

**GIRLS FIRST INITIATIVE**  
**IMPACT REPORT**  
**2023**

# NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

## HELLO COMMUNITY!



Girls First Initiative experienced remarkable achievement and growth in 2023. We celebrated various milestones and made substantial contributions to empowering girls and breaking down obstacles. However, like with any voyage, it was not without its hurdles. It was a bittersweet year that taught us significant lessons and reinforced our resolve to make the future brighter for all girls. Together, we will continue to push the envelope and create a lasting difference.

We've come a long way toward giving young women the skills they need to reach their full potential and fight for the rights they deserve.

All eyes should be on the accomplishments listed in this yearly report. We built on our previous record of extraordinary performance.

We believe in altering people's perspectives and putting an end to the undervaluation of girls' abilities by establishing a network of strong young women and girls who can utilize their talents to advocate for equality.

We appreciate your unwavering commitment to GFI.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**DorcasBahati Mgogwe**





# About Us

## Introduction

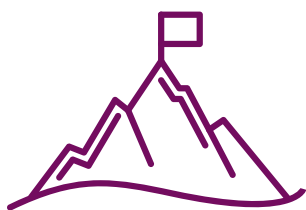
The Girls First Initiative (GFI) in Tanzania is a non-profit organization that advocates for and elevates the voices of young women and girls, particularly those who are vulnerable to sexual harassment. The organization's mission is to defend women and girls' constitutionally guaranteed rights. GFI works to eliminate the social and economic conditions that make girls more susceptible to sexual assault, including the lack of access to health services, education, and economic opportunity.





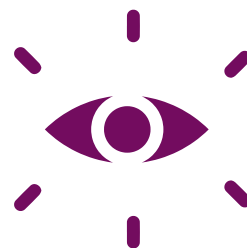


## Our Mission



To promote and amplify the girl's voice and choices through encouraging access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, entrepreneurship skills, and innovation training.

## Our Vision



A society in which young women have complete control over their lives, are immune to sexual assault, and live in an environment free from harassment and abuse.





# Linkages to Sustainable Development Goals



### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



- We work to ensure that all girls, regardless of where they live, have access to quality sexual and reproductive health care, which includes family planning, information and education, and advocate for the incorporation of reproductive health into national plans.

### 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



- GFI's efforts in the field of education is to ensure that all students have access to a quality education, regardless of their gender.

### 5 GENDER EQUALITY



- GFI works to help all girls and young women achieve their full potential by providing them with equal access to career-related information, resources, opportunities, mentorship, and coaching.

### 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



- GFI provides resources and job-readiness training to young women and girls in order to encourage economic growth, employment, and decent work.





# 2023 Review



# Girl Network Tanzania (GNT) Launch

“

Adolescents and young women constitute 20 % of the global population. They should have the assurance of not just having an opportunity to express their opinions but also having a genuine influence in important issues that are actually significant to them.

”

On March 20, 2023, we established GNT, a platform designed for girls and young women to empower themselves and shape their own lives and futures. This is achieved through organizing events that facilitate the sharing of skills and introspection, as well as fostering accountability partnerships and sisterhood circles within the community, all under the umbrella of Girls Network. The Network provides adolescent girls and young women with access to opportunities, resources, skills, mentorship, and coaching services while treating them with respect and dignity.

The objective of this network is to establish a community of outstanding young women information, who are motivated to utilize their abilities to advocate for fairness and justice.





# Raising Msichana Kwanza Users to 3000+

In 2023, our user base grew from 2000 to over 3,000 active users on the site due to the inclusion of SRHR and human rights education courses. The objective of each of these courses is to provide instruction to girls and young women on essential human rights and how to actively support and promote those rights.

The objective of the Msichana Kwanza ([www.msichnakwanza.org](http://www.msichnakwanza.org)) Online Hub is to empower young women and girls by providing them with the necessary resources to assume control over their lives.

This platform serves as a comprehensive source where they may access all the information and tools required to excel in their professional endeavors and entrepreneurial pursuits.

This online community is dedicated to promoting gender equality by providing young women with the necessary materials to engage in economic decision-making and enjoy the benefits of their work.



# Scholarship partnership with European Business University of Luxembourg

In 2023, we entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U) with the European Business University of Luxembourg. Through this collaboration, we are jointly offering scholarships.

Every year, there are 10 students who pursue a master's degree in Business Administration, one student who pursues a bachelor's degree, and eight students who enroll in industrial certificate courses.

Our objective in the realm of education is to guarantee equal access to a high-quality education for all students, irrespective of their gender.



“This three-year  
collaboration will enable us  
to extend our reach to over  
30 girls by the end of 2026.”





# Project UPDATES





# This is my circle:



Girls and women face a lot of negative consequences when society stigmatizes menstruation. This includes a lack of education about the period, damaging attitudes, poor hygiene habits, social exclusion, and more. Because of this, a lot of women and girls experience feelings of shame when they are menstruating. There is a severe lack of education and understanding regarding the menstrual cycle in Tanzanian society, and associated religious and social misconceptions run deep.

