

Rise Initiative for Women's Right Advocacy- RiWA Annual Report



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- AGYW:** Adolescent Girls and Young Women
- AIDS:** Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- RiWA:** Rise Initiative for Women’s Right Advocacy
- CHLEGs:** Community Health and Livelihoods Enhancement Groups
- DiCs:** Drop in Centers
- LGBTIQ+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer
- EID:** Early Infant Diagnosis
- GBV:** Gender Based Violence
- HCT:** HIV Counselling and Testing
- HIV:** Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome
- HMIS:** Health Management Information System
- PMTCT:** Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
- PPs:** Priority Populations
- PrEP:** Pre Exposure Prophylaxis
- STIs:** Sexually Transmitted Infections
- TB:** Tuberculosis
- GACs:** Girls Action Club
- IPV:** Intimate partner Violence

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Message from Executive Director

Warm greetings to you as we present the second annual report of the RiWA, to our members, development partners and other key stakeholders in the human rights movement. It is a unique report that brings together events and outcomes of RiWA's interventions over a two-year period. In the report, we are accounting to you on what we have been able to do and achieve in the period in issue. The Organization commends the various partners and stakeholders that have been instrumental in supporting the institutional development of the Organization and its achievements. We have continued to play our key role in demystifying the concept of the human rights for women's and Sexual Minorities in South Sudan who qualifies to be one. We have popularized it to ensure that we build a critical mass of empowered young women and the minority communities in the central equatoria and Western Bhar el Ghazal States. I once again wish to express our appreciation to all of you who have expressed support and good will to ensure that the Coalition becomes stronger thereby enhancing its effectiveness. We at the RiWA pledge to do our best to ensure that the RiWA achieves the objectives it was set up for.

Thank You

About RIWA:

RIWA thematic areas: Stigma, discrimination & challenging criminalization of all forms; Access to comprehensive quality SRHR services, Employment and economic justice including access to safe preventive biomedical innovations such as PrEP, GBV services and acceleration of SDGs; Community and institutional capacity development targeting Women and Young Adolescent girls and emerging Women and youth leaders and Adolescent at high risk through feminists transformational leadership,



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Strengthening Communities

mentorship and movement building; Advocacy, research & knowledge management including documenting Women and youth resilience & movement building; Livelihoods Support including economic empowerment; Social protection specifically vulnerable children of Women & AGYW at high risk; Mental Health & Psychosocial Support.

RiWA was established?

RiWA was born out of the need to bridge the missing link of the untapped potential, comparative advantage & strategic resourcefulness of grassroots rural & peri-urban based Young women groups in the struggle to work towards realizing a supportive policy and social environment that enables rural & peri urban based grassroots female Women's to live free from human rights abuse in order to live healthy and productive lives in South Sudan. Varied number of groups in rural and peri urban areas were not organized, lacked functional structures and Women in these areas were suffering violations of their rights coupled with lack of access to essential SRHR, GBV, HIV/AIDS and employment opportunities tailored services as most of other organizations are concentrated in the capital city. RiWA's role therefore is to bridge this gap.

Rise Initiative for Women's Right Advocacy -RiWA

At RiWA, we believe in the resilience and capacity of Women to rebuild their lives in spite of many scarce resources and a lack of visibility. This project will support a community of Women in South Sudan to self-organize so they can provide for their families, become self-sufficient, and integrate in their local community. We currently are implementing programs under shelter and protection, capacity building of YAGW in Juba.

Rise Initiative for Women's Right Advocacy (RiWA) is an NGO based in South Sudan founded in 2018 and registered in 2019 working with vulnerable Women and youth in the Central Equatoria and western Bahar el Ghazal States of South Sudan.

Rise Initiative for Women's Right Advocacy focuses on four key issues:

Advocacy on human rights, Economic Justice, Sexual Reproductive Health and Right, and Sports Programs for AGYW.

VISION

To envisage a peaceful world offering Women and Young Adolescent Girls have an opportunity to participate in the socio-economic development decisions and activities in South Sudan where they are accorded full and equal dignity without prejudice.

MISSION

To promote and protect the health, economic, political and social rights of young women and vulnerable groups in South Sudan

CORE VALUES

Commitment, Equality, Accountability, confidentiality, Solidarity, Respect, Partnership

Objectives

1. To strengthen the institutional capacity of RiWA secretariat and its members for better coordination, communication, reporting, engagement and accountability to successfully execute her mandate in South Sudan.
2. To respond to stigma, discrimination and violence fueled by punitive laws and harmful cultural norms to guarantee equitable access and utilization of responsive integrated HIV, SRHR, GBV, TB services and acceleration of SDGs by rural and peri-urban grass root Women and youth and AGYW at high risk in South Sudan.
3. To economically empower rural and peri-urban Women & AGYW at high risk expand their range of choices, reduce their vulnerabilities and improve their social economic well-being in South Sudan.
4. To provide social protection, psychosocial support and mental health needs to AGYW at high risk and vulnerable children-especially children of Women widowed women in South Sudan.
5. To undertake research and document human rights abuses experienced by Women and young adolescent girls for evidence based advocacy and policy change in South Sudan.

