



GFI Girls First Initiative

2025 IMPACT REPORT

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1 Executive Director's Foreword

Dear girls, partners, supporters, and the ever-growing GFI community,

As we reflect on the year behind us, one truth stands tall. Girls First Initiative is no longer finding its footing. We are building momentum.

This year affirmed something we have always believed. When girls are trusted, resourced, and heard, change follows. Not the slow, polite kind. The kind that reshapes systems, challenges norms, and opens doors that once felt locked.

Throughout the year, GFI deepened its commitment to empowering girls and young women through programs rooted in dignity, innovation, and lived realities. From expanding access to life skills and leadership spaces to strengthening community-based responses around health, education, and economic resilience, our work continued to evolve with intention. Each milestone reflected lessons learned, partnerships strengthened, and courage exercised.

None of this happened in isolation. Progress was powered by collaboration. By partners who believed in the mission even when outcomes were still loading. By supporters who amplified our work. By a team that chose purpose over comfort, every single time.

This year also asked us to grow inward. To listen harder. To refine our strategies. To acknowledge gaps without losing faith in the vision. That balance between humility and ambition has shaped who we are becoming as an organization.

As we look ahead, our focus sharpens. Innovation with impact. Partnerships with depth. Programs with sustainability at the core. The future demands more than good intentions. It demands bold action, accountability, and trust in girls as agents of change, not beneficiaries of charity.

To every girl whose voice grew louder. To every ally who walked with us. To every lesson that stretched us. Thank you.

The journey continues. And we are only getting started.

With gratitude and resolve,

Bahati Mgogwe
Executive Director
Girls First Initiative



3 About Us



Girls First Initiative (GFI) is a Tanzania-based non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the rights, agency, and well-being of girls and young women.

We work with and for those most at risk of sexual harassment, abuse, and systemic exclusion, placing their voices, choices, and lived experiences at the centre of our work.

GFI exists to confront the social and economic conditions that limit girls' freedom and safety. Limited access to education, health services, and economic opportunities continues to expose girls and young women to violence, exploitation, and silencing. We address these barriers through integrated programs that combine sexual and reproductive health and rights education, leadership development, entrepreneurship skills, and community engagement.

Our Mission

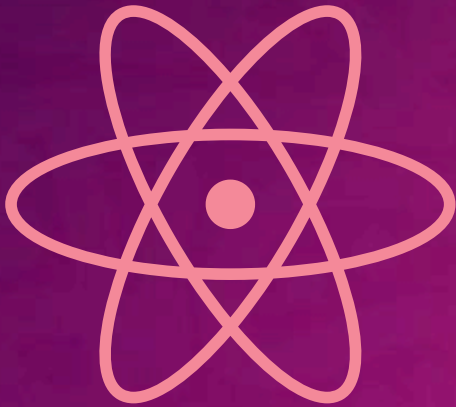
To empower girls and young women through education, economic empowerment, and health-focused programs that strengthen their voices, expand their choices, and protect their rights.

Our Vision

An inclusive society where girls and young women are safe, confident, and empowered to thrive without fear of violence, discrimination, or limitation.



Our Model



The Girls First Initiative (GFI) Dual Empowerment Model addresses barriers to girls' education by supporting both parents and daughters at the household level. GFI economically empowers parents through financial literacy, income-generating activities, and access to small loans, while providing girls with scholarships and learning materials. By strengthening family income and keeping girls in school, the model creates a ripple effect that reduces early marriage and pregnancy, improves household well-being, and builds resilient, educated communities.

4

Linkage to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Girls First Initiative **aligns its programs and advocacy work with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**, recognizing that the empowerment of girls and young women is essential to sustainable and inclusive development.

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



5 Overview of the key Achievements

Launch of the 2025–2027 Strategic Plan

2025 was a line-in-the-sand year. Girls First Initiative stepped forward with a clear plan, steady hands, and big intent. The launch of the 2025–2027 Strategic Plan marked a shift from passion-led action to precision-led impact. Built with technical support from the Issroff Family Foundation through the Collaborative Learning Initiative, the strategy tightened focus across education, entrepreneurship, sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence advocacy.



This plan was not paperwork for shelves. It became a living guide. A compass. A promise. GFI committed to reaching 50,000 girls and young women through scholarships, entrepreneurship training, and reproductive health education. By the close of 2025, 99 per cent of 2025 target had already been reached. Communities showed up. Girls enrolled. Systems responded. The pace confirmed strong execution muscle and deep local trust. The strategy now anchors GFI for sustained growth, stronger partnerships, and measurable results through 2027.

We Turned Four

Four years in. Still standing. Still growing. In 2025, Girls First Initiative marked its fourth anniversary, a milestone shaped by resilience, learning, and relentless belief in girls.



30,000 +

girls and young women have accessed education support, built practical skills, and explored entrepreneurship pathways.



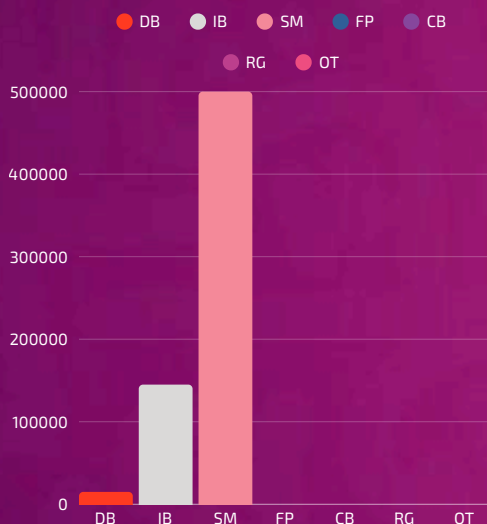


This moment honoured the bravery of the girls who chose to show up for themselves. It celebrated partners who invested time, trust, and resources. It acknowledged supporters who believed before the results looked obvious. The journey has shown one truth on repeat. When girls rise, families stabilize. Communities shift. Futures expand. GFI moves forward with deeper resolve and sharper purpose.

