

Annual Review

2025





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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGYW	Adolescent Girls & Young Women
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AYSRHR	Adolescent & Youth Sexual and Reproductive Rights
CTO	Chief Creative & Technology Officer
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EE	Entertainment Education
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GenAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
MNH	Maternal and Newborn Health
OOSGs	Out-of-School Girls
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
SBCC	Social and Behavior Change Communication
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TFGBV	Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene



Executive Summary

Across Africa and South Asia, Girl Effect reached **over 150 million people** through integrated multimedia ecosystems, AI-enabled digital health tools, peer-led engagement models, and deep partnerships with governments, donors, and global institutions. Our work drove measurable change across **sexual and reproductive health, HPV vaccination demand generation, mental wellbeing, digital safety, and economic empowerment**, with clear evidence of behaviour change and shifting social norms in multiple markets.

Key highlights include:

- Driving a **19% increase in contraceptive use among boys** and **16% among girls in Kenya** through the Tukisonga multimedia ecosystem.
- Supporting the **vaccination of over 60,000 girls in Nigeria** through community-embedded demand generation approaches.
- **Reaching more than 20 million people in India** through national radio campaigns addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
- Scaling Girl Effect's AI-enabled chatbots to a **lifetime reach of 2.2 million users**, with demonstrated increases in service uptake and sustained engagement.

Since 2024, Girl Effect has strengthened our influence as a **global leader in ethical AI for social impact**, earning recognition from institutions including the Yale School of Public Health, Fast Company, and major international convenings. Strategic investments in **Generative AI, service concierge models, and the Champions peer-engagement approach** are positioning the organization to deliver scalable, evidence-driven impact at unprecedented reach.

Looking ahead to FY26, Girl Effect will **focus on delivering results at greater scale, strengthening data and learning systems, deepening strategic partnerships, and advancing innovative, youth-centered solutions** that enable girls and young people to exercise agency, access essential services, and shape healthier, more equitable futures.



Our Priority Initiatives

Girl Effect's top priority is to deliver the measurable impact within each of the countries in which we operate. Our compelling content, trusted programs, and connections to vital services drive measurable health, education, and livelihood outcomes.

Through our programming across Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania, Girl Effect reached **over 150.9 million young people**. The table below breaks down reach by country:

Country	Reach (1 Jan 2025 - 31 Dec 2025)
Ethiopia	28.5 million
India	78.8 million
Kenya	6.7 million
Nigeria	10.4 million
South Africa	1.7 million
Tanzania	24.6 million

We will continue to work with girls and their parents, partners and peers, as well as technical experts, partners, and governments to co-create and scale up solutions that connect girls to support and services that improve their health, education, and livelihoods. The sections below detail our priority initiatives by country.

Ethiopia

Program Focus Areas	Outcomes
Cervical Cancer Prevention	Girls get the HPV vaccine
Cervical Cancer Prevention+	Co-create HPV+ interventions, improving nutrition, menstrual health management, and reducing child marriage
Immunization	Children under 2 in last-mile communities get routine vaccinations
Livelihoods	Enhance mindsets among girls and their communities regarding economic participation and increase access to employment opportunities
Education	- Girls participate equally in education and community activities - Perceptions of adolescent girls and young women in education are shifted

Key Achievements

- UNICEF National Youth Forum:** The HPV+ initiative gathered insights from out-of-school adolescents ages 9-14 regarding their perceptions and awareness of HPV, menstrual hygiene, nutrition, and education. The event brought together **248 participants**, and was highlighted by UNICEF on their [LinkedIn page](#).

- **Digital and Social Media Reach:** Our digital and social media presence has significantly contributed to the visibility of both the **Yegna Gize** and **Gavi** programs. Our content has seen strong audience engagement and reach, with Yegna Gize reaching more than 2.1M people and Gavi-related content reaching more than 2.2M people. We have also carried out multiple on-the-ground youth engagement activities, reaching more than 2,700 people.
- **Yegna Gize:** Through a combination of on-the-ground, digital, and mass-media engagement, the program reached an estimated 3.2M young people as part of the initiative to empower Ethiopian youth to move from inspiration to action. The program seeks to transform societal attitudes toward youth employment and enable young people to pursue dignified work in key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and the creative industries.
- **Reaching Out-of-School Girls for HPV Vaccination:** In partnership with the Gates Foundation and JSI (John Snow Inc.), we implemented a pilot program aimed at improving outreach and demand generation mechanisms for out-of-school girls (OOSGs), their parents, and caregivers. So far, the program has engaged 20 Health Extension Workers, vaccinated 1,400 girls, and identified 2,280 girls to receive vaccinations.

