

# Grassroots

## IN THIS ISSUE

A Message from the Director  
of Development • P. 2

Making Strides Together • P. 3

Grandmothers Campaign  
15 Year Anniversary • P. 4-6

MWEDO Girls' Education • P. 7

The Strength of Young People • P. 8

Reducing Stigma for People  
Living with HIV & AIDS • P. 9

The HIV & AIDS pandemic is not over • P. 10

The Power of Monthly Donors • P. 10

SLF Financial Overview • P. 11

Holiday Cards • P. 12

## *Hand in hand*

You are helping to strengthen  
the movement.

# A message from the Director of Development

The fall has always been my favourite season. Now that November is upon us, there is no denying the distinctive signs that fall is in the air. For many, this is a time of deep reflection, renewal and rebirth. And at the Stephen Lewis Foundation, it is a time of renewed hopefulness, energy, celebration and momentum building.

Since the start of the year, we've already accomplished so much together. You've shown us the true meaning of acting in solidarity by continuing to demonstrate your unwavering support to fund community-led work specifically focused on addressing the multifaceted issue that is the HIV and AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa. We are reinvigorated by the zeal and passion of grandmothers in Canada, the UK, and Australia and in sub-Saharan Africa, who came together to mark the 15th anniversary of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign and reaffirm their commitment. We are inspired by the stories of the youth and LGBTIQ advocates who are working to eliminate stigma and champion change in their communities. And we are bolstered by the testimonies of partners and supporters who attest to the strength of working in partnerships that are based on collaboration and mutual respect.

I am so thrilled to be sharing this edition of Grassroots with you and to be able to highlight snippets of what is still to come as we venture into a bold, new strategic plan that will strengthen and expand our relationships with community-based organizations. Our goal is to create opportunities for supporters like you to become more deeply engaged in our work by learning more about the breadth of impact and by acting decisively as agents of the movement.

We are also taking further steps to engage and drive accountability within the international development sector through education and advocacy and to drive systemic change through a people-centered, rights-based approach, rooted in feminism, anti-colonialism and anti-racism.

I hope you share in my optimism about the direction of this important work. In the stories that follow, you'll see the remarkable transformational change that organizations funded by the SLF are making in the lives of those that they touch.

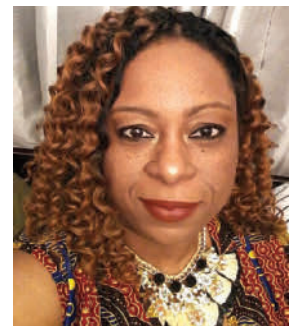
You'll hear from young people who are redefining gender equality. You'll read about the life-changing ways education lifts up adolescent girls, their families and communities. You'll be moved by an 80-year-old champion for grandmothers' rights. And you'll meet a young boy who is finding his voice through music.

Most of all, I hope that you will be inspired to continue to stand in solidarity with the Stephen Lewis Foundation, its partners, beneficiaries and friends as, together, we work to end the AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

In solidarity,



**Niambi Martin-John**  
*Director of Development,  
Stephen Lewis Foundation*





# Making Strides Together

Your commitment makes it possible for SLF to partner in ways that:



**Empower**, not restrict



**Support**, not demand



**Encourage**, not dictate



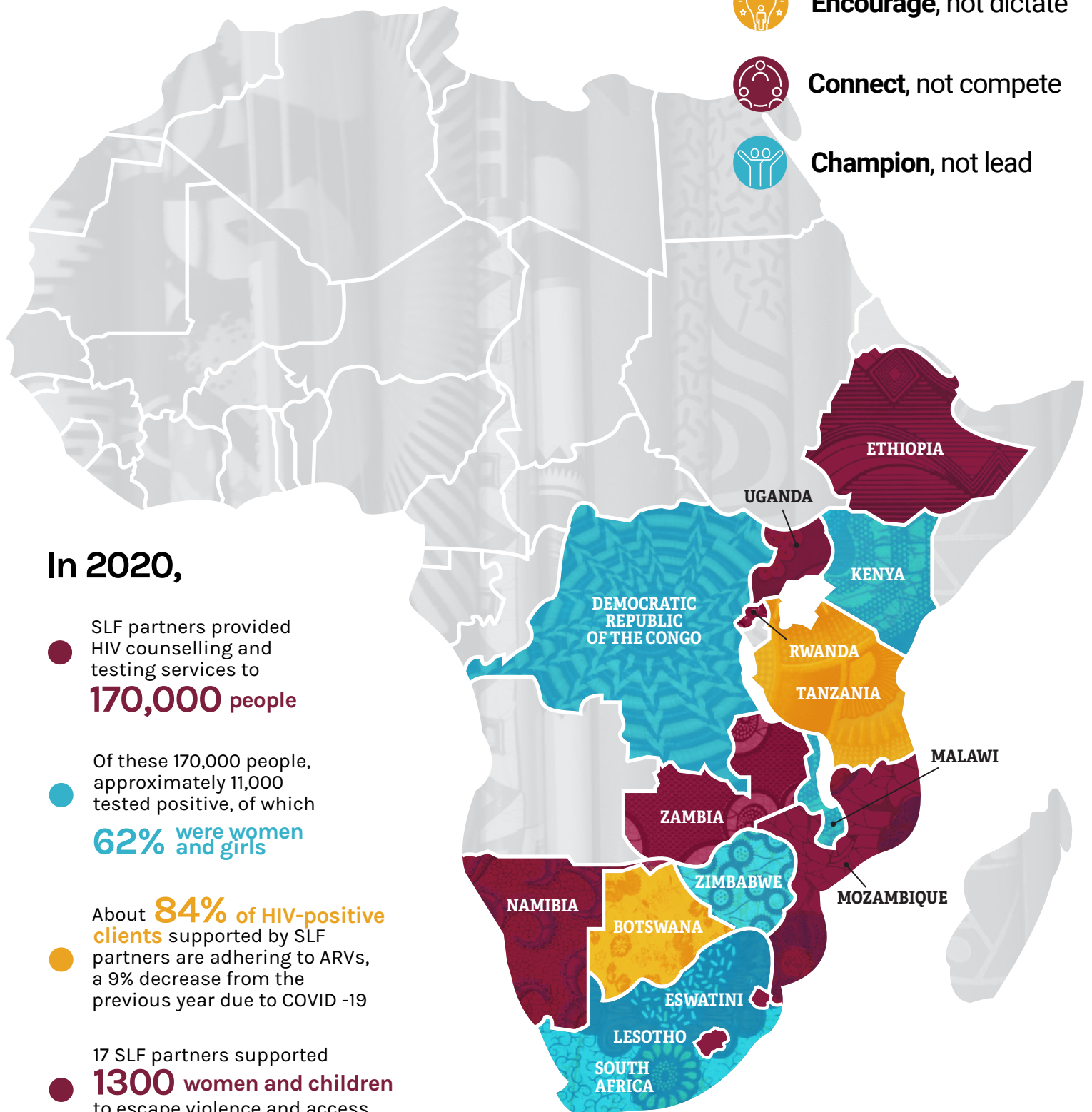
**Connect**, not compete



**Champion**, not lead

## In 2020,

- SLF partners provided HIV counselling and testing services to **170,000 people**
- Of these 170,000 people, approximately 11,000 tested positive, of which **62% were women and girls**
- About **84% of HIV-positive clients** supported by SLF partners are adhering to ARVs, a 9% decrease from the previous year due to COVID -19
- 17 SLF partners supported **1300 women and children** to escape violence and access safe shelter



# Together, we are amplifying the voices of grandmothers



Emmanuel Museruka

At 80 years young, Mary Babirye is a grandmothers advocacy champion. Known to her colleagues as “one of the greatest advocates in the group,” Mary is a leader, lobbyist and active member of the Grandmothers Consortium (GMC) in Uganda. Together with a collective of older women from six community-based organizations across the country – longstanding SLF partners – Mary is claiming human rights for grandmothers and the children in their care.

The Grandmothers Consortium prepares community elders like Mary with training, tools and confidence. “At the start of the advocacy initiatives, Mary felt she could not speak to decision-makers given the language barrier,” shares a consortium spokesperson. “Her fellow grandmother-advocates encouraged her to stay with the group.” Mary is now an effective lobbyist, targeting decision-makers who speak Luganda, complementing the efforts of grandmother-advocates working in English and other languages.

Grandmothers like Mary now serve on national child-protection and land-rights councils and meet with government officials to demand more equitable policies. Grandmothers carry out this work while also raising grandchildren affected by HIV and AIDS.