By using creative and engaging approaches, the educational project "This is My Cycle" aims to educate teenage boys and girls about menstruation in an effort to reduce the shame, ignorance, and socio-cultural misconceptions that surround the subject. By raising awareness among educators, disseminating instructional materials, supplying menstrual hygiene items, and establishing support networks, it helps to improve the frequently unfriendly school atmosphere for girls who experience menstruation.

We held a four-day school awareness program for over 200 students at Nzasa Primary and Mbagala Secondary between March and May of 2023. The program aims to educate primary school girls (ages 9–12) about menstruation and the resources available to them as they start to experience it. As part of our efforts to raise awareness, we held a "big brother, little brother" session where mentors and mentees talked about menstruation and how the boys can help keep women and girls safe during this time.





## My Data Our Health:

The present public discourse pertaining to data governance centers on concerns concerning the privacy of individuals and the security of data. However, individual privacy and security must be balanced with the health requirements of the population when it comes to health, particularly for young women and girls who are more likely to disclose more private health information.

As a result, organizations, citizens, and women and girls in their diversity must scrutinize health data governance, including data security and privacy. This requires participation at multiple levels in order to ascertain the individuals or entities that dictate the methods by which data is gathered, administered, utilized, stored, and discarded. Recognize the boundaries of that authority. Once more, guarantee that information gathered from individuals is utilized for the betterment of public health.

Identify the appropriate level of access and control that individuals should have regarding their health data, and guarantee that such ownership and control are safeguarded.

In 2023, we commenced the My Data, Our Health campaign alongside nine (9) other organizations spanning East Africa. This initiative aims to foster confidence in the entities responsible for gathering and utilizing our health information, while also ensuring that it is utilized to promote our present and future well-being.

To educate the public about the significance of health governance, the campaign included journalist interview training, a sensitization meeting with government officials and a youth and women-led organization, and an online campaign.





# Girls Network Tanzania

Girls Network provides a platform for young women to assert control over their lives and choose their future. This Network provides adolescent girls and young women with access to opportunities, resources, skills, mentorship, and coaching services, while treating them with respect and dignity.

This network utilizes peer-to-peer events, introspective sessions, and skill-sharing events to empower young women and girls, enabling them to fully fulfill their potential and effectively express their opinions on relevant matters. The Network's mission is to establish a collective of outstanding young women who are motivated to utilize their abilities in advocating for fairness and justice.





# Msichana Kwanza Platform



On a global scale, women have greater challenges securing jobs compared to men. As per the International Labor Organization (ILO), in Tanzania, the probability of employment for male graduates stands at 72 percent, whereas for female graduates it is only 47 percent. Women frequently encounter challenges in securing desired employment opportunities, in addition to facing a low employment rate. Women outnumber men in temporary and part-time employment, as well as in low-wage industries and professions.

Msichana Kwanza Online Hub is a comprehensive platform designed for girls and young women. It serves as a community that offers various resources and training to enhance their self-awareness and prepare them for the workforce. The hub provides valuable information and support to help them make informed decisions about their career development and explore entrepreneurship opportunities. This online center aims to ensure gender equality by promoting equal rights and opportunities for girls and young women in making and implementing economic decisions, as well as sharing in the resulting advantages. You can join the platform through [www.msichnakwanza.org](http://www.msichnakwanza.org)

# Mimi ni Nani Journal

No one would ever say that growing up is easy. In the best of circumstances, everyone experiences a period of self-discovery, a period of coming to terms with physical changes, and a period of growing pains (both literal and metaphorical). Teenage girls need resources to help them translate information and tools to help them create secure spaces for themselves.

Mimi ni nani means "who am I?" in Swahili, and this journal is designed to assist teenage girls in finding out who they are by encouraging them to reflect on their own lives from a variety of angles and draw wisdom from their experiences.

The diary is intended to help girls recognize their own strengths and take advantage of their opportunities at school, at home, and in their communities, as well as to assist them in asserting their own autonomy, developing healthy relationships with others, and achieving their goals.







# Event and Highlights:





# Commemoration of Women's Day 2023

The problem of gender-based violence (GBV) is severe in Tanzania. Out of every 100 women and girls in Tanzania aged 15 to 49, 40 have encountered physical abuse, while 17 have encountered sexual violence.

To commemorate International Women's Day in 2023, TANGIBLE Tanzania hosted an exhibition in which GFI took part. During the event, we showcased the Msichana kwanza platform, which utilizes technology and innovation to address gender-based violence. The event attracted an audience of more than 300 individuals.

## Girls Konnect

During our quarterly "Girls Konnect" events, young women and girls can reestablish friendships, open up about personal and professional struggles, and work toward personal and professional goals with the support of peer "accountability partners." This program aims to empower women and girls to reach their full potential, advance in their careers, and make their voices heard. Inspiring young women to be self-reliant, creative problem solvers, and achieve personal and professional success is our top priority. People who share similar interests will be able to meet at this event.