Learnings and Challenges

- **Youth Forums:** Our youth forums provided valuable lessons on how to effectively reach and gather insights from out of school adolescents. Creating an environment that makes them feel comfortable and respected is vital for encouraging open expression, which in turn allows us to better understand their challenges and the opportunities that matter most to them.
- **HPV+ Targeted Outreach Works:** Addressing real-world barriers through community insights helps design effective, holistic and context-specific solutions. Tailoring demand-generation messages leads to high vaccination uptake.
- **Role models as economic catalysts:** Connecting inspiration to opportunity ensures that mindset change translates into tangible impact.

Our Work in Action: Impact Stories from the Zero-Dose Community

We have been working to highlight local role models that are relatable for our youth audiences. This approach creates stronger resonance and inspires deeper connection. Raised in a modest household in Mekelle, Tigray, Saron Misgina Kashai always dreamed of running her own business. While studying Marketing at Mekelle University, she took a bold step and opened a sports bar, but it collapsed under financial strain, leaving her in debt and facing the criticism of those who doubted her because of her age and gender. Instead of giving up, Saron invested her remaining savings into Saron Poultry Farm and started Euphoria Language School. Today, she successfully runs two thriving businesses, employs over seven people, and teaches more than 250 students how to turn setbacks into stepping stones for success.

India

Program Focus Areas	Outcomes
Cervical Cancer Prevention	Girls and parents have improved knowledge on the benefits, safety, and availability of the HPV vaccine
Shifting Gender Norms around SRH + immunization + digital literacy + mental wellbeing	- Girls are empowered to take decisions that benefit their SRH + mental wellbeing + digital safety - Boys and parents support girls' choices regarding SRH, immunization, digital safety
Mental Well Being	Girls access mental health services in a safe, confidential space
Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)	Girls and boys are aware of TFGBV and can access services

Key Achievements

- **CTRL+SHIFT+RESPECT:** Girl Effect convened and moderated a panel at the Trust and Safety Festival in India, “*Building Safer Digital Spaces for Girls.*” Our social media campaign continues to show strong momentum, reaching 8.6M people and driving 343K engagements. The social media campaign helps raise awareness about TFGBV and promotes digital safety and rights. GE India also did a four-week radio awareness campaign, which reached more than 20M people across 4 cities.
- **Vaccine Rollout with Gavi:** Girl Effect conducted risk communication trainings in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, engaging 270+ state and district immunization officials to strengthen preparedness for the HPV vaccine rollout. GE designed and facilitated the workshops, leading scenario mapping and crisis response exercises to build capacity of the State Government’s Immunization Division in managing misinformation and communication risks.
- **Youth Engagement in Delhi and Mumbai:** Youth Champions supported User Acceptance Testing for Bol Behen’s TFGBV content and will undergo orientation sessions on SRH, gender norms, and research skills. A 400-sample baseline evaluation was done to assess community perceptions on digital safety, TFGBV, and SRH, while strengthening research and safeguarding capacities.

Key Learnings

- **Diverse Voices drive Engagement:** The Chhaa Jaa × Radio Mirchi collaboration revealed that male voices drive stronger peer engagement on conversations about TFGBV, showing the potential of positioning men as allies in addressing online harm. Female testimonies, though widely viewed, highlighted the persistent barriers women face in audience reception and dialogue on digital safety.
- **Developing TFGBV Content:** There is a need to develop a shared vocabulary on TFGBV to help young people recognise, name, and validate their experiences. Content must also go beyond awareness-raising to actively support recognition, understanding, and safe action. Engaging parents is key to shifting attitudes from control to empathy, ensuring girls who seek help receive compassion rather than judgment. At a foundational level, continued work on addressing harmful gender norms is critical to tackling the root causes of online violence.

Impact Story: How GULLY Youth Labs are Breaking the Silence on TFGBV

Our GULLY lab in Dakshinpuri, Delhi has **ten champions** whose own journey of being associated with the lab has transformed them into confident speakers. At a recent gathering on 15 October 2025, youth champions talked about how they could never imagine talking about issues that are stigmatised with others or even their siblings and parents. Zeba, one of the youth champions, shared how tongue tied she was before

joining the lab, but after going through the training traveled to her village where she talked about TFGBV as a rising problem and how one can safeguard themselves against this form of online harm.