Grandmothers’ demands are clear: sustainable income, access to health care, childcare supports, and protection of their human rights. Without strong, determined voices like Mary’s it would be impossible to influence the institutional and societal structures that establish policy. With your help, Mary is ensuring that the voices of those most impacted are represented and truly integrated into the solutions.

Grandmothers are driven by a desire to produce healthy and flourishing communities for their grandchildren to inherit. They deserve to age with dignity and respect, and the children in their care deserve access to the resources they need to learn and thrive.

**2021 marks the 15th anniversary of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign and grandmothers’ conviction is stronger than ever.**

As Mary continues to demand a level playing field for herself, her grandchildren and her community, international grandmothers are also strengthening their legacies by raising funds, advocating, educating and inviting others to join the movement in their corner of the world.



Ugandan grandmothers marching at the 2015 Grandmothers Gathering

**“The increased participation of grandmothers in policy formulation and program review meetings has provided an effective space for the grandmothers to hold their leaders accountable and gain more prominence and support.”**

**- GRANDMOTHERS’ CONSORTIUM (GMC), UGANDA**

# A story of sisterhood and solidarity

Back in 2006, there was an article in the Edmonton Journal about a group of senior women getting together to support grandmothers in Africa dealing with the AIDS pandemic. It was noted that this work was being led by the Stephen Lewis Foundation. As a woman over 60, I knew who Stephen Lewis was and had heard him speak a few times – I trusted what he was saying.

At the time, I was still busy working and didn't feel I had the time to get involved. But a few years later, as I was driving by my local United Church, there was a sign promoting Grandmothers of Alberta for a New Generation (The GANG) and a Scrabble tournament.



*Joyce Madsen is a grandmother, activist, member of The GANG and a loyal donor to the SLF.*

grandmothers  
campaign to grandmothers

I decided it was time to investigate, so I went in and signed up for membership. One of the women I met that day was Sally, who I knew from our time at St. Stephen's College. I think she suggested to others in the group that I might have some 'gifts' to offer, and I was quickly invited to join the Education Committee.

Right from the first group meeting, I was impressed with the women who were involved and their commitment to African grandmothers. Being a grandmother myself, and having raised three children on my own, I have some idea of how difficult it is to be on your own, raising children so they have every opportunity to be their best, even with resources and support.

I went to the next Alberta Grandmothers Gathering and learned more about HIV and AIDS, and the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. I became a spokesperson for The GANG and participated in most every event that they sponsored. It always felt like the work we were doing was making a difference, and we were learning and having fun doing it together.

Certainly, one of the most influential factors is the support we get from the Foundation. The staff who support the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign are always very generous with their thanks and praise, and they ensure that we have a connection with grandmothers and organizations in sub-Saharan Africa and the work they are doing. They bring grandmothers to Canada to share their stories; they organize events in African countries where connections and support are shared; they make videos; they send out newsletters – **they work to create an environment where we can really feel like sisters with one another, even though we live on different continents.**

I believe that the work we are doing and the connections we have made are changing the world view of what senior women can do. We are no longer just the grannies baking cookies and rocking in our chair – we are still making a difference in the world. The resilience demonstrated by African grandmothers and Canadian grandmothers, as we have dealt with pandemics, represents a new understanding of what we can continue to accomplish. It makes me proud to be a member of such a group.

**I would describe The GANG members as committed, energetic, and perseverant in their relationships with one another, the SLF, and African grandmothers and grandchildren.**

Describing the Campaign to others is easy for me. "Imagine having to raise the lovely grandchildren you have, without any of the essentials we take for granted – no education, no income, no support." How can you not want to help raise the next generation of children in Africa to be leaders, especially girls?

**Joining The GANG has been a highlight of my life for the last 10 years.** I encourage those looking for a way to contribute to something worthwhile to find a local group or create a new one to further this work.





# Celebrating 15 Years of Impact

Fifteen years after the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign was launched, more than \$40 million has been raised in support of African grandmothers.

