAWG and harmful practices.
- The two important documents prepared under outcome 1 – the accountability framework and the continental FGM report – are used by activists, youth groups and human rights activists, who are supported under outcome 6.
- The media training on VAWG and harmful practices for journalists under outcome 1 also has components about the power of using available quantitative and qualitative data to generate convincing information and advocacy to improve the lives of women and girls.
- The various innovations promoted under outcome 6 to end FGM and child marriage have the potential to inform feasible national programmes and strategies.
- The initiative under pillar 1 to strengthen the capacity of regional partners and CSOs to influence member states on drafting and reviewing laws and policies related to women’s rights groups contributes to outcome 6, as it

enables the CSO movement and groups to influence and advance gender equality and women’s empowerment.

- The increased collaboration with African Union Commission Women, Gender and Youth Directorate and among RUNOs under pillar 1 resulted in better coordination and understanding of the Spotlight programme among regional partners and CSOs. This enhanced collaboration resulted in establishing links between the three outcome areas to closely work with CSOs/implementing partners in strengthening the ownership and sustainability of Spotlight’s impact beyond the programme implementation period.
- Working in line with UN Reform has helped to achieve results beyond specific outcomes. For example, the technical expertise across RUNOs leveraged in pillars 1, 5 and 6 has been used in the implementation of the programme.
- Experiences also showed that data are important to governments because understanding the magnitude of VAWG and harmful practice problem areas is vital for developing and strengthening existing laws and programmes. Data and research reports generated under outcome 5 have also been used by the youth groups and CSOs financed under outcome 6 to design community-level programmes and interventions.
- The pre-consultations and support for young people and religious leaders to come up with feasible recommendations for implementing the Kinshasa Declaration and positive masculinity contribute to outcomes by reinforcing the fact that African Union and member states will be accountable for the regional instruments adopted.

Reporting on the implementation of participatory monitoring, evaluation and reporting, including an update on MTA recommendations (P-MER)

In this reporting period, SIARP applied participatory M&E principles in the following major areas.

I. STRENGTHENING REGULAR SIARP MONITORING

The SIARP regional M&E plan was developed by the programme coordination unit and well received and validated by all RUNOs. The M&E plan outlines the theory of change of the regional programme, the result indicator matrix, the activity plan, and various M&E methods. The plan was developed along with relevant data collection tools. The system also instituted regular monitoring mechanisms including quarterly reporting, annual planning and review convening, holding regular monthly coordination meetings, and monthly and quarterly activity tracking. Accordingly, quarterly reports of the regional programme have been documented and shared internally. Stream-level and joint regional-level annual

reviews and planning were also conducted with all RUNOs and implementing partners to review the implementation status of the programme and to enhance the synergy of the 2022 interventions through careful and coordinated planning sessions. RUNOs did get the chance to strategize to implement some common interventions jointly to reduce any duplication of effort and to enhance the reach of the intervention (e.g. the CSO experience sharing forum).

II. ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF THE CSRRG IN M&E

Under the general objective of engaging the CSRRG in the regional M&E system, SIARP held a consultation meeting with CSRRG members in May 2022 to obtain systematic feedback on and input into the 2021 annual report. The meeting enabled the CSRRG to have an overall on the regional programme 2021 annual report, including how

and when it is developed and the participatory multilayer review mechanism it puts in place. During the consultation, members of the CSRRG further discussed the CSO capacity challenge presented in the annual report and took into account their role in engaging capable CSOs at regional and grassroots levels in 2022. Furthermore, the group was also familiarized with the global CSO scorecard tools, which inspired them to develop a similar scorecard for SIARP, which is to be finalized and shared at the beginning of 2023.

III. SIARPCSTREAMI ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING

The stream I joint annual review meeting was held virtually on 8 June 2022. Stream I implementers (31 participants) from all four RUNOs, CSOs/implementing partners, the CSRRG, the African Union Commission and the PCU attended to review annual progress and discuss promising practices, challenge and lessons. Some of the lessons learned included coordination platforms among RUNOs and implementation partners, which continue to create synergy, expert secondment the African Union Commission has facilitated

an improved, youth engagement through) youth reference group and youth innovation challenge) is making at the centre of the programme, further engagement and capacity building to CSO is encouraged to promote long-lasting change. It is highlighted that, even though the implementation progress is encouraging, further acceleration is needed.

IV. SIARP JOINT REVIEW AND PLANNING WORKSHOP

The SIARP PCU, with the support of the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO) and the Spotlight Initiative Uganda country programme, conducted a four-day joint review and planning workshop in Entebbe, Uganda, from 14 to 17 June 2022. The workshop brought together 53 participants from the Spotlight Initiative country programme, the African Union Commission, implementing partners, RUNOs, the European Union, the PCU, the CSRRG and selected rights holders.



FIGURE 8 SIARP JOINT REGIONAL REVIEW AND PLANNING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

The joint review and planning workshop applied the participatory M&E (PME) method with the aim of creating and strengthening synergies across the Africa Spotlight Initiative programme while capitalizing on results and good practices across the continent. Specific pillar-level results and promising practices and challenges of the regional and country programmes were presented. Findings from three regional assessments were also shared to inform the regional stakeholders on the current state of law enforcement, the status of human rights defenders and the civic space. The workshop provided a platform for exchanging concepts on interlinkages between SIARP outcomes; enhancing

synergy among RUNOs and implementing partners; the coordination mechanisms between the regional and country programmes; challenges in establishing civil society regional reference groups; and accelerating SIARP delivery and sustainability. Using the inputs in the workshop, an additional regional document on coordination and technical coherence and an acceleration plan was developed. The CSO, the CSRRG and rights holders (from Global Youth Consortium and InnoHack winners) provided input and perspectives throughout the sessions. See [here](#) for the full report of the SIARP joint review and planning workshop.

V. SIARP MID-TERM ASSESSMENT

As part of the Spotlight Initiative's results-oriented monitoring, an MTA of SIARP was conducted to obtain a snapshot of the implementation status of activities. It will serve as a tool for project management by informing stakeholders about the performance of the interventions, but it will also contribute with lessons learned to inform further programming, design and implementation of interventions and to test the initiative's regional theories of change.

The MTA used primary and secondary data collection methods, including a desk review of programme documents, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and an online survey. With the support of the programme coordination unit, a desk review (47 documents) and key informant interviews (48 interviews) with internal stakeholders including beneficiaries/agents of change were conducted. Additional data were collected from 29 people through online surveys. A standard set of monitoring questions was developed for the key informant interviews and online survey to structure the analysis of documentation and empirical data.

Key findings and working recommendations

Key recommendations include:



Establish stronger synergy and connection between interventions, continue facilitating coordination meetings of all implementation partners, and reinforce the most promising practices.



Use the Africa regional programme as a holistic programme and incorporate standardized indicators that are relevant to the regional perspective.



Align regional indicators and reporting formats with the global reporting/SMART system.



Develop and implement a sustainability plan.

Additional effort to partner and engage with grass root level CSOs,

The MTA findings highlight 13 programme areas assessed, 10 of which are rated good (green state) and three of which are rated as having problems (orange). These include the need to develop an overarching regional theory of change across the different streams of work so that the programme is understood as one programme rather than being fragmented, addresses human resource shortages, and enhances the capacity of implementing partners to accelerate programme delivery. The report showed that:

- The programme continues to be delivered as one through an integrated approach aimed at sustaining efforts that

address ending VAWG and harmful practices. This was also reflected in the partnership with the African Union Commission.

- Key programme areas that require addressing include the need to comprehensively orient all implementation partners on SIARP and UN implementation modalities, addressing staff's high workload and the need for clarity on coherence, which is aimed at strengthening synergy.
- There is a disconnect between the quantitative annual report and the quantitative results indicators and a challenge for the global result reporting system (SMART database system) is noted, which also needs to be addressed.

The regional programme integrates the MTA findings and recommendations into annual plans to improve specific areas. Accordingly a cascading tool was developed to disseminate time-bound recommendations to responsible bodies. Hence the implementation of the MTA recommendations is in progress, with some emerging developments, including the use of a standard coordination meeting calendar and minutes, the revision and alignment of regional results indicators, strengthening of coordinated meetings with common implementing patterns, conducting monthly focused discussions per outcome/pillar, improved engagement of the CSRRG in the planning and implementation, supporting CSOs to liaise with the African Union, African Union human rights organizations and RECs, and monitoring of the regional programme and specialized efforts to partner with local/grassroots CSOs, worth mentioning. The EU Delegation will closely follow up on the list of prioritized recommendations and their implementation. Details of the achievements are in the relevant sections of the report.

VI. SIARP SHARED ITS PARTICIPATORY M&E EXPERIENCE AT THE GLOBAL LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

SIARP actively participated in one of the Global Learning Symposium participatory M&E sessions where colleagues shared lessons on regional results tracking. Fourteen M&E



FIGURE 9 SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN #WithHer

staff from regional programmes (Pacific and Caribbean) and country programmes took part in the discussion, where SIARP representatives used the platform to discuss how regional programmes are implementing participatory M&E, including sharing the challenge of results tracking. A strength was that SIARP shared experiences of how all pillar leads and all RUNOs were engaged in results reporting. The discussion also raised some of the challenges of tracking regional results in the available global reporting system. SIARP used this opportunity to maintain communication with the regional focal points to share experiences and address common challenges. The aspect of **contribution vs attribution** in relation to the level of Spotlight Initiative investment against the stated outcome of the programme,

outcome harvesting methodology, theory of change monitoring, and experiences of the joint global programme to end FGM and child marriage was discussed, facilitating meaningful conversation among participants and replicating some experiences in Spotlight Initiative programmes.

The aspect of contribution vs attribution in relation to the level of Spotlight Initiative investment against the stated outcome of the programme, outcome harvesting methodology, theory of change monitoring, and experiences of the joint global programme to end FGM and child marriage was discussed, facilitating meaningful conversation among participants and replicating some experiences in Spotlight Initiative programmes.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Effectiveness	●	●	●	●	●	●
	7	8	9			
Relevance	●	●	●			
	10	11	12			
Efficiency	●	●	●			
	13					
Sustainability	●					

Scoring overview ● blue (good) ● orange (problems) ● red (serious deficiencies)

FIGURE 10 SIARP MTA GRADING SUMMARY



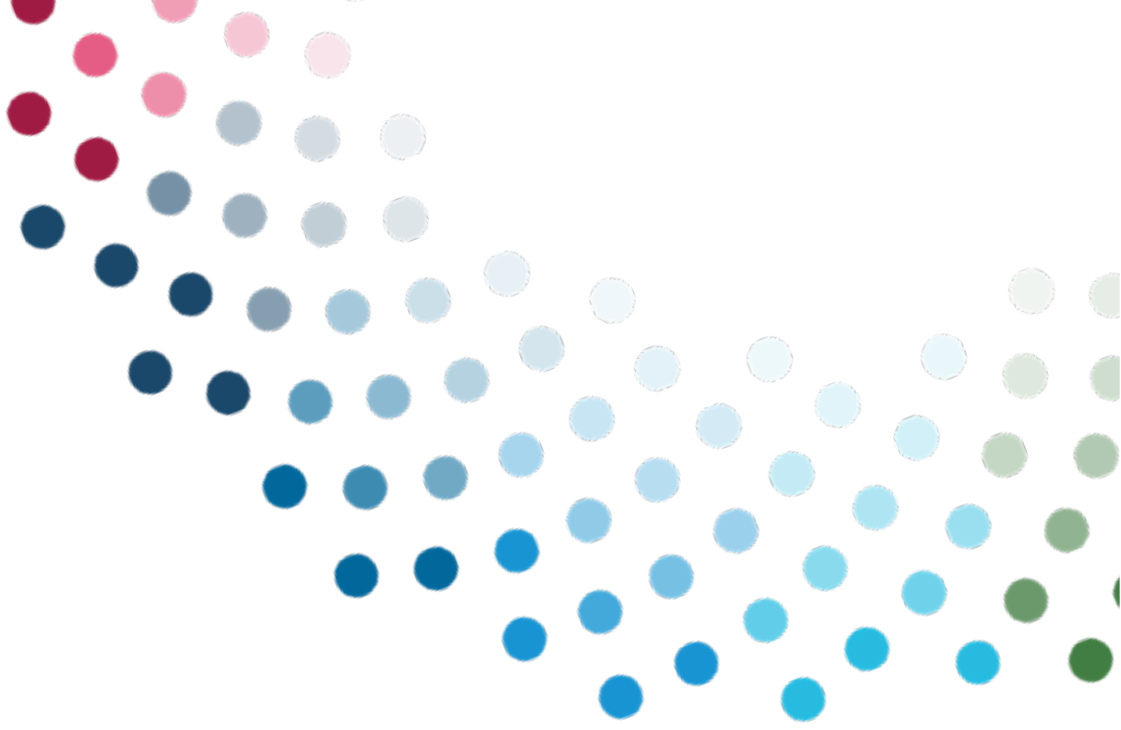
Violence against women and girls remains as one of the critical impediments to the realization of women's fundamental rights.



*Prudence Nonklululeko
Ngwenya Ag.*

*Director, Women, Gender
and Youth Directorate African
Union Commission*





Capturing change at outcome level

Outcome 1: Legal and policy framework

Output 1.1:

National and regional partners have strengthened evidence-based knowledge and capacity to assess gaps, draft new and/or strengthen existing legislation and policies and enforce existing legislation on ending SGBV, FGM and child marriage, in line with international human rights standards and treaty bodies' recommendations

Under stream I, SIARP strengthened the capacity of national and regional governments, regional CSOs and other partners to assess gaps, draft new and strengthen existing legislation and policies, and enforce existing legislation on ending SGBV, FGM and child marriage, in line with international human rights standards. To achieve this, in 2022 the regional programme under stream I supported and collaborated with the African Union Commission, regional CSOs and government partners to implement the following key interventions.

Regional evidence-based mapping and assessment report on the status of domestication and enforcement of human rights instruments informs capacity-building initiatives

A regional evidence-based mapping and assessment report on the status of domestication and enforcement of human rights instruments and the development and implementation of national action plans and financing on EAWG in Africa was developed at the end of 2021. The study provides a broad overview of the domestication of global and regional human rights commitments on EAWG in all 55 African

Union member states and a deep-dive analysis of 18 member states. It has contributed to establishing a baseline for regional programmes related to EAWG. Consequently, the study will inform policy decisions at both regional and national levels and influence member states to ratify, domesticate and implement human rights instruments and increase funding for EAWG. The report was validated with 78 (61 female and 17 male) representatives from the African Union Commission, RECs, member states, CSOs and RUNOs. The report is scheduled to be launched in the first quarter of 2023.

SIARP enhanced the capacity of RECs, regional parliamentarians and national ministries on the ratification, domestication and implementation of human rights instruments related to EAWG and SRHR

Two regional training of trainers sessions were conducted, for regional partners from 17 to 19 November 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and for regional CSOs from 9 to 11 November 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya, on how to advocate to and influence member states on the ratification, domestication,

implementation and reporting of human rights instruments related to EAWG and SRHR. A total of 67 (56 female and 11 male) regional partners, national stakeholders and CSOs from the African Union Commission, RECs of ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and EAC, regional parliamentarians and representatives from national ministries in charge of gender and women's affairs were trained. The training used the standard facilitators' training manual on the ratification and domestication of human rights instruments related to EAWG that was technically and financially developed by SIARP. The manual is developed based on the findings and recommendations of the evidence mapping and assessment report, and it serves as a resource guide and training tool to enhance the capacity of regional partners and CSOs to engage and influence member states in ratifying,

domesticating and enforcing human rights instruments. The manual was validated through an in-person validation workshop with 38 (28 female and 10 male) regional partners, member states and CSOs on 19 and 20 July 2022 in Addis Ababa.

The training fostered cross-learning among regional partners, member states and CSOs on best practice in the ratification, domestication and implementation of international and regional human rights instruments on EAWG. Trainees developed action plans to identify and articulate detailed and achievable commitments. The action plans will serve as a road map for the regional partners and CSOs on how to strategically encourage member states to ratify, domesticate, implement and report on EAWG.



FIGURE 11 NATIONAL MINISTRIES ON RATIFICATION: DOMESTICATION TRAINING

SIARP partnered with African parliamentarians to advocate to and encourage member states in the development and implementation of regional and national action plans and in increased financing through domestic resource mobilization and budget commitment for the elimination of VAWG and including promoting SRHR

SIARP in collaboration with UNFPA, Equality Now and the SADC Parliamentary Forum conducted a scoping assessment to track the implementation of the **SADC model law on ending child marriage** in the region. The

model law was adopted by the Plenary Assembly of the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) on 3 June 2016. The model law constitutes a milestone in the efforts to end child marriage in southern Africa. The law provides guidance to parliamentarians, ministries of justice, policymakers and other stakeholders in SADC member states as they develop effective national laws to end child marriage and address inconsistencies in their current legal frameworks.

The **scoping assessment** showed that capacity-building interventions are required to ensure the domestication

and implementation of model laws. In addition, tracking the status of implementation is as important as developing the model law as, otherwise, the means will be interpreted as the end. In this case, the model laws will be celebrated as a significant achievement without additional efforts to ensure that endorsements at country level are presented to SADC-PF and the Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee. In addition, to ensure its wider dissemination, the document is being edited and translated into French and Portuguese. The recommendations of the assessment were fully acknowledged by the stakeholders and will be incorporated into the work plan of the SADC-PF and SIARP partners (Equality Now).

The engagement with SADC was further strengthened through working standing committees that held a virtual public hearing from 25 to 28 November 2022 under the theme ‘Consolidating democracy by bringing parliament to the people’. SIARP used the opportunity in one of the sessions of this public hearing to present to the Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee on the current developments with regard to the SADC model law on child marriage and GBV and how to support the domestication of these model laws.

SIARP provided technical support for the Asian and African parliamentarians’ consultation and used the platform to advocate the SADC model law and engage over 40 parliamentarians from Africa and Asia. The consultation also helped to discuss progress towards ICPD+25 commitments and agreed the way forward for parliamentarians in enhancing their support for accelerating progress towards ICDP+25 commitments. SIARP will continue working with the joint programme to sustain the implementation of the laws, including the SADC model law, to accelerate progress towards ending harmful practices in the region. During this very interactive consultation, parliamentarians expressed their continued dedication to playing their part in realizing the ICPD+25 commitments and ending harmful practices. The consultation culminated in 10 actions/major outcomes that recognize ending child marriage as one priority.

Based on the recommendations above, SIARP provided technical assistance to the Africa Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development and convened a high-level webinar on the role of parliamentarians in tracking progress towards the ICPD+25 commitments in East and Southern Africa on 22 September 2022. Accordingly, in this first webinar, progress on the commitments to ending child marriage in the region was discussed. The parliamentarians from Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi presented the efforts they had made in strengthening multi-sectoral responses and the pathways that need to be delivered. The webinar was attended by 88 online participants; 31 were members of parliaments,

while others were from national standing committees and development partners.

SIARP promoted gender-transformative approaches for improved programming and advocacy

SIARP collaborated with Girls Not Brides to cascade the global gender-transformative accelerator tool for CSO coalition members in Nigeria and Mozambique. Two consecutive workshops were conducted transformative programming in these two countries. The first capacity-building workshop allowed CSO coalition members to discuss current approaches and reflect on the steps needed to move individually and jointly towards more transformative approaches to programming and advocacy. This was followed by another workshop to develop the coalition’s road map and action plans. By the end of 2022, the implementation of pilot grants had started in Nigeria, and the accelerator tool had been adapted to better reflect on CSO work and needs. During Girls Not Brides’ fifth global learning series webinar on 24 November 2022, coalition members shared their experiences of the gender-transformative accelerator journey in terms of the process and some of the shifts that they were seeing. This webinar reached over 110 participants on the day and over 400 registrants and participants through the sharing of workshop [resources](#). The approach helped members to highlight the link between child marriage and gender inequality and the importance of addressing the root causes of child marriage and achieving positive outcomes at scale for girls in all their diversity. The gender-transformative accelerator country report for Nigeria and the CSO facilitation guide are scheduled to be published in Q1 of 2023.

CASE STUDY

Empowering Gender-Transformative Programming in Nigeria: A Success Story

In July 2022, a transformative gender assessment workshop took place in Nigeria, marking a significant milestone in strengthening gender-transformative programming in the country. The workshop brought together 27 technical staff members from UNICEF, government agencies, and civil society organizations, representing a diverse coalition of 14 key organizations. The primary objective of the workshop was to reactivate the coalition's activities and enhance their programming capacity. Through a collaborative and participatory approach, the workshop set the stage for a series of transformative actions that would drive positive change in Nigerian society.

