



the Stephen Lewis
FOUNDATION

Together we are cutting the
AIDS pandemic off at its roots.



2021 IMPACT REPORT

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Your solidarity is making a difference

Dear SLF Community,

The work of the SLF's partners in the face of COVID-19 has affirmed what we know to be true:

- Community-based organizations have the expertise, agility, and relationships needed to respond quickly and effectively to pandemics.
- Transformative change is generated when people can access wrap-around services to meet their needs as whole people.
- Support for community-based organizations is most effective when it is responsive, long-term, and shaped by the priorities of communities themselves.

The depth of our partners' accomplishments, despite the challenges of COVID-19, makes it easy to sing their praises and celebrate their extraordinary resourcefulness in adapting to their communities' changing needs. But in so doing, we cannot afford to ignore the very real impact that the pandemic has had and continues to have for their staff and communities.

It is in considering the distinctive context of our partners' work, and the extent to which your solidarity has contributed to their essential programs, that we present this impact report. We hope that the stories, testimonials, and insights shared will help you reflect on the difference your support has made.

Thank you for being an empowering collaborator in this work.

In solidarity,



Meg French
Executive Director, Stephen Lewis Foundation



PHOTO CREDITS Front cover: Reach Out Touch One Ministries (ROTOM). Interior photos: p.1 Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (HACT), p.3 St. Francis Health Care Services, p.5 ROTOM, p.7 mothers2mothers, p. 8 Kiambu People Living with HIV/AIDS (KIPEWA), p. 9 Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG), p.10 left-to-right Kulich Youth Reproductive Health and Development Organization (KYRHDO), dIalanathi, p.11 Rainbow Sunrise Mapambazuko (RSM), p. 12 Women's International Peace Centre, p.13 Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), p. 14 Tamba Pwani, Back cover: HACT

A snapshot of impact

Community-based organizations are uprooting the inequities that allow the AIDS pandemic to persist. Their work is driving change and laying the foundation for a just and equitable future.

In 2021, with your support, our partners:



Distributed

masks, sanitizer, and other essential COVID-19 protective supplies to members of their communities.



Counselled

children, youth, and adults to address the trauma of loss, combat HIV stigma, and strengthen resolve.



Facilitated

access to HIV treatment and COVID-19 vaccines, serving as a vital link for formal health systems and communities.



Trained

women through income-generation, business skills, and financial management, contributing to their economic empowerment.



Mobilized

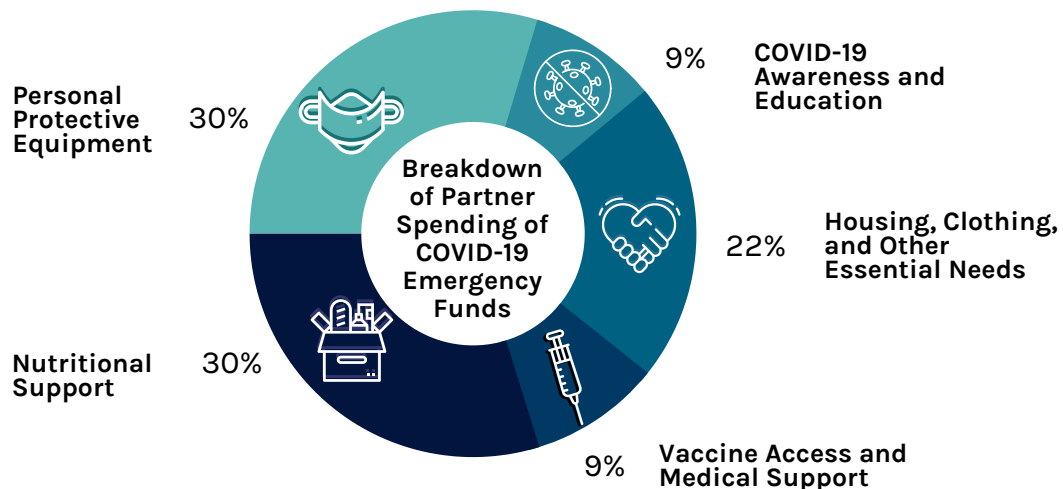
community representatives, health care workers, police, and religious leaders to join the movement to end gender-based violence.