Grandmothers groups are thriving, growing and organizing in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

They are not slowing down. Together, grandmothers are modelling a collaborative, feminist, grassroots movement that affirms the autonomy, expertise and readiness of grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as community-based organizations, and people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

Photo credits on p.12



## 15 YEARS OF THE GRANDMOTHERS CAMPAIGN

5

**Grandmothers Gatherings**  
in Canada, Eswatini, Uganda, South Africa and Tanzania

2

**Grandmothers Consortiums**  
established in Uganda and South Africa

1

**Groundbreaking African Grandmothers Tribunal**  
of African grandmothers testifying for their human rights to be recognized

1

**Geneva Forum for Health Award**  
presented to the Campaign in 2018 for "proven, disruptive innovations that have the potential to become global best practice."

\$40M

**\$40 million raised**  
for the Grandmothers Fund

10k+

**Grandmothers Campaign members**  
raising funds and awareness while working in solidarity not charity

165

**Active groups**  
in the Grandmothers Campaign in Canada, USA, UK and Australia

## TO JOIN OR SUPPORT A GRANDMOTHERS GROUP CONTACT US



1-888-203-9990 EXT. 0



campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org



grandmotherscampaign.org

# Ubuntu: I am what I am, because of who we all are

**Ubuntu** is an African philosophy that embraces a shared humanity. Solidarity is born out of the Ubuntu spirit, through which we feel the experiences of others as deeply as our own, inspiring us to take action.

Thanks to the generosity of SLF funders and donors, we feel the Ubuntu spirit with organizations like the Maasai Women Development Organization (MWEDO). In Tanzania, where MWEDO operates, only one in four girls finishes secondary school. And, the COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on adolescent girls' education. Even when access to education is prioritized, in many communities, girls are the first to leave school and the last to return when conditions permit. Often, they never return at all.

The MWEDO Girls' Secondary School gives adolescent girls and young women the chance to focus on their education and personal development away from the demands of family and community life. The MWEDO team mentors girls to ensure they stay in school and are poised for success after graduation.

The values of community-building, equality, and solidarity that inspired three Maasai women to start MWEDO are the values that they instill in their students. Attending MWEDO Girls' Secondary School is a life-changing opportunity not only for the girls themselves, but also for the women and children in their families and communities.

To end AIDS, we need to reduce the inequalities that drive the pandemic. Adolescent girls and young women face disproportionate rates of HIV infection, and girls who leave school early are particularly at risk. Some are faced with the difficult proposition of early marriage, unexpected and unwanted pregnancies or engaging in sex work to survive.

In December, we are proud to say the first 100 girls supported by the SLF will graduate from the MWEDO Girls' Secondary School. They have excelled, and they are empowered. They are taking on leadership roles in their communities, challenging gender norms, and bravely demonstrating how the ripples of change can begin with them.

## Now, the next 100 girls are ready for their chance. Who could they become?

There are countless other children, especially girls, who will not see the inside of a classroom again. We need to prioritize children's, adolescents', and girls' education.



Photo provided by MWEDO

**“Most of our girls are already working to support communities back in their villages by teaching literacy to women and children. They have also reported training women about vegetable gardening and planting trees, taking better care of their environment. We are very proud of our girls.”**  
- MWEDO

## Other Ways You Can Take Action

- Create a sign with a message of solidarity for school children. Proudly post it to your networks with a selfie tagged #SolidaritySLF
- With your grandchildren, or any young people in your life, create a paper chain, a line of gingerbread people, a chalk drawing, or any other expression of solidarity with school children that inspires you. Post and share your work of art! #SolidaritySLF



Photo provided by MWEDO

**“The MWEDO Girls Secondary School was established as a safe house to protect and educate disadvantaged and marginalised girls to become leaders and advocate for their own communities.”**  
-MWEDO



# The Strength of Young People: Ryan's Story

When Ryan\* first came to MusicWorks in Cape Town, South Africa, he was withdrawn and quiet in his music therapy group.

He was already struggling to communicate and engage with kids at school. The caring MusicWorks staff understood he needed extra support and reassurance. They worked closely with Ryan, guiding and encouraging him to share his ideas, build relationships with others and eventually, lead the group.

Young people like Ryan who have lost parents to AIDS or are living with HIV often face significant challenges that go beyond their physical health. They are navigating the social stigma and isolation that come from being viewed as an outcast within their own communities, on top of the usual insecurities of teenage life.

MusicWorks uses the power of music to unlock the potential in children's lives, giving them a chance to explore their creative self-expression in a therapeutic setting, while restoring their self-worth.