6 Key Impact Numbers

ITEM	REACH
Direct Beneficiaries (Boys & Girls)	15,000+
Indirect beneficiaries: (Family & Communities)	145,000+
Social Media: (Instagram, LinkedIn, & Tiktok)	500,000+

ITEM	REACH
Funding Partners	4
Collaborators	6
Regions	3
Others	4



DB - Direct Beneficiaries
IB - Indirect Beneficiaries
SM - Social Media
FP - Funding Partners
CB - Collaborators
RG - Regions
OT - Others

7 Projects

Her Education Program

Only 3 out of 100 girls from families living under \$1 per day complete secondary school, while 1 in 3 is married before turning 18.

Extreme poverty, early marriage, gender-based violence, and lack of menstrual products continue to push girls out of classrooms long before their potential is realized.

In partnership with Mundo Cooprente, Her Education program protects girls' right to remain in school in Kilwa and Lindi regions, and Kibwegere in Dar es Salaam, using a multi-pronged approach:

53

students from low-income families received scholarships covering tuition contributions, school materials, and uniforms, enabling continued school attendance.

50

parents and caregivers participated in entrepreneurship and financial literacy training, as a way to empower families.

200

and more parents, teachers, and community leaders participated in advocacy sessions, equipping them to influence local decisions that protect and promote girls' education.

220

participants reached in 12 dedicated sessions across four wards, educating communities about girls' rights, the value of education, and the long-term harms of early marriage.





By combining student scholarships, family empowerment, and community advocacy, the Her Education Program is creating a ripple effect: girls stay in school longer, families gain financial stability, and communities adopt practices that protect and support girls' education—breaking the cycle of extreme poverty and early marriage.

This Is My Cycle Program

In 2025, Girls First Initiative (GFI) implemented its flagship eight-month project, "This Is My Cycle," in partnership with The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, in Tanzania at Bumbuli Secondary School in Lushoto, Tanga, to address these challenges. Key achievements included:



Over 400 students, including both girls and boys, participated in sessions on menstruation and stigma reduction.



Over 500 sanitary pads, 230 period tracking tool were distributed, reducing absenteeism and daily stress to girls.

Creative arts competitions encouraged student-led conversations,



Schools reported fewer missed days, higher participation in class, and stronger confidence among students.



A new seven-room girls' toilet block, including a disability-friendly room with a menstrual changing space, now serves more than 200 girls.

GFI Girls First Initiative



Before



After



In Tanzania, nearly 60% of adolescent girls miss school during their periods due to lack of sanitary products or inadequate facilities, resulting in months of lost learning each year and reinforcing cycles of poor academic performance and early dropout. Stigma and misinformation further isolate girls, leaving them unprepared to manage their health with confidence (UNAIDS, 2025).

Leader On The Rise Program

Across Tanzania, leadership opportunities for young women are limited. Less than 30% of women under 25 hold formal leadership positions, leaving many with ambition but little access to role models, mentorship, or practical experience.

The Leader on the Rise Program tackles this gap through immersive, hands-on experiences. Each quarter, a young woman is recruited to shadow a position of her choice in the GFI office for two weeks, gaining firsthand exposure to organizational operations, decision-making, and leadership in action. This is followed by three months of structured career mentorship, providing guidance, skill development, and confidence-building.



What Happened?

In 2025, two young women participated, with Happy Malunde shadowing as Community Engagement Officer and Edna Joseph as Executive Director. Together, they completed six months of mentorship, gaining practical skills, professional confidence, and exposure to strategic leadership. By the end of the program, participants emerged as empowered young leaders, ready to take responsibility, make informed decisions, and influence their communities.





In Tanzanian universities, young women often lack structured spaces for collaboration, mentorship, and leadership development, leaving ambition unsupported, skills underdeveloped, and potential unrealized. Girls Network Tanzania (GNT) was created to address this gap—a collective movement of young women in universities, designed to collaborate, learn from one another, and grow as leaders, facilitated by Girls First Initiative (GFI).

In 2025, GFI officially launched the GNT University Chapter, recruiting 8 universities and engaging over 200 young women. As part of their membership, participants took part in targeted Learning Series covering Leadership Development, Project Design, and Problem Analysis, equipping them with practical skills, confidence, and networks. These chapters became vibrant spaces for peer learning, collaboration, and mentorship, helping members turn individual growth into collective impact across their universities and communities.

8 Universities
Recruited

200
Young Women
Engaged



Niboreshe Project

In Tanzania, most young people, particularly young women, leave school without a clear pathway into stable income-generating opportunities. While many hold strong ideas and ambition, most lack essential 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, financial literacy, adaptability, and digital confidence needed to navigate modern livelihoods.

The Niboreshe Project was designed to close this gap through a blend of mindset development and practical entrepreneurship. Implemented in partnership with Global Shapers Dar es Salaam Hub and Dar Shapers, the project delivered interactive life skills and hands-on business training. Participants engaged in self-awareness, decision-making, goal setting, financial planning, and income-generating activities such as soap-making, combining personal growth with real-world application.





Participants reported increased confidence, clearer goals, and a stronger belief in their ability to earn, adapt, and make informed decisions.