Provided

food security to vulnerable households through food hampers, backyard gardens, and support for their economic activities.

In 2021, we provided emergency COVID-19 funds to all 120+ SLF partners in addition to their core funding agreements.



Responding to COVID-19 with determination

“ This period has been one of the toughest periods we have ever experienced as an organization due to the coronavirus, which abruptly interrupted our activities, businesses, and way of life. Without the generous support of ... the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF), we can't imagine how devastating life could have been. Your support has given us hope.”

- THIRD WORLD IMAGES PROJECT, ZAMBIA

St. Francis's life-saving interventions

There is significant diversity among the SLF's 120+ partners. Some are smaller, localized organizations staffed primarily by volunteers for whom we are their only consistent funder; others are much larger in scale and reach. What all of our partners have in common is their ability to pivot their work so that those who need them the most have a place to go where they know their needs will be prioritized.

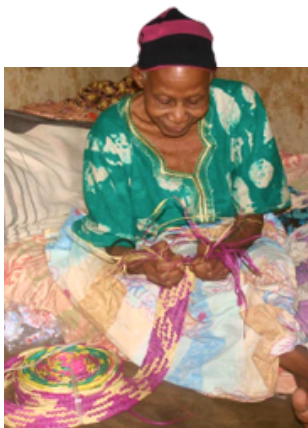
St. Francis Health Care Services in Uganda is one of our partners whose significant breadth of programming has contributed to seamless access to health care for many individuals in their community.

In June 2021, St. Francis established a specialized COVID-19 treatment unit in response to over-capacity public health care facilities. At the time, many St. Francis staff were testing positive for COVID-19 but couldn't access treatment, and grandmothers in the community were dying from COVID-19 complications after not receiving adequate care due to a shortage of beds and oxygen at government-run hospitals. St. Francis developed the COVID-19 unit to better care for their community's urgent needs.



Health care workers at St. Francis set up the COVID-19 treatment unit

Jajja (grandmother) Mary, an 87-year-old grandmother, was among the first patients in the unit. She had been experiencing significant difficulty breathing, and her grandchildren had tried to admit her to several hospitals in the district, but each one was over capacity and under-resourced. Despite her precarious health, Mary was forced to return home without receiving care.



As is often the case when a community member needs help, word reached staff at St. Francis. They sent a community health worker and ambulance to transport Jajja Mary to their COVID-19 treatment unit where she remained in their expert care for more than a month.

Today, Jajja Mary is home where she is taking care of her grandchildren, weaving mats, and telling stories of surviving the pandemic.

Your continued support is ensuring that organizations like St. Francis remain present for people such as Jajja Mary when they are needed the most.

Your gift allowed our partners to adapt to the emerging needs of their communities in 2021.

Action for Rural Women's Empowerment in Uganda

ensured children and grandmothers were able to stay on HIV treatment despite restrictions on movement and skyrocketing transportation costs by having a community health worker collect their lifesaving medication at urban health centres and bring it to the community for distribution.



Health Development Initiative in Rwanda

addressed the mental and physical health impacts of social isolation during times when physical distancing was required. HDI used a hotline, local radio, WhatsApp, and social media to reach their LGBTIQ clients with counselling and information about COVID-19 precautions.



Catholic AIDS Action, in Namibia

stepped in to support 367 community members to apply for national emergency income grants to afford food and housing despite income loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Mozambique Treatment Access Movement in Mozambique

is a voice of people living with HIV and advocates for their full inclusion and consideration in COVID-19 responses. Their expertise was recognized by the Maputo City Council, which has contracted MATRAM to provide education on HIV and COVID-19 at Maputo city health facilities.