INTRODUCTION

This report highlights the progress of RiWA's activities based on its strategic objectives. The report is part of the requirement intended to give RIWA stakeholders information about the program activities, income, financial performance and position.

Overview of the year 2022 was a challenging yet exhilarating year. We tapped into dreaded territories and achieved the desired results at the end of the year. We broke the glass ceiling and dared to be different in all our programs and activities. All thanks go to our members, contributors, and sponsors for supporting our vision and mission of educating, empowering, and impacting the lives of young female adults. "We learnt, we thrived, we fell, but we rose with passion and determination. 2022 was a huge learning curve for the organization, and we are glad that all this was necessary for phenomenal growth and setting the pace. We envision a world where the rights of women are upheld, & respected and massive efforts were made to ensure that the foundation of this work was created on a firm ground. We are proud to be firm trailblazers in our line of work."

Membership

We have 357 members between the ages of 18 and 40. Though the membership is female dominated we are proud to have inducted some male members in 2022. We continue striving for a gender inclusive environment through the active involvement of men in our programs. Our membership is comprised of high school graduates, university students, young professionals, and small business owners.



1.1 Psychosocial support and mental health program/ Girls Talk Leadership

RiWA has established a psychosocial support program to its members and staffs, these sessions have impacted more than 240 young women within Juba with knowledge on trauma healing, Stress management. Providing psychosocial support for therapy healing and safety for young women. launch group and individual psychosocial support circle for community members in Juba. This program is done on monthly bases targeting 320 community members.

The Psychosocial support and Empowerment program is an initiative intended to create change and develop sexual minorities in and out of school for socio economic. The initiative will target young women between ages of 15-35 years taking them through training and mentorship program covering initial topics of body autonomy education, access and dissemination of information about mental health, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 creative leadership development, menstrual Hygiene and sanitation management, physical education, defensive life skills and personal development skills, Etiquette.



Understanding and mitigating mental health:

The working sessions ranged from an introduction by the Ade on mental health, stress, Trauma, PDS and others.

South Sudan as the world's newest nation and country born out of a protracted conflict, was found to have the characteristics of its most young people being poor with high rate of unemployed, rampant insecurity, inter-and intra-communal fighting, limited engagement of youth in culture, arts and sports because, Many youths grew up and survived in a hostile environment without protection due to the long civil war in the country.

There is a large number of youths across the country that face scornful and humiliating criticism from peers, relatives, some fall prone to abuse and some are neglected by family member and therefore resort to criminal activity and drugs, creates greater emotional vulnerability.

Among the urgent needs for support in basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, young people in South Sudan also require assistance in dealing with the psychological and emotional stress of conflict, which can include witnessing violence, fleeing their homes, or living in difficult conditions among others.

To do this, RiWA with support from the United States Embassy Juba remains committed to improving mental health and emotional well-being of those affected by the challenges they face, by organizing a psychosocial support program with various sessions, including the Introduction to mental health, recognizing mental illnesses, and anger in the three previous sessions.

Activity Impact;

The psychosocial support and wellness program brings together young people and put them in a space where everyone feels safe to share the problems that they go through and the moderator helps them understand that the emotions and feeling that they go through are meant to be felt and then gives them tips on how to deal the stresses that come with it.

The moderator also stated that moving from juba to terekeka was very helpful to the participants because that change of scenery was basically good for their healing process as they get to connect to the new environment, different people and culture.



Below is a quoted comment from one of the participants during an interview;

“I live in juba, an environment where I feel like I am always closed up and the news going around south sudan is not peaceful, south sudan has issues so I felt like juba is the right place to be in all the time but coming to terekeka; it's peaceful, green, having fresh air, less noise, less problems, less guns! I have not seen any gun since I came. Coming here is the best decision I have made today and I can't wait to visit places outside juba to experience how it feels like to be outside juba”

General comments and recommendations;

The wellness program is having a positive influence on the lives of the participants. They have been taken through a series of topics such as getting to know what mental health is by definition, types of mental illnesses, how to recognize that someone is stressed, some of the coping mechanisms that one can use; and there were special sessions that tackled specific types of mental illnesses for example; depression, anger and anxiety.

The recently concluded session in terekeka focused on post-traumatic stress disorder, eating and sleeping disorders, phobia and anxiety.

Women wit Purpose;Economic Empowerment Project;

This project aims at establishing Mentoring programs and also teach socio-emotional (life) skills, through peer-supported learning and practical experiences such as trauma healing workshops, and extracurricular activities like sports, games, clubs, societies, networks, dance, and drama.



Objectives;

To economically empower rural and peri-urban young women at high risk expands their range of choices, reduce their vulnerabilities and improve their social economic well-being in South Sudan.

To train youth in liquid soap making in small and large scales.