Over time, Ryan's confidence grew. He began to let his guard down. He became more self-assured and joyful. He built trust with his group, and felt a sense of belonging that he had always wanted but didn't quite have the skills to navigate comfortably on his own.

In the midst of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, thousands of children like Ryan are struggling to find acceptance from their peers. Children affected by HIV, including those who have HIV, live with a caregiver who is HIV positive or has lost a parent to AIDS, experience anxiety and depression more than their peers.

This is why the work that MusicWorks is doing is so important. Through music and creative expression, they are helping children overcome personal barriers, connect with their community and explore their individuality in a safe and nurturing environment.

With your help, we can continue to fund this valuable work throughout COVID-19 lockdowns and into the future. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for this type of intervention is greater than ever. Together, we can ensure that MusicWorks can adapt its work and create programs that will support children, teachers and the community.

\*Pseudonym to protect his identity

**“Each day, we work towards ensuring that our organisation supports and develops the resilience of young people which in turn, we hope, will liberate, empower and enrich their lives.”**

- MUSICWORKS – SOUTH AFRICA

Photos provided by MusicWorks



COVID Response Program's Students



First group of Music Therapy COVID Response Program Graduates



# Reducing Stigma for People Living with HIV and AIDS

Since 2001, Kiambu People Living with HIV/AIDS (KIPEWA) has addressed the stigma and isolation faced by people affected by HIV and AIDS. The founders, nine people living with HIV themselves, saw a need to create a space where people could share their experiences with others who were facing some of the same hurdles. Their support groups are a lifeline for people in their community.

Recently, a KIPEWA client recounted the positive impact his support group has had on his life. At first he was uncertain, even suspicious of their motivation for reaching out to him. Despite his fears, he knew that he needed the support of his community.

Over time, as his trust grew, he began to appreciate the significance of the group, and started participating in discussions around health management, support, safety and reducing isolation. He gained the self confidence that comes from sharing challenges, instead of carrying them alone.

He has made new friends who he communicates with openly about the realities and commonalities of their experiences, and has emerged as a leader, encouraging other members to promote the benefits of the support group.

Your contributions support KIPEWA's vision for a safe space that is supportive and accommodating of people living with HIV and AIDS.

“*Their [group members'] journey from clients to leadership serves as an inspiration to peers in that they are living proof that HIV doesn't limit you in any way.*

*You can live a productive life despite being HIV positive. They challenge clients to overcome their seemingly huge limitations and show them that self-acceptance is the key to positive living.”*