Breaking The Script - SRHR Youth Initiative

Sexual and reproductive health challenges remain high among adolescents in Tanzania. Nearly 27 percent of girls aged 15–19 are already mothers or pregnant, while access to accurate information and youth-friendly spaces remains limited. Stigma and silence continue to block open conversation, leaving many young people unable to ask questions, seek guidance, or assert their rights, and increasing vulnerability to early pregnancy, unsafe practices, and disrupted life trajectories.

Breaking The Script was designed to disrupt this silence by placing young people at the center of sexual and reproductive health advocacy. Implemented as a six-month pilot in Dar es Salaam in 2025, the initiative equipped ten SRHR Ambassadors with skills and platforms to lead storytelling through poetry, zines, digital media, and community dialogue. Youth-led content challenged taboos and reframed SRHR as a shared, rights-based conversation rather than a hidden topic.

**500+**

youth-created zines
circulated messages
on agency, health,
and bodily autonomy

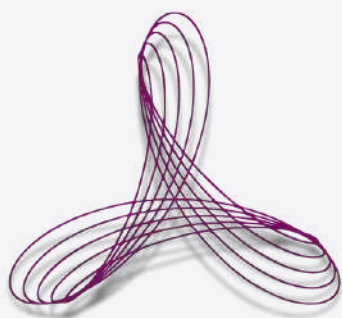
2,000

peers were reached
through digital
campaigns and
community events

“My Life at 16” Initiative



Across Tanzania, adolescence is a breaking point for girls. One in three girls is married before the age of 18. More than a quarter of girls aged 15 to 19 are already pregnant or mothers. By age 16, many girls are navigating school dropout, early relationships, domestic responsibilities, and social pressure, often without safe spaces to speak openly or be heard. (NBS & UNICEF Tanzania, 2018)



“My Life at 16” was launched to respond to this reality. The initiative is a storytelling and mentorship platform designed to create safe, supportive spaces where girls can share lived experiences, name challenges without fear, and articulate aspirations out loud. Through guided storytelling, peer dialogue, and mentorship, girls build confidence, critical thinking, and a sense of belonging.

WATCH HERE

8 Events

CSW69 Side Event Session

Global conversations on girls' education often generate strong statements, yet too rarely translate into sustained action. Despite growing international commitments, gaps remain between policy discussions and the lived realities of girls, particularly in under-resourced contexts where education access and retention are still fragile.

During CSW69, we hosted a virtual side event to bridge this gap by centering one clear message: girls' education is foundational to social and economic progress. The session convened participants from diverse sectors and regions, creating a space where global frameworks met grassroots experience. Discussions focused on why investment in girls' education matters and what meaningful action looks like beyond declarations and pledges.

The exchange strengthened cross-sector understanding and reinforced collective responsibility, generating renewed commitment to collaboration and action. By connecting policy conversations to real-world experience, the session demonstrated how shared spaces can shift mindsets, align priorities, and build momentum toward tangible change.



More than **40** participants engaged in a candid dialogue, shared learning, and reflection.

Power Talk: Challenging “Normalized” Practices Around Sexual Assault



Global conversations on girls' education often generate strong statements, yet too rarely translate into sustained action. Despite growing international commitments, gaps remain between policy discussions and the lived realities of girls, particularly in under-resourced contexts where education access and retention are still fragile.

To confront this reality, we hosted a bold Power Talk on Instagram to close Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The session deliberately rejected comfort in favor of truth, creating a public space to question practices long accepted as “normal.” Through open dialogue, participants examined how cultural narratives sustain harm and explored the responsibility of communities to challenge silence and demand accountability.

[WATCH HERE](#)

The conversation centered survivors, encouraged critical reflection, and invited discomfort as a necessary step toward change. Participants engaged in honest exchange that affirmed that culture evolves and silence enables harm. By reframing sexual assault as a collective issue rather than a private burden, the Power Talk reinforced that meaningful prevention begins when communities choose to unlearn harmful norms and commit to protection, justice, and action beyond awareness.

More than **1000** participants were engaged.

Mental Health Power Talk: Overcoming Imposter Syndrome



To address this challenge, Girls First Initiative hosted a Mental Health Power Talk on Instagram focused on overcoming imposter syndrome. Led by certified mental health advocate Glory Livingstone, the session created an open and accessible space to unpack how imposter syndrome appears in daily life, including fear of being “found out,” internalized self-criticism, and unrealistic expectations of perfection.

[WATCH HERE](#)

Imposter syndrome remains a quiet but persistent barrier for many girls and young women, often undermining confidence, performance, and personal growth. Despite academic or professional achievement, self-doubt, fear of exposure, and pressure to appear perfect continue to shape how young women show up and limit their willingness to take up space.

Participants were equipped with practical tools to build self-trust, reframe internal narratives, and strengthen emotional resilience. The dialogue normalized vulnerability and reinforced that confidence grows through awareness and support, not silence. By centering mental health as a core pillar of empowerment, GFI affirmed that confidence is not optional but essential to leadership, well-being, and sustained impact.

More than **2000** participants were engaged.

International Day of the Girl Child



For many girls, limited access to mentorship and relatable role models narrows their sense of possibility. Without spaces to learn from those who have walked ahead, confidence, aspiration, and informed decision-making often develop in isolation rather than through guidance and support.

To mark the International Day of the Girl Child, Girls First Initiative created spaces for connection, mentorship, and shared learning. Young women from Girls Network Tanzania engaged directly with Her Education Program beneficiaries in schools across Kibwegere Ward. Through open and honest exchange, they shared personal stories, lessons learned, and practical guidance on choices, challenges, and pathways forward.