Kenya

Program Focus Areas	Outcomes
Child marriage	- Delayed sexual debut and decrease in unwanted pregnancies - Decrease in experience of sexual and gender based violence - Girls access skills training and are linked to work and entrepreneurship opportunities
Sexual and Reproductive Health	Girls access SRH services (contraception and HIV) via cost-efficient, sustainable, digital health ecosystems
SRH, Mental Health, Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH)	Girls access mental health services (counseling) via cost-efficient, sustainable, digital health ecosystems

Key Achievements

- **Maternal & Newborn Health Research:** We have successfully conducted formative research to understand barriers and enablers within the community and health system, and sought to identify opportunities and communication points for intervention around maternal and newborn health.
- **Soma Binti Project Design:** We have finalized the design for our *Soma Binti* (“read, young girl”) project on child marriage. This work will focus on building agency and autonomy for girls, creating supportive ecosystems, and encouraging norm and system shifts amongst parents and communities.
- **HPV Meeting Showcase:** Global HPV stakeholders convened for a 2-day workshop in Nairobi to facilitate discussions on critical aspects such as country support, technical assistance, and supply. Girl Effect Kenya led a session around innovative approaches to engaging adolescents and young women through technology, drawing valuable lessons from their current work in Migori and Nairobi.
- **Formative research:** GE Kenya conducted research to understand the key drivers and stakeholder roles influencing child marriage. The results showed that young girls want to stay in school and pursue their dreams, but are overwhelmed by family and community expectations for early marriage. Many family discussions may appear neutral, but external pressures like poverty tip the scale, and make marriage seem like a practical solution.
- **Tukisonga:** The Tukisonga Multimedia ecosystem for SBCC reached approximately 6.1 million young people in Kenya through a mix of digital, broadcast, and community-based channels. Tuki, a 12-episode TV drama series which was the core SBCC content format for the multimedia ecosystem, reached over 1 million viewers across TV, radio, YouTube, and community screenings. Exposure to our content was associated with normalising SRH discussions among partners, and with self reported contraceptive use increases. Tukisonga also became a finalist for the Anthem Awards under the Education, Art and Culture category for non-profits. Anthem awards honor the purpose and mission-driven work of people, companies and organizations worldwide by amplifying voices that spark global change.
- **WAZZII Sharing and Updates:** Kenya’s work on WAZZII was featured in MSD compilation [here](#), and submitted two abstracts to be included in the ICFP. WAZZII reached more than 1 million young people, and we have built new tech chatbot & concierge features, including our partnership with Reproductive Health Services Kenya, to improve service uptake

Key Learnings

- **Evidence-Based Learning:** Leveraging data and best practices enables us to generate actionable insights and design interventions that are both informed and impactful. It also helps validate our approach by benchmarking against proven strategies.
- **Authentic Programming for Engagement:** Emerging programs like those addressing child marriage continue to offer meaningful opportunities to improve girls' lives—especially when interventions begin as early as age 10. Fictional storytelling—through live action, animation, and social media—remains our most effective channel for connecting with and inspiring young people.
- **Integrated and culturally resonant approaches enhance community engagement:** It is evident that combining creative, locally grounded communication channels with strong storytelling and visibility platforms can effectively shift norms, mobilize support, and elevate Kenya's leadership in advancing girls' agency and wellbeing.
- **Strengthening digital tools:** There is a clear opportunity to deepen impact and reach through expanding entertainment-education (EE) work, leveraging local talent, and enhancing offline community delivery.

Testimonial: How WAZZII Empowered Margaret to Find Her Voice

"I first learned about WAZZII in 2024 through my friends and social media, quickly recognizing it as a safe, relatable space where I could freely access information and feel genuinely heard. Before joining, I relied heavily on peers for advice and often misused P2 pills without understanding safer family planning options. Through WAZZII's accessible platform - usable even when my data ran out - I learned about SRH, enabling me to switch to a more reliable contraceptive method. I have strengthened my professional skills and now refer others to the platform. I am inspired to one day create a manual on SRHR and mental health to empower more young people." - **Margaret Ajengo, Mathare North, Nairobi, Kenya.**

Nigeria

Program Focus Areas	Outcomes
Cervical Cancer Prevention and Nutrition	• Girls get the HPV vaccine • Parents and girls get accurate nutrition education
Shifting Social Norms	• Girls access SRH services • Girls access skills training and are linked to work and entrepreneurship opportunities
Systems Strengthening	• Build capacity of impact media ecosystem partners
Contraceptive education and uptake	• AGYW of reproductive age have the agency and ability to access contraceptives.

Key Achievements

- **Leveraging Fashion for Health Education:** In Kaduna State, we utilized the fashion ecosystem to advance sexual and reproductive health awareness and services. A total of 80 healthcare workers and mentors were trained as champions to collaborate with tailors on community outreach. This work reached 44,442 women, facilitated 35,222 referrals, and supported 32,672 women in adopting family planning methods. GE Nigeria also trained 225 female tailors through a 3-week digital upskilling and mentorship program in partnership with Planet Wealth Fashion Academy.
- **Social Media Reach and Impact:** Girl Effect achieved a total reach of 5.2M across Saabi social media platforms on META, amplifying sexual and reproductive health messaging and strengthening

community engagement. The “Oya - Protect Her” platforms reached 2,359,049 individuals with vital information on HPV, cervical cancer, and the importance of HPV vaccination, contributing to increased public awareness and demand generation for prevention services.