- KIAMBU PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (KIPEWA) – KENYA

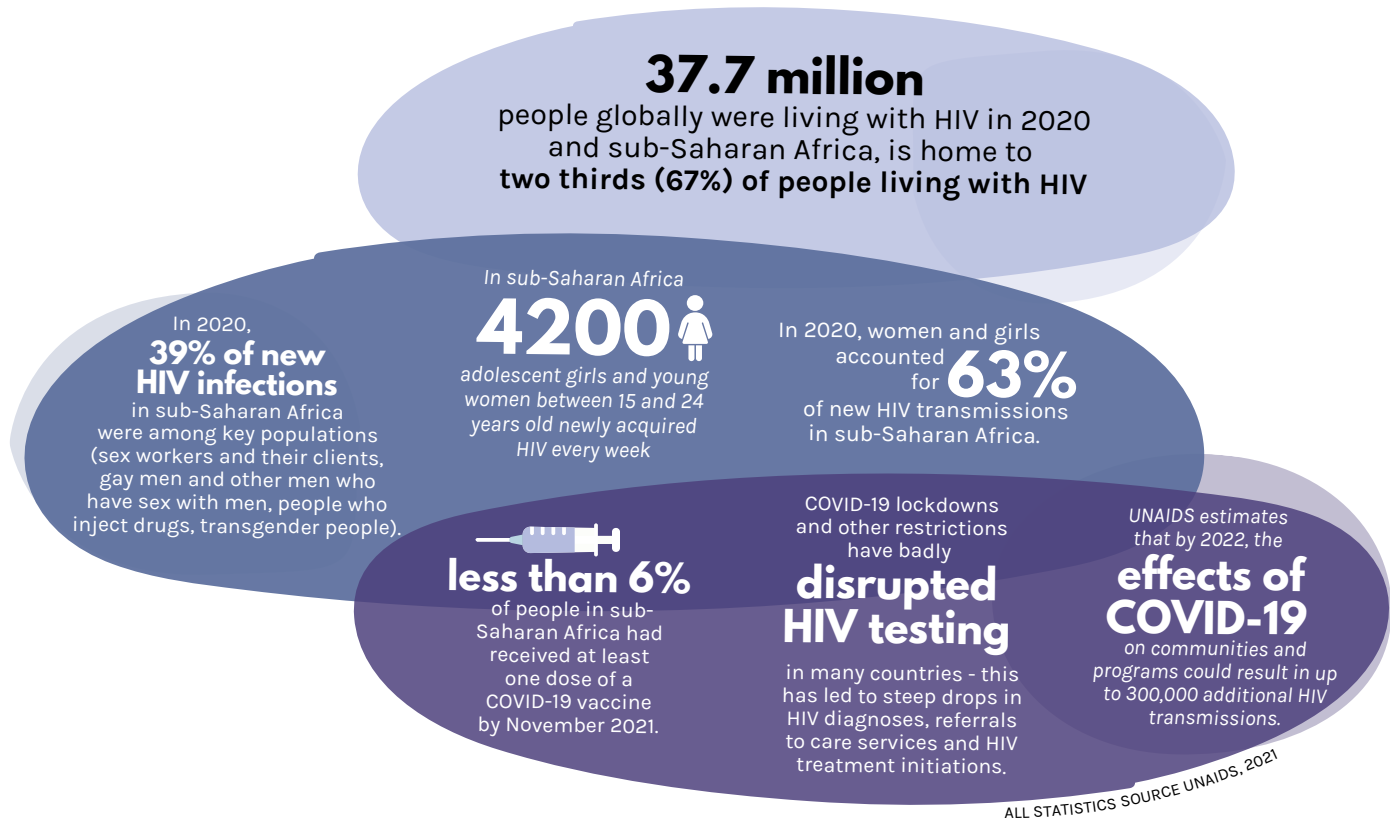
MUJHU Young Generation Alive HIV Awareness Outreach for Youth



Musenka Emmanuel

# The HIV and AIDS pandemic is not over

The need is great and urgent. The numbers below tell an alarming story of why we need to act now, more than ever. Community-based organizations are doing all that they can to ensure that we do not lose too much ground in the fight against AIDS. Your generosity has been instrumental in ensuring that the Stephen Lewis Foundation can play a role in supporting them to do just that. Thank you for playing a part in making a lasting change and restoring hope to those affected.



## Monthly donations provide a stable source of funding to build the movement towards a future free from HIV and AIDS

Your recurring gift ensures SLF can maximize our impact in supporting grassroots partners across sub-Saharan Africa. Monthly donations lower administrative costs, help our organization and our partners to make informed plans for the future, and have ongoing impact all year long.

**We promise to use your monthly gift wisely.** Our partnerships are based in solidarity, not charity. That means we don't just fund our partners - we build long-term relationships with them, too.

**Monthly donors are a driving force for change.** You can help provide a stable foundation from which new and innovative possibilities in community-led HIV education, prevention and treatment services can grow.