The engagement extended throughout the month through digital platforms, including an Instagram Live conversation focused on courage, self-belief, and girls as agents of change. A guest speaker and youth moderator grounded inspiration in lived experience, reinforcing the value of education, mentorship, and visibility.

Power Talk: Breaking the Silence on Sexual Assault



Sexual assault remains one of the most underreported forms of violence against girls and women, sustained by silence, shame, and deeply rooted cultural taboos. Fear of stigma and lack of safe spaces continue to prevent survivors from speaking out, delaying justice and allowing harm to persist unchecked.

To confront this reality, we hosted a Power Talk on Instagram Live to mark Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The session created a public space to examine how shame and fear suppress reporting and how harmful beliefs, often framed as tradition, normalize violence. Through open dialogue, participants named realities that are frequently hidden and challenged the narratives that protect harm.

[WATCH HERE](#)

The conversation centered on survivors, strengthened solidarity, and reinforced the importance of education, accountability, and community responsibility. Participants were reminded that healing begins with truth-telling and that speaking out is an act of resistance. By sustaining open dialogue and awareness, GFI continues to advance safer communities and affirm that protection grows through courage, education, and collective action.

More than **1500** participants were engaged.

9 New Tools & Resources

Financial Tracking Tool for Entrepreneurs

Over **60%** of small and micro enterprises fail within the first three years across Tanzania, largely due to poor financial management and lack of basic record keeping. Many young women entrepreneurs operate informally, relying on memory instead of systems, making it hard to track profit, plan growth, or separate business money from personal needs.

In response, **GFI introduced a simple financial tracking booklet for young women entrepreneurs in 2025.** Designed for real markets and daily realities, the tool supports consistent tracking of income, expenses, and savings. Pen meets paper. Numbers become visible. Patterns emerge. Financial decisions grow clearer.

By turning financial literacy into a daily habit, the booklet strengthens business discipline, builds confidence, and supports resilience. It equips young women not only to start businesses, but to sustain them, grow them, and take control of their economic futures.



Mimi Ni Nani

Growing up is not a neutral experience for many girls. Across Tanzania and East Africa, adolescence often unfolds in environments where information is limited, silence is normalised, and girls are expected to adapt without guidance.

Data tells the story clearly. In Tanzania, nearly

1 in 4 girls marries before the age of 18 (UNICEF).

More than 30% of adolescent girls report experiencing some form of gender-based violence before adulthood.

Mimi ni Nani, meaning “Who am I?” in Swahili, was created in response to this gap.

The journal is a guided self-discovery tool designed to help adolescent girls navigate identity formation, understand physical and emotional changes, and build the confidence to set healthy boundaries. It supports girls to recognize their worth, advocate for their health and safety, and speak up against gender-based violence in ways that are age-appropriate and culturally relevant.

Through reflection exercises, learning prompts, and practical guidance, the journal helps girls aged 9 to 17 strengthen self-awareness, make informed choices, and develop resilience at school, at home, and within their communities.



Hedhi Yangu, Mzunguko Wangu

Hedhi Yangu, Mzunguko Wangu was developed to address persistent menstrual health gaps that continue to disrupt girls' education and wellbeing across East Africa.

Over **50%**
of girls miss school during
menstruation, and in rural Tanzania,

Only **23%**
of women have access to menstrual
products, reinforcing stigma,
misinformation, and exclusion.



The offline, culturally responsive booklet supports girls and young women to understand and manage their menstrual cycles with confidence. **It features a 12-month tracking chart, menstrual health and hygiene information, fertility awareness, and locally relevant illustrations in familiar language.**



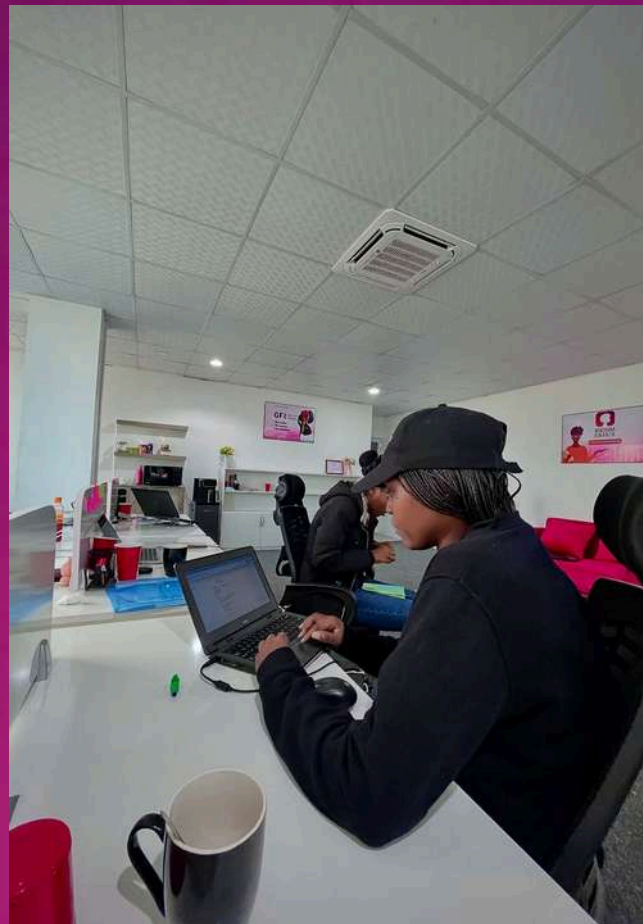
By turning silence into knowledge and stigma into confidence, the tool strengthens health awareness, supports school attendance, and promotes dignity. Through this initiative, GFI continues to deliver practical, accessible solutions that ensure periods never limit potential.