Stepping Stones International in Botswana

trained grandmothers on how to identify cases of gender-based violence, provide immediate support, and make appropriate referrals. As a result, these grandmothers are reaching previously unreached survivors of gender-based violence and making sure they receive the care and support they need.



Swaziland Nurses Association in Eswatini

improved food security and increased access to nutritious food for their community through kitchen, backyard, and community gardens.



With your support last year, our partner **Health Options for Young Men on HIV, AIDS & STIs (HOYMAS)** in Kenya reached thousands of LGBTIQ community members with vital support:

500

MSWs (male sex workers) living with HIV received nutrition and mental health support through counselling and peer support groups

1215

MSWs received deliveries of vital anti-retroviral medication, HIV self-test kits, condoms, and lubricants via a team of trained peer counsellors

100

frontline staff accessed personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, sanitizer)

7500

MSWs received COVID-19 and HIV information through a peer-to-peer approach on social media platforms

832

MSWs accessed COVID-19 testing and vaccinations through an initiative organized by HOYMAS in partnership with government

Translating expertise from one pandemic to another

"Community-led organizations ... deployed insights developed in the context of the HIV response to effectively mobilize their communities against COVID-19."

- UNAIDS, 2021

When the COVID-19 vaccine became available to older people in Uganda, Reach One Touch One Ministries (ROTOM) learned that many grandmothers in their community were hesitant to be vaccinated. ROTOM drew on their expertise and experience responding to HIV and developed a plan to address misinformation.

ROTOM mobilized its existing team of experienced field assistants and Village Volunteer Committee members to reach the community with accurate information. They also did something community-based organizations do best – they organized community meetings and visited house after house. Thanks to the trust that ROTOM staff and volunteers have built in the community over the years, these efforts were overwhelmingly successful.

“ Many grannies said they were helped to stop believing in unproven rumours about the vaccine and to make informed decisions, hence reducing their worries and fears. Grannies were happy to receive the vaccine that they could not have received on their own.”

- ROTOM

99%
of the seniors ROTOM supports had received 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as of January 2022



A health care worker administers a COVID-19 vaccine to a ROTOM grandmother.



Grandmothers support groups were key places to dispel misinformation about vaccinations.



Harriet displays her vaccine certificate.

Excellence through holistic care

Meeting people where they are

mothers2mothers (m2m) in Lesotho demonstrates what community-driven, responsive care truly is. They meet their clients who are pregnant and living with HIV where they are -- both physically and emotionally.

m2m employs Mentor Mothers as the cornerstone of their care model. Mentor Mothers draw on their lived experiences as people who themselves experienced pregnancy while living with HIV to provide services that address stigma, encourage adherence to HIV treatment, and are tailored to the specific and diverse needs of their clients.

Mentor Mothers meet pregnant and post-natal clients wherever they are:



At health facilities, Mentor Mothers provide immediate support when someone is diagnosed with HIV.



In the community, Mentor Mothers offer health clinics for pregnant and postnatal women who can't access health centres.



Through home visits, phone calls, and WhatsApp, Mentor Mothers follow-up with clients who miss appointments and those who require additional, personalized support.



In support groups, Mentor Mothers address the immediate concerns of clients and offer trainings and support that build long term transformation through economic empowerment and improved nutrition.

m2m has had extraordinary results - 100% of their clients living with HIV are on treatment.



Makhotso Sejane, an HIV treatment mentor with m2m visits a client who missed health centre visits for early infant diagnosis. The mentor will provide HIV testing for the infant at the household level.

Taking a needs-driven approach to service delivery

Chiedza Child Care Services in Zimbabwe works to improve the quality of life of children living with HIV as well as orphans and other vulnerable children. Like many of our partners, they know that supporting children involves ensuring that they and their caregivers have access to **a full spectrum of services** to meet their needs.