In 2023, we held one Girls Konnect session in August and one in December to assist girls in taking stock of their annual goals and planning for how to better achieve them in the following three months. We took stock of 2023, commemorated our first year of community growth, and planned for 2024 in December, all the while forming accountability partners and solidarity circles.





# Field Day with Camera for Girls

Girls and women in Africa encounter numerous barriers to achieving their job aspirations, such as limited prospects, cultural prejudice, institutionalized harassment, and gender bias.

The Cameras For Girls organization strives to empower African women by enabling them to document their stories and, crucially, obtain remunerative employment. Our students are equipped with a camera to retain and participate in a comprehensive year-long 4-phase training program focused on photography and business skills. This curriculum empowers them to express themselves and graphically document their story.

In November 2023, we organized a field day event called "Camera for Girls" in our program. This event provided female students with the opportunity to engage in hands-on field sessions to practice their photography abilities while documenting our impact stories. During the event, the students had the chance to interact with our staff, beneficiaries, and management.







# Inhouse Highlights:



# Help us break the **taboo** and **knowledge gap** about **menstrual health** through **comics!**



Your donation will ensure

- The development and design of the comic
- Printing and distribution of 150 comics and informational materials to girls and boys
- The implementation of future workshops in both urban and rural schools and awareness campaigns among teachers
- The distribution of 150 reusable sanitary pads to adolescent girls
- More girls being confident, knowledgeable and proud of their body and menstrual hygiene

[\*\*Click Here to Donate\*\*](#)



We are also part of a featured organization of the Girls Opportunity Alliance under the Obama Foundation. The Girls Opportunity Alliance seeks to empower adolescent girls around the world through education, allowing them to achieve their full potential.

Working together, we are committed to the noble cause of raising funds to provide mentorship opportunities to young girls attending school under the supervision of mentors (Big Sisters).

Our main goal in providing young girls with such good and inspiring role models is to inspire them, showing them they can actually aim and realize whatever ambition they dare to envision.



# Our work on “Advancing Women’s Right” has been featured in the Global Shapers Impact 2022/2023 Report

[Click Here to Read The Report](#)

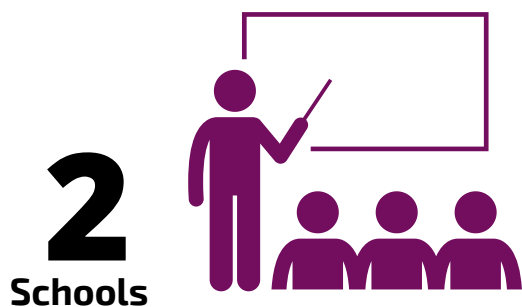
# Overall Reach



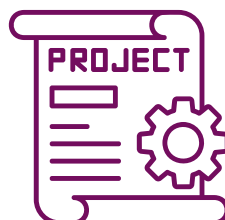
**3500+**  
Beneficiaries



**3** Events



**2**  
Schools



**2** Projects



A close-up photograph of a young woman with dark skin, wearing a white hijab and a white school uniform. She is looking down at a notebook, with her hands visible at the bottom of the frame. The background is blurred, showing other people in similar uniforms. The image has a soft, warm lighting. There are pink rectangular overlays in the top right and bottom left corners.

# What's Next 2024?

As we step into the new year, 2024 holds the promise of various advancements, challenges, and innovations across different aspects of our lives. At the heart of this dynamic landscape, Girls First Initiative is poised to make a significant impact, particularly through an array of engaging social events and activities.

### **1. Empowering Social Events:**

The Girls First Initiative is dedicated to organizing empowering social events that foster inclusivity, encourage dialogue, and celebrate the achievements of girls and women in various fields. These events will provide a platform for networking, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas, creating an environment conducive to personal and professional growth.

### **2. Community Engagement:**

A core aspect of the Girls First Initiative's mission is community engagement. Throughout 2024, Girls First Initiative aims to connect with communities on local and global scales. Through outreach programs, workshops, and collaborative projects, we strive to create a positive impact on the lives of girls, ensuring they have access to education, mentorship, and opportunities for personal development.

### **3. Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns:**

In line with its commitment to creating a more equitable society, Girls First Initiative plans to roll out advocacy and awareness campaigns throughout the year. These campaigns will address key issues affecting girls and women, promoting understanding, empathy, and a collective effort towards dismantling barriers that hinder progress.

### **4. Technology for Empowerment:**

Recognizing the transformative power of technology, Girls First Initiative will leverage digital platforms to amplify its message and reach a broader audience. Webinars, online forums, and interactive sessions will be organized in various social medias and our learning platform (Msichana Kwanza) to provide girls with insights into various fields, inspiring them to pursue their passions and break gender stereotypes.

### **5. Collaborative Partnerships:**

Collaboration is at the heart of Girls First Initiative's strategy. In 2024, we actively seek partnerships with like-minded organizations, businesses, and individuals who share the vision of empowering girls and women. These collaborations aim to pool resources, expertise, and networks to create a more significant and lasting impact.

*Happy New Year 2024*





**GFI** Girls First Initiative



# Our Partners







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