10 Internal Highlights & Updates

Relocation to a New Office Space

As Girls First Initiative expanded its programs, partnerships, and team, the need for a more functional and accessible operational space became clear. Growth behind the scenes required an environment that could support coordination, collaboration, and the daily work that sustains community-level impact.

In 2025, GFI entered a new chapter with the relocation to a new office space in Mikocheni B, Dar es Salaam. The move marked more than a change of address. It reflected organizational growth, deeper partnerships, and an expanding program footprint. The new office was intentionally selected to support teamwork, planning, and efficient operations as the organization scaled its work.



The space now provides a welcoming and collaborative environment that strengthens internal coordination and enables delivery across programs. With a clear focus and the same mission, GFI continues to build systems that sustain impact.

New Address: Auditax Building, 2nd Floor, Coca-Cola Road, Mikocheni B, opposite Clouds FM.

New Team Members

Behind every program milestone is a team driving the work forward, and in 2025, GFI expanded its team to support growing operational and program demands. Sustained impact requires a team with the skills, values, and commitment to grow alongside the organization.

To support this growth, GFI welcomed two new team members who bring complementary strengths across programming and operations.



Raphael joined as a Social Work graduate from the Institute of Social Work, contributing strong community engagement skills and hands-on experience working with young women. His role has strengthened on-the-ground implementation and day-to-day program delivery.



Beatrice Kivuyo joined as Finance Officer, bringing expertise in financial management and accountability. Her leadership reinforces internal systems, transparency, and responsible resource management as the organization scales.

With these additions, GFI continues to invest in people as the foundation of strong institutions. The expanded team reflects a shared commitment to the organization's mission, values, and long-term vision for impact.

Joined THN Network



As the organization grows, strategic ecosystem partnerships have become essential to sustaining and scaling impact.

In 2025, GFI officially joined the THN Network, positioning the organization within Tanzania's growing innovation ecosystem. This milestone expanded access to collaborative learning, partnerships, and platforms designed to support sustainable and inclusive solutions. The membership was marked by participation in the THN Annual Gathering held on 4 December 2025, a national convening that brought together innovation hubs, government leaders, development partners, founders, academia, corporates, and investors.

Held under the theme "Shaping the Future of Innovation Together," the gathering centered conversations on sustainability, inclusion, and long-term impact. For GFI, joining the THN Network strengthens its commitment to inclusive innovation and creates new pathways for girls and young women to engage with future-facing spaces within Tanzania's innovation economy. New partnerships. Expanded reach. Same mission, now operating at a larger scale

Olympism365 Innovation Hub



As social impact increasingly intersects with technology and innovation, access to global learning spaces has become critical for organizations working to scale inclusive solutions. Engaging beyond local contexts allows ideas to evolve, systems to strengthen, and impact to travel further.

In 2025, Girls First Initiative joined the Olympism365 Innovation Hub Tech365 Explore Think Tank, a global collaboration led by the International Olympic Committee, Beyond Sport, and Women Win. GFI was selected among 25 innovators worldwide using emerging technologies for social good. The cohort brings together practitioners committed to experimentation, collaboration, and future-focused problem-solving.

Through the think tank, GFI engages in shared learning, exchanges ideas with global peers, and explores tech-driven pathways for scaling impact. The platform positions the organization within an international innovation community, expanding opportunities for collaboration and bold thinking. New perspectives. Global rooms. Serious momentum toward inclusive, tech-enabled impact.

Revamped Organizational Website

A clear and accessible digital presence is essential for organizations working at scale. For Girls First Initiative, strengthening online visibility became a priority as programs, partnerships, and audiences expanded.

In 2025, GFI launched a revamped organizational website designed to improve clarity, access, and engagement. The redesigned platform features improved navigation, clearer pathways to resources, and stronger impact storytelling that reflects the organization's growth and professionalism.



The website now serves as a central digital hub for partners, supporters, and the wider community. By aligning digital communication with on-the-ground work, the platform reinforces transparency, accountability, and meaningful connection across audiences.

Msichana Kwanza Platform Update

Digital platforms must evolve alongside the communities they serve. When tools fall out of sync with users' needs, impact slows rather than scales.

The Msichana Kwanza platform is currently paused to allow for a full and intentional revamp. This period creates space to strengthen design, improve functionality, and enhance overall user experience, ensuring the platform aligns with current realities and future ambitions.



The relaunch will deliver clearer tools, deeper relevance, and greater responsiveness to the evolving needs of girls and young women. This pause is strategic, not static. A moment to refine, rebuild, and return stronger.

11 Internal Capacity Building

Digital Citizenship Course Pilot

Digital spaces now shape how people learn, connect, and organize, making digital citizenship a core competency for social impact work. Without the right skills and awareness, opportunities online can quickly turn into risks.

To strengthen internal capacity, two Girls First Initiative team members participated in piloting the Digital Citizenship online course developed by Team4Tech. The course focused on essential digital skills, online safety, ethical participation, and responsible engagement in digital environments.



This learning strengthened how the team navigates digital spaces and informed how GFI approaches digital inclusion more thoughtfully. Beyond certification, the pilot equipped the organization to integrate digital literacy into future programs for girls and young women. When capacity grows within the team, impact expands outward into the communities GFI serves.