Shorai is a testament to how economic empowerment for caregivers improves outcomes for children. When she was newly divorced, Shorai found it challenging to provide for her two young children and she was unemployed. She was able to make small amounts of money through housekeeping, but this source of income was significantly affected by restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When Shorai learned of Chiedza's income-generation support, she seized the opportunity. Participating in a savings and lending group allowed her to borrow the funds she needed to undertake specialized training in making dish soap.

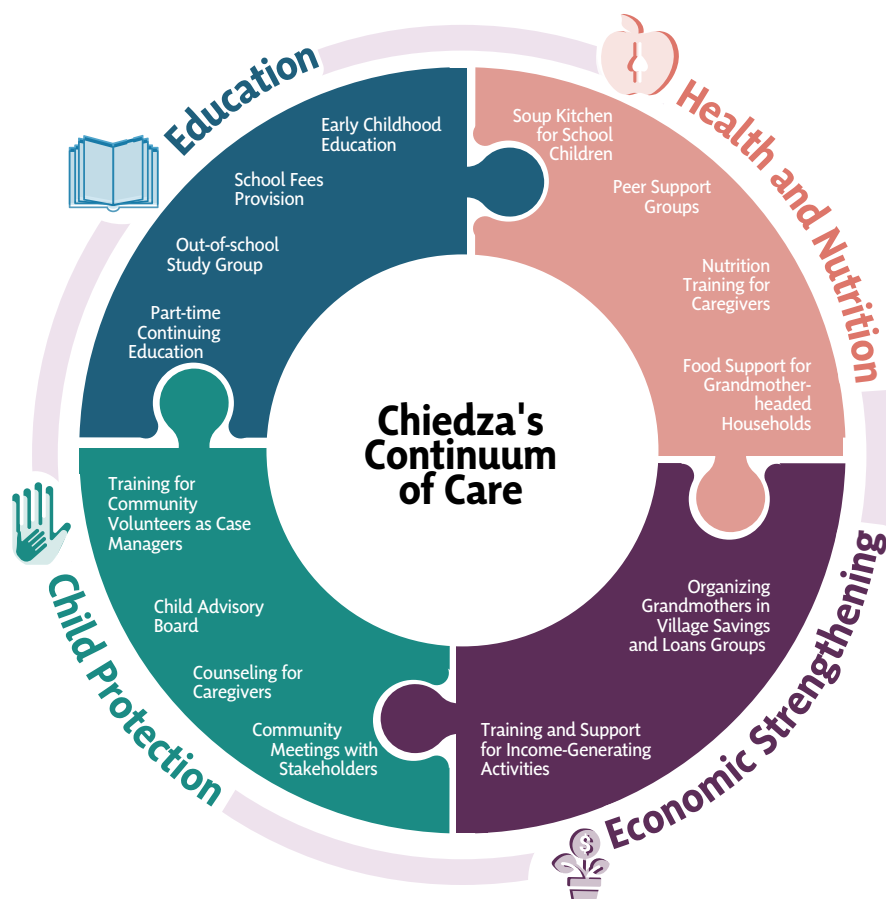
When asked what economic empowerment has meant for her, Shorai reflects, "I am happy that I managed to buy school shoes for all my children. I am also able to cater for bus fare for my children, buy food and also support their educational needs. I can also buy stationery and school uniforms from my business proceeds,"

“ We use a holistic orphan care support model to identify and support orphans and vulnerable children in the community.... This approach acknowledges that a child requires more than one intervention to thrive. The organization works with other stakeholders so that children can receive a continuum of care.”

- CHIEDZA CHILD CARE SERVICES, ZIMBABWE

Shorai's is a story of capacity-building, courage, and community, and it is not unique. Chiedza's approach of implementing mutually reinforcing, interconnected strategies **- a continuum of care -** has brought health and healing to hundreds of children and their families.

This is the type of impact that your support to the SLF and our partners like Chiedza makes possible.