- **Community Engagement and Vaccination Outcomes:** Through Champion-led community sessions, Girl Effect reached 10,000 girls and 20,000 parents and caregivers with information on HPV and cervical cancer prevention. These efforts directly contributed to increased demand generation, resulting in the referral and vaccination of 19,295 girls with the HPV vaccine. Other community outreach activities engaged 333,485 individuals and resulted in the vaccination of 28,334 girls.
- **Generated Demand for HPV Vaccination:** Through demand generation activities such as the Oya campaign, Champions live sessions and the Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health & Nutrition Week held in collaboration with the Kaduna State Primary Health Care Development Agency, we supported the vaccination of 15,058 adolescent girls who with targeted HPV messaging. These efforts reflect a strong linkage between community engagement and service uptake, contributing meaningfully to the broader goals of adolescent health and cervical cancer prevention.

Key Learnings

- **High-Level Stakeholder Engagement Drives Community Trust:** A key learning from the launch of the Oya campaign is that the involvement and endorsement of influential figures such as First Ladies, Deputy Governors, and other dignitaries significantly enhances public trust and acceptance of adolescent health initiatives. Their participation catalyzes community buy-in and uptake.
- **Program Integration improves reach and cost-effectiveness:** By integrating the Tipping Point approach with the GE Collaboration model, we strengthened program delivery, amplified impact, and optimized resources. This layered implementation not only built on the successes of previous efforts but also served as a cost-saving strategy, enhancing efficiency without duplicating efforts.
- **Engaging men accelerates change:** Male involvement strengthens joint decision-making, shifts restrictive norms, and boosts women’s confidence to adopt family planning and other SRH services.
- **Storytelling and entertainment-education work:** Community dramas and relatable media effectively address myths, spark dialogue, and improve knowledge and attitudes in communities with deep-rooted cultural and religious norms.
- **Community ownership and leadership builds trust and sustainability:** Locally led advocacy and engagement reshape perceptions, drive acceptance of services like HPV vaccination, and supports long-term behavior change.

Testimonial: Aisha’s Journey to Championing Family Planning in Her Community

Aisha, a 22-year-old tailor from Rigasa, Igabi LGA, shared: *“Before the [tailor] training, I believed contraceptives were harmful. Now, I not only use them but also educate my friends and customers about them. Many women now ask me questions about family planning.”*

South Africa

Program Focus Areas	Outcomes
Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	• Girls access SRH services (contraception and STI testing)
Adolescent Economic Empowerment	• Girls submit strong, skills-aligned job applications and seek mentors
Adolescent Mental Health	• Girls use coping mechanisms to navigate difficult situations • Girls access mental health services for information and support

Key Achievements

- **Integration of HIV and Gender-Based Violence Messages:** Our social behavior change (SBC) strategy integrates simple, knowledge-driven messaging on HIV prevention and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). This focus addresses the strong association between HIV, GBV, and mental health.
- **The Coining Campaign:** We launched the Coining Campaign, a mental health initiative that invited young people and community members to define what mental health means to them. This campaign showcased that when young people shape their own mental health language, engagement increases and stigma decreases. With 300 unique words submitted in just 48 hours, the campaign reflected a strong appetite for creative expression and interaction.
- **Expanded Reach via Community Radio:** GE South Africa launched a radio campaign with Madibeng FM to disseminate key messaging on sexual reproductive health, mental wellbeing, and economic empowerment. This initiative leverages the accessibility and local credibility of community radio to reach young people, particularly those in underserved areas.
- **Strengthened Community TV Partnerships for Wider Distribution:** We recently secured distribution agreements with Cape Town Television and Platinum North West Television to re-air DiChiPi, our youth-centered drama series, on community television. These partnerships help deepen our presence in local communities, extend the lifespan of our flagship content, and increase access for young people who rely on free-to-air platforms for information and entertainment.
- **Reaching Thousands Through Orbit Activation:** Our large-scale activation in partnership with the Department of Health reached over 18,000 young people and offered a range of integrated services, including mental health support, SRH education, and service referrals. The event served as a critical touchpoint for awareness, direct support, and driving service uptake at scale.