Visibility Grant Fellowship

Strong impact depends not only on what is done, but on how clearly the work is communicated and understood. Without visibility, even effective programs struggle to attract the support and partnerships needed to scale.

Through a partnership with Just Peoples under the Visibility Grant Program, Girls First Initiative invested in strengthening its communication and visibility systems. The team completed an eight-week guided training with The School of Visibility, received expert mentorship to refine donor communication, and participated in a fully funded in-person workshop in Nairobi. In parallel, GFI received grant funding to implement a tailored visibility strategy aligned with its mission and growth goals.



This investment resulted in clearer impact storytelling, stronger communication systems, and expanded global reach. The work on the ground remains unchanged. The difference lies in how far the message now travels and how clearly the impact is seen and understood.

Builder of Africa

Leadership recognition carries weight when it reflects sustained action and clear vision. For organizations driving social change, individual leadership milestones often signal institutional strength and long-term direction.

In 2025, Bahati Mgogwe, Founder and Executive Director of Girls First Initiative, was selected as a Builder of Africa's Future Fellow by the African Diaspora Network. The fellowship supports early-stage African entrepreneurs advancing tech-enabled, locally grounded solutions to complex challenges across the continent. Bahati joined a pan-African cohort of innovators working across education, health, financial inclusion, and sustainability.



This recognition affirms GFI's leadership, strategic direction, and future-facing vision. It also strengthens the organization's positioning within continental and global innovation networks, expanding opportunities for learning, collaboration, and growth. Leadership acknowledged. Vision validated. Momentum sustained.

Gratitude Network Fellowship

Long-term impact requires leaders and institutions that are willing to learn, adapt, and grow with intention. For organizations working with children and youth, strong leadership systems are essential to sustaining scale and quality.

In 2025, Girls First Initiative was selected for the Gratitude Network Fellowship, a year-long global leadership program supporting organizations advancing outcomes for children and young people. Through the fellowship, GFI engages in expert coaching, strategic scaling sessions, and peer learning alongside a global community of social impact leaders.

The experience strengthens leadership capacity, sharpens organizational strategy, and supports sustainable program growth across Tanzania. This milestone reflects a deliberate investment in reflection, learning, and systems that endure. Growth with intention. Leadership with purpose. Impact built to scale.



12 Visitors

Issroff Family Foundation

Some visits feel like check-ins. Others feel like full-circle moments. Girls First Initiative was honored to welcome the Issroff Family Foundation team to our office following the completion of the ten-month Collaborative Learning Initiative attended by our Executive Director.

The visit created space to connect learning with lived work. GFI shared on-the-ground experiences and reflected on how the mentorship, tools, and strategic guidance from the initiative sharpened organizational direction and strengthened internal systems. The conversation affirmed growth not as a pause, but as a process.

We remain deeply grateful to the Issroff Family Foundation for walking alongside us and for investing in capacity-building approaches that prioritize long-term, sustainable impact over quick wins.



Flaviana Matata Foundation (FMF)

Collaboration thrives when practice meets practice. GFI welcomed Deborah, Communications Officer, and Suzan, Project Officer, from the Flaviana Matata Foundation for a knowledge exchange centered on women's economic empowerment.

The session opened honest dialogue on beneficiary identification, program delivery, and strategies for sustainability. Shared priorities surfaced quickly. Girls' education. Health awareness. Community-rooted solutions. The exchange strengthened mutual learning and highlighted how aligned missions amplify reach.



Hosting the FMF team was both affirming and energizing. GFI looks forward to continued engagement and future collaboration to deepen impact for girls and young women across Tanzania.

Manzo Nzumafo

Learning travels across borders. GFI welcomed Manzo, a development professional from Cameroon with experience managing Sexual and Reproductive Health initiatives.

The visit focused on practical exchange around program design, implementation, and lessons drawn from SRH work in different contexts. GFI shared insights from the This Is My Cycle Project, reflecting on menstrual health education, stigma reduction, and community engagement.



The conversation reinforced the value of cross-regional learning and shared expertise. Different contexts. Shared challenges. Collective solutions.

Fanny & Michelle

Research matters most when grounded in community. Girls First Initiative welcomed Fanny Rudstedt and Michelle Nilsson from Lund University's School of Social Work during their academic engagement on empowering girls.



Their visit supported a Minor Field Study examining social workers' perspectives and strategies for preventing child marriage in Dar es Salaam. GFI facilitated connections with child protection professionals, enabling meaningful participation and access to real-world insights.

This collaboration strengthened the bridge between academic research and community-based practice, contributing to knowledge generation while keeping girls' realities at the center.



This collaboration contributed to knowledge generation on child marriage prevention while strengthening the link between academic research and community-based practice.

13 Partnership Activities

Workshop on Gender-Based Violence

Partnerships sharpen practice. In 2025, the GFI team participated in a capacity-strengthening workshop on Gender-Based Violence organized by Equality for Growth in collaboration with Green Craft Academy.

The workshop brought together multiple organizations for focused dialogue on the National GBV Guidelines and how they translate into real protection in communities and workplaces. The conversations moved beyond theory into application. What works. What fails. What needs rethinking.

The experience strengthened GFI's understanding of prevention and response frameworks while opening space for peer learning and collaboration. It also surfaced opportunities for future partnerships aimed at expanding reach and strengthening support systems for girls and young women. Learning stays alive when it shows up in action.



Tanzania Hub Network



Social impact accelerates when organizations operate within strong, connected ecosystems rather than in isolation. Innovation thrives through collaboration, shared learning, and alignment across sectors.