Integrating community-based care with government services

“ There is a strong referral network between KipeWA and the health centres. Our home-based care workers act as link points between the community, KipeWA, and the health facilities. They connect people up with the health facilities for medication, and they will follow up with the clients that the hospital identifies as needing support. The health centres will also refer clients to KipeWA for counselling and psychosocial support in our community support groups.”

- KipeWA

Kiambu People Living with HIV/AIDS (KipeWA) has built strong and productive relationships with various government health departments and centres in Kenya. By collaborating with government representatives, KipeWA increases the reach of services in the community and ensures their clients receive comprehensive care.

- Working closely with the PMTCT (prevention of mother to child transmission) clinic at Kiambu Hospital, KipeWA encourages women to involve their partners in the prenatal journey and supports them in disclosing their HIV status.
- By partnering with the County AIDS Control Council, KipeWA ensures their community health volunteers and staff are equipped with accurate, up-to-date COVID-19 prevention information.
- KipeWA worked with a Kiambu hospital to offer free COVID-19 vaccination during their “I Am Not My Diagnosis” beauty pageant. More than 100 people were vaccinated that day.

[Click to watch KipeWA's video](#)



featuring a former client who is now a community health volunteer



Participants in KipeWA's "I Am Not My Diagnosis" community pageant.

Fostering mental health and well-being

Mental health and well-being programs have always been an integral part of our partners' work. These programs are key to increasing rates of HIV testing and helping people who test positive to initiate and stay on life-saving treatment. They address stigma, help people heal from trauma and loss, and rebuild resilience for individuals, families, and communities affected by HIV and AIDS. Now, our partners are finding the demand for mental health support has increased with the stress and insecurity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they are responding in innovative and restorative ways.



Zumba class at Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG) for lesbian, bisexual, and queer women

Beyond the therapist's office

While formal counselling is an important part of mental health and well-being support, some of the most impactful programming involves peer support, skills development, and educational and economic empowerment.

Kulich Youth Reproductive Health and Development Organization (KYRHDO) is helping young people in Ethiopia build life skills and self confidence.



"The life skills training we provided to young girls and boys was helpful to keep girls in school since it builds self-confidence and self-awareness."

-KYRHDO

KYRHDO recognizes the multiple impacts the HIV and AIDS pandemic has had on young people in Ethiopia, especially those who have lost one or both parents to AIDS-related illness. Through their life skills training program, KYRHDO works with 50 youth a year to develop their self-esteem, problem-solving and communication skills, and ability to manage stress. Primarily focused on supporting young people's mental and emotional well-being in the face of multiple traumas, the life skills training program also has many additional benefits for young people, including preparing them for success in school.

With support from the SLF and our donors, KYRHDO is ensuring that young people develop the confidence they need to become a generation of changemakers.

Healing through play

dlalanathi is a Zulu word that means "play with us." It perfectly captures the approach of the South African organization by the same name, which works to "provide emotional support to children and families affected by trauma in a context of poverty and HIV and AIDS."

"Our name expresses how we use play to achieve wellness for children. Play is . . . a key indicator of their mental health. Play is children's natural means of communication, bringing fun, connection, development and healing where there has been trauma and loss."

-DLALANATHI

dlalanathi's Family Support Group provides a safe space for caregivers to process the grief and trauma that can create emotional distance between them and the children in their care. At the same time, parenting workshops provide caregivers with vital skills and strategies for building strong relationships of trust and communication with their children through play. This lays the foundation for them to provide emotional support to their children throughout their lives.



At a dlalanathi Play for Communication training, a caregiver makes a doll to use for storytelling.

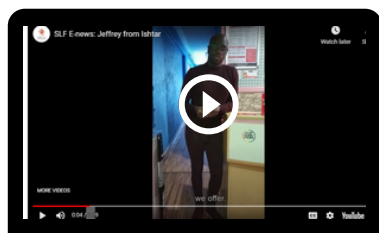
Your contributions to the SLF have allowed us to provide consistent, flexible support to dlalanathi at a time when the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have made play, communication, and family connection especially important.