Building Government Commitment: Recognizing the importance of government support, participants devised a strategic plan to leverage existing platforms for engagement. They identified the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development's technical working groups as an opportunity to seek advice and commitment from the government. By actively engaging with these groups, the coalition aimed to garner support and ensure the integration of gender-transformative initiatives into national policies and programs. This collaborative approach between the coalition and government stakeholders fostered a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for achieving transformative outcomes.

Focus Areas for Change:

During the workshop, gender advocates and key stakeholders collectively identified three priority areas for action in the next implementation period. These areas were selected based on their potential to drive meaningful, transformative and sustainable change:

- **Girls' Skills, Agency, and Empowerment:** Recognizing the significance of empowering girls, the coalition emphasized the need to cultivate their skills, agency, and empowerment. To achieve this, participants prioritized initiatives such as positive parenting, aiming to instill positive gender norms from an early age. By expanding expectations for girls' futures, they sought to create an environment that fosters their growth and development.
- **Addressing Masculinities and Engaging Men and Boys:** Understanding that gender equality requires the active involvement of all genders, the coalition sought to address toxic masculinities and engage men and boys as allies in the process. Reinforcing positive masculinities at all levels of the socio-ecological model became a critical focus area. This approach aimed to transform gender norms and behaviors, promoting healthier and more equitable relationships.
- **Community Mobilization and Enabling Environment:** Recognizing the influence of communities, the coalition identified community mobilization as an essential component of gender-transformative programming. They aimed to create an enabling environment by engaging community members in conversations about gender equality, sexuality education, and youth-friendly health services. By fostering dialogue and awareness, the coalition sought to break down barriers and promote a supportive social fabric.

Progress and Implementation:

Following the workshop, the coalition wasted no time in translating their vision into action. Implementation of the prioritized initiatives commenced promptly, with each focus area assigned dedicated working groups. These groups began developing comprehensive strategies, action plans, and innovative approaches tailored to the Nigerian context. Collaborative partnerships were forged with community leaders, schools, healthcare providers, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the successful execution of gender-transformative programs.

Status Report and Future Outlook:

To track progress and maintain transparency, the coalition committed to publishing a status report in 2023. This report will provide a comprehensive overview of the initiatives implemented, outcomes achieved, challenges faced, and lessons learned. By sharing this information, the coalition aims to inspire further engagement and foster a culture of accountability among stakeholders. The status report will serve as a guide for refining strategies, scaling up successful interventions, and advocating for sustainable funding and support.

Social and behaviour change toolkit developed

SIARP used findings from community engagement activities and provided support to six country offices (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Niger and Nigeria) to develop a contextualized social behaviour change toolkit for community engagement by government and CSO implementers/facilitators on child marriage and FGM through human-centred methodologies and in fragile and humanitarian contexts. The social behaviour change framework will support country offices in conducting rapid assessments with communities that capture key drivers, engaging actively with communities and developing social behaviour change solutions to FGM and child marriage. The tools will inform social behaviour change programming that goes beyond awareness raising and brings communities into the centre. It will be flexible and usable in a range of contexts relevant to the West and Central Africa region. An initial report including country profiles has been developed and finalized. Key implementing partners from each country have been identified to discuss and contextualize the prototype of the toolkit in Q1 of 2023. The toolkit will be tested by implementing partners with the support of the country offices.

African Union accountability framework on harmful practices finalized and endorsed by African Union specialized technical committee

SIARP supported the African Union's efforts to support policy and legislation reforms through the adaptation of policy instruments by the specialized technical committees as a push factor for member state-level implementation. The Fourth Ordinary Session of the African Union Strategic Committee on Social Development Labour and Development (STC-SDLE-4) was held from 4 to 8 April 2022, and the HHS Commissioner presented key strategies on ending harmful practices at the experts' meeting. The framework was endorsed for adoption at the ministerial meeting and the content of the strategies commended. The accountability framework on harmful practices became official after the decision taken during the Executive Council meeting in Lusaka in July. The accountability framework can be found [here](#) in five languages.

To further strengthen the oversight and assessment by African Union human rights organizations of state party reports, the organizations convened a summit on the African Union accountability framework from 3 to 5 December 2022 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Twenty-nine participants (8 men and 21 women) from commissioners, member states, senior officers, experts from the African Union, members of the UN and international organizations attended the roll-out event. The meeting aimed to (1) conduct a detailed overview and orient the accountability framework, (2) develop working tools, including an operational plan and

key questions, and (3) conduct a stakeholder dialogue on the role of African Union human rights organizations in strengthening state parties' accountability.

The representatives from the African Union human rights organizations showed a commitment to adopting the accountability framework, to encouraging member states to report as per the framework, to reviewing reports, and to supplementing them with shadow reports. The operational plan will be finalized with the tools to be rolled out to member states in 2023.



FIGURE 12 AFRICAN UNION ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK ON THE ELIMINATION OF HARMFUL PRACTICES

Progress towards addressing FGM and implementing the plan of action of the African Union initiative on the elimination of FGM documented and disseminated

Under the title 'Getting to Zero Female Genital Mutilation in Africa: Strengthening Human Rights, Accelerating Efforts and Galvanizing Accountability', the FGM continental report was finalized and launched on 11 October 2022 with a virtual event attended by 471 people. A total of 5,000 impressions were recorded in response to the post made on the Saleema initiative official Twitter account. The report analysis and discussions were underpinned by human rights. It seeks to highlight good practices on the ground, while emphasizing the need for accountability at all levels if Africa is to get to zero FGM within a generation. The report and the policy brief can be found [here](#). The aim of the African Union report on FGM on the continent is to provide a recent historical account, the scope of the harmful practice, an examination of its impact on the lives of young girls and women, a policy analysis and recommendations. After the launch, the report was distributed to the African Union Organs, CSOs, NHRIs and other stakeholders working on FGM, providing the latest information on FGM in the continent.



FIGURE 13 GETTING TO ZERO FGM IN AFRICA: VIRTUAL REPORT LAUNCH POSTER

SIARP promoted south-to-south knowledge exchange on good practices regarding cross-border FGM

A costed regional action plan to end cross-border FGM was developed in November 2021 by representatives from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda. As a follow-up, countries have made considerable progress in coordinating and collaborating in the implementation of the action plan.

To maintain the momentum, in September 2022 SIARP organized a webinar on cross-regional knowledge to bring together UNFPA and UNICEF regional and country offices across the region, CSOs and actors to share experiences of addressing cross-border FGM. During the exchange, the collaboration of various actors served as a ‘force multiplier’ that engages governments to prioritize and commit adequate financial resources to eliminate FGM and to enhance inter-country collaboration at regional level. The discussion increased knowledge of the extent to which and how cross-border FGM impacts the gains made to end FGM. Over 60 participants attended the webinar, including people from women’s rights organizations, CSOs and youth organizations. At the end of the webinar, the following key recommendations were made:

- It is important to have a common tool, such as a regional law that criminalizes FGM, and harmonize sanctions so that the fight is unanimous and consistent, and mandates member states to coordinate and allocate adequate resources to programmes to eliminate FGM. In Africa, only Guinea-Bissau, Kenya and Uganda have specific

provisions for cross-border FGM in their national laws, which provide for extraterritorial application of the law and allow prosecution even when FGM takes place across the border.

- Additionally, countries that do not have a specific legal prohibition against FGM (such as Somalia in East Africa, and Mali, Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa) should be the next countries to be targeted in addressing cross-border FGM.
- Strong laws should be accompanied by the political will to address FGM and need to be effectively implemented using a multi-sectoral approach to have an impact on the practice.
- The costed regional action plan should be duplicated in other regions and states to ensure that they invest and sustain the amounts required by the plan.
- There is a need to implement coordinated and collaborative programmes in neighbouring countries, including surveillance and monitoring systems and the engagement of state and non-state actors, for example religious and traditional leaders and young people.
- There is a need to strengthen law enforcement by and collaboration between security and judicial actors in prosecution.
- Collaboration among CSOs working in different countries in combining efforts to address FGM, and particularly cross-border FGM, needs to be increased.

The platform also provided a lesson that community engagement on issues that affect communities is important in bringing positive change and helping them become assertive by making informed decisions. It is also noted that participatory approaches are the best ways to address FGM when working with communities, especially with influential leaders. Engaging young people is equally important to understand the damage caused by FGM and lack of access to information on SRHR.

The capacity of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Welfare of the Child to oversee the implementation of relevant African Union instruments is strengthened

SIARP provided technical and financial support to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) to hold member states accountable on commitments to eliminate FGM, including implementing legislation, allocating resources, and providing care and services, education and awareness. Thirty-two (10 men and 22 women) representatives from ACERWC, African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHRP), African Union Commission, UNFPA and UNICEF, and CSOs and University of Pretoria academics participated in the

joint high-level¹² discussion, mainly to review and validate the general comments. The articles relating to FGM in the Maputo Protocol and the African Children's Charter were also discussed in detail in the context of the FGM Joint General Comment and, finally, the committee agreed to:

- Provide comprehensive interpretations of the obligations of the African Union member states by defining the legislative, administrative, institutional and other appropriate measures that should be adopted to prevent and eliminate FGM in Africa
- Define measures that should be taken to prevent FGM and ensure that it is promptly and impartially investigated and

that effective remedies are provided to girls and women who have been harmed

- Commit to informing relevant stakeholders of the findings related to the status of FGM on the continent and providing recommendations on what should be done to reduce the prevalence and accelerate the elimination of FGM in Africa.

The Joint General Comment will be finalized and adopted at the upcoming session in April 2023 and will be disseminated to member states through regular sessions of the African Union.



FIGURE 14 REVIEW OF THE JOINT GENERAL COMMENT ON FGM WITH ACERWC

FGM agenda elevated during regional and international high-level platforms

SIARP has utilized all relevant high-level events to cascade and reposition FGM agendas in Africa, such as in the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, Commission on the Status of Women, and UN General Assembly and European Union forums.

SIARP represented by Saleema Youth Victorious Ambassadors facilitated the annual high-level accountability platform on harmful practices. The main objectives of the platform were to discuss the main challenges faced and exchange information on best practices. Stakeholders who took part in the discussion included the African Union (Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, the Office of the Youth Envoy and the African Union Commission Youth Division), member states, ACHPR

and ACERWC, UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM, European Union, African Governance Architecture and representatives from civil society.

Furthermore, as part of marking the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, SIARP collaborated with the UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM and launched the Global Youth Consortium against FGM (see the news here [Global Youth Consortium launched](#)). The ceremony was opened by the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Programmes Ms Diene Keita and was attended by the ambassadors of Portugal, the European Union, the United Kingdom and Norway, key donors to the joint programme. The purpose of this youth consortium is to empower young people to act against FGM in their communities. The vision of the Global Youth Consortium is ‘Youth Leading a World Free of FGM by 2030’.

¹² Commissioners from the African Union actively participated in and moderated all the sessions: Hon. Maria Teresa, Hon. Lucy Manuela, Ms Lucy Asuagbor, Hon. Janet Ramatoulie Sallah Nije and Hon. Hermine Kembo.



FIGURE 15 YOUTH CONSORTIUM AGAINST FGM LAUNCH: VIRTUAL POSTER



Membership of the consortium has expanded since its establishment in 2021. Current membership is over **1,425** (from 1,000 in 2021) **young people** aged 17–40 from **51 countries**.

There are currently three WhatsApp groups that are used to coordinate the activities of the consortium. The group also has Facebook and Twitter accounts to reach and influence young people, policymakers, practitioners, etc. See the [Global Youth Consortium](#) Twitter page. Details of the consortium are provided in subsequent sections of this report.

Investing in strategic partnerships and grassroots actors to end FGM

This additional engagement was conducted under the framework of the commemoration of 6 February, International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, and aimed to profile the role of strategic partnerships, including those with grassroots actors, in contributing to effectively tackling FGM at a local level. It also sought to share sustainable partnerships for ending FGM by showcasing the work of the implementing partners (Global Media Campaign, Youth Hub Africa, AIDOS, Equality Now, FEMNET, Forward UK, Sonke Gender Justice).

The virtual meeting resulted in the following:

- It was decided to have more engagement with stakeholders, including CSOs, media, young people and survivors of FGM, to hold everyone accountable for accelerating the elimination of FGM across Africa.
- All of the CSOs participating in the meeting discussed mobilizing more commitments to and investment in grassroots organizations and guaranteeing their joint participation in the advocacy to end FGM.

- The CSOs also decided to have more training and information-sharing initiatives, including innovation, best practices and ideas, with partners and key stakeholders.

Accordingly, some of the results mentioned above paved the way for major interventions, including the media training on FGM for journalists and the resulting articles they wrote contributing to advocacy and awareness raising. The second important outcome was related to inputs to the meeting of the donor working group on elimination of FGM by the CSOs that participated.

Side event on the margins of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

A virtual side event on the margins of the eighth Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development took place on 25 February under the title ‘Strengthening Regional Partnerships towards Achievement of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda Commitments on Eliminating Gender Based Violence and Harmful Practices’.

The dialogue between the participants contributed to Africa’s report on achieving SDG 5 within the context of Agenda 2063. The discussions revolved around SIARP’s work and the potential and opportunities for continent-wide results. The SIARP programme coordinator presented the work of the RUNOs and the achievements so far.

Additionally, members from regional offices shared two examples of good practice: the establishment of the Global Youth Consortium against FGM and lessons learned from the FGM innovation challenge. The Kenya Anti FGM Board and African Union Goodwill Ambassador on Child Marriages reflected on the key challenges and experiences from country-level actions to achieve Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 commitments on the elimination of GBV and harmful practices.

The Global Youth Consortium against FGM amplifies work against FGM and VAWG at both high-level and grassroots community levels

The Global Youth Consortium, which was established with support from SIARP, engaged in a series of high-level and community advocacy initiatives. The consortium played an active role in the launch of the Movement for Good to End FGM in Nigeria, the African Union Humanitarian and Pledging Conference in Kenya, the regional launch of the

UNFPA State of the World Population Report in South Africa, the 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights, and the second African Union Conference on Positive Masculinity. Furthermore, consortium members engaged in several specialized technical committee and met several stakeholders in different countries such as the Minister of Public Service, Gender and Affirmative Action in Kenya, the national police, the UNFPA country representative, UNFPA youth panel executives and CSOs.



FIGURE 16 MEMBERS OF THE GLOBAL YOUTH CONSORTIUM AGAINST FGM DURING A FIELD VISIT

The Global Youth Consortium Kenya chapter worked with the UNFPA Kenya Country Office to mark the 16 days of activism in various sensitization workshops and community engagement sessions on the harm caused by FGM, GBV and SRHR, reaching a total of 205 people. The participants included community members, religious leaders and local leaders, who were sensitized using innovative engagements such as screen and drama plays and brainstorming sessions. During the discussion, the participating women shared some of the successes and challenges faced in addressing FGM and GBV. The women pointed out that the lack of clear referral pathways for reporting FGM cases is one of the major challenges. It is also indicated that communities' continued reluctance to adopt and embrace change continues to put girls at risk of FGM. At the end, declarations were made by the community denouncing the practice of FGM.

The consortium further complemented the events to mark the activism days with feasible action-oriented initiatives. The

youth innovator winners of the UNFPA InnoHack Challenge (2021) together with the consortium members in Uganda carried out field and community engagement in four districts (Amudat, Nakapiripirit, Kween, Bukwo) affected by FGM. The purpose of the engagement was to carry out a feasibility study on whether the proposed innovation solution using technology to end FGM would be successful in these communities. The consortium members also used this opportunity to conduct community sensitization and identified youth champions to play a key role in ending FGM in their communities. With this exercise a total of 318 community members were reached (115 women, 77 girls and 126 men).

SIARP also supported the West and Central Africa Region chapter of the consortium in launching a call for applications for innovative activities as part of the 16 days of activism. A total of 226 applications were received from 23 countries, and 17¹³ winners were selected to implement youth-led activities in their communities.

¹³ The winning activities were from Nigeria, The Gambia, Mali, Guinea, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Senegal and Chad in the West and Central Africa region; Kenya and Uganda in the East and Southern Africa region; and Somalia in the Arab States region.

SIARP supported regional and national human rights institutions in disseminating and advocating full implementation of resolutions and recommendations of international and regional human rights instruments¹⁴ on FGM

SIARP provided technical and financial support for the continental workshop ‘Engaging with National Human Rights Institutions in Advancing SRHR and Preventing Harmful Practices’, which was held in Johannesburg on 6 and 7 December 2022. This high-level event brought together 48 representatives (11 men and 37 women) from UNFPA and NHRIs from 10¹⁵ countries.

NHRIs’ unique position allows them to collaborate with civil society, including young women-led organizations, on the one hand, and with the government on the other, which makes them a particularly well-placed partner. In turn, NHRIs look for technical and financial support to strengthen their engagement in SRHR, including harmful practices, as part of their monitoring role. Non-Spotlight Initiative partners, including UNAIDS and OHCHR, provided their experiences of reaching out to and working with key populations and NHRI engagement with international human rights mechanisms.

share knowledge on good practice in employing a human rights-based approach to addressing SRHR, GBV and harmful practices. While focused on the African context, presentations were included from other regions (Indonesia and Georgia) to increase the diversity of the perspective. One of the key takeaways from this engagement is to situate this collaboration within the Maputo Protocol.



FIGURE 17 WINNERS OF THE INNOVATION CHALLENGE

This NHRI consultation aims to bring together UNFPA country offices and their counterparts from NHRIs to foster increased collaboration and shared learning on addressing SRHR as a human right. The session also provided an opportunity for countries and sub-regions to



FIGURE 18 NHRI AND UNFPA COUNTRY OFFICE PARTICIPANTS AT THE CONTINENTAL WORKSHOP

The workshop offered structured time for country offices and NHRIs to collaboratively develop concrete, country-specific action plans for advancing support to NHRIs to address SRHR, GBV and harmful practices. This included a tentative thematic topic for focusing an NHRI national assessment and/or country inquiry: for instance, FGM (Nigeria and Sierra Leone), child marriage (South Sudan and Ghana), adolescent access to contraceptives/adolescent pregnancy (Liberia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Burundi), maternal mortality and access to services (Namibia), and assisted reproductive technologies/surrogacy (Kenya).

14 UN General Assembly resolution, Universal Periodic Review, CEDAW, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Maputo Protocol and African Union/continental-level instruments.
 15 Ethiopia, Namibia, Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Burundi.

The importance of comprehensive stakeholder engagement specifically collaborating with CSOs was underscored by NHRI representatives. The full range of challenges was also discussed during the two-day workshop: geopolitical, institutional, lack of political will, economic and social factors, the legal and policy framework, and capacity and resource gaps within NHRIs were the major challenges.

The communication campaign of the African Union initiative on the elimination of FGM is strengthened

The Saleema initiative is a continental platform bringing together all stakeholders related to the elimination of FGM. The vision of the African Union Commission was empowering young women to advocate for the elimination of FGM. To ensure that, the Saleema Youth Victorious Ambassadors programme was created as the platform that would establish channels between the political level and the grassroots, thus guaranteeing a bottom to top dissemination of information. The ambassadors went on advocacy missions to Kenya, Ethiopia and Egypt to use their platforms to amplify the voices of civil society.

In their respective missions the ambassadors met with the government sector that works to end this harmful practice, the Anti FGM Board, to understand the crucial role member states have in changing social norms. They also met young girls/activists, media stakeholders, local artists, religious leaders and faith-based organizations to discover the results of civil society engagement and document the best practices and challenges. The advocacy mission shows the diverse situation of the countries visited:

- Kenya is an excellent example of how government creates the legislative framework to end FGM, including funding and assigning specific organizations to focus on FGM and coordinating all stakeholders.
- Ethiopia also showcased achievements in bringing together various stakeholders with the objective of working towards ending FGM.
- Although Egypt has strong legislation banning the harmful practice and a national structure tackling the issue, it is one of the countries with the highest rates of medicalized FGM. In their advocacy mission the Saleema Youth Victorious Ambassadors met medical doctors who advocate the elimination of FGM and perform reconstructive surgery.

Generating discourse to strengthen accountability and enforcement of policies through media and communication

A major hindrance to progress in eliminating harmful practices (FGM and child marriage) is the limited knowledge, information and the right communication on the effects of these practices, especially in the most underserved places where they mostly occur. There is also a lack of accountability for and enforcement of nationally agreed policies by key stakeholders at the grassroots level, including village chiefs, traditional and religious leaders and educational institutions.