Key Learnings

- **Strengthening our Data Pipeline:** We identified weaknesses in the data pipeline of our MSSA helpline, which impacted our ability to draw clear insights around uptake and service referral. Strengthening this pipeline will be prioritised in our next round of tech development to ensure better performance tracking and integration with our broader Evidence and Insights systems.
- **Development of Tailored Methodology:** Our Data Quality Assurance visits revealed a gap in existing verification tools for assessing mobiliser performance. We developed a bespoke methodology to verify outreach, engagement, and service linkages. These check-ins help maintain implementation quality and drive impact across our community engagement efforts, and they have improved accountability and consistency in measuring and managing community mobilisation efforts.
- **Strengthening Engagement through Community Partnerships:** Partnerships with trusted local organizations strengthen youth engagement by bridging digital and offline interactions. Integrating career readiness and mental health discussions in community settings reinforces our approach to wellbeing, highlighting economic empowerment and mental resilience as key drivers of agency.
- **Integrating Messaging in Existing Tools:** The success of Big Sis's new Mental Wellbeing features demonstrates that embedded personalized, practical, and action-oriented content drives relevance and sustained engagement. Integrating HIV, GBV, and mental health themes within social and behavior change strategies strengthens message coherence and relevance for young audiences.

Testimonial: Supported, Protected, Empowered: Andiswa's Journey to PrEP and Big Sis

"My name is Andiswa. I was assisted by Mam Lushozi (Community Mobiliser). She advised me to go to the clinic for HIV counselling and testing. I went back to her with my test results and she further engaged me on PrEP. She said I can have it to protect myself and that is when she unpacked all the support that I can get on Big Sis through Jik'iZinto and how it works whenever I need help. So I started using Big Sis and it's helping me a lot."

Tanzania

Program Focus Areas	Outcomes
Cervical Cancer Prevention	Girls get the HPV vaccine
Immunization	Children under 2 in last-mile communities get routine vaccinations
Responsive Caregiving	Young parents and caregivers practice responsive caregiving

Key Achievements

- **Reached Millions with HPV and Immunization Content:** Our Mwanzo Mwema program reached 12.1 million people (6,032,686 girls ages 15-29) with HPV content via radio spots and TV commercials and 2 HPV related radio interviews.
- **Raised Awareness on Responsive Caregiving:** Through the Mzazi Hodari project, we have reached 1.02 million community members in Arusha with responsive caregiving and nutrition education through print and media channels.
- **Trained Community Leaders on ECD:** A total of 5,663 community members have received key messages on responsive caregiving and nutrition from local influential people. Receiving these messages from trusted and respected figures within the community enhances their credibility and impact, increasing the likelihood of acceptance and adoption of the promoted practices.
- **Increasing Financial Literacy:** Our Mzazi hodari project trained 5 women groups (with about 10 to 15 women per each group) on financial literacy skills and provided seed funding to 2 groups.
- **Distribution of HPV Awareness Magazines:** As part of our efforts to promote awareness and prevention of HPV among adolescents, a total of 22,858 educational magazines were distributed to students during our in-school intervention activities, with 10,603 magazines provided to girls, ensuring that young women who are at higher risk of HPV-related complications received targeted information to help them make informed decisions about their health.
- **HPV campaign via Interactive Voice Response:** A total of 3,590 people were reached using the Interactive Voice Response campaign, out of which 3,178 became listeners, reflecting an impressive overall conversion rate of 89%. The campaign achieved a cumulative reach of 15,158 key messages, and listeners spent a combined 24,188 minutes listening to the messages.
- **Training young parents on responsive caregiving and nutrition:** A total of 1,436 young parent champions have been trained on responsive caregiving and child nutrition. These trained parents will equip other parents with skills to practice responsive caregiving and adopt positive nutrition habits.

Key Learnings

- **Influencers Boost Engagement:** Social media influencers have helped increase engagement with our social media posts. Collaborating with influencers and giving them ownership on how they craft our messaging to align with their style and content makes it engaging and allows us broader reach.
- **Embedding activities in school sustains impact:** Integration of HPV discussions into existing clubs and extracurricular activities proved effective in keeping momentum despite disruptions.
- **Integrating Skills Initiatives:** The inclusion of additional initiatives, such as economic empowerment programs, strengthens the sustainability of the initiative and the retention of group members.
- **Leveraging Knowledge and Skills Cascades:** Capitalizing on Champion parents from existing communities to voluntarily disseminate knowledge and skills to their peers has proven effective in retaining skills and knowledge at the grassroots level.
- **Impact of Partnering with Local Organizations:** Partnerships with local Implementing partners accelerates our achievements by bringing in additional expertise.