Safe spaces promote well-being

Organizations run by and for their communities create spaces where it is safer (emotionally and physically) for people to be fully themselves. When people living with HIV, LGBTIQ communities, children who have lost parents to the AIDS pandemic, and survivors of gender-based violence have safe spaces to connect and share experiences, and access stigma-free health services that meet their individual needs, outcomes for mental health and HIV prevention and treatment greatly improve.

LGBTIQ individuals in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo face discrimination and violence on a regular basis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, LGBTIQ communities were blamed by some for bringing the virus as "God's punishment" for their sexualities. SLF partner Rainbow Sunrise Mapambazuko (RSM) runs a "friendship centre" that offers a safe space for LGBTIQ community members to gather, attend educational talks, and meet with peer educators. The SLF's contribution to the cost of renting the space and upgrading its security allowed RSM to support well-being for 208 LGBTIQ individuals who visited the centre in 2021.

Your support for the Stephen Lewis Foundation allows us to invest in the long-term sustainability of community-based organizations so they can build or rent spaces that are physically safe and train staff and volunteers to facilitate emotionally safe spaces.



Click to watch and read about how Ishtar created safe spaces during COVID-19

“In a society where there are no safe spaces, in a society where there's violence, safe spaces ... are quite important ... [and] an opportunity to have conversations to support each other and grow together. ”

– ISHTAR, KENYA

On the frontlines: human-centred change

As we work together to support community-based organizations in driving systemic change and addressing the root causes of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, we also acknowledge the people who are at the heart of this work.



A Women's Leadership in Peacebuilding training offered by Women's International Peace Centre in Uganda

Sibongile Tshabalala is driving change in her community.



"Women are still leading the struggle of humanity on the ground," Sibongile proclaims. "And it gives me hope that one day, we'll win the fight against abuse. We will win the fight against oppression of women, because whether we like it or not, we are still oppressed and we need to liberate ourselves."



TAC demonstrations demand equitable access to HIV treatment for all.

As the national chairperson for Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), Sibongile is leaving her mark and building a legacy. TAC is a South African advocacy network that gave this change-maker and mother of three her first introduction to HIV and AIDS activism.

Sibongile was diagnosed with HIV in 2000. Five years later, she lost her husband to complications from AIDS. She had not sought treatment for HIV up to that point due to widespread HIV stigma. "You felt insulted, you felt dehumanized, you felt like I'm nobody in this community because I will die soon," Sibongile recalls.

Although Sibongile eventually began taking antiretroviral medication, she lacked information about the impacts of the virus and why treatment was so crucial. A chance encounter with a TAC representative, and an invitation to attend a peer support meeting, changed everything and were the start of a lifetime of activism for Sibongile.

For the first time, Sibongile met people speaking freely about their diagnosis, treatment, hopes, and fears. She no longer felt alone in her journey and found hope in how people were fearlessly coming together to support one another. Inspired, she signed up to become a TAC branch organizer that very day.

"This is where I want other people living with HIV like me to come and get strength," she thought.

TAC continues to be a leading activist organization demanding equitable access to HIV treatment. Sibongile has now spent more than a decade working with TAC. Made possible in part by the support of SLF donors, TAC's campaigns and Sibongile's leadership have led to tremendous progress. Sibongile sees TAC's focus on women's programming as her legacy.



[Click to read stories](#)

[of more women working towards a future free from AIDS](#)

Dr. Samia Masinde is confronting stigma head on.

As a trans woman, Samia is no stranger to gender-based discrimination and inequity – much of which she encountered in her own childhood home. Her nine younger siblings joined with community members who bullied and physically abused her. Once, they attempted to set her on fire.

From a place of strength and resolve, Samia has forged her own path forward. After studying internal medicine in Cape Town, South Africa, she returned to Kenya where she now works to increase access to sexual health services for gender and sexual minorities. Today she is director of Tamba Pwani in coastal Kenya.