SIARP through streams I and II engaged media personnel in sharing critical legislative information on the elimination of VAWG and harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM.



FIGURE 19 RECOGNITION OF MEDIA TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

The journalists were trained in regional and international instruments on women's rights, SGBV, reporting of SGBV and what they can do in their countries to promote the rights of women and girls.

A media training event aimed to garner support from media representatives and university journalism faculty members in leading media sector actions and reforms towards ethical, informed, balanced, human rights-focused and victim-sensitive reporting on harmful practices.

A total of 92 journalists from 16 countries¹⁶, including 66 frontline journalists, attended the training on generating content for comprehensive human rights-centred media reporting, communication, information dissemination and advocacy for the protection of girls from child marriage and FGM. A network of East and Southern Africa media practitioners and faculty members was formed including a WhatsApp group, which will facilitate the continued engagement and experience and best practice sharing of media practitioners on the elimination of harmful practices. As part of the training, 12 journalism lecturers were engaged in a brief curriculum development session, which resulted in outlines of local curricula on media reports in reference to the African Union campaigns on ending child marriage and FGM that can be scaled up to empower pre- and in-service frontline media professionals. Here are two videos documenting [high-level statements](#) and [trainee statements](#).

Since the training event, to date 23 media pieces have been produced on harmful practices in Uganda (6), Kenya (4), Malawi (6), Tanzania (2), Somalia (3) and Zambia (2). This is encouraging, as it indicates a willingness among journalists to cover these stories and a desire to break the silence on FGM and related issues such as child marriage and teenage pregnancies ([news on journalist training](#)). Under pillar 6, SIARP also supported the development of a journalists' handbook on FGM, *Guideline for Gender-sensitive Reporting*, which focuses on gender-sensitive reporting for journalists and all communication practitioners working on ending FGM. The handbook offers practical examples of the language to use and application of the 'do no harm' principle and the principles of ethical reporting, which are aimed at promoting the protection of the dignity of the survivors of FGM while reporting their cases or stories.

In addition, Mali and Nigeria received technical and financial support to develop and implement media campaigns that contribute to the continental roll-out of the African Union campaign on FGM: Saleema. Initial key lessons on working with youth-led CSOs as part of a social movement campaign

from Nigeria's 'Movement for Good to End Female Genital Mutilation Campaign' are emerging. The movement is facilitated by youth-led CSOs and driven by women-led organizations and feminist movement actors who are already working in communities by mobilizing concrete action at the household level to protect girls at risk of FGM. The actions will be developed in Q1 of 2023 and are to be shared with the wider UN joint programme and Spotlight FGM community and beyond.



Although the campaign is still ongoing, it has already mobilized more than **600 youth- and women-led community-based** organizations and has worked with more than **11,000 adolescent girls** to initiate intergenerational conversations in their families and organize advocacy events in their communities across the five states in which the movement for good has been implemented¹⁷.

[Support the African Union Commission and regional CSOs to implement the Africa-wide initiative and high-level country missions to advocate for ending VAWG and child marriage in Africa](#)

SIARP through stream II supported the joint country monitoring missions of the ACERWC special rapporteur on ending child marriage, the Goodwill Ambassador of African Union campaigns on ending child marriage, which started in July and continued until the end of November 2022, covering eight¹⁸ countries.

The aim of the joint country missions was to track and report on the country-specific progress on implementation of the campaigns on ending child marriage and FGM and to learn and document key country campaign outputs, including challenges, lessons learned and best practices, while providing key recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the campaign action plans to end child marriage and eliminate FGM.

Critical steps towards demonstrating leadership and commitment in accelerating programmes, policies and legislation for preventing and responding to child marriage were observed in the countries visited along with steps towards **alignment with continental and international legal and regulatory frameworks on**

¹⁶ Burundi, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Somalia.

¹⁷ The interventions have been implemented in 36 communities across the five states where the UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM is focused: Ebonyi, Ekiti, Imo, Osun and Oyo.

¹⁸ Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

ending child marriage. The missions also noted the significant achievements towards the implementation of national action plans that have been enhanced by the increase in government collaboration with CSOs, development partners and other NGOs.

However, the lack of adequate funding from governments poses a critical challenge to the effective coordination, implementation and monitoring of national policy frameworks and plans to end child marriage. During the mission, the delegation interacted with concerned government officials, CSOs, law enforcement and human rights bodies, community members, traditional and religious leaders and UN agencies.

SIARP under stream , provided technical and financial support to commence the following preparatory activities which were helped to the successful ratification mission in Egypt and Morocco

- Conduct a desk review the status of women's rights protection (against Sexual Violence and Harmful Practices) in the 13 countries that have not ratified the Maputo Protocol.
- Based on the desk review findings the program organized a capacity building training for the selected organizations in the 13 countries on developing advocacy and campaign action plans to promote ratification, domestication, and implementation of the Maputo protocol and CEDAW
- The program supported the pre consultation meetings held with the key stakeholders and AU to mobilize members states, women right organization and CSOs and mobilized regional partners, the African Union Commission and CSOs to support the advocacy country missions in Egypt and Morocco for the ratification, domestication, and enforcement of the Maputo Protocol by member states.

The programme in collaboration with the African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate, Equality Now, SOAWR and various actors conducted ratification missions in Egypt and Morocco to advocate the adoption of the Maputo Protocol. These two countries are among 12 in Africa that have not acceded to the women's rights treaty. The two missions took place in October and November 2022.

In Egypt, a consultation was held with SOAWR critical stakeholders, such as the Association of Egyptian Female Lawyers, Equality Now, KADIRAT, Sources of Peace, six Members of Parliament and the President of the National Council of Women. The delegation also had a consultation meeting with several Egyptian civil society actors and media personalities. The event was officiated by the Chairperson of EVE Future and Secretary-General of the

Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education. During the mission a discussion was held on the provisions of the Maputo Protocol to enhance participants' understanding, as the protocol is pivotal to advancing the realization of women's rights. The CSO actors committed to working together to advance the ratification of the protocol. The media has already highlighted the mission in various outlets.

In Morocco, the African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate partnered with SOAWR to conduct the ratification mission. It took place from 1 to 4 November 2022 in Rabat under the leadership of the First Vice Chairperson of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bureau, Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuzo. The delegation held discussions with several high-level state and non-state actors, including the Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family, Members of Parliament, and the President of the National Human Rights Council. Government representatives appreciated that the visit was also timely as Morocco is in the process of revising the Family Code. The CSOs pledged to work with the government in addition to promoting the Maputo Protocol to ensure that it will be ratified.

Additionally, the programme initially planned to support the ratification and domestication missions to Madagascar and South Sudan. However, the missions have not been realised in either country because of a lack of cooperation and other difficulties related to the political situation in both countries. With respect to Madagascar, given that the state is to hold its general elections in 2023, there is a high level of political uncertainty and instability, which renders it difficult for state actors to dedicate efforts to ensuring the ratification of the protocol.

Status of child marriage, legislation, policy environment and programmatic approaches in responding to child marriage in Africa

SIARP completed a desk review of evidence from the existing literature and the legal framework on child marriage, including the implementation of national and international marriage laws, policies, programme approaches and reports on the implementation and monitoring of child marriage programmes in Africa. The review notes that several African states are increasingly adopting regional and international instruments on the protection of child rights to end child marriage. However, the strong influence of traditional and religious practices makes the enforcement of the national formal law difficult. In fact, the formal law should take priority over customary or religious laws that perpetuate child marriage and discrimination against girls and women. Because of the existence of plural legal contexts and the

fact that marriage registrations are not compulsory, it is harder to properly criminalize child marriage and provide fair adjudication for victims. The review notes the role of

digital transformation in increasing access to justice for girls at risk of child marriage.



FIGURE 20 GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS BY PARTICIPANTS

Output 1.2:

National, sub-national and regional partners have increased capacity to advocate for, influence and develop evidence-based action plans on ending SGBV, FGM and child marriage in line with international human rights standards and achieved increased financing for M&E frameworks and for responding to the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups SIARP in partnership with the African Union Commission developed and validated the first-ever regional action plan for Africa with an M&E framework on EVAWG

The regional action plan will serve as a framework for regional partners to implement global and regional commitments in strategies and actions on EVAWG. The action plan is the result of extensive internal and external collaboration with a broad range of organizational, continental and international stakeholders and was developed at the end of 2021. It was based on evidence of the current situation of VAWG and

what has worked to reduce and prevent certain forms of violence, as well as an in-depth study on the so far uneven implementation of international and regional human rights instruments. Its main purpose is to address the factors that have impeded progress towards the elimination of VAWG across the African continent.

“The regional action plan is such a powerful tool that will help the continent in ending violence against women and girls,” declared Abimbola Aladejare-Salako, member of the CSRRG and Director of the Nigerian NGO ‘The New Generation, Girls and Women Development Initiative’, in an interview at the UNDP validation workshop on the regional action plan for Africa on EVAWG.



The action plan was successfully validated at an in-person workshop with 38 (28 female and 10 male) African Union Commission Women, Gender and Youth Directorate, RECs, member states, CSOs and RUNOs on 19 and 20 July 2022. The validation of the plan contributed to promoting accountability and reporting on the implementation of commitments on EVAWG. The plan is expected to be adopted by the African Union Commission's specialized technical committee and to be rolled out in early 2023.

SIARP successfully developed a tailored facilitators' training manual to strengthen the capacity of regional partners and CSOs to influence member states on drafting and reviewing laws and policies related to women's rights groups, CSOs and human rights defenders. The manual will provide the basis for continual engagement and learning on laws and policies related to the protection of WHRDs at both conceptual and practical levels. It will be used to build regional partners' capacity to encourage member states to develop, enforce and report on laws and policies that will protect WHRDs.

The manual was informed by a comprehensive country assessment that covered 10 African Union member states and examined the legal and social environment in which WHRDs and civil society operate. The countries covered were Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Mozambique, the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria. The main findings of the assessment included that violent conflict, security crises and instability have a negative impact on the work of WHRDs. Lack of information about human rights and a lack of literacy on constitutional and legal rights also affect WHRDs' capacity to defend their rights and the rights of the communities they work with. Moreover, WHRDs noted that the lack of litigation and national jurisprudence protecting their rights slows development of this area of law, and, as a consequence, limits the available legal, policy and institutional provisions for their protection. The manual was also informed by a capacity needs assessment of regional partners in relation to drafting laws and policies that guarantee the capacity of WHRDs.

The country assessment report and the facilitators' training manual were validated with 94 (66 female and 28 male) participants from the African Union Commission, RECs, regional parliamentarians, pan-African parliamentarians, regional CSOs, human rights defenders' lawyers and UN agencies from 31 August to 1 September 2022. The workshop provided stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the content of the report, while improving the quality of the facilitators' training manual through a participatory approach and feedback. The manual will be rolled out through capacity building of regional partners and CSOs in early 2023.

Output 1.3: Regional partners have greater knowledge and awareness of human rights obligations and are able to advocate and influence the drafting/review/enforcement of laws and/or policies that guarantee the ability of women's rights groups, CSOs and WHRDs to advance the human rights agenda and accountability for SGBV and harmful practices

Advocacy capacity of CSOs enhanced

As part of the advocacy initiative, SIARP in partnership with Equality Now and the African Union Commission organized a workshop for women's rights CSOs in the 12 countries yet to ratify the Maputo Protocol, building their knowledge of the aforementioned legal standards and norms and of legal advocacy methodologies and strategies to address VAWG.

The legal advocacy workshop was held from 27 to 29 June. A total of 22 (14 female and 8 male) participants from 17 organizations attended the workshop; five were SOAWR members and the remaining participants were other civil society actors from 13 countries¹⁹. Two traditional leaders from Ghana and South Africa and one faith-based organization from Nigeria also attended and contributed to the workshop. The participants developed regional action plans, specifically focusing on strategies to end VAWG in their countries. The plans included the development of legislation to cover all forms of SGBV including domestic violence, emerging forms of violence such as medicalized FGM and technology-facilitated GBV.



FIGURE 21 GUIDE AND GUIDELINES TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WHRDs: VIRTUAL POSTER

¹⁹ Burundi, South Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia, Niger, Chad, Central African Republic, Ghana, Madagascar, Zambia and South Africa.

Model guide and guidelines for establishing systems/protocols to support and protect the rights of women's rights and human rights defenders developed

SIRAP supported the development of the model guide and guidelines for establishing systems/protocols to support and protect the rights of women's rights and human rights defenders and to prevent VAWG-related extrajudicial executions and prosecutions. The programme in partnership with Equality Now worked with experts in the field of safety and security for WHRDs to develop a guide and guidelines on supporting and protecting the rights of WHRDs in Africa. The guide and guidelines have been reviewed by selected CSOs in Africa, including those who are part of the Equality Now-led SOAWR network.

Equality Now has also engaged the African Union Commission to review the guide and guidelines and held a virtual validation in September 2022. This meeting allowed Equality Now to share the findings of the status of WHRDs in Africa, to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to evaluate and question the content and structure of the model guide and guidelines on WHRDs and to receive feedback and submissions for consideration in the final model guide and guidelines.

The feedback from the validation meeting and from the African Union Commission was reviewed and incorporated into the guide and guidelines. The guideline will be launched on the first quarter of 2023.

SIARP successfully developed and finalized a facilitators' training manual on shadow or alternative reporting on the situation of the rights of women and girls in Africa

The facilitators' training manual was based on UNDP and Equality Now/SOAWR's experiences with CSOs in Africa and a capacity needs assessment supported by numerous renowned human rights practitioners from across the continent.

Fifty-two (35 female and 17 male) participants representing 36 CSOs and women's rights movements were trained during a three-day virtual programme on the drafting and submission of periodic reports about the rights of women and girls in Africa. The workshop also served as an opportunity to test the facilitators' training manual.

Following the capacity-building training, SIARP provided technical support to two CSOs, Alliances for Africa in Nigeria and Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM) in Tanzania, on drafting and submitting periodic reports. The two CSOs were enabled to draft and complete alternative/shadow reports on the rights of women per the Maputo Protocol for their countries.

The shadow reports allow CSOs and women's rights organizations to provide alternative information to treaty monitoring bodies and countries on issues and gaps that need to be addressed.



FIGURE 22 SHADOW REPORT ON MAPUTO PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA

Accordingly, Equality Now, Alliances for Africa and NAFGEM participated in the ACHPR 73rd Ordinary Session in Banjul, The Gambia. This provided them with good exposure to interact with ACHPR and to engage with state representatives and other CSOs. One of the national CSOs (NAFGEM) has applied for observer status in the ACHPR. The regional platform also enabled them to explore the process of submitting shadow reports to ACHPR. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is yet to submit its periodic report, and the Nigerian government has not submitted its seventh periodic report on the Maputo Protocol. These reports are vital in providing comprehensive information on the situation of the rights of women and girls, including the Maputo Protocol's implementation, human rights violations faced by women and girls, key recommendations on what the government should do, and key recommendations to ACHPR for making nations accountable. The reports are expected to be submitted to the African Union Commission ACHPR in 2023 after the two nations submit their periodic reports.

CASE STUDY

SIARP supported the development of shadow reports on the Maputo Protocol's implementation in Nigeria and Tanzania

Following the capacity building on the drafting and submission of periodic reports on the rights of women and girls in Africa received from SIARP, Alliances for Africa in Nigeria and NAFGEM in Tanzania further engaged with grassroots CSOs and relevant government ministries to develop shadow reports using a participatory approach. Hence during the development process both CSOs were able to engage with 49 (21 in Nigeria and 28 in Tanzania) local organizations that included women's rights organizations and feminist groups, community-based organizations, academics and professional bodies working on women's rights. The following steps were followed to develop a comprehensive and representative shadow report that both organizations are using with their governments as an advocacy tool to enable the state to submit the national report. The shadow reports will be reviewed and submitted to ACHPR as an alternative report in 2023.

The full case study report can be found [here](#).

Outcome 5: Data

Output 5.1:

Key regional and national partners have strengthened capacity to regularly collect data related to SGBV, child marriage and FGM in line with international and regional standards to inform laws, policies and programmes

During this reporting period, SIARP finalized a curriculum on VAWG and trained professionals from academia, CSOs and government in the art and science of using data to combat VAWG. Three rounds, each consisting of a five-day capacity-strengthening workshop, took place in Kenya, Ghana and Senegal and were attended by 121 participants from 16 anglophone countries, 7 francophone countries, the African Union and UN agencies. The overall objective of the training programme was to strengthen capacities of the African Union Commission, RECs, CSOs and women's rights organizations and national partners to plan and regularly collect data related to SGBV, child marriage and FGM in line with international and regional standards to inform laws, policies, and programmes and to track the progress of national, regional and continental commitments in addressing these issues. This training is one part of the multi-sectoral approach to responding to GBV, specifically VAWG.

The face-to-face training was conducted by facilitators who adopted an interactive method of training, tapping into the expertise in the room and leaning more towards the experiences of the participants in their work around VAWG, GBV and SRHR. The facilitators oriented participants on the best practices throughout the research cycle. The training covered 10 modules focusing on concepts related to VAWG/harmful practices, VAWG research questions and design, VAWG prevalence data, sampling techniques, designing questionnaires and ethics approvals, data collection and processing and disseminating/using results and coordination.



121 participants from **16** anglophone countries, **7** francophone countries, the African Union and UN agencies participated in the five-day capacity training workshop

CASE STUDY

Empowering CSOs and Government Personnel: (Success in VAWG Data Collection and Management)

Introduction:

The success story revolves around the post-training follow-up survey conducted by SIARP (Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme) to assess the impact of capacity-building training on ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) research, data collection, management, and analysis. The survey findings demonstrate the positive outcomes of the training, highlighting the enhanced grant proposal and research skills of CSO and government personnel. The training has empowered participants to utilize their newfound expertise, resulting in significant advancements in their respective organizations and countries.

Implementing Skills and Knowledge:

Following the capacity-building training workshop, SIARP conducted a comprehensive post-training follow-up survey, reaching out to trainees who had participated six months prior. The results of the survey revealed that the skills and knowledge acquired during the training were effectively implemented by the participants. The majority of trainees successfully finalized and submitted the research protocols they had developed during the training for potential funding. This achievement highlights their improved proficiency in grant proposal preparation and management, as they actively contribute to designing and revising programs based on evidence-based approaches.

Supporting National Initiatives:

The impact of the training extends beyond individual organizations, with participants actively supporting their governments in addressing VAWG issues. Notably, two participants from South Sudan and Nigeria reported their involvement in conducting national VAWG surveys, demonstrating their valuable contributions to national-level initiatives. These participants' dedication and expertise contribute to the generation of accurate and reliable data, which serves as a foundation for evidence-based policymaking and intervention strategies.

Enhancing Data Collection and Research Methodology: The training not only strengthened participants' grant proposal and research skills but also had broader implications for their organizations. A participant from Cameroon highlighted the transformative effect of the training, enabling their team and organization to update data collection tools, gain a deeper understanding of research methodologies, and improve ongoing research projects. This demonstrates the ripple effect of the training, as participants utilize their enhanced skills to refine existing research practices, ensuring accuracy and quality in data collection and analysis.

Conclusion:

The success of the capacity-building training on VAWG data collection and management conducted by SIARP is evident through the post-training follow-up survey. The survey revealed that participants have effectively utilized their acquired skills and knowledge, leading to notable advancements in their organizations and countries. The ability to develop and submit research protocols, support national surveys, and improve data collection practices showcases the impact of the training on both individual participants and the wider VAWG research landscape. This success story exemplifies the transformative power of targeted capacity-building interventions in driving positive change and empowering CSOs and government personnel to tackle VAWG effectively.



FIGURE 23 VAWG DATA COORDINATION TRAINING SESSION. PHOTO: UN WOMEN

In addition to the face-to-face training, the curriculum was transformed into an online learning platform to provide integrated resources, with the aim of reaching more learners and creating personalized learning environments. The platform is designed to be simple for self-directed learning and certification and serve as a portal for all resources on VAWG. The curriculum has been translated into French and will be accessible to CSOs and other stakeholders. The curriculum has been uploaded and is currently undergoing iterative improvements. The online platform is a simplified replica of the face-to-face training accommodating all 10 modules and providing more resources. These capacity enhancement resources will be one of the key sustainability elements of the programme that will benefit stakeholders beyond the end of the programme.

During the next quarter of implementation, both learning products will be branded and tested for additional roll-out, including server administration, certification, monitoring and evaluation, and possible areas of improvements.