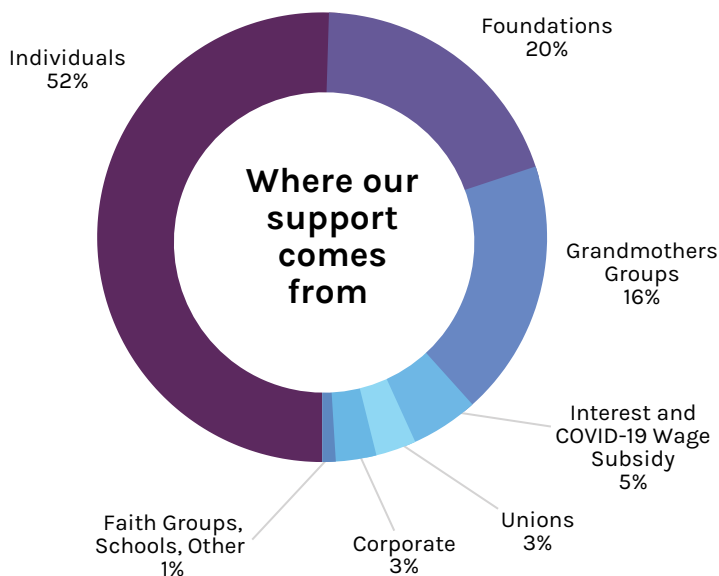
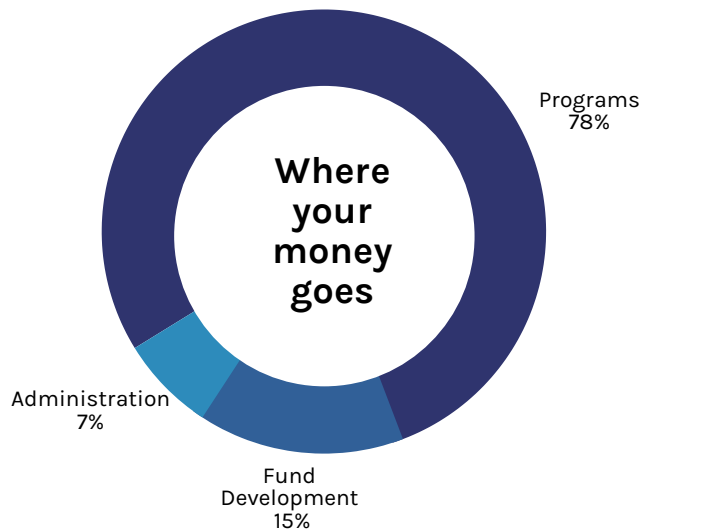


Become a monthly donor by visiting our website at  
[www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/monthly](http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/monthly)



# Stephen Lewis Foundation Financial Overview

Your support is a true act of global solidarity. Thanks to you, the Stephen Lewis Foundation is able to channel resources directly, reliably and accountably to our partners. Between 2003 and 2021, the SLF has disbursed and committed a cumulative \$138.6 million in program spending, including direct support to over 2,100 initiatives with 335 community-based organizations in 15 African countries. To read more about our work with African partners, please visit: [stephenlewisfoundation.org/areas-of-work](http://stephenlewisfoundation.org/areas-of-work)



**“It is not a cliché, but we truly appreciate SLF for trusting us to partner with you in your endeavor to make the lives of people in the communities experience a touch of love and care.**

*We have many people appreciating the work and we know that we could not do it without SLF. You have enabled our wings and now the community is getting 'healed'.*

*The CoVHs [Community Volunteers for Home-based care] themselves are not afraid because as one puts it “the more they talk about it, the more they get healed!” Thank you SLF, on our own behalf and the community you are serving through us.*

- KIAMBU PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (KIPEWA) – KENYA

The Foundation's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. For a copy of the Foundation's full audited financial statements and the link to our annual Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) charity returns, please visit: [stephenlewisfoundation.org/who-we-are/financials](http://stephenlewisfoundation.org/who-we-are/financials).



The SLF is proud to be accredited by the Imagine Canada Standards Program. Accredited organizations demonstrate excellence and leadership in five key areas: board governance, financial accountability and transparency, fundraising, staff management, and volunteer involvement.

# Order your holiday cards today

The holiday season is nearly here. With it comes a welcome opportunity to reconnect, share holiday cheer, and act in global solidarity. This year, consider making donations and sending beautiful printed cards or e-cards to your family, friends and colleagues. Simply donate online and send e-cards for easy and immediate delivery. We can also send you cards to personalize and deliver yourself, or mail cards on your behalf. Your contributions have a meaningful impact and strengthen the work of our grassroots partners and their communities.

Order your holiday cards today  
[www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/holidays2021](http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/holidays2021)



\*Printed cards may not be exactly as pictured

## There are many ways to support community-based organizations turning the tide of HIV and AIDS

[stephenlewisfoundation.org/donate](http://stephenlewisfoundation.org/donate)



Donate Online



Become a Monthly Donor



Donate Stocks



Join the Campaign

Photo credits for p.6 Starting top, L-R, top-bottom: Alexis MacDonald, Skystudios Africa, Henry King, Tikun Olam, Alexis MacDonald



Tel: 416-533-9292

Toll-free: 1-888-203-9990

Email: [info@stephenlewisfoundation.org](mailto:info@stephenlewisfoundation.org)

[www.stephenlewisfoundation.org](http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org)

Charitable Registration # 89635 4008 RR0001

Publication Mail Agreement # 41002516

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

260 Spadina Ave · Suite 100

Toronto ON Canada M5T 2E4