Samia adopted her son, Yassin, at two months old. “When he was about 10 years old I made a decision to tell him about myself because I knew that I wanted his education about diversity to start at home with me,” she recalls. “I wanted to talk to him about the stigma and discrimination he might face and to protect him.” Now, she calls him her best friend and says he is very protective of her – aware of the heightened risk of sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence faced by trans women around the world.

Samia says it’s in her nature to fight for other women. Trans women face a significantly heightened risk of acquiring HIV, and access to sexual health services is essential to preventing its transmission.

With the support of SLF donors, leaders like Samia are transforming their communities. 🇰🇪



“I can’t just sit back and remain passive.”
– SAMIA



Click to read stories
of more women
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future free from AIDS

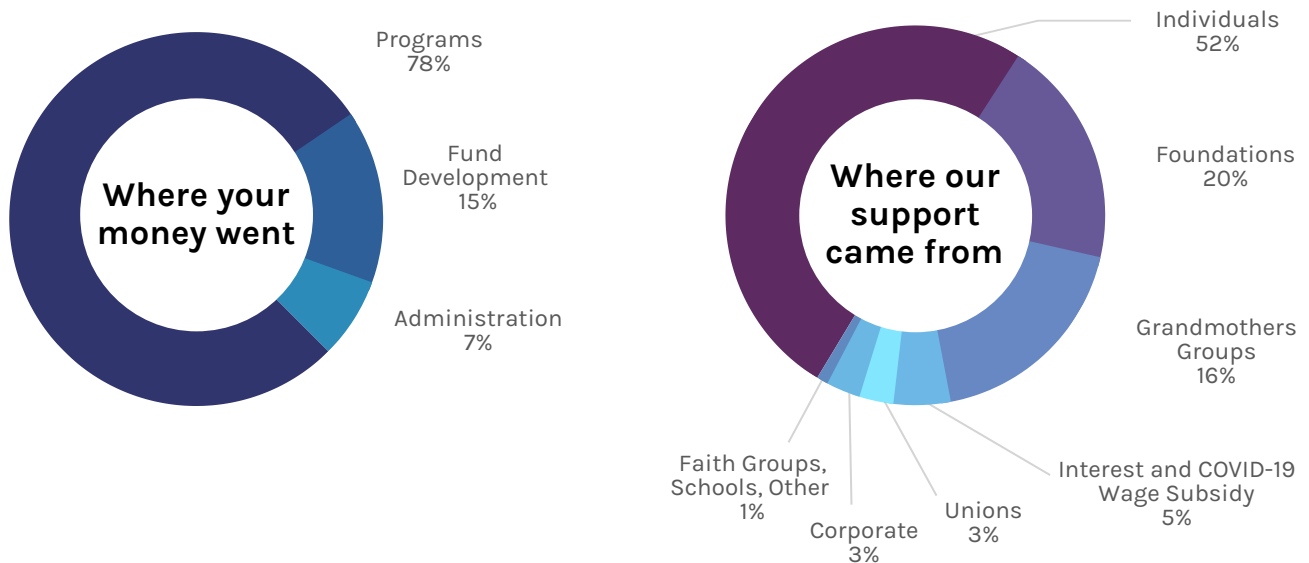


Weekly meeting of Tamba Pwani staff and peer educators (left); community sensitization and outreach session (right)

Stephen Lewis Foundation Financial Overview

The SLF's work is grounded in our firm belief that the expertise needed to end the AIDS pandemic is found at the community level, but sufficient funding for community-based organizations is not. 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.

SLF Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)



For a copy of the Foundation's full audited financial statements and to view our annual Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) charity returns, [click here](#).

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.



Thank you for your
ongoing solidarity
and support.

Together we are
cutting the AIDS
pandemic **off at**
its roots.



[Click to make a 2022 gift](#)



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