Testimonial: Nurturing Health Habits in Tanzania

“Before this project, I didn’t realize that I needed to pay attention to breastfeeding or what foods my child should eat. I would just prepare porridge with milk or simply give them mashed food. I also wasn’t careful about my child’s eating habits; I would make them fuss while eating. However, after this intervention, I’ve understood the importance of focusing on nutrition in my child’s diet. For example, when I prepare porridge, I now know to add carrots, oil, and sugar in moderation. During mealtime, I make sure to play with my child instead of forcing them to eat, and my child enjoys eating now.” **Young parent’s testimonial after the Mzazi Hodari intervention.**

Amplify

Over the past year, our global communications efforts have elevated Girl Effect’s position as a thought leader across multiple disciplines, including AI-driven change. From a high-profile presence at key sector fora, to globally-recognized strategic campaigns, Girl Effect’s achievements reflect the power of youth-driven storytelling and coordinated action at scale. Our key achievements include:

- **Thought Leadership in Technology and Social Impact:** *Positioning Girl Effect at the Forefront of AI-Driven Change*
 - **GenAI Whitepaper Launch:** We launched a 4-week content campaign on LinkedIn and Medium in collaboration with the Tech team spotlighting our whitepaper on safer, smarter AI for young people, reinforcing our leadership in ethical AI for youth.
 - **Yale School of Public Health Girl Effect Case Study:** Girl Effect was profiled in a Yale School of Public Health and Clinton Global Initiative collaboration, highlighting global health innovators. Published in August, the case study, “Big Sis: Choosing a Path to Scale and Sustain a Mission-Driven, AI-Enhanced Chatbot” showcases our approach to scaling youth-focused, AI-driven health solutions.
 - **AI for Good Summit:** At this year’s summit in July, our Chief Creative & Technology Officer (CTO), Karina Rios Michel, delivered a powerful address spotlighting how AI can be a catalyst for health equity—especially for girls and underserved communities that are too often overlooked.
 - **Merl Tech Roundtable:** Our Data Scientist, Soma Mitra-Behura, delivered pioneering insights on the role of Generative AI in SBC, establishing Girl Effect as a leader in leveraging emerging technologies for social good.
 - **Yale Innovation Summit:** Our CTO, Karina Rios Michel, presented our culturally grounded, youth-led AI tools for mental and sexual health, reinforcing our reputation for ethical and inclusive tech innovation.
 - **Fast Company Recognition:** World Changing Ideas: WAZZII, our Kenyan chatbot, was honored among Fast Company’s Best World Changing Ideas for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, spotlighting its role in connecting youth to contraceptive information and services. This recognition strengthens donor confidence and affirms our leadership in deploying AI for transformative health outcomes.
- **Global Convenings:** *Girl Effect leadership presence at high-profile global forums strengthened strategic alliances and visibility with key stakeholders*
 - **UNGA80 (New York):** Girl Effect’s CEO and Chief Program Officer attended to foster strategic alliances.
 - **Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting:** The CEO participated in key sessions and stakeholder outreach.
 - **Africa Health Summit (Rwanda):** The Senior Director, Global Programs, contributed to regional health dialogues at the event.
 - **Gavi Global Summit:** Our CEO’s participation underscored Girl Effect’s alignment with Gavi’s 2026–2030 gender-responsive health goals.

- **Global Visibility via Gavi Advocacy:** Girl Effect's CEO was featured in Gavi's #ForOurFuture campaign alongside prominent global leaders. Her quote, shared on Gavi's LinkedIn, amplified our voice and reaffirmed our commitment to global health partnerships.
- **Donor Visibility & Strategic Partnerships:** *Celebrating philanthropic momentum*
 - **Iconiq Impact Women's Health Co-Lab:** Girl Effect was selected as one of the grantees of this \$100M initiative. The announcement was amplified across the donor and Girl Effect platforms driving visibility and engagement.
 - **Citi Foundation Global Innovation Challenge:** Grant awarded to advance youth employability in Kenya; promoted via press release and social media.
- **Country-Level Communications Achievements:** *Driving Local Relevance and Youth Engagement Across Markets*
 - **Ethiopia**
 - The National Youth Forum in Addis Ababa brought together over 300+ participants across two dynamic days, amplifying youth voices on critical health issues, including HPV, menstrual health, nutrition, and WASH. As part of the HPV+ partnership with UNICEF, the forum provided a safe, inclusive, and gamified space centered on young people's lived experiences. In parallel, the team launched the Mastercard Foundation's 'Yegna Gize' program, hosting multiple awareness events. Focused on youth empowerment, job creation, and entrepreneurship, the initiative is being implemented across six regions in Ethiopia.
 - **India**
 - **CTRL+SHIFT+HELP Launch:** Girl Effect India launched a bold new partnership with the [Kering Foundation](#) in Q1 FY26, unveiling the campaign "Online ka Asar Real Hai Yaar" in collaboration with [Radio Mirchi](#) and the transformative online initiative "[Ctrl+Shift+Respect](#)". These efforts confront Technologically Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), reframing it as a public and systemic issue while empowering girls to reclaim digital spaces with confidence and agency. With Radio Mirchi—India's leading FM station—the campaign achieved visibility in key metros, reinforcing Girl Effect India's leadership in adolescent public health communication. Country Director Kavita Ayyagari further amplified [the Indian Social Responsibility Network \(ISRN\) podcast](#), spotlighting the urgent need to shift mindsets and drive collective action on TFGBV.
 - **Global Digital Health Summit:** The team Presented 'Beyond Access: Reframing Digital Health for India's Girls' and showcased how Bol Behen, our Indian Chatbot, transforms awareness into action through culturally intelligent digital tools.
 - **Trust & Safety Festival:** GE India, in collaboration with partner organizations, proudly sponsored the event and hosted a panel featuring leading voices in digital safety and gender equity. The dialogue emphasized the urgent need for a unified, multi-stakeholder approach to tackle Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) and reduce its harm on victim-survivors. The insights shared will serve as a foundation for future partnerships and help scale initiatives aimed at fostering safer, more inclusive online spaces.
 - **Kenya**
 - The team showcased youth-led research excellence with four accepted abstracts—two authored by Youth Advisory Panel members—at the [8th RHNK Pan-African AYSRHR Scientific Conference](#). At a UN Women's Generation Equality event, the team shared program insights and launched a strategic partnership with [IREX](#) to advance gender equity.
 - **Anthem Awards Winner:** Tukisonga, our Kenyan brand, was awarded a Silver Award at the 5th Annual Anthem Awards in the *Education, Art & Culture – Awareness Category*. A global campaign was launched to mobilize votes for the Community Voices Award,