Girls First Initiative joined the Tanzania Hub Network, positioning the organization within Tanzania's growing innovation ecosystem. This engagement connects GFI with collaborators, thinkers, and builders shaping the future of social impact. GFI's participation was highlighted during the THN Annual Gathering, a national convening that brought together government leaders, development partners, founders, academia, corporates, and investors to explore sustainability,

Through its involvement in the Tanzania Hub Network, GFI strengthens its commitment to inclusive innovation and ensures that girls and young women remain visible and connected within future-facing spaces. Innovation only creates value when those most often excluded are intentionally brought in.



GOA Partnership: Mentorship Program for Adolescent Girls

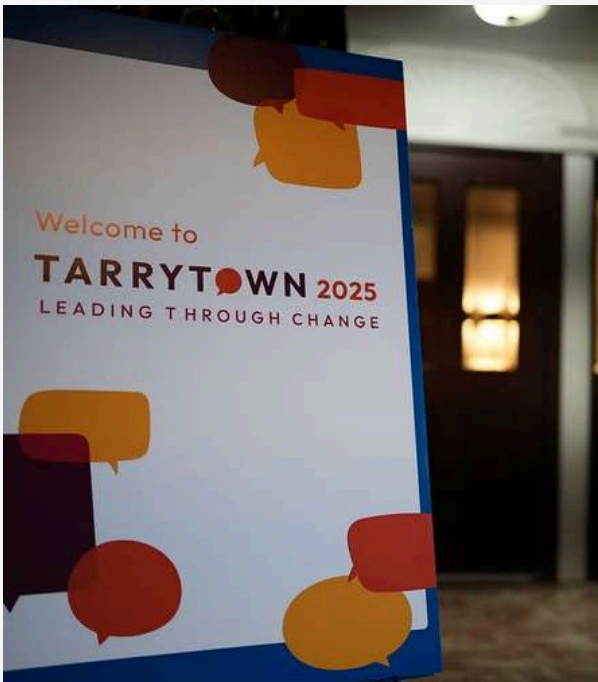
Adolescent girls continue to face heightened risks related to gender-based violence, limited autonomy, and restricted access to safe spaces for learning and self-expression. Without consistent mentorship and support, many struggle to build the confidence and skills needed to set boundaries and speak up for themselves.

Since 2023, the Girls Opportunity Alliance has partnered with Girls First Initiative to support the Mentorship Program for Adolescent Girls. This partnership has enabled the design and delivery of a structured self-discovery journey focused on body autonomy, healthy boundaries, leadership, and the courage to challenge gender-based violence. The program creates supportive environments where girls learn, reflect, and grow together.

Through GOA convenings, GFI is also connected to a global community of organizations working toward shared goals of safety, voice, and opportunity for girls. This partnership reflects a shared belief in the power of adolescent girls and a commitment to nurturing confidence, clarity, and resilience that extends beyond the program itself.



Tarrytown 2025 (Schmoozefest)



Global uncertainty, shifting funding priorities, and overlapping crises continue to place pressure on grassroots organizations working closest to vulnerable communities. In this context, spaces for honest exchange and aligned learning matter more than ever.

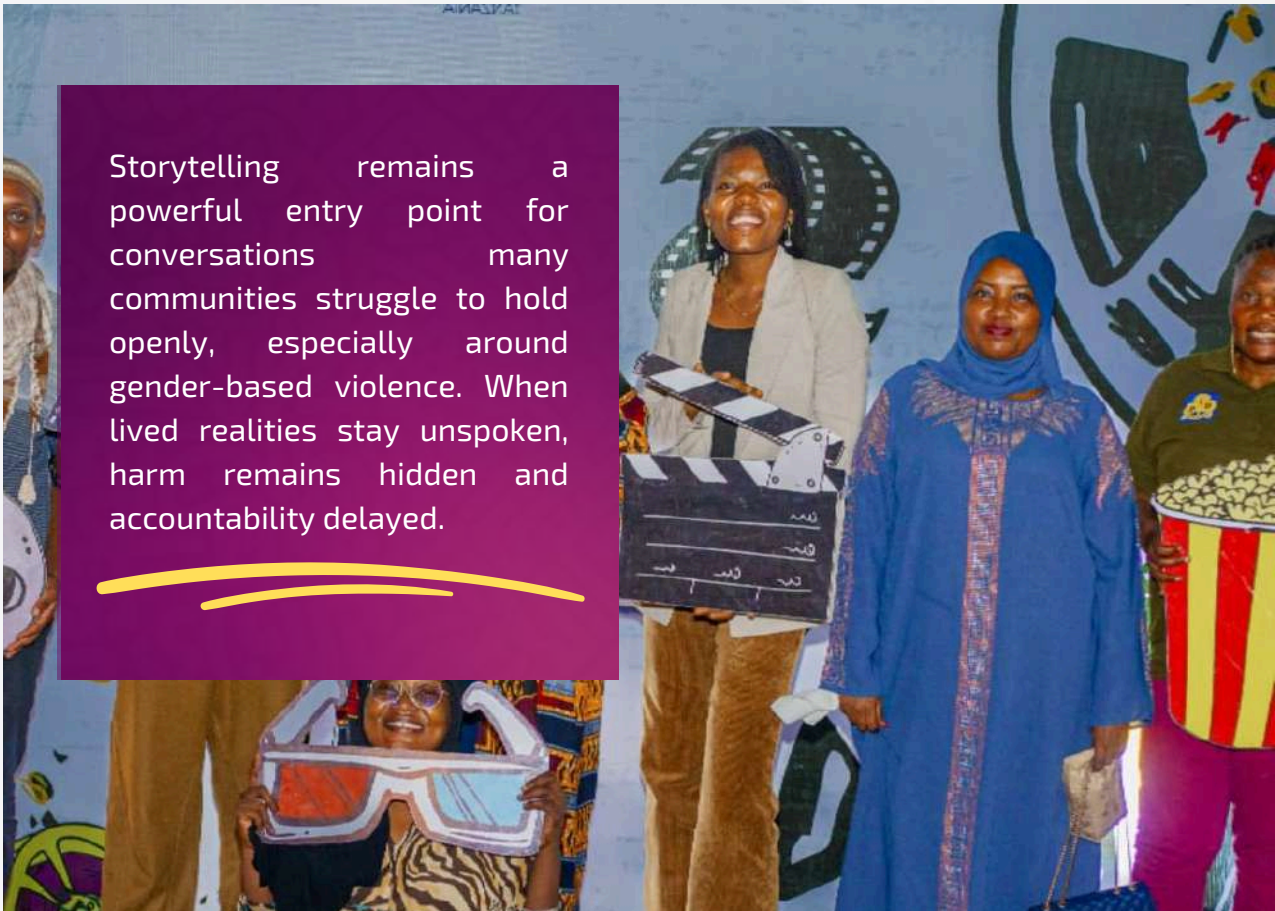
In 2025, Girls First Initiative participated in Tarrytown 2025 (Schmoozefest) in New York, a gathering that brought together grassroots organizations, funders, and practitioners. The convening created space for candid dialogue on navigating political shifts, resource constraints, and the realities facing communities on the ground.