Besides capacity building, SIARP continued to strengthen research organizations' skills in generating evidence to inform policy and programme development. One of the key achievements during this period was the continued capacity support for the South Sudan national GBV prevalence survey. SIARP supported this activity from the inception of

the survey, including protocol development, tool adaptation, training, engaging in regular meetings and report writing. This activity was mainly led by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare of South Sudan and a local implementing partner in close collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Health, various RUNOs, and the University of Melbourne, among others. The research reached 3,500 women and girls and 1,500 men and boys in 11 of the 13 states in the country using a structured tool designed in Open Data Kit (ODK). Moreover, the survey included key actors in GBV implementation through qualitative tools (in-depth and key informant interviews) to address programme and policy aspects. During this reporting period, analysis was completed and a draft research report was reviewed by the board members. SIARP contributed to the development of standard methodology and tools in the region and further scaling up of this exercise to other countries in the region. During this period SIARP also supported research on migration, gender norms changes, positive masculinities and male engagement to prevent SGBV/harmful practices and empower women and girls. SIARP prioritized research in two identified countries (Malawi and South Sudan), identified two implementing partners in each country, developed two protocols on positive masculinity and male engagement, and drafted sets of tools.

Output 5.2:

Quality prevalence and/or incidence data on SGBV, child marriage and FGM analysed and made publicly available for the monitoring and reporting of SDG indicators 5.2 and 5.3 to inform evidence-based decision-making

Strengthen the African Union Commission regional data and research, the gender observatory and the gender scorecard to ensure periodic, inclusive and quality reporting by member states and CSOs on VAWG/SGBV/harmful practices and SRHR to generate evidence to inform policy and programmes

To promote data availability and progress the monitoring culture, SIARP supported the development of the 2021 African Union gender scorecard report ([AU gender scorecard](#)) and the finalization of the African Union Gender Observatory. The scorecard report has been translated into the four African Union languages and shared with member states, RECs and CSOs. On top of this, SIARP continued to liaise with the African Union Commission's Directorate of Information and Communication and its Management Information Systems Department to finalize [AUGO – African Union Gender Observatory \(au-genderobservatory.org\)](#) to ensure integration into African Union Commission IT systems. User guides to navigating the gender observatory were developed in English and French for member states, RECs and CSOs, as were user credentials for member state representatives who will input data. Few remaining tasks to fully launch and operationalize the platform are ongoing through deployment of a webmaster. The program will continue supporting WGYD in maintaining and sustaining the system

Improvement in social norms programming and measurement: In collaboration with RUNOs, SIARP finalized the social norms training package. The package was rolled out in collaboration with CISP in four countries with over 150 representatives from governments, CSOs and national academia trained and mentored in social norms programming and measurement focusing on harmful practices and violence against children and women. The ESARO social norms training package was also converted into a self-paced course. Through dedicated technical assistance, the training was also rolled out in Eritrea with over 25 government officials working on FGM and child marriage trained in social norms measurement with a focus on UNICEF's ACT framework.

Scaling up gender-transformative approaches to end harmful practices: As part of the collaboration with Girls Not Brides, a joint inception workshop was convened with CSO coalition members. The workshop was convened to lead CSO coalitions in Nigeria and Mozambique on gender-transformative approaches including through the application of the gender-transformative accelerator tool. The interactive workshop was situated in the context of regional and country-specific data and evidence on child

marriage, the Africa Spotlight Initiative and the Global Programme to End Child Marriage. CSO coalitions led by CYPF (Nigeria) and AMODEFA (Mozambique) presented an overview of their mandate and work linked to the coalitions they lead, while Girls Not Brides and UNICEF provided an extensive orientation on gender equality, gender-transformative approaches and the gender-transformative accelerator tool and its application in six countries.

Experts' meeting on FGM data and research: The UNFPA 'Population data, FGM data and research fellowship' initiative organized its first experts' meeting from 22 to 24 March 2022 in collaboration with stakeholders. The goal of the event was to showcase the work of the fellows and harness the expertise of FGM data and research experts to use the most appropriate methodologies and research questions. The meeting comprised 98 (41 male and 57 female) experts from a variety of sectors, including programming, academia, implementing partners, policymakers and community members/stakeholders. FGM data and research fellows shared and presented six studies. In addition, the UNFPA Population Development Branch presented updated survival analysis results for countries with new Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data. The report of the experts' meeting on research and data can be found [here](#).

Provision of technical assistance to strengthen the knowledge management capacity of partners by conducting focused and action-oriented analysis of evidence to produce evidence briefs, case studies and country-specific profiles on thematic child marriage issues

SIARP partnered with Girls Not Brides to run the [Child Marriage Research to Action Network](#), encouraging research by policymakers and practitioners, mainly through the development of major publications. The first publication summarizes the successes and challenges of an evidence-based approach to young women's programmes in Africa, focusing on [BRAC's Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents programme](#). The second publication, [Boyhood and Child, Early, and Forced Marriages and Unions: An Evidence Review](#), lays out the case for including boys in efforts to promote gender equality and prevent child marriage. Finally, [Motherhood in Childhood: The Untold Story](#) examines trends in adolescent childbearing using techniques that focus on the most vulnerable girls.



FIGURE 24 ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT AT SCALE REPORT

Organize an annual forum to share knowledge, evidence and best practice and have critical debates on various policy and programmatic issues related to FGM in countries supported both by the joint programme and by the Spotlight Initiative and in other countries with a high prevalence of FGM

The aim is to share the experience and lessons from the joint programme with other countries to create a spill over effect and ensure continent-wide impact to inform efforts to address FGM.

11th Annual Technical Consultation of the joint Programme in The Gambia: In October 2022, the 11th Annual Technical Consultation of the UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM took place in Banjul, The Gambia, with over 105 participants from 17 countries. It aimed to position the joint programme to deliver on the global promise in the next eight years and strengthen programme quality including design, implementation and results-based management at country, regional, continental and global levels in line with international agreements and the evidence generated from the evaluation and research studies. Details about the programme can be found [here](#).

Exploring country-level data for programming and advocacy on child marriage: UNICEF produced a set of statistical country profiles for eight Spotlight countries on child marriage, which present a succinct overview,

visually engaging key performance indicators with a view of generational trends, and an assessment of the progress required to meet the 2030 target of eliminating this harmful practice. Moreover, UNICEF organized a virtual training workshop entitled ‘Harnessing the Power of Data to End Harmful Practices’, targeting all Spotlight Initiative countries and partners in Africa. The workshop aimed to improve the collection, analysis, interpretation and use of data related to child marriage and FGM and was attended by 70 participants from 10 African countries.

Support evidence building on violence, SRHR and harmful practices impacting young adolescent girls with a focus on (1) developing and implementing a methodology for secondary analysis of MICS and DHS data to understand the links between child marriage, school-related barriers for girls, gender norms and teenage pregnancy; (2) formative evidence on girls’ menstrual health and hygiene; and (3) data and evidence building on school-related gender-based violence

SIARP completed an assessment of the integration of national and sectoral policies and plans to end child marriage into government budgets for six selected African countries. The purpose of the assessment study was to enhance the capacities of key stakeholders to advocate for, influence and develop regional, national and sub-national programmatic actions and budgets to end child marriage. A regional synthesis on the government budget allocation for ending child marriage activities was made available in June 2022 along with country-specific reports. The findings show a weak link between the making of policies and plans to guide national responses to harmful practices and their full implementation due to limited human, financial and technical resources. Furthermore, the analysis revealed low integration of national plans to end child marriage into government budgets.

Data and evidence on acceleration options to eliminate harmful practices: SIARP commissioned a research institution with expertise in child marriage leading to the development of a methodology that analyses country situations in order to identify high-impact areas for investment to end child marriage.

Targeting **13 countries** participating in the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, the activity aims to understand child marriage trends, drivers and options for accelerating and amplifying efforts to end the practice.

Exchanges and an extensive review of the literature took place for Burkina Faso and Malawi, the two ‘test countries’, in August and September, and interviews and discussions with key informants and other stakeholders in the two countries were conducted. Based on these interviews and

discussions, strategy notes have been developed for both countries, leading to the compilation of a strategy notebook that captures lessons from the two test countries.

Support operationalizing the global framework on measurement of changes in social norms: In West and Central Africa Region, an institution has been contracted to adapt and simplify the ACT framework so that it becomes more accessible to the region and also includes child marriage indicators. Targeting three countries (Mali, Sierra Leone and Guinea), an end product will be accessible to other countries to be contextualized in the region. In ESAR,

the ACT framework has been contextualized and adapted in Ethiopia and Kenya where partners conducted social behaviour change baseline assessments on FGM and child marriage (data analysis is currently under way). SIARP is also supporting Eritrea to expand the current FGM community mapping initiative in the country by using some of the ACT constructs, questions and tools. Training with over 20 government partners has been conducted remotely to instruct the team on how to select indicators, questions and tools.

CASE STUDY

Empowering Girls through Education: A Success Story on Ending Child Marriage in Mozambique

Introduction:

This success story showcases Mozambique's efforts in the education sector to combat child marriage and empower girls. By aligning the annual programme of activities with the Education Strategic Plan 2020–2029, the government has successfully integrated activities to end child marriage into their overall education agenda. Through strategic planning, increased funding, and targeted interventions, Mozambique has made significant progress in addressing the issue of child marriage and promoting gender-responsive education.

Integrated Planning and Resource Mobilization:

In Mozambique, the education sector has developed an internal system that links planning and budgeting, facilitating effective implementation. The annual programme of activities aligns with the Operational Plan 2020–2022 of the Education Strategic Plan, identifying specific actions, funding sources, budgets, and responsible entities for execution. This integrated approach ensures that activities related to ending child marriage are directly linked to budgetary allocations. It also ensures that all funding sources, including external funds, are consolidated under the government's comprehensive plan. This coordinated effort maximizes the impact and sustainability of interventions.

Significant Increase in Funding and Scope:

Mozambique has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to ending child marriage by substantially increasing the resources allocated to relevant activities. The estimated value of activities targeting child marriage within the programme of activities grew from MZN19.6 million in 2017 to over MZN390 million in 2020, representing a seventeen-fold increase in real terms. Furthermore, child marriage-related activities accounted for 6 percent of the total programme of activities budget in 2020, a significant rise from 1 percent in 2017. This substantial increase in funding allocation demonstrates Mozambique's prioritization of ending child marriage and investing in girls' education.

Expanding Gender-Responsive Education Initiatives:

The programme of activities in the education sector reflects an expanded range of interventions targeting child marriage. Gender-responsive education initiatives have been introduced to address the unique challenges faced by girls. Activities include efforts to reintegrate out-of-school children, including married children and adolescent mothers, into the formal education system. The programme also focuses on strategies to improve school environments, such as enhancing water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities and increasing the availability of educational materials. Life skills training and measures to address abuse in schools have also been integrated into the programme, ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

Comprehensive Support for Girls' Empowerment:

In addition to the education sector's strategy actions, the programme of activities incorporates social support measures and psychological counseling to protect girls at risk of child marriage. Empowerment initiatives include integrating the promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in teaching, providing training to teachers in this area. The programme also includes awareness campaigns targeting parents and communities to emphasize the importance of girls' education. By involving multiple stakeholders and adopting a holistic approach, Mozambique is creating an enabling environment that supports girls' empowerment and enhances their educational opportunities.

Conclusion: Mozambique's success in addressing child marriage through the education sector's annual programme of activities highlights the power of integrated planning, increased funding, and targeted interventions. By embedding activities to end child marriage within the broader education agenda, Mozambique has made significant progress in empowering girls and promoting gender-responsive education. This success story serves as a model for other countries in leveraging education as a catalyst for positive social change, ultimately contributing to the elimination of child marriage and the realization of girls' rights in Mozambique.

Convene an annual continental coordination platform for African Union member states that implement national Spotlight programmes

Inspiring stories uncovering first-hand experiences from African countries on eliminating gender-based violence are collected and disseminated

SIARP, African Union Commission, and Women, Gender and Youth Directorate launched the report [Lessons Learned, Promising Practices, & Challenges to Overcome](#) with key stories, first-hand experiences and actionable recommendations on fighting GBV from the eight African countries implementing the Spotlight Initiative. The report was launched following the [Annual Continental Coordination Platform](#).



FIGURE 25 THE LESSONS LEARNED, PROMISING PRACTICES & CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME REPORT

Outcome 6: The women's movement

Output 6.1:

Increased opportunities and support for women's rights groups and relevant CSOs to share knowledge, network, partner and jointly advocate gender equality and women's empowerment and ending VAWG, including SGBV, child marriage and FGM, and to promote SRHR

In 2022, building on the efforts of the previous year, the programme increased the investment, engagement, and technical and financial support to enhance the capacity of women's rights groups, CSOs and networks, including those representing youth and vulnerable groups, to get a platform to effectively influence and advance progress on gender equality and women's empowerment and VAWG, including SGBV/harmful practices. In total SIARP collaborated with 27 regional and local CSOs, a 90 per cent increase on the previous year. Accordingly, 25 per cent of the programme budget was invested to support the CSOs in this reporting period.

The programme under stream I drafted five jointly agreed recommendations adopted from multi-stakeholder dialogues convened by women's rights groups and CSOs with relevant government/intergovernmental/regional authorities and the African Union. The agreed recommendations are discussed below in detail.

Multiple platforms created for CSOs and women's rights groups to share knowledge, network and jointly advocate on gender equality, women's empowerment and EVAWG

SIARP worked with Partners in Sexual Health to organize three rounds of a [regional forum on ending VAWG in Africa](#) to influence the African Union and global policy processes on ending VAWG. The CSO forum aimed to contribute to women's rights groups, autonomous social movements and CSOs, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalization, to more effectively influence and advance progress on ending VAWG.

The forum:

- Created a dedicated opportunity for CSOs, governments, UN agencies, RECs and the African Union to effectively engage with and explore opportunities to influence and advance progress on EVAWG
- Facilitated a space for building strategic partnerships and strengthening connections between CSOs (inclusive of women's rights groups, movements, networks, youth-serving organizations, faith-based organizations and those representing vulnerable groups); networking opportunities; the exchange of views, opinions and expertise; and knowledge sharing and best practices for influencing progress on EVAWG

- Generated shared recommendations for accelerating progress on EVAWG, fostering long-term and continued collaborations across regional borders and within countries
- Identified opportunities for CSOs to advocate on and inform policy frameworks
- Made African Union member states and other regional bodies accountable for their commitments to EVAWG, and supported exchange among CSOs on evidence-based advocacy and effective engagement in regional policy development and implementation processes.

The first forum was attended by 31 (24 female and 7 male) participants from 12 ESAR countries. The CSOs gathered to pledge support and deliberate on how best to jointly advocate realistic policies and better implementation of policies to fight GBV. At the end of the two-day forum, participants adopted [four key recommendations](#) that will be used to jointly advocate violence-free communities and ultimately to effectively influence the African Union policy agenda on EVAWG in Africa.

The key recommendations are:

- RECs and African Union to strengthen resourcing, accountability, tracking and reporting on human rights and gender rights commitments, including but not limited to the Maputo Protocol (2003), African Union gender strategy, sub-regional SRHR and SGBV commitments (harmful practices, FGM, child marriage)
- African Union and the RECs to standardize rape sentencing across SADC and EAC member states with provisions for minimum mandatory penalties
- African Union and the RECs member states to review and align national laws and policies to domesticate and implement regional and international instruments for ending child marriage, including establishing comprehensive social protection systems
- African Union, the RECs secretariats and the UN to facilitate meaningful participation of CSOs, women's movements and youth organizations in their decision-making processes.

The programme created an additional platform for regional and national CSOs and African Union member states implementing national Spotlight programmes to share

knowledge, network, partner and jointly advocate gender equality and women's empowerment and ending VAWG, including SGBV and child marriage, and to promote SRHR. Accordingly, four CSOs in the development of thematic papers focused their efforts on the elimination of VAWG/harmful practices and promotion of SRHR in Africa.

Furthermore, two learning platforms were convened for West and Central Africa on 9 and 10 July in Dakar, Senegal, and East and Southern Africa on 6 and 7 July 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to enable knowledge sharing on best practices and lessons learned on VAWG.



FIGURE 26 REPRESENTATIVES FROM CSOS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS GROUPS, GOVERNMENT, RECS, THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AND UN AGENCIES CONVENED AT 'SPOTLIGHT CSOS KNOWLEDGE SHARING' EVENT

The last two forums brought together 80 participants from CSOs from East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa, women's rights groups, government representatives, RECs, the European Union, the African Union Commission and UN agencies. This enabled the programme to reach a wide range of partners and stakeholders beyond the usual partners.

The CSOs who had been selected to showcase their promising practices in the various areas of EAWG took centre stage in both two-day forums and used participatory and interactive methods to detail their critical contributions to ending VAWG and lessons learned. The five selected CSOs were nominated from the eight Spotlight Initiative countries. The CSOs selected to share their stories at the forum were the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) from Nigeria, Development Education Network – Liberia from Liberia, Girl Child Rights from Mozambique, Justice Centres from Uganda, and Musasa, from Zimbabwe. Over two days during each forum, there were panel discussions involving CSOs, government, African Union Commission and RECs on topics including challenges and entry points for increased CSO engagement at Commission and REC level and strategies for enhancing networking and collaboration between CSOs, RECs and the African Union Commission on knowledge management, documentation and dissemination. The highlights of the two CSO knowledge sharing forums are published here: [video I](#) and [video II](#).

[SIARP launched and initiated discussions on the operationalization of the guidelines to support partnerships between the African Union Commission, faith-based organizations and communities of traditional leaders](#)

In 2021 SIARP brought together regional faith-based organizations, cultural traditional leaders, the African Union Commission and RECs to hold an extended dialogue on the importance of partnership in addressing ending VAWG and harmful practices and promoting SRHR. The programme then finalized [guidelines to support partnerships between the African Union Commission, faith-based organizations and communities of traditional leaders](#), which reinforced engagement. The guidelines were validated on 10 March 2021 in consultation with the key stakeholders, namely the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa, faith-based organizations, CBOs, women, young people, people with disabilities, UN agencies, , European Union, African Union Organs and RECs.

In 2022, the programme organized a second-round consultation with traditional and religious leaders in collaboration with the African Union Commission, European Union and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of Senegal as part of the African Union Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls on 3 and 4 November 2022. After the two-day consultation, the participants (a total of 60) proposed [key time-bound](#)

action points to be taken by African Union heads of state and governments towards the implementation of the **Kinshasa Declaration** which was submitted during the Positive Masculinity Conference held in Dakar, Senegal, in November 2022.

The platform created opportunities to discuss strategies for faith-based organizations and traditional leaders to contribute as advocates on and contributors towards the development, adoption, ratification, domestication and

implementation of the Convention on Ending VAWG and the implementation of the African Union Campaign on Ending VAWG. Moreover, the consultation strengthened connections between regional and traditional leaders, the African Union Commission, European Union, RECs, other platforms, and high-level forums in detecting, preventing and responding to SGBV and harmful practices and promoting SRHR in Africa.



FIGURE 27 GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS, LAUNCHED BY UN WOMEN AND CULTURAL LEADERS

SIARP UNECA redesigned knowledge sharing digital platforms to make them interoperable and accessible by the CSOs

In 2021, in partnership with UNECA, SIARP established a knowledge management platform. The development of a centralized knowledge management platform was one of the main components of the **Knowledge Management Strategy**, which included creating the SIARP platform to complement the activities of the Spotlight Initiative global platform. The activity had initially been designed to continue existing work by strengthening UNECA's African Women's Rights Observatory for integration into and access by civil society. However, the platform had become defunct, and so SIARP collaborated with UNECA to establish a new platform to serve a similar purpose under the Spotlight Initiative.

In 2022, progress was made towards the operationalization of the new Spotlight knowledge management platform that had been established in 2021. Under the leadership of UNFPA, a technical working group consisting of representatives from UNFPA's West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) and ESARO was established. This worked closely with UN Women and the team of developers

from UNECA to improve and finalize the platform as part of the first phase of a three-phase approach to the development of the regional platform. Joint feedback was provided in the form of a business requirement document that included suggestions on the contents and aesthetics of the platform. Phases two and three will be implemented in 2023 and will involve translating the website into four key languages and adding interactive features such as regional communities of practice and web dialogues.