spotlighting youth empowerment in Kenya.

- **Nigeria**

- At the August 2025 Society for Adolescent and Young People's Health Conference in Nigeria, Girl Effect showcased its innovative youth programs. Speakers highlighted the Champions App (Gavi-supported), which uses tech to advance youth health, and the Tailors Project (supported by the Gates Foundation), which taps into culture and entertainment to drive health outcomes—underscoring Girl Effect's commitment to impactful, youth-centered solutions.

- **South Africa**

- **12th South African AIDS Conference:** The Senior Evidence & Impact Manager of Girl Effect South Africa, Emmanuelle Mgiba, presented research on integrating digital innovations and AI-driven chatbots to strengthen adolescent health systems. Emmanuelle contributed to strategic discussions on HIV and SRHR financing with youth-led organizations. Earlier, on 12 May, she presented our peer-based, tech-enabled adolescent health approach—including the use of AI and social media to SBCC master's students at Wits University, at the invitation of the School of Public Health.
- **Southern Africa GBV Prevention Forum:** The Safeguarding & Youth Participation Manager moderated a pivotal session on Technology & GBV reinforcing Girl Effect's leadership in safeguarding and digital health.

- **Tanzania**

- Hosted our first outdoor health expert radio talk show in Kahama, a Gavi-supported region. The event received strong community and government support, successfully reaching underserved populations with limited access to radio
- **Tanzania Health Summit 2025**, spotlighting our storytelling and tech-enabled health solutions, including a live demo of the Champions App, a short-film premier, and HPV awareness program testimonials



Innovate to accelerate and scale Girl Effect's Unique Selling Point

Impact Overview

Metric	Impact (FY to Date)
Chatbot Users	2.2 Million (All time)
Scale Concierge	10,923
Champion App Users	Champions: 557 Sessions: 3,652 Attendees: 24,233