Conversations focused on practical strategies, partnership-building, and collective problem-solving. The experience reinforced the value of aligned resources, solidarity, and shared learning in sustaining long-term impact. GFI returned with fresh connections, sharpened ideas, and renewed momentum for the work ahead.

SinemaConnect Film Screening

Storytelling remains a powerful entry point for conversations many communities struggle to hold openly, especially around gender-based violence. When lived realities stay unspoken, harm remains hidden and accountability delayed.



In 2025, Girls First Initiative attended SinemaConnect, a film-based dialogue space organized by Medea Tanzania. The screening of *Malkia* offered a raw portrayal of gender-based violence within homes, centering survivor resilience, fear, and the pursuit of justice. The post-screening discussion created space for reflection on survivor support, accountability, and the role of communities in prevention and response.

The experience reaffirmed the role of film as a catalyst for awareness, empathy, and social change. When stories are seen and shared, silence loosens its grip and dialogue becomes possible.



14 Publication Highlight

Visit to BBC



In March, Girls First Initiative gained wider visibility through a BBC feature by Waridi wa BBC highlighting the journey of Executive Director Bahati Mgogwe. The article traced her path from lived experience to leadership, linking personal history to GFI's mission to support girls at risk of early pregnancy and school dropout.

By amplifying this story on a global platform, the feature strengthened awareness of GFI's work and attracted new allies to the mission. When local realities reach wider audiences, impact travels further.

Africa in Motion Feature (AK Radio)



Girls First Initiative was featured on Africa in Motion by AUK Radio, highlighting the organization's origins during COVID-19 and its growth into a national movement supporting girls across Tanzania.

The feature amplified GFI's belief that investing in girls strengthens communities and drives lasting change.

15 New Partners

Mundo Cooperante

In 2025, Girls First Initiative partnered with Mundo Cooperante to launch the Her Education Program in Kilwa District, Lindi. The partnership focuses on keeping girls in school while preventing early and forced marriage, strengthening protection and education outcomes for girls most at risk.



Masana Wa Afrika

During the year 2025, Girls First Initiative welcomed Masana Wa Afrika as a new funding partner. Their unrestricted funding support has strengthened our organisational flexibility and enhanced our capacity to deliver programs across education, health, and economic empowerment

This partnership enables GFI to respond more effectively to emerging needs while sustaining core operations and program quality. It reflects a shared commitment to an Africa where girls and young women have the resources, agency, and confidence to lead, thrive, and shape their futures.



Just People

In 2025, Girls First Initiative partnered with Just Peoples through the Visibility Grant Program to strengthen organizational communication and outreach capacity. The support enhanced impact storytelling, donor communication, and global visibility, positioning GFI for stronger partner engagement and sustainable growth.



German Embassy

In 2025, Girls First Initiative partnered with the Embassy of Germany in Tanzania to support the implementation of the This Is My Cycle project at Bumbuli Secondary School. Through this partnership, the project received sponsorship that enabled the construction of a girls' toilet, directly addressing menstrual hygiene and dignity needs.



This support strengthened a safer and more supportive school environment for adolescent girls, reducing barriers to attendance and participation. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to girls' education, health, and dignity, turning practical infrastructure into lasting impact.



Catalyst Africa



Girls First Initiative partnered with Catalyst Africa to implement the Breaking the Script project. Through this sponsorship, GFI advanced youth-led sexual and reproductive health advocacy using creative storytelling and peer engagement.

This partnership strengthened youth leadership, expanded safe spaces for dialogue, and supported accurate SRHR information for young people. It reflects a shared commitment to empowering youth voices and driving community-level change through creativity, education, and advocacy.

Isroff Family Foundation



Girls First Initiative partnered with the Isroff Family Foundation as a funding partner through unrestricted support. This flexible funding strengthened organizational resilience and enhanced GFI's ability to sustain core operations and respond to emerging program needs.

This partnership supports long-term institutional growth and reflects a shared commitment to investing in capacity, adaptability, and sustainable impact for girls and young women.

16 Supporter & Collaborators



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