SIARP supported the implementation of the Kinshasa Declaration on Positive Masculinity

SIARP supported youth engagement as part of the second African Union Conference on Positive Masculinity, which took place in Dakar from 8 to 10 November 2022. The youth consultation, which was held on 8 November, brought together 248 participants (123 male and 125 female) from 40 countries across Africa. The purpose was to consult youth leaders (both male and female) to identify existing gaps in the implementation of the **Kinshasa Declaration**, a call to action on positive masculinity that was developed at the First African Union Conference in Kinshasa and adopted as an African Union Assembly decision at the African Union

Heads of State Summit in February 2022.

Recognizing the role of young people as powerful contributors to the work on positive masculinity, the consultation sought to generate their support in this area. The event included an update on the actions from the first call to action on positive masculinity in 2021, discussions of various challenges currently impeding the promotion of positive masculinity, experience-sharing on youth engagement to advance positive masculinity, and dissemination of findings of the IMAGES study on positive masculinity.

The main outcome of the youth consultation was a document providing tangible recommendations on advancing positive masculinity that was also shared during the conference with member states' representatives. The recommendations focused on four thematic areas: (1) good practices on positive masculinity and critical allies; (2) follow-up on the commitments and recommendations of the Kinshasa Declaration; (3) engagement of young men in ending GBV, harmful practices and online violence; and (4) masculinities in crises, conflict and peace-building. The full report on the youth consultation and the recommendations can be found [here](#).



FIGURE 28 YOUTH PARTICIPANTS IN THE AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE ON POSITIVE MASCULINITY

SIARP promoted a multisectoral approach to lobbying for and advocating the elimination of FGM and protecting the rights of girls and women

SIARP launched a report on a multisectoral approach to ending GBV and FGM. The report indicated that African countries are making progress in addressing FGM due to the adoption of the multisectoral approach to engaging all

stakeholders in the development and implementation of a programme to protect and promote women's and girls' rights. Challenges such as a lack of strong political commitment and limited resources were cited as significantly impacting the approach's effective implementation. Although there was evidence of positive changes in social norms, more synergistic action was required from different sectors over the long term. This requires the holistic application of the approach, bringing together relevant state and non-state actors alongside providing a platform for coordinating the development and implementation of national programmes and actions and allocating resources. For more information see the [report on the use of the multisector approach](#).



FIGURE 29 USE OF THE MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN AFRICA

Innovations implemented to eliminate FGM and child marriage

In 2021, SIARP under stream II launched a bodily autonomy hacklab with a specific focus on FGM and its connection to other harmful practices including child marriage and early pregnancy. The 2021 FGM hacklab identified 109 innovative solutions from 18 countries that contribute to the elimination of harmful practices and FGM across Africa. Following the final pitching event, four winning solutions were selected and completed a six-month intensive incubation programme (in December 2022) facilitated by UNFPA's regional innovation incubation partner, AfriLabs. The partners invested a seed fund of US\$70,000 in both capital and business support services. The four solutions are currently being assessed based on an investment readiness matrix developed by AfriLabs – taking ideas to fully fledged scalable innovative solutions with viable business entities led by young innovators, three of which are women. It is expected that by Q2 of 2023, these solutions will complement the efforts of SIARP and partners through direct community interventions to end FGM in Africa.



FIGURE 30 HIGHER OFFICIALS AT THE AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE ON POSITIVE MASCULINITY

Building on the lessons from the 2021 hacklab, in the 2022 version of the FGM hacklabs this cohort directly engaged with community youth- and women-led innovation incubation/accelerator hubs. The hacklab engaged over 100 innovation incubation/accelerator hubs across Africa through the application process, further reaching out to over 300 innovators and hubs in the application platform with 31 submissions received. A selection panel drawn from UNFPA ESARO, UNICEF–UNFPA Joint Programme on

Eliminating FGM, UNICEF and the African Union evaluated and selected two hubs to emerge as winners at the final pitch event in Nairobi. The winners, Mack Marangu of Enlightened Generation International, Kenya, and [Glory Mlagwa](#) of Innovate Ventures, Tanzania, were each awarded US\$30,000 in seed funding to support the growth of their solutions. The winners will also receive incubation support access to the wider network of innovation enablers to scale up these solutions ([read more](#)).



FIGURE 31 AWARD CEREMONY FOR THE INNOVATION CHALLENGE WINNERS

SIARP continued similar innovations to build a youth movement to eliminate harmful practices and promote mental health

Through the Spotlight Initiative, the UNICEF African Union Office and the African Union Commission launched a challenge for youth on innovative approaches to address the impact of harmful practices on mental health and well-being. Following the review of applications and coaching, the 10 outstanding innovative applications were each provided US\$2,500 seed funding to empower girls and support those affected by harmful practices and mental ill health; enable them to work directly with peers in the communities; and advocate laws and policies that protect the girl child.

SIARP intensified partnerships with local CSOs in policy advocacy and reporting on ending harmful practices

In this reporting period, as part of the general SIARP CSO engagement framework and based on the MTA recommendations, additional partnerships were created with 22 local CSOs in 10 countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to mobilize stakeholders at the grassroots level to influence action on elimination of harmful practices. SIARP under stream II has so far provided dedicated technical assistance and financial support to the 12 local CSOs in conducting policy advocacy, capacity building and evidence-based reporting on ending harmful practices by working with young people, women's and men's groups, traditional and religious leaders and local government officials including parliamentarians. Some of the ongoing activities include:

- Youth-led research and synthesis of evidence illustrating how child marriages pose an impediment to the advancement of children's rights
- High-level local youth-led advocacy engagements with duty-bearers on eliminating harmful practices that perpetuate child marriage
- Development of coherent and coordinated multimedia advocacy campaigns for the elimination of harmful practices
- Dialogue sessions with traditional leaders on the protection of children and adolescents, including the importance of birth registration
- Collaborate with journalists to develop a feature story on FGM and child marriage
- Youth forums on FGM and child marriage and other harmful practices
- Online campaigns to commemorate key calendar days on FGM and ending child marriage
- Supporting young people to develop and submit a

position paper with key recommendations on FGM and child marriage and other harmful practices.

Regional youth-led initiatives supported to amplify youth engagement in policy dialogue on ending VAWG, SGBV and harmful practices

SIARP partnered with youth-led social movement Y-Act, which successfully implemented **social media campaigns** for the Day of the African Child 2022, International Youth Day and Girl Child Day, all in collaboration with Amref Health Africa projects such as Power to Youth. These interactions included Twitter threads, forums, webinars and an in-person workshop highlighting the role of young people in tracking the ICPD+25 commitments and reducing harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage in Africa. The Youth Power Hub also features a website segment called the Conversation Café and Youth Power Fridays on its social media platforms, which aim to encourage narrative among Youth Power Champions about social accountability for the ICPD+25 commitment to monitoring and ending harmful practices. Youth Power Hub also acquired new pages on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to optimize its content and attract new followers.



During the August campaign, Facebook was the best-performing platform, reaching nearly **20,000 people**. Youth Power Hub's Twitter profile acquires new followers daily, with over **2,500 impressions**.

During the 16 days of activism, Y-Act, through Youth Power Hub in partnership with SIARP, organized a Twitter space to champion bodily autonomy, equity, economic freedom and rights to life in the face of increasing gender-based aggression and crimes on a global scale. This flagship Twitter space is titled '**Accountability 365: A global call for generational equality to end GBV**', where the discussions seek to open avenues for conversation that echo the global clarion call to end GBV and femicide, as the world observes 16 days of activism against GBV.

The Twitter space consisted of industry thought leaders alongside host partner organizations that are eligible to have a representative. The platform also accommodated emerging issues such as cyberbullying and mental health and GBV. The Twitter space was an engaging and immersive live audio conversation that provided a 'radio experience' for the listeners who joined the discussion. In addition, the panel discussion was transmitted live and shared across Y-Act's website (desktop and mobile) and all Y-Act, Youth Power Hub and partners' social media platforms.

Strengthening the capacity of youth-led organizations through organizational development and systems strengthening

As part of the work plan signed with Y-Act, an online capacity assessment was conducted for the 14²⁰ countries in Africa through the organizational development and systems strengthening (ODSS) model, a dynamic and outcomes-based participatory process that emphasizes organizational ownership. It looks to the capacity-building organization to have essential structures and systems such as financial management, governance and leadership and extend value by complementing areas such as strategic planning, project management, monitoring and evaluation, sustainability, networking and advocacy, and stakeholder involvement.

The organizations were evaluated across all ODSS thematic areas, with the assessment report revealing how most organizations had prior experience in executing the suggested social accountability actions on the SDGs with special emphasis on gender, including ending child marriage. However, most lacked other organizational structures, such as a finance management structure, to manage the project effectively. This necessitated applying the 'leave no one behind' principle and the ODSS training to build the capacities of these organizations to achieve better results. Organizations from 13 African countries were assessed. Limited resources meant that the organizations were trained only in areas where the most gaps were identified following the assessment.

SIARP technically supported youth engagement on multiple platforms

- **The fourth African Youth SDGs Summit** was held at the UN Economic Commission for Africa Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual participation) from 9 to 11 March 2022. The summit was attended by more than 250 in-person participants and about 5,000 virtual participants

Output 6.2:

Capacities of regional women's rights groups and relevant CSOs to use social accountability mechanisms to advocate and influence prevention and response to VAWG, including SGBV/harmful practices and enhance gender equality and women's empowerment

One of the main objectives of SIARP is to build the capacity of CSOs on advocacy, accountability and community interventions across all areas affected by VAWG. In line with this goal, SIARP and its implementing partner APHRC conducted a needs assessment for CSOs in 2021 to identify capacity gaps. The results revealed a general lack of capacity in gender-responsive programming and engagement with

consisting of young leaders, government officials, ambassadors, diplomats, student bodies, UN agencies, bilateral, local and international NGOs, and other primary and secondary stakeholders. The fourth summit was on the theme 'Youth Resilience in COVID-19 era; pathways to accelerate actions towards achieving the SDGs'. The summit created a multi-stakeholder space for learning, sharing and assessing emerging youth-driven solutions, existing potential challenges, and opportunities for youth resilience to recover from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate youth actions to achieve the SDGs without leaving anyone behind. During the summit, UNFPA hosted sessions on meaningful youth engagement, comprehensive sexuality education and youth-led social accountability towards ending harmful practices and participated as a speaker in climate-oriented plenary sessions.

- In addition, SIARP technically supported three youth-led side events in connection with the Africa Forum on Sustainable Development that was held from 3 to 5 March 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda. These focused on the meaningful engagement of young people in mitigating the challenges of climate change, voluntary national reviews, harmful practices and maternal health. The side events gave youth leaders opportunities to present their opinions and demand that key stakeholders engage meaningfully in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SDGs in their countries.
- In addition, 30 youth advocates supported by SIARP convened a side event during the **third African Peer Review Mechanism** in July to consolidate young people's voices directed at transforming harmful practices and behaviours. The key outcome was to highlight the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and propose governance solutions to inform decision-makers during the symposium. In conclusion, the symposium prioritized youth mainstreaming as a critical element for building prosperous, secure and self-sustaining African economies.

the African Union human rights systems.

To address this gap, the programme organized two capacity-building workshops for CSOs on gender-transformative programming and African Union human rights mechanisms.

Workshops were organized for the West and Central Africa Region from 30 August to 1 September 2022, and involved

20 Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

31 participants from nine countries: Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The training succeeded in improving the knowledge of CSO representatives on gender-responsive programming, including the basic concepts, frameworks and tools used, and monitoring and evaluating gender-responsive programmes; strengthening their knowledge of African

Union human rights concepts and instruments, including modes of engagement and monitoring and reporting on human rights; and enhancing the capacities of CSOs to implement gender-responsive programmes and advocate on duty-bearers' accountability for the implementation of the human rights agenda in Africa. The workshop was facilitated by APHRC with support from UNFPA WCARO and was held in English and French.



FIGURE 32 TRAINING ON GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING AND AFRICAN UNION HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS, DAKAR, SENEGAL

The programme enhanced the capacity of 33 CSOs on the processes of documenting and reporting human rights violations to the sub-regional and regional human rights mechanisms

SIARP in collaboration with its implementing partner APHRC conducted two reviews. One was a desk review conducted in 2021 that assessed the status of civic spaces in Ethiopia and Kenya. It highlighted various challenges that CSOs encountered in advocating human rights in Africa. These included legal constraints such as barriers to accessing and using domestic and foreign funds; administrative practices and procedures hindering CSOs' operations; restrictions on and threats to activists and human rights defenders as they perform their duties; and freedom of expression for CSOs.

The second review assessed the ratification, domestication, implementation and reporting of the African Union human rights instruments. It showed that CSOs lacked awareness about the reporting mechanisms, sufficient resources and adequate technical capacity to monitor and report on the human rights instruments and their implementation, well-established links with the African Union reporting mechanisms, and standardized monitoring and reporting tools.

Based on the findings, the programme developed a curriculum focused on building the capacities of national and regional CSOs to manage knowledge, exchange information and advocate accountability in relation to the ratification, domestication and reporting on African Union instruments on ending VAWG. The programme convened an in-person training workshop from 20 to 22 April 2022. The participants were trained on human rights concepts, African Union human rights instruments and mechanisms, obtaining observer status, advocacy interventions in the human rights space, knowledge and information exchange platforms and tools and guidelines for monitoring and reporting on human rights.

Furthermore, the programme organized a virtual convention on 16 August 2022 to:

- Review and validate draft tools for reporting on the implementation of the African Union human rights instruments
- Foster cross-network learning on common challenges and best practices in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the African Union human rights instruments.

The workshop targeted CSOs representing regional networks of rural women, women living in conflict-affected areas, women with disabilities and women living with HIV/AIDS. Also targeted were CSOs with observer status with ACHPR and ACERWC.

The programme organized a two-day in-person workshop on 27 and 28 October 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya, to build the capacity of CSOs at the grassroots, national and

regional levels on the processes for documenting and reporting on human rights violations to the sub-regional and regional human rights mechanisms and strengthening the coordination and partnership among CSOs including building networks for a more coordinated approach to engagement with government and human rights mechanisms that strengthens accountability. Forty participants from Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe attended the workshop.

Output 6.3:

Capacities of regional women’s CSOs and networks strengthened to design, implement and monitor their own programmes on VAWG, including ending SGBV, child marriage and FGM, and promoting women’s and girls’ health rights

In collaboration with APHRC, the programme rolled out a mapping of men’s and boys’ networks in Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe in 2021. Based on the findings of the mapping, the programme organized a virtual dialogue to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of men’s

and boys’ networks engaging in eliminating VAWG; to identify the capacity needs of men’s and boys’ networks in regard to their engagement; and to strengthen men’s and boys’ networks in sub-Saharan Africa to effectively support efforts to eliminate VAWG.

Violence negatively affects women’s general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. It impacts their families, their community, and the country at large.

”

Sunita Caminha, Regional Policy Specialist, UN Women

African Union | Spotlight Initiative | European Union | UN Women | Sustainable Development Goals | African Population and Health Research Center | POPULATION COUNCIL | eannaso

In addition, the programme held an in-person workshop on 12 and 13 May 2022. The workshop targeted men’s and boys’ networks, women’s rights networks, and key stakeholders and partners from SIARP. A total of 70 people (29 female and 41 male) participated in the two-day workshop.

The workshop:

- Increased the participants’ knowledge of advocacy and gender-responsive programming for ending VAWG/harmful practices, promoting positive changes in social norms, advancing gender equality and eliminating all forms of SGBV

- Increased awareness among men’s and boys’ networks on modes of engagement with the African Union human rights system
- Developed a work plan to identify joint activities and technical support needs for further engagement and continuous capacity development among men’s and boys’ networks and women’s rights organizations.

Additionally, the programme hosted a virtual convention on 12 and 13 July 2022 to discuss in detail the role of the media in engaging with Agenda 2063 and the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa

beyond 2014 and the media's role in reporting human rights violations and promoting positive masculinities. The programme set up a WhatsApp group, which has

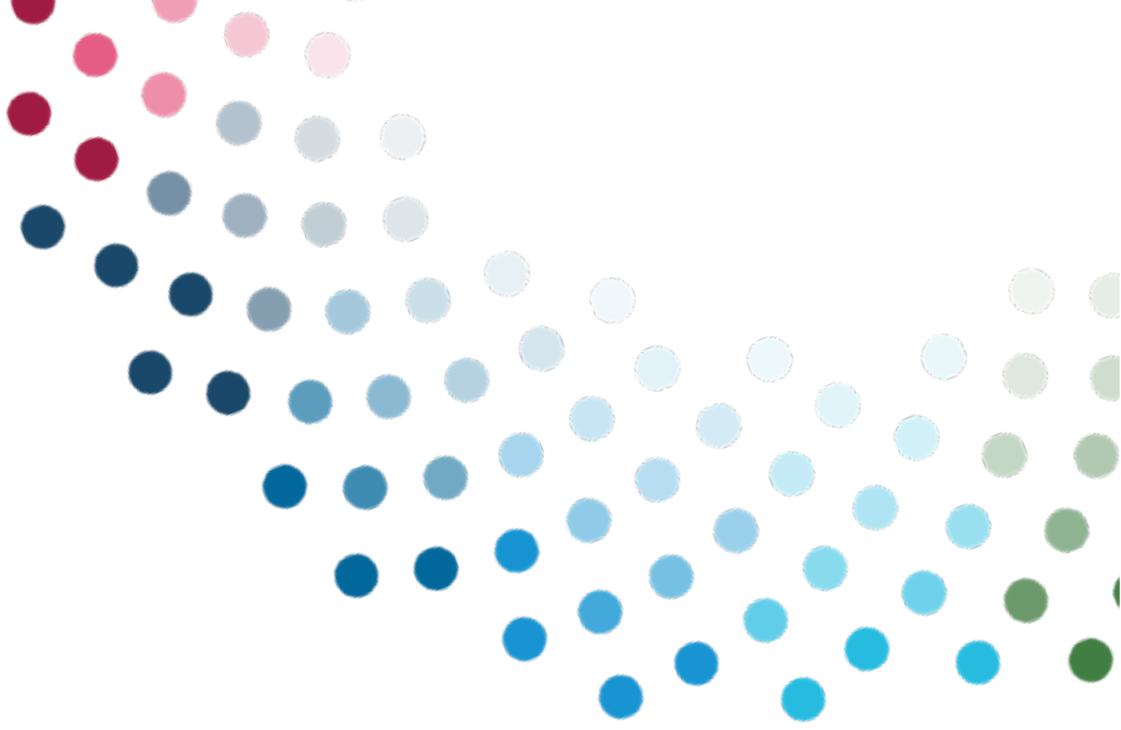
given members a platform to network, engage and share information on different aspects of their work towards ending VAWG.

REPORTING ON SRHR

Most of the interventions implemented under stream II of the regional programme are linked to SRHR:

- The parliamentarians' engagement implemented in collaboration with SADC addressed commitments related to ICPD+25, among which SRHR is key. The consultation emphasized the role of members of parliament, councillors, service providers, technocrats and development partners in updating and aligning national policies, plans and strategic documents to accelerate progress towards achieving commitments to ICPD+25, Family Planning and the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- **The SIARP Continental Workshop on engaging with NHRIs in advancing SRHR and preventing harmful practices** served as a strategic opportunity to position human rights within programming and to share SIARP resources and tools to advance work in this field. At the same time, the workshop was used as an opportunity to strengthen country office staff's capacity to apply human rights-based approaches to SRHR. In a best practice model, the forum enabled those without experience to learn first-hand from their peers. SIARP has much value to add to this arena, including its expertise on gender and SRHR. Ten countries that attended the workshop have started to work on the road map of how to work on harmful practices and SRHR within the context of the NHRIs.
- **SIARP supported the 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights.** SIARP partnered with the Purposeful and African Federation for Sexual Health and Rights for the 10th conference, held from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in Freetown, Sierra Leone, with the theme 'Accelerating the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence in Africa'. The conference brought together more than 950 participants from 41 countries across the continent comprising activists, governments, UN agencies, development partners and civil society to learn, connect and build partnerships to end VAWG. The conference provided a unique opportunity to dedicate time to consulting and agreeing on key SRHR problems in the region.





Rights holders

(Spotlight programme ‘beneficiaries’)

In 2022, with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions and its second year of implementation, the programme completed initial interventions. As a result, the programme intensified implementation and reached various rights holders, such as regional partners, community groups, personnel from regional and national CSO networks, youth groups, and men and boys, through various capacity-building initiatives.

The programme also expanded its reach to building the capacity of grassroots CSOs through initiatives implemented by regional partners and regional RUNO offices.