Accelerate Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

- **Expanded reach and engagement:** Our GenAI health chat system now has over 70,000 active users, submitting more than 250,000 messages, with a lifetime reach of 2.2 million young people across multiple markets.
- **Strengthened academic partnerships:** We publicly promoted the [Yale School of Public Health case study](#) and are co-developing a joint webinar series with Yale to explore learnings from our GenAI whitepaper.
- **Advanced innovation in AI-enabled therapy:** We kicked off the “Mental Health Anytime, Anywhere” grant with Oxford University, and are developing an AI-assisted single-session therapy integrated into Big Sis in South Africa.
- **[Yale Case Study on Girl Effect & Big Sis](#):** The Yale School of Public Health recently published a case study on *Big Sis*, Girl Effect's pioneering chatbot that integrates Generative AI into sexual and mental health support for young people. It documents Girl Effect's journey in building the AI infrastructure, balancing innovation with safeguarding to ensure GenAI responses remain safe, accurate, and culturally grounded. The case study also positions Big Sis as a leading example of how AI can expand access to health information in low- and middle-income countries, particularly for underserved youth populations. This recognition from Yale not only continues to validate Girl Effect's approach but also places Big Sis as a benchmark in digital health innovation.
- **[Whitepaper Building GenAI: Girl Effects Journey to Smarter Safer Health Chatbots](#):** Our new whitepaper documents Girl Effect's pioneering work in integrating generative AI into health chatbots. It shares the challenges, breakthroughs, and safeguards we've developed over the last year. By opening up our process, we aim to contribute evidence, spark dialogue, and strengthen collective understanding of what it takes to responsibly deploy AI for vulnerable groups. It outlines how our unique datasets in underrepresented languages, and rigorous safety benchmarks helped us launch GenAI in South Africa, driving both engagement and impact. It also details our roadmap towards building agentic systems that can proactively guide young people to health services and predict preventable health challenges. By publishing *Building GenAI*, we're positioning Girl Effect on the frontier of GenAI for social impact, shaping a future where AI is designed by and for girls, and built with equity and safety at its core.
- **Scaling GenAI:** Last fiscal year marked a major leap forward in our GenAI work. We successfully launched our new GenAI model in South Africa, demonstrating that it can be deployed safely while driving significant impact. Results showed a **200% increase in user questions** and a **13% rise in intention to access services**. Building on this success, we expanded GenAI beyond its beta phase, embedding it across the entire Big Sis experience. To date, more than **45,000 users** have engaged with Generative AI response, asking **125,000 questions**.

Scale: Champions Model

The first quarter of FY26 marked a major step-change in the Champions model and its contribution towards impact. Rigorous research from our Tipping Point program in Kenya evaluated the effectiveness of the Champions model in driving behavior change compared to other forms of engagement such as social media, TV, or radio. The findings are extremely encouraging: young people who were exposed to a Champion equipped with the Champions App in peer discussion groups showed significantly stronger outcomes than those who engaged through other channels. This reinforces the unique value of human-led, technology-supported peer engagement in shifting norms and behaviors at scale.

- Those participating in the Champions approach were **four times more likely** to have had SRH discussions with peers in the last 3 months
- Those participating in the Champions approach were **twice as likely** to have SRH discussion with partners in the last 3 months
- Those participating in the Champions approach were **three times more likely** to be using contraceptives
- **Program alignment and strategy:** Teams completed retrospective sessions and developed a centralized roadmap for Champions, ensuring alignment and improved coordination across countries.
- **Enhanced readiness for new initiatives:** The Kenya team is gearing up to leverage Champions for the new Citi Bank partnership, expanding youth engagement and mentorship reach.
- **Operational improvements:** System enhancements have been prioritized to strengthen tracking, training, and digital integration within the Champions model.

Scale: Service Concierge

Kenya was the first market to pilot our Concierge feature, where we saw promising results and, for the first time, were able to report health service uptake at scale through human chat agents integrated directly into the chatbot experience. Young people could chat with or call a healthcare operator for light wellbeing support, triage, and referrals to services. This led to 1 in 3 users in Kenya receiving a health consultation with our healthcare chat operators.

Over the past year, South Africa has represented our strongest market opportunity to replicate and scale Concierge, given the high traffic volumes. However, integrating Concierge proved far more technically challenging, as stable API connections needed to be built to handle high volumes of traffic without breaking the system. For months we carefully rolled out the integration, concierge is now scaling in South Africa. The evidence shows the API integration has reached a point of stability, and our healthcare chat operator capacity has reached 56% capacity. **Looking ahead, we are forecasting a steady state of 5,000 health consultations per month, delivered at an average operator cost of 0.39 cents per consultation.**

- **Steady performance:** Concierge teams continue to connect users to verified health services, ensuring continuity of care through integrated referrals.
- **Operational learning:** Identified opportunities to improve agent workflows and streamline escalation pathways for higher service quality.
- **AI integration exploration:** Early-stage planning to integrate AI into concierge triage and response, aligning with broader GenAI system development.

Key Learnings:

- **Academic credibility drives influence:** Partnering with leading institutions like Yale and Oxford has significantly increased external visibility and credibility, positioning Girl Effect as a thought leader in ethical, practical GenAI for social impact.
- One of the clearest lessons from this body of work is that the **pace of funding in the sector has not yet caught up to the speed of Girl Effect's innovation.** While our Yale School of Public Health case

study and previous Stanford Whitepaper validates Big Sis as a benchmark in digital health innovation and demonstrates the transformative potential of AI for sexual and mental health, we continue to face challenges in mobilizing sustained investment for our AI agenda. This misalignment between proven impact and funding traction underscores a broader gap in the global health and development ecosystem, resources for digital innovation, especially AI, are still slow to flow.

Our Funders

We are especially grateful to the donors and strategic partners who help advance our work over the past year, including:

Foundations
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