Economic recovery project, training of 40 youth between the age of 18 to 35 in liquid soap making. These 3 months' training aims at empowering the community members in income generating activities to sustain their lives and provide for their families. After their trainings, members will be supported with small startups capitals. Provided Financial management and business literacy training, for every business startups and an entrepreneur to be successful, it's imperative to have financial and business management skills in order to realize growth. The approach will equip sexual minorities with the necessary skills both finance and business management techniques.

Digital Security Training; Safety and Healing project

This project further aims at decentralizing digital tools and strategies. The hope is that these efforts will secure an online operating environment and safeguarding the broader space for young women human rights defenders and other targeted groups throughout Juba. The project also targets in stocking RiWA with new computers, servers, or hosting for data or websites and CCTV for security Purpose.



RiWA Carried out therapy sessions for young Women Human Rights Defenders within Juba. Specific objectives include:

- To increase the respect for commitment of Women Human Rights Defenders and their role in Society through concerted advocacy
- To initiate strategic networking with diversity of stakeholders in order to build wider and more diverse support base for Women Human Rights Defenders (WRDs)
- To establish and/or entrench new and existing partnerships for WHRDs and business to support an enabling environment for defending rights
- To build capacities for Women counselors, paralegals and ToT in human rights who will train others, provided psychosocial support for therapy healing as well as mentor the WHRDs
- Improve the institutional capacity of RiWA organization to protect itself from surveillance, office raids, interrogation, bad publicity and other threats



RiWA is currently implementing three projects on Safety, Security and Healing supported by FRIDA FUNDS and Project on Girls Leadership programs on two year phases supported by AWDF.

Under the Girls Leadership program, 300 young women ambassadors will be trained during the Girl Talk Leadership Camps in two years by providing information on Body, Health and rights, socio economic leadership, menstrual and sanitation management, physical education, defensive, life skills and personal development skills, Sports and Games.

Activity 1

Girl Talk Leadership Camps Planning and implementation.

To train community mentors, School Teachers, law enforcers as role models who will be mentors to the girls and monitor the Girl Talk Leadership Clubs as a mechanism of project sustainability.



ACHIEVEMENTS

In the past three years, our projects have benefited 1500 beneficiaries directly and 10000 indirectly through our peer's network and social media campaigns.

1. At least 240 people were equipped with basic knowledge on trauma healing, stress management.
2. We were able to provide solutions and recommendation that can provide young women protection.
3. Developed recommendation and guideline.
4. Trained 60 youth on liquid soap making and provided startups capital to four groups.
5. Trained 100 Human rights defenders and digital security
6. 380 young women ambassadors trained on Human Rights, Leadership skills.
7. Drafted 5 organizational polices.
8. Member of Ma'Mara Sakit movement in South Sudan and ESWA in Tanzania

Recommendations:

1. Awareness and sensation of the law enforcement and service providers.
2. Advocacy strategies
3. Amendment of customary laws that oppress gender equality
4. Allocation of more time on Mitigating GBV and breaking down of the laws and procedure
5. More projects on Economic Justice and empowerment
6. More advocacy on equal opportunities
7. Need for resource and wellness hub

Challenges:

1. Language barrier as participants came from different backgrounds speaking different languages.
2. There were very many women who needed to participate in the training but the budget constraints couldn't allow us to accommodate everyone.
3. Victim blaming has paved way for continuous harassment cases.

Strategic direction objective: Resource mobilization

Donors

List of donors and projects funded attached in annex

Name	Project/Year
USA Embassy Juba, South Sudan	Economic Empowerment and Psychosocial support 2021-2022
FRIDA Young Feminist Funds	Safety and Healing Project 2021 to 2023
ITF	Core and Administrative support 2021 to 2023
Freedom House	Digital security training 6 months (2022)
Africa Women Development Funds	Unleashing Girls opportunity 2022 to 2024 (2 Years)

RiWA new fundraising strategy

In a bid to respond to the declining trends in donor funding and the need to continue sustaining investments that consolidate and accelerate registered gains in ensuring that Women and AGYW at high risk live healthy and productive lives, free from harm and human rights abuses in South Sudan long after the donor funding is gone, RIWA established the Sisterhood Funds Initiative online. SF is aimed at financing the establishment of RiWA Institute of Holistic Transformation that will have a full equipped Hub center.

CHALLENGES:

1. Stigma and discrimination towards womxn
2. Police brutality and arrests of human rights activists and Human rights organizations
3. Restrictive legal environment as there is no freedom of expression.
4. Violations of rights of Women by law enforcers, community
5. Retrogressive cultural and religious beliefs towards feminism

Recommendations and next steps:

1. We intend to secure office space where the organization will be based and carry out her activities both with in South Sudan and South Sudan.

2. We plan to continue supporting our members to subtly carry on with activities of the organization.
3. There's urgent need for a training phase centred on security training for Women Human Rights Defenders in Exile, Income Generating activities, Financial Literacy, English Adult Education, Digital literacy. This is also on our bucket list for the near future.
4. All these activities will require financing and RiWA would really appreciate your continued support.



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