As a result, in 2022, **230 CSOs were represented** in different capacity enhancement initiatives **across the 45 supported countries**

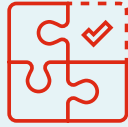
Indicative numbers	Direct (2022)	Indirect (2022)	Comments/explanations
Women (18 years and older)	1,212	4,515,297	
Men (18 years and older)	603	4,119,709	
Non-disaggregated	12,528		Community sensitization in Mali and Nigeria, 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights, pre-conference events
TOTAL	14,343	8,635,006	

As the above table shows, in this reporting period, the regional programme directly reached an estimated 14,343 rights holders. The interventions that are cascaded in the

three outcome areas are estimated to reach 8,635,006 women and men indirectly.



In this reporting period, the regional programme reached **45 countries** directly through different capacity-building initiatives, community sensitization, interventions through CSO networks, high-level country missions, human rights consultation meetings, journalist training events, pre-conference side events, and regional conferences.



More than **75 per cent** of these countries received a minimum of two types of capacity-building support.



FIGURE 33 SIARP SUPPORTED COUNTRIES

Selected feedback from rights holders

During the reporting period, the programme created the following platforms for compiling feedback from rights holders:

- The rights holders and implementing partners participated in the programme MTA.
- Post-training/workshop assessments were carried out to understand the relevance, effectiveness and added value of the capacity-building training and workshops organized with the support of the programme.
- The programme also used online event evaluation to receive participants' feedback.

Accordingly the following feedback is presented to reflect the direct impressions of a few rights holders of the programme:

- **Feedback from a participant in the training of trainers on ratification, domestication, implementation and reporting on human rights instruments related to ending VAWG and promoting SRHR:**

“The training was very valuable in assisting the key stakeholders to implement and translate the treaties nationally. The aspect on African human rights system was quite useful because it has to be understood before one can discuss about ratification and domestication of international and regional human rights instruments. The action planning session also provided a space for participants to reflect on and interrogate their role in advocating on ratification, domestication, implementation and reporting of human rights instruments on EAWG. Additionally, the session provided trainees with an opportunity to identify and articulate achievable actions/commitments and obstacles that may hinder the full implementation of the identified actions. Overall, the training helped us to be equipped with the knowledge and skills ranging from ratification, domestication, implementation and reporting to the process of drafting and reviewing laws and policies on EAWG.”

- **Feedback from national CSOs, Alliances for Africa in Nigeria and NAFGEM in Tanzania:**

“The continued technical guidance and support received from UNDP and Equality Now was an eye-opener to deeply understand not only the contents and process of drafting and submission of shadow/alternative reports but also the key roles national CSOs can play in advocating with their member states to submit periodic reports to [the African Union Commission]. The support provided also enabled us to undertake several advocacy visits to our respective human rights commissions and establish good working relationship with the institutions.”

- **Feedback from participant in the NHRI regional consultation:**

“Overall, the workshop demonstrated a meaningful example of peer-to-peer learning. The participation of NHRIs from diverse countries across and beyond the region enabled NHRIs with extensive experience working on these issues, such as the NHRIs in Kenya and Nigeria, to share information and good practice with those NHRIs whose capacities remain relatively weak and/or whose human resource capacity and experience on SRHR was low.”

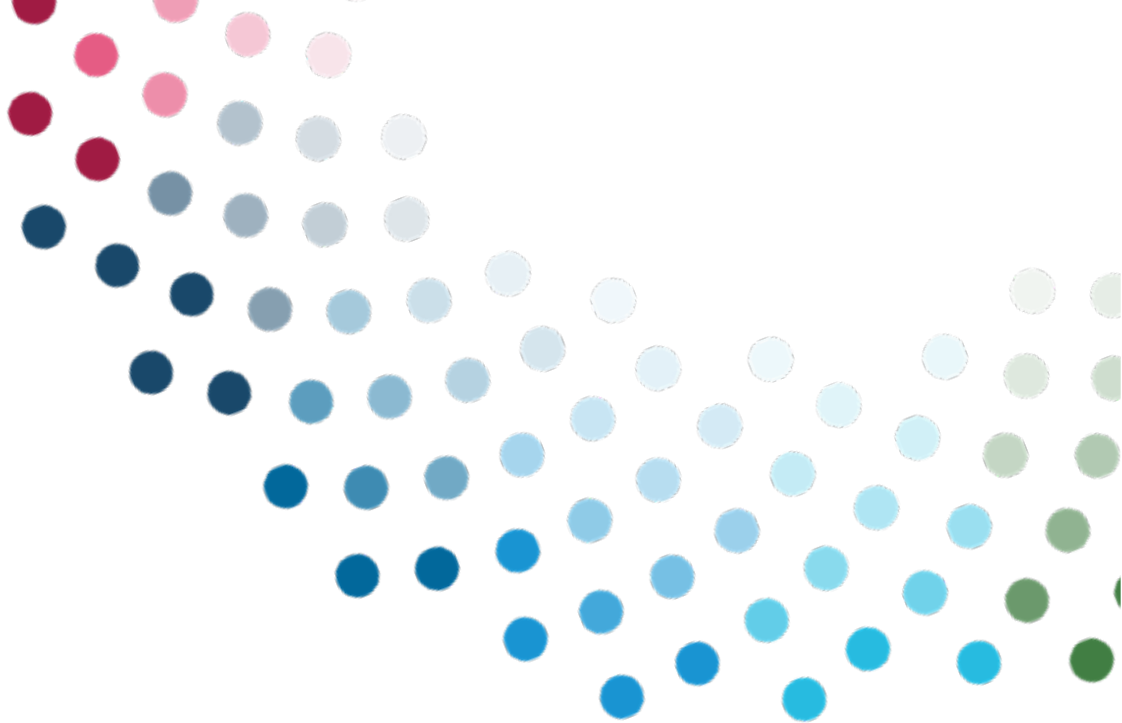


Spotlight is a daring initiative! An extraordinary amount of work goes beyond naming the problem, to finding solutions, striving to shift negative social norms and celebrating positive cultural diversity.



*Dr Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda
African Union Goodwill
Ambassador for ending
child marriage*





Challenges and mitigating measures

In 2022, SIARP made significant progress, while it also encountered challenges during implementation, with implementers creatively adapting to the post-COVID-19 trends.

As described in the continental shift section of this report, the unrest in some countries, and the effect of climate change on the lives of women and girls, an outbreak of Ebola and election-induced political tensions disrupted its implementation.

In addition to these macro-level challenges, the following highlight specific programmatic and administrative challenges that commonly emerged among implementers.

- **Lack of timely response from stakeholders:** There were delays in securing the participation of regional and national stakeholders in regional training and workshops because of competing priorities. In addition, there were some delays in receiving feedback from regional partners and member states in relation to regional strategic documents that affected the timely implementation of initiatives. SIARP mitigated this by directly engaging with the country offices in the selected member states and with the African Union Commission, which supported the implementation processes and responses from the member states as it appreciated the partnership with SIARP.
- **Limited presence and capacity of regional CSOs:** The presence and capacity of regional CSOs to implement gender-related initiatives is limited. The

regional programme faced challenges with limited numbers of CSOs supporting more than one RUNO in the implementation of the programme. Most of these CSOs are overstretched, which affects delivery rates. However, this is being addressed through effective inter coordination mechanism, including holding common meetings with RUNOs and CSOs to promote collaboration in the implementation of activities with the same CSOs.

- In relation to the aforementioned challenges, there was limited utilization of budget line items related to grant transfers to CSOs because of the lack of capacity among regional CSOs to support local/country CSOs. A concept note has been drafted and shared with regional offices to engage with country offices in identifying local CSOs that can be supported through capacity enhancement to engage with young people in policy advocacy and community mobilization to eliminate harmful practices.
- It is appreciated that the Spotlight Initiative has now been extended globally until the end of December 2023. SIARP is part of this no-cost extension, and **the lengthy process of the no-cost extension's approval** has significantly affected the momentum of implementation. Additionally, the **delays in cash replenishment of funds** constrain the programme's acceleration plans and delay procurement processes. Joint activities by RUNOs to support the African Union Commission and programme implementation are being delayed due to a lack of funds from the RUNOs to implement those activities. To address this challenge, RUNOs use internal working

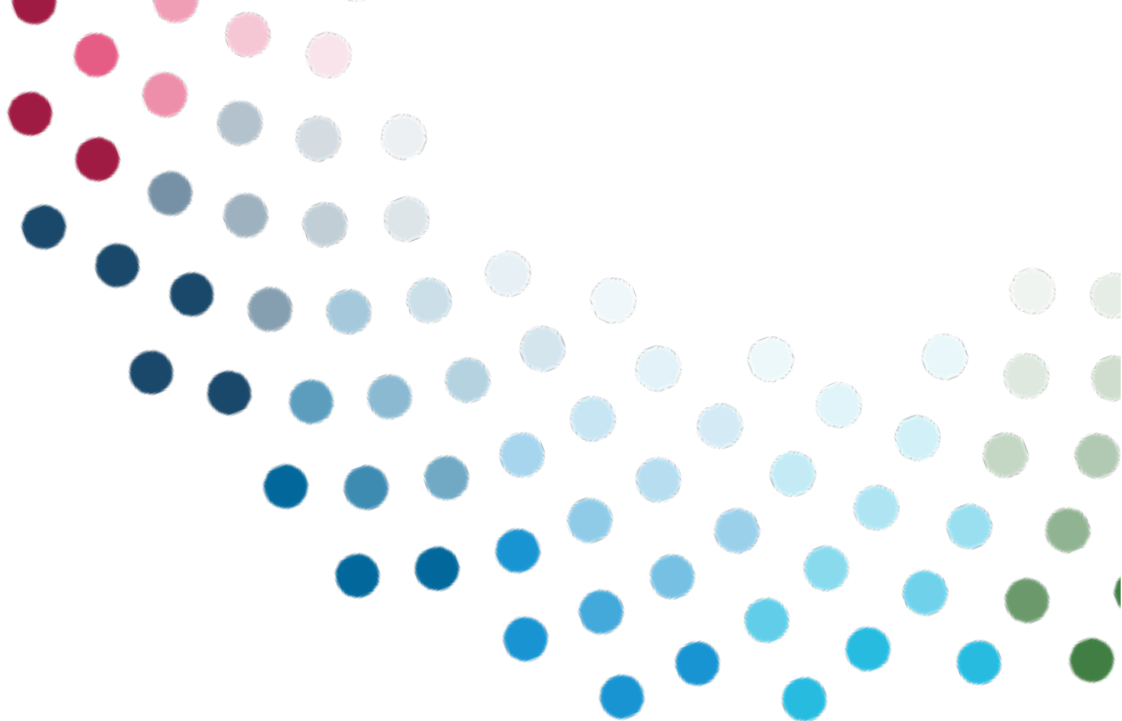
modes with other projects and pre-finance most of the activities, whereas the programme coordination unit conducts close follow-up and communication to finalize the timely release of funds.

- **The ratification mission** to Madagascar and South Sudan after various preparatory work faced a challenge because of political uncertainty and instability. This mission was temporarily replaced by missions to other countries (Egypt and Morocco) that have SOAWR coalition members and national-level efforts already ongoing to push for the ratification of the Maputo Protocol.
- Travel has resumed after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. However, current budgets are impacted by **high ticket prices** in most countries. This is leading to a scaling-down of the number of countries monitored and the amount of in-person technical support provided.

- **Absence of qualified consultants:** The programme faced challenges in getting experienced experts to conduct two major deliverables: (1) to integrate the African Union Gender Observatory into the existing African Union platform/website and (2) to design, organize, facilitate and report on the key discussions, recommendations and action points from the African Union summit. The programme replanned the initiatives and widened its call to proposal channels to invite diverse and well-qualified applicants.







Lessons learned and new opportunities

Lessons learned

During this reporting period, the regional programme comprehensively compiled and reviewed lessons to be taken into consideration during the remaining implementation period and beyond. The following key lessons were identified:

- Sustainable social and behaviour change requires a collective understanding of the processes and capacities of the relevant public, CSOs, and RUNO/implementing partner staff to plan, implement and monitor community engagement interventions. With SIARP's support for programmes, country offices should be provided with dedicated technical assistance aimed at improving the implementation of community engagement interventions.
- Support for national and local partners is essential to build bridges and strengthen the capacities of adolescents. Mobilizing adolescents and young people to exercise their rights is a powerful tool that will empower them to become change-makers. Support for adolescent and youth participation must be reviewed and adapted so that it can become part of mainstream structures. One clear example of the importance of this is the work implemented through the Global Youth Consortium members, as they have been critical in reaching out to the most distant areas where harmful practices such as FGM are not reported.
- Support through innovation challenges and mobilizes young people to be creative in methods of and initiatives for eliminating FGM. An innovation toolkit is being developed to be disseminated among the young innovators and hubs across the continent. The toolkit will be ready in 2023.
- The engagement of regional partners, including RECs, is imperative, ranging from programme/project design, planning and implementation to monitoring and reporting as it ensures stakeholders' buy-in and sense of ownership of the programme. It also has more impact, as it builds synergy and complementarity between regional and country programmes. SIARP continuously learns from these multi-stakeholder processes and will continue with the various forms of engagement in 2023.
- There is a need for more collaboration with grassroots CSOs to ensure that the regional programme expands and builds on its reach and impact. SIARP will continue facilitating the active engagement of regional and grassroots CSOs to ensure that they meaningfully contribute their knowledge and skills to achieve sustainable impact. SIARP will continue to work closely with CSOs to achieve targeted results, using participatory and inclusive processes that ultimately reflect ownership, shared decision-making and accountability.
- Supporting the NHRIs on harmful practices paved the way for more advocates and activists involved in working to eliminate FGM and child marriage. The continental workshop on engaging NHRIs in advancing SRHR and preventing harmful practices highlighted all the parties that involve NHRIs, and merging the promotion of SRHR with action on harmful practices will open a new channel in the work of eliminating FGM and child marriage as well as other emerging harmful practices.

- Accountability of governments is one of the important steps in the elimination of FGM and child marriage. The strategy development meeting with the African Union Human Rights Organs (ACERWC and ACHPR) demonstrated the criticality of the African Union and its Organs as institutions in positing and advocating accountability. Furthermore, apart from the documents generated by the African Union and the governments, the general recommendations from the Human Rights Organs will play an important role in the work of eliminating FGM. With SIARP funding, a meeting was held to validate the Joint General Comment on FGM, developed by ACERWC and ACHPR.
- The shadow report writing by national CSOs provided a unique opportunity for these organizations and government stakeholders to understand the status of women's rights in their nations. It also showed the need to further promote and disseminate the Maputo Protocol at all levels to strengthen the responsibilities and accountability of CSOs and governments. It also noted the importance of collaboration and consultation with governments to support the timely development and submission of states' period reports.
- Dedicated technical and financial capacity-building support to CSOs, including engaging in high-level regional platforms to enhance their influence and advocacy capacity, is vital in ensuring their meaningful participation in the preparation and submission of reports on human rights instruments.
- The first-ever regional joint review and planning workshop, conducted in June 2021, indicated an important lesson: strengthening joint monitoring and evaluation of Spotlight Initiative programmes is critical to track and accelerate programme implementation. Strong participatory M&E through identification and resolution of bottlenecks to promote inter-pillar, intra-stream synergies helps to improve the exchange of achievements and areas for improvement.
- Strengthening coordination across the regional and national programmes and stakeholders creates opportunities for sharing innovative, promising and good practices, fostering knowledge exchange and establishing south-to-south triangular cooperation and for strengthening multi-tiered approaches to eliminating VAWG in a comprehensive manner and for sustainable action beyond the initiative.
- Also noted is the need to strengthen the communication and documentation aspects of the programme to ensure strong dissemination and sustainability across all the stakeholders, including the African Union Commission, RECs, member states and regional CSOs.

New opportunities

Young people leading change to reduce and prevent harmful practices

In early 2022, UNICEF worked with youth advocates on the prevention and reduction of harmful practices to tailor the existing youth advocacy guide training to their particular needs. Their perspectives and experiences helped adapt the youth advocacy guide and training processes to make them more relevant to issues facing young advocates who are looking to make changes for the prevention and reduction of harmful practices. This adapted version of the training will be used to empower young advocates and youth-led networks across the African continent to gain a

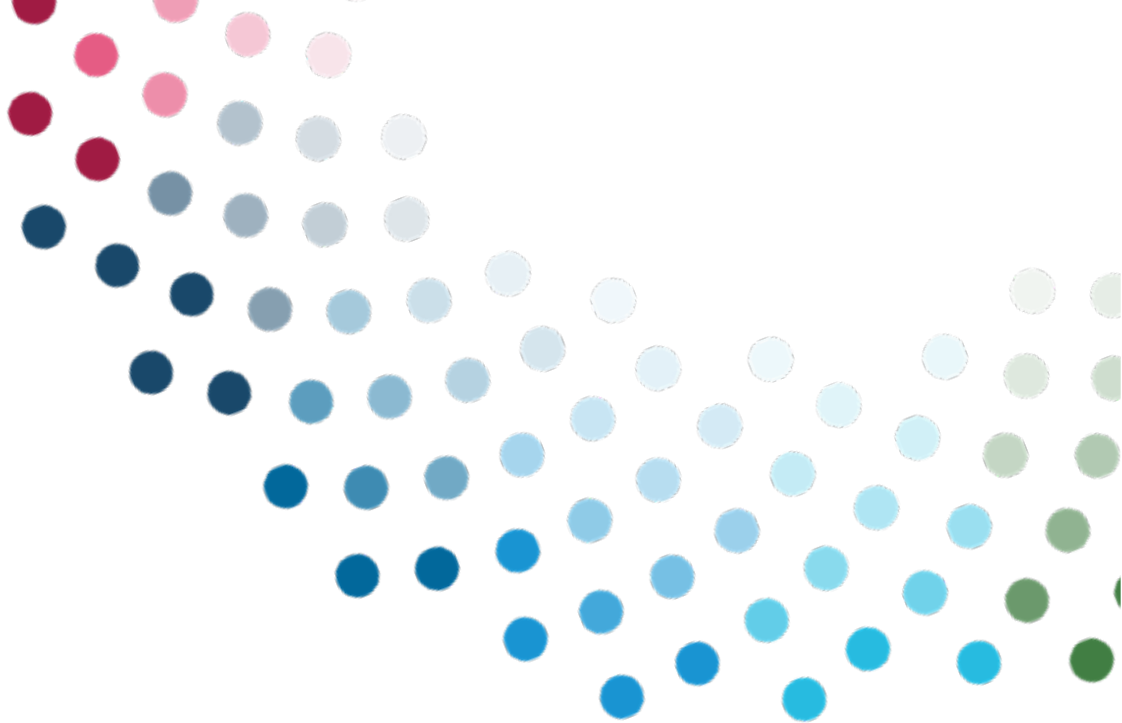
deeper understanding of and capacity for advocacy, ranging from meaningfully engaging with policy, researching their advocacy issues, building networks and fostering allies to embarking on advocacy campaigns and monitoring advocacy efforts to reduce and prevent harmful practices. The training is intended to sustain efforts in building a cohort of young advocates for the prevention and reduction of harmful practices in the region and will conclude with participants developing an outline of their advocacy plan.

Engaging with NHRIs as state bodies with a constitutional or legislative mandate to protect and promote human rights

NHRIs have a unique role in advancing national accountability for SRHR and harmful practices. In Africa, several initiatives were carried out by NHRIs to advance SRHR and gender equality. For example, the Kenya NHRI was the first to carry out a public inquiry into SRHR, in 2011. Since then, a growing number of NHRIs in the region have engaged in this area, including those of Malawi and Uganda. In some contexts, a public inquiry and/or country assessment carried out by NHRIs has led to legislative reforms and change, advancing SRHR. To further build momentum, develop capacities and accelerate efforts to support NHRIs in monitoring the

right to sexual and reproductive health and freedom of discrimination against discrimination, including harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage, it is important to advance the capacity of the NHRIs. In relation to that, a three-day workshop was held in South Africa in December 2022 with 10 NHRIs for experience sharing and developing road maps on how NHRIs could monitor and assess the public inquiries into SRHR and harmful practices (mainly FGM and child marriage). This will pave the way for establishing an NHRI platform specifically in the context of the elimination of FGM and child marriage.

**Eliminating harmful
practices - child
marriage and female
genital mutilation
by 2030.**



Innovative, promising or good practices

During 2022, SIARP exhibited remarkable progress in programme implementation across the board. Some of these activities stood out as promising and good practices, considering the results achieved, their unique approach,

mode of implementation, target audiences and issues addressed. Accordingly, SIARP identified the following good and promising practices that can be strengthened and replicated.

