



Neilson
Foundation

2025

Impact report



Contents

Africa

Focus areas

- Strengthening public health systems and delivery
- Inclusive digital and green economic growth
- African leadership, voice and regional influence

Australia

Focus areas

- Investing in Sydney’s support sector and strengthening systems
- Backing First Nations women and girls
- Justice for women and girls

Innovation

A message from Judith	5
From our CEO	7
Leaders of change	10
Dr. Benjamin Wachira	12
Nicole Yade	14
Concy Aloyo	18
Isabelle Kamariza	20
Barbie-Lee Kirby	22
Peter Kazickas	24
Ren Fernando	26
Angela Oduor Lungati	28
Our Portfolios	30
United Nations Development Program Zimbabwe	34
We Care Solar	40
Emergency Medicine Kenya Foundation	44
Save the Children	48
Fresh Life	52
Clinton Health Access Initiative	56
Plan International	62
COMACO	66
Solid’Africa	68
Uncommon	74
MasiSports+	78
King George VI Centre Zimbabwe	82
ActionAid	86
Centre for Women’s Economic Safety	90
The Older Women’s Network	94
Sydney Community Foundation’s Doorways to the Future	96
ReLove	100
Fair Agenda	102
Global Sisters	104
Karrkad Kanjdji Trust	106
First Nations Futures	112
Tangentyere Council	114
KWOOP	120
Success Works	124
Justice and Equity Centre	126
Refugee Advice and Casework Service	130
Anti-Slavery Australia	134
Community Restorative Centre	136
Women’s and Girls’ Emergency Centre	138
Urban Futures	144
Our team	158



In Rwanda with a smallholder farmer working with Solid' Africa, whose produce strengthens local livelihoods and supplies nutritious meals for public hospitals. © Solid' Africa

“ Good ideas deserve the chance to last

A message from Judith

Progress never happens in isolation. It is shaped by people with the courage and imagination to keep moving forward. This year, I had the opportunity to visit our partners in Rwanda, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Zambia who are doing just that. I met smallholder farmers restoring land, health workers delivering essential care, and young people creating opportunities for the future, often in challenging circumstances, and with fewer resources than they need. These encounters left a deep impression on me. They reinforced that we must walk carefully and with respect.

Lasting change comes when communities lead, and when support is steady enough to help their ideas endure. That is the role

of this Foundation. In Africa and Australia, as well as through innovations that reach more widely, we want to stand alongside people who know their communities best. The contexts may differ, but the commitment is the same: to back determined people and practical solutions with the support they need to thrive.

The people and stories in this report reflect that spirit. They show how, with steady backing, communities can build change that lasts.

Judith Neilson
Founder

From our CEO

Real impact starts with steady backing

At the Judith Neilson Foundation, 2025