CSO engagement in policy advocacy and reporting on ending harmful practices (child marriage and FGM)

Recognizing the critical role of CSOs, and taking the recommendations from the MTA, SIARP through the UNICEF African Union Liaison Office in collaboration with UNICEF regional and country offices is working to support CSOs in carrying out policy advocacy, capacity building, and evidence-based reporting on ending harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM. Achievements to date include over 14 local CSOs in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Somalia, Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria developing proposals using a small-scale funding agreement to advocate efforts towards ending child marriage, FGM and harmful practices to influence positive change to be included in government policy documents and guidelines. These CSOs have committed to participation and commenced implementation in December 2022, increasing the percentage of funding that goes to local CSOs.

Some of the activities include youth-led research and synthesis of evidence on how child marriages impede the advancement of children's rights; high-level local youth-led advocacy engagements with duty-bearers on eliminating harmful practices that perpetuate child marriages; development of coherent and coordinated multimedia advocacy campaigns for the elimination of harmful practices; dialogue sessions with traditional leaders on the protection of children and adolescents and the importance of birth registration; collaboration with journalists to develop a feature story on SRHR, FGM and child marriage; youth forums on FGM and child marriage and other harmful practices; online campaigns to commemorate key calendar days on FGM and ending child marriage; and support for young people to develop and submit a position paper with key recommendations on FGM and child marriage and other harmful practices.

Engaging with NHRIs in advancing SRHR and preventing harmful practices – continental workshop to establish an NHRI platform to eliminate FGM

This continental workshop supported and facilitated by SIARP served as a strategic opportunity to position human rights within its programming and to share UNFPA resources and tools to advance work in this field. At the same time, the workshop was used as an opportunity to strengthen country office staff's capacity to apply human rights-based approaches to SRHR. In the best practice model, the forum enabled those without experience to learn first-hand from their peers.

The workshop brought together staff from UNFPA country offices and their counterparts from NHRIs to foster increased collaboration and provided an opportunity to share knowledge across countries and sub-regions in the African continent on experiences and good practice in employing a human rights-based approach to addressing SRHR, GBV and harmful practices. While focused on the African context, presentations were included from other regions (Indonesia and Georgia) to increase the diversity of perspectives on specific interventions and what is possible.

During the workshop, UNFPA's methodology for NHRIs to conduct country assessments and national inquiries on SRHR, GBV and harmful practices, based on its [Guide in Support of National Human Rights Institutions](#) was disseminated as a tool and reference document for participants to exchange experiences of conducting country assessments and national inquiries on these issues and reflect more deeply on numerous aspects that shape programming, including diverse political, social and economic contexts, human and financial resources, and

institutional capacity. Accordingly, country offices and NHRIs collaboratively developed concrete, country-specific action plans for advancing support to NHRIs to address SRHR, GBV and harmful practices.

The usefulness of the workshop was confirmed by the feedback received and stated as a promising practice, as including harmful practice issues in the context of NHRIs will increase accountability. Overall, the workshop demonstrated a meaningful example of peer-to-peer learning. Representatives from some NHRIs present used the opportunity to make concrete plans and proposals for the provision of future bilateral and informal technical support and sharing with their UNFPA country office counterparts. This was particularly important in countries where collaboration was in its initial phases.

SIARP has much added value to bring to this arena, including its expertise on gender and SRHR, which NHRIs have been slow to take up. Learning from its engagement will enable it to hone its approach and further accelerate efforts to support NHRIs in monitoring the right to sexual and reproductive health.

Ten countries that attended the workshop have started work on the road map for working on harmful practices and SRHR in the context of NHRIs.

CSOs reinforce a state's accountability for protecting the rights of women and girls – lessons from Nigeria and Tanzania

Under SIARP, CSOs are key players that are strategically positioned as political bridges between member states and the community at the grassroots level, and between member states including regional bodies, to better advocate and influence the ratification, domestication, enforcement and reporting of human rights. As part of SIARP, UNDP and Equality Now provided dedicated and tailored technical support to two national CSOs – Alliances for Africa in Nigeria and NAFGEM in Tanzania – on the drafting and submission of periodic reports on the rights of women and girls in Africa.

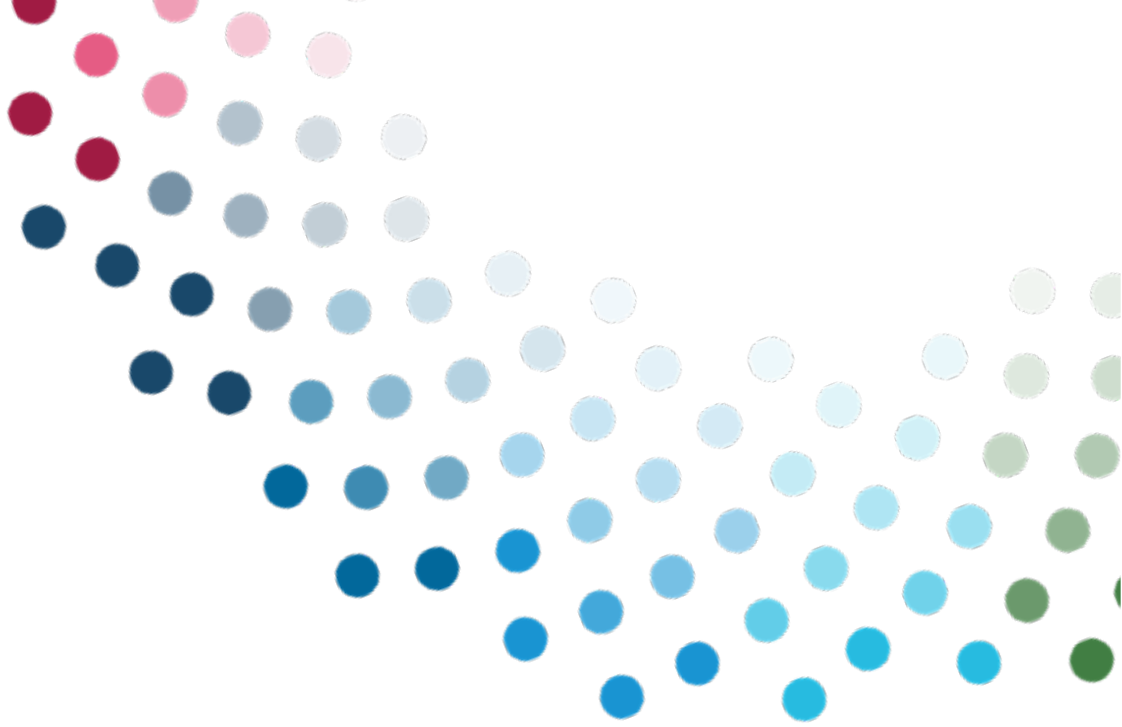
The regular training, shared sessions and engagement in advocacy activities equipped the CSOs with knowledge and skills in promoting the rights of women and girls in Africa. After participating in the training of trainers on shadow or alternative reporting, the two CSOs drafted and completed an alternative report (in the case of Tanzania) and a shadow report (in the case of Nigeria) on the rights of women under the Maputo Protocol for their countries. The preparation of the shadow report on Nigeria's implementation of the Maputo Protocol was led by Alliances for Africa while collaborating on the preparation with a group of 21 organizations in Nigeria

that included women's rights organizations, feminist groups, community-based organizations, academics and professional bodies working on women's rights. The development of an alternative report for Tanzania was supported by 28 CSOs under the coordination of NAFGEM Tanzania. Both reports provided facts, relevant information and recommendations for the Nigerian and Tanzanian governments.

The regular training, shared sessions and engagement in advocacy activities equipped the CSOs with knowledge and skills in promoting the rights of women and girls in Africa. After participating in the training of trainers on shadow or alternative reporting, the two CSOs drafted and completed an alternative report (in the case of Tanzania) and a shadow report (in the case of Nigeria) on the rights of women under the Maputo Protocol for their countries.

Moreover, Equality Now, Alliances for Africa and NAFGEM participated in [the ACHPR 73rd Ordinary Session in Banjul, The Gambia](#). Their participation allowed them to interact with ACHPR and to engage with state representatives and other CSOs. One of the national CSOs (NAFGEM from Tanzania) is applying for observer status in the ACHPR. The regional platform also enabled the two countries to explore the process of submitting the shadow reports to the ACHPR. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is yet to submit its periodic report, and the Nigerian government has not submitted its seventh periodic report on the Maputo Protocol. These reports are vital in providing comprehensive information on the situation of the rights of women and girls including the implementation of the Maputo Protocol, human rights violations faced by women and girls, key recommendations on what the government should do, and key recommendations to ACHPR for holding the nations accountable. The reports are expected to be submitted to ACHPR in 2023 after the two nations submit their periodic reports.





Communications and visibility

Overview

In 2022, SIARP strengthened its communication and visibility efforts through various mechanisms to ensure brand and identity coherence. SIARP continued to communicate the priorities of the programme in the continent through strategic communication and campaigns based on the initiative's results and lessons learned. Accordingly, a comprehensive [communication and visibility strategy](#) with a detailed implementation plan was developed and implemented throughout the year to inform different stakeholders at various levels and raise awareness in the target communities through a credible and consistent flow of information and accessible knowledge products about the programme.

In addition, during the reporting period, through the leadership of the SIARP coordination unit, a communication focal points group drawn from the African Union Commission, European Union and RUNOs was established, and a monthly communication focal points meeting was launched to deliberate on the communication and visibility efforts aimed at strengthening teamwork and fostering collaboration between the focal points of different key stakeholders and, more specifically, to constantly ensure

visibility across organizations and throughout programme implementation. In 2022, three monthly meetings were conducted that resulted in clear actionable takeaway points.

SIARP has employed various information-sharing mechanisms and channels, including the websites and social media of the relevant RUNOs and partners (the African Union Commission, CSOs, European Union, etc.) to promote the regional programme. During this reporting period, the programme used the Global Programme to End Child Marriage and RUNOs Facebook, website and Twitter account to spread the message. Some social media coverage included recognition of the contribution of the programme (see [link 1](#), [link 2](#), [link 3](#), [link 4](#), [link 5](#), [link 6](#), [link 7](#), [link 8](#), [link 9](#), [link 10](#), [link 11](#), [link 12](#), [link 13](#), [link 14](#), [link 15](#)), engagement in advocacy events and programme activities (see [link 1](#), [link 2](#), [link 3](#), [link 4](#), [link 5](#), [link 6](#), [link 7](#), [link 8](#), [link 9](#), [link 10](#), [link 11](#), [link 12](#), [link 13](#), [link 14](#), [link 15](#), [link 16](#), [link 17](#), [link 18](#), [link 19](#)), knowledge management updates (see [link 1](#), [link 2](#), [link 3](#), [link 4](#), [link 5](#), [link 6](#), [link 7](#), [link 8](#), [link 9](#), [link 10](#), [link 11](#), [link 12](#)) and stories about its impact (see [link 1](#), [link 2](#), [link 3](#), [link 4](#)).

Messages

During the reporting period, the following key messages on various thematic areas (climate change, domestic and family violence, women's empowerment, harmful practices, sexual and reproductive health, and engagement of civil

societies) have been endorsed and communicated to the target internal and external audiences identified under the communication strategy through the various platforms and communication channels.

1. “Civil society organizations are motors for transformation at the community level and should guide actions to ensure the impact on the ground”, Thomas Huyghebaert, Head of Policy and Cooperation, European Union delegation to the African Union.
2. “Domestic, sexual violence, and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation or child marriage, have harmful consequences of the physical and psychological health of women and girls, and prevent them from achieving full socio-economic development”, declared Florence Raes, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women West and Central Africa, in her opening remarks.
3. “UN Women recognizes the critical role that CSOs and women’s network human rights defenders (WHRDs) play to advocate and work towards ending sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices on the continent”, Sunita Caminha, policy specialist in ending violence against women, UN Women East and Southern Africa.
4. “Given the unique challenges the women human rights defenders (WHRDs) face including gender-based discrimination and violence, it is imperative to strengthen protection mechanisms that respond to their specific concerns. Hence, the model guide and guidelines developed by Equality Now for AU member states is very critical and timely”, Azmera Kassahun, Programme Coordinator of SIARP at UN Women.
5. “Spotlight Initiative in Africa have been a game-changer regarding gender-based violence and ending violence against women and girls”, Adekeni Ndieli, UN Women Head of Office, Uganda.
6. Women living with disabilities have the right to equal job opportunities.
7. Fifteen of the twenty countries with the highest rates of child marriage in the world are in Africa.
8. Promoting laws and policies is needed to prevent violence and discrimination and address impunity.
9. FGM is an illegal practice and should not be seen as an alternative means of generating income.
10. Involving men and boys is crucial to eliminating violence against women and girls.
11. Gender norms, attitudes and behaviours need to be promoted by engaging men and boys.
12. The participation of civil society organizations in governance and decision-making is at the heart of the fight to end gender-based violence.

Media and visibility events

It is strongly believed that selecting effective and appropriate communication channels is critical to achieving the objectives. Accordingly, SIARP used traditional media in addition to social media platforms to deliver the messages, demonstrate the impact to the intended audiences, and advocate for women’s and girls’ rights. Accordingly, the following media and visibility events were organized during the reporting period.

Global Learning Symposium: A platform that exhibited the real impact behind the big ideas: SIARP participated in the first-ever global learning symposium organized by the Spotlight Initiative Global Secretariat, with the theme ‘Galvanizing our Gains: Past, present, and future’. The symposium took place from 16 to 18 September 2022 in Cancún, Mexico, and brought together close to 200 Spotlight Initiative communities and stakeholders, including representatives from government and civil societies from 25 countries across the globe ([read more](#)).

Positive masculinity to combat gender-based violence: The Government of Senegal through the support of SIARP launched the African Union Youth Consultation on the theme ‘Accelerating actions and promoting positive masculinity to end violence against women and girls’ ahead of the second African Union Men’s Conference on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

The consultation took place on 8 November 2022 in Dakar, Senegal ([read more](#)).

11th Annual Technical Consultation of the Joint Programme in The Gambia: With the support of SIARP, the joint programme held its 11th annual technical consultation, bringing together stakeholders from 17 African countries, and beyond, to discuss strategies, share experiences and reaffirm the global promise to end FGM by 2030. The forum also discussed the road map for ending FGM in the next nine years, in line with the UN’s SDGs ([read more](#)).

Ground-breaking innovative solutions for ending FGM on the continent: The FGM Innovation HackLab Initiative supports Africa’s young people and youth organizations in developing innovative solutions to end FGM. The initiative was organized by UNFPA, SIARP and the global UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM ([read more](#)).

CSRRG workshop: The CSRRG organized a workshop in April 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya, to present its first work plan. The CSRRG developed four work areas and assigned members to lead and catalyse action in each work area. At the end of June 2022, the CSRRG was finalizing the detailed budget of the work areas ([press release](#)).

Men's and Boys' Networks Regional Dialogue Forum on 12 and 13 May 2022, Nairobi, Kenya: This forum brought together men's and boys' networks, women's rights organizations, religious leaders, regional partners and other stakeholders to strengthen the capacity of men's and boys' networks to promote positive changes in social norms to advance gender equality ([press release](#)).

The 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights (ACSHR): SIARP partnered with Purposeful and the African Federation for Sexual Health and Rights for the 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights, held from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in Freetown, Sierra Leone, with the theme 'Accelerating the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence in Africa'. Delegates from the regional programme were present at the conference to share breakthroughs where resources are powering civil society efforts to end VAWG in Africa ([conference report](#)).

CSOs knowledge sharing forum: CSOs from East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa held a knowledge sharing forum to learn, network and adopt promising practices on ending VAWG and harmful practices and promoting SRHR, including engaging key African Union processes, held on 6 and 7 July 2022 and on 9 and 10 August 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Dakar, Senegal, respectively ([press release 1](#), [press release 2](#)).

Regional CSO and Women's Movement Forum on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls: SIARP in partnership with Partners in Sexual Health organized the 2022 Eastern and Southern Africa Regional CSO and Women's Movement Forum to influence the African Union and global policy processes on ending VAWG, held on 3 and 4 August 2022

in Cape Town, South Africa ([press release](#), [outcome document](#)).

Eliminating VAWG data coordination training: SIARP in partnership with APHRC organized a workshop to strengthen the capacity of the African Union Commission, RECs, CSOs and women's rights organizations in the use of data to combat VAWG. The five-day capacity-strengthening workshop took place from 19 to 23 September in Senegal ([press release](#), [newsletter](#)).

Consultation to support partnerships between the African Union, regional faith-based organizations and communities of traditional leaders: Traditional, religious and faith-based organizations from all regions of Africa met for the second time on 3 and 4 November in Addis Ababa and launched 'Guidelines to Support Engagement with Traditional and Regional Leaders' with key recommendations for traditional and faith leaders, the African Union Commission, and development partners on strengthening partnerships to respond to GBV in Africa. Leaders developed key recommendations that were presented at the second Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity that took place on 9 and 10 November in Dakar, Senegal ([press release](#), [social media](#), [newsletter](#)).

Regional dialogue between AU and regional CSOs Actors and Member States to promote and advocate for an enabling legal and policy environment for CSOs to operate and advocate for women's rights: With the support and collaboration of SIARP, COCAFEM held the first of two high-level dialogues on 19 and 20 January in Brazzaville, Congo. The dialogue served as a platform to support CSOs in advocating for rural women's rights in West and Central Africa ([report](#), [newsletter](#)).

Campaigns

- SIARP organized a dedicated side event entitled 'Breakthrough moments under Spotlight Initiative where resources and programming are powering civil society efforts to end violence against women and girls' at the 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights in Sierra Leone. The session objective included highlighting how SIARP has been engaging women's rights organizations and CSOs to collectively advocate and work towards ending SGBV and harmful practices on the continent, and analysing the legislative and policy environment on VAWG in Africa.
- The African Union with the support of SIARP launched the Campaign to [End Child Marriage Community of Practice](#) which aims to support cross-learning, capacity-building follow-up of country action plans and technical needs assessment and dissemination of key campaign resources and provide a forum for engaging child representatives in advocacy actions. The launch event took place on 19 April 2022 and had broad representation from key

African Union stakeholders, including the African Union Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa. The convener, HRM (Arc.) King Adedapo Aderemi, and Hon. Lady Justice Imani Aboud, the President of Africa's People's and Human Rights Court, marked the start of a series of planned learning events where member states and key stakeholders, such as traditional leaders, children and women representatives, education institutions, CSOs and UN agencies, highlighted cross-fertilizing key approaches, evidence and legislative actions that can be adapted and scaled up to accelerate the end of child marriage.

- The 2022 Day of the African Child was celebrated on 16 June under the theme 'Eliminating harmful practices affecting children: progress on policy and practice since 2013'. To commemorate the event, UNICEF African Union Liaison Office in collaboration with UNICEF Ethiopia Country Office organized a film screening of the UNICEF mini-series *Vaillante* which focuses on young girls' journeys in the face of marriage. The film was screened

in four high schools in Addis Ababa city, Amhara (Addis Zemen town) and Oromia regions (Chiro town) in Ethiopia. In total around 1,506 students in all the locations attended the screening and dialogue sessions. Local government representatives, school officials and some community members also took part in the event.

- The UNICEF Office to the African Union also produced a podcast series on the theme of the Day of the African Child and highlighted key recommendations to reinvigorate the commitment to end harmful practices (child marriage, FGM) in Africa. The podcast series

featured [Dr Najat Maalla Mjid](#), Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, Hermine G. Kembo, ACERWC Special Rapporteur on ending child marriage, [Dr Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda](#), Goodwill Ambassador for the African Union campaign on ending child marriage, [Prudence Ngwenya](#), Acting Director of the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate of the African Union Commission, [Dr Edward Addai](#), UNICEF Representative to the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa, and [Nankali Maksud](#), Senior Child Protection Adviser, UNICEF.

Human interest stories

MALE CHAMPIONS RESCUING GIRLS FROM FGM

Chemutai Real, 22, is from Uganda. She is one of the brave girls in her community who refused to be cut and was rejected by her parents. However, with the support of male champions, she escaped the situation and convinced her parents of the consequences of FGM.



This is Tirivashe Jelem from Zimbabwe, who took part in the 2021 TuWezeshe Spotlight cohort. In this story, Tirivashe shared her learning experience about the training, which was focused on leadership, research, power and agency, gender and patriarchy, with a special focus on FGM. She also highlighted how the platform helped her to expand her network with fellows from several European countries. Currently, she is working as an intern at FORWARD. TuWezeshe Spotlight Fellows: [Tiri's TuWezeshe Journey | FORWARD \(forwarduk.org.uk\)](#)



A CALL FOR TOUGHER ACTIONS TO END FGM IN UGANDA

This is the story of six girls from Uganda who survived forced FGM and child marriage during the COVID-19 pandemic.



RECLAIMING MY DIGNITY – BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN MOZAMBIQUE

Sarudzai Saize, 26, is from Mozambique. She was able to break the cycle of violence and become an inspiration to other women in her village. She lives in her own house, runs a hairdressing business and is the president of the local enterprise group.



Testimonials

In 2022, a considerable number of high-profile personalities, decision-makers and influencers were engaged on the various platforms organized under SIARP and emphasized the need for strong coordination, resource mobilization and commitment from the various regional, sub-regional and international actors, including the member states, to systematically fight GBV and harmful practices, which are the fundamental problems of women's and girls' rights. Below are some of the testimonials captured during the year.

[Testimonial video](#) about CSO forum and the [article on EVAWG data coordination training](#)

Mr Awudu Ahmed Gumah, Head of Planning, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation, ECOWAS Gender Development Center: “The regional action plan for Africa on EVAWG will have a critical role in sustaining the momentum towards addressing the issue of violence against women and girls. Up until now, what we have tried to do at the regional, sub-regional and member states levels is adopt policies and frameworks and try to domesticate them including [African Union] Agenda 2063, SDGs, Maputo Protocol, and other instruments that seek to address VAWG. However, we didn't have a regional framework that brings together diverse stakeholders on the implementation and monitoring of strategies and actions on EVAWG. I believe the development of the Regional Action Plan is a very innovative regional framework bringing together all stakeholders to effectively address the issue of VAWG.”

Ms Abimbola Aladejare Salako, Member of the CSRRG, Nigeria: “The Regional Action Plan for Africa on EVAWG in my opinion is a powerful tool that will help the continent to advance its cause when it comes to ending violence against

women and girls. Examining the document thoroughly it provides guidance, protocols, and structures for which all forms of VAWG can be addressed. The important aspect for me is that it puts the survivors and women & girls at the center of the programme. I believe [the plan] will go a long way to eliminate all forms of VAWG in Africa.”

Miguel Jambo, Programmes Director, GCR, Mozambique: “Girl Child Rights (GCR) is a local CSO based in Mozambique that works to promote and advance women's rights. Under the Spotlight Initiative, we are operating in three districts, Mossurize, Tambara, and Gondola, and we were able to build the self-confidence of women, as they were being economically empowered. The most significant achievement that we can share is the legalization of 24 women-led businesses in the districts. Within that, we have a success story of a woman with a disability who was pregnant at 17. Because she has a disability, her husband decided to leave her. Based on that, she joined the Spotlight Initiative and built on her skills, and started her own business. Today we can say that she is a president leading a women-led business at a community level and she is also helping other women to build their self-confidence and access business opportunities on a community level, as they are reducing and preventing cases of GBV.”

[Social media campaign](#) articulating commitments and statements by a range of high-level personalities on positive actions to address thematic issues.

Photos

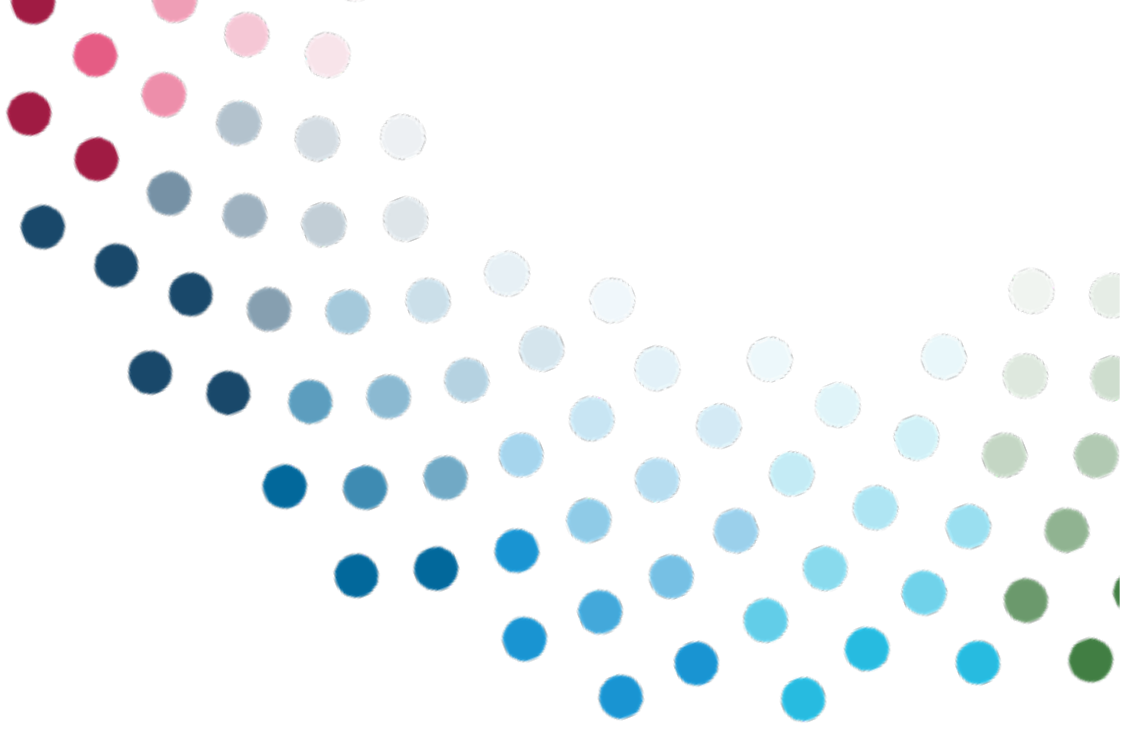
All accompanying photos were uploaded to [PHOTO SUBMISSION PLATFORM](#).

Videos

The following are the main videos produced during this reporting period under SIARP:

- The SIARP programme coordination unit produced a 90-second video that features four real-life stories from the African region and the ways that SIARP supported these and other women and girls in having the right to make their own choices – whether it relates to education, profession, financial independence or raising confidence. [Watch the animated video here.](#)
- SIARP continued advocating for the rights of women and girls in this year's 16 days of activism against GBV. [Here is the message from the Regional Programme Coordinator.](#)
- SIARP followed participatory engagement approach while developing regional strategic documents. [This video](#) shows interactive session of the EVAWG regional action plan validation event.
- This is a song about FGM which has been produced by one of the Tuwezeshe Fellows with support from the Spotlight Initiative. The song has subtitles and very powerful messages – it is sung in Mandinka, Wolof and English. [‘No more cut’ song.](#)
- [SIARP joint annual review and planning workshop](#), ‘Better Coordination for Effective Engagement and Harmonization’, parts one and two – these are short videos from the first joint annual review and planning workshop that brought together participants from the regional programme and the eight Spotlight countries.
- At the global level, UNICEF partnership with the Spotlight Initiative [premiered the screening of Vaillante](#) on the sidelines of the 66th Commission of Status of Women in New York. Vaillante is a fictional three-part mini-series that follows the intertwined stories of two female protagonists and their painful experiences with child marriage.
- [Media training on harmful practices for East and Southern Africa overview](#) and [reflections from media training participants.](#)
- 2021 Innovation winners message from the three countries: [2021 Innovator's message to 2022 applicants: Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Uganda.](#)

CSO Partnerships at the heart of the fight to end sexual and gender-based violence.



Sustainability

The Spotlight Initiative is currently developing a sustainability plan to be finalized by April 2023. The plan will scale up strategic actions in consultation with the African Union, RUNOs, CSRRG, implementing partners and other regional bodies. This approach will strengthen a high degree of ownership, sustainability and continuity of action through the African Union and its member states. Commitments enshrined in African Union instruments/protocols such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child will be used as the basis for sustaining actions, including the principles of 'leaving no one behind' and 'the Africa we want', and delivering on aspirations including ending all forms of GBV and harmful practices.

The wide consultation approach taken during the development of the SIARP sustainability plan is acknowledgement of the critical role that regional partners and diverse stakeholders have and continue to play in the effectiveness of the programme and will be validated and approved by the Africa Regional Programme Steering Committee, which is the highest governing body.



The community of practice and learning platform

will continue to support governments to align with and strengthen existing legislation, policies and systems, including on service delivery for survivors of GBV and harmful practices, while avoiding duplication or creating new mechanisms. This approach will ensure adherence to existing normative frameworks, while maximizing resources, knowledge sharing and services, and guaranteeing national ownership and sustainability.

SIARP is also leveraging the existing capacity-building efforts that have been delivered through a structure drawn from and instituted into the African Union Commission and other regional bodies' systems as well as member state institutions. These include capacity building on data and evidence use, operationalization of the accountability framework and the African Union Gender Observatory. Such efforts will strengthen oversight of implementing relevant African Union legal instruments and hold member states accountable for commitments to women, girls and ending VAWG and GBV.

Technical positions seconded will be retained by the African Union Commission to sustain the programme coordination, knowledge management and communication, and the monitoring and evaluation functions supported. Sustainability will also be ensured through the roll-out of data analysis guidelines that is being incorporated as part of the in-service training of personnel as well as using the pool of trained statisticians (from francophone and Anglophone countries) that will cascade training/e-learning and in-country technical support to build the capacity of other statisticians, institutions and CSOs.

The Spotlight Initiative knowledge products developed under the three outcome areas will serve as resource guides to regional, sub-regional and national stakeholders in effectively responding and preventing VAWG beyond the duration of the Spotlight Initiative programme. For instance, the regional action plan for Africa is an overarching and cutting-edge regional framework that would accelerate the prevention of and response to VAWG, as regional partners and member states will know where to refer to when developing or improving action plans for EVAWG.



The African Union Commission regards sustaining action initiated and supported through SIARP as a strategic priority. The partnerships built and the approaches developed, tested and launched will be important pillars for the Commission's work in 2024 and beyond. To this end, multiple investment partnerships are being developed with international partners, including the UN, the World Bank, donor countries and international donor organizations. These efforts go hand in hand with wrap-up activities under the African Union Commission SIARP in 2023 to demonstrate progress, knowledge products and their dissemination and expanded advocacy on investing in continental gender equality and eliminating VAWG at the African Union Commission. Concrete actions will be incorporated in the ongoing sustainability strategy document.

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Everyone has a responsibility to
PREVENT & END
violence against
women & girls

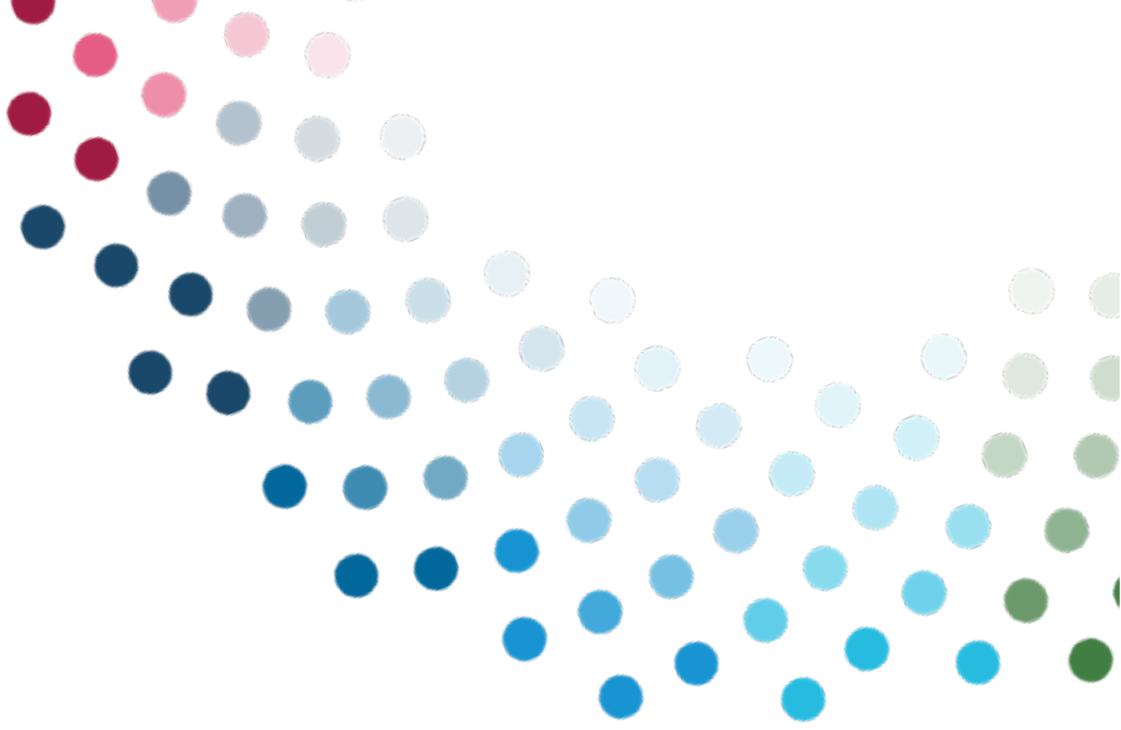


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Next steps

In the last year of the regional programme (2023), most of the priority will be finalizing what was started in 2022. The programme will focus on consolidating and documenting the regional programme results and disseminating the

learning and promising practices of the regional programme. Based on the no-cost extension plan, the following table summarizes major interventions that will be implemented in each outcome under the two streams.

Pillar 1	Pillar 5	Pillar 6
STREAM I		
<p>Support the African Union Commission in the training of youth advocates for the reduction and prevention of harmful practices</p> <p>Launch and disseminate the assessment studies and strategic documents that are in the pipeline</p> <p>Organize a regional roll-out workshop on the regional action plan for Africa on EVAWG with an M&E framework</p> <p>Capacity-building training for regional partners on drafting and reviewing of laws and policies that guarantee the ability of WHRDs</p>	<p>Roll out and disseminate the harmonized and standardized data collection toolkit on VAWG/SGBV/ harmful practices and SRHR</p> <p>Finalize and make publicly available the online version of the contextualized curriculum on the VAWG prevalence survey to the African continent that specifically includes modules on FGM and harmful practices</p>	<p>Provide financial and technical support to the CSRRG to effectively coordinate and provide oversight on the implementation of international and regional commitments on gender equality and women’s rights</p> <p>Convene an annual regional CSO and women’s movement forum on EVAWG, SGBV/harmful practices and SRHR to influence the African Union and global policy agenda on ending such practices and promoting SRHR in West and Central Africa</p>

STREAM I

Capacity-building for regional partners and CSOs on the development and implementation of action plans and increased financing for the elimination of VAWG

Dissemination and use of the guidelines for state reporting to member states on the rights of women and girls, and undertaking fact-finding missions in selected member states to investigate special cases on women's rights

Launch and translate 'guide and guidelines' which is developed to support and protect the rights of women's rights defenders

Organize two regional dialogues between the African Union and regional CSO actors and member states in West and Central Africa

Finalize the recruitment of the webmaster consultant to design, develop and operationalize the African Union Gender Observatory website aligned with the current African Union Commission communication guidelines and aimed at facilitating the dissemination of the findings and gender-related reports. The gender observatory will be fully operationalized

Provide capacity-building training for networks of regional CSOs (including networks of rural women, women living in conflict-affected areas, women with disabilities and women living with HIV/AIDS) to fast-track, monitor and report on the implementation of regional African Union instruments including the Maputo Protocol, Agenda 2063 and the African Union Commission Gender Strategy on VAWG/harmful practices and SRHR

Convene a high-level multi-stakeholder continental summit on the sidelines of the African Union summit to showcase, network and ensure cross-learning of CSOs, women's CSOs, African Union member states, African Union

STREAM II

Organize high-level panels with focus on strategic issues related to child marriage and FGM during the International Day of Zero Tolerance

Organize international conference focusing on yearly strategic thematic issue on FGM

Convene ending child marriage biannual forum to develop a road map of programming and global programme document to achieve the SDG by 2030

Develop intergovernmental and institutionalized cross-border initiatives to address the dynamics of FGM in selected neighbouring countries

Support ACERWC in strengthening oversight on implementation of relevant African Union instruments, and hold member states accountable

Build the capacity of and support regional and national human rights institutions in disseminating and advocating full implementation of resolutions and recommendations from the different human rights instruments on FGM

Organize technical assistance missions to strengthen and support the use of evidence-based information and provide technical support on programme implementation in countries supported by both the joint programme and the Spotlight Initiative

Complete validation and development of social and behaviour change module for MICS and DHS

Build the capacity of national women's rights groups, youth movements and CSOs on social accountability to advocate and influence the national-level responses in implementing policy commitments and legal provisions in ending child marriage and addressing FGM

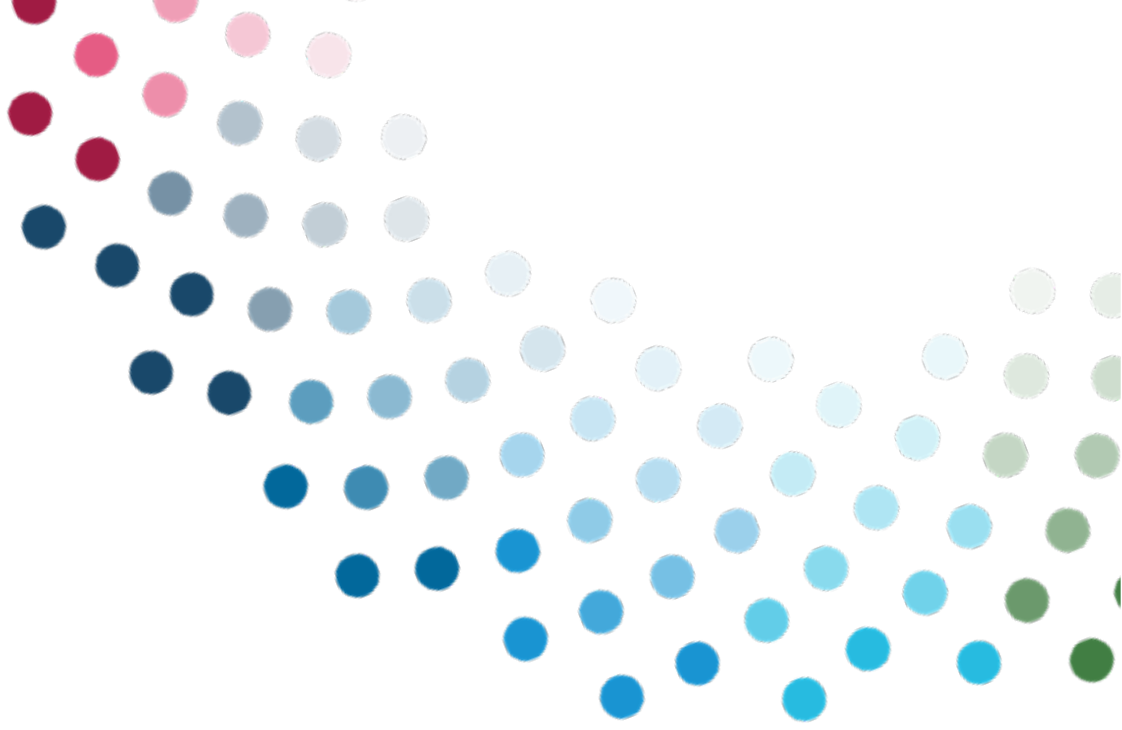
Undertake a regional-level media campaign on the progress, achievements and challenges in addressing FGM in Africa, including a focus on the African Union campaign on FGM

Undertake a regional-level coordinated CSO movement for lobbying for and advocating the elimination of FGM and protecting the rights of girls and women

Organize an innovation forum and the third innovation challenge (2023)

In addition to the above implementation priorities, operationally the regional programme will focus on the finalization of the sustainability plan and exit strategy, develop and implement the programme's closure plan,

ensure the documentation and dissemination of the knowledge management products, document the end-of-programme report, facilitate thematic and end-of-term evaluation, facilitate effective closure and handover.



Annexes

Annex A Regional result indicators

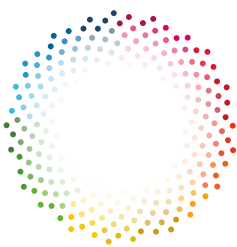
Annex B Risk matrix

Annex C CSO engagement

Annex D Promising practices and knowledge management products

Annex E Annual work plan 2023





Spotlight Initiative

To eliminate violence against women and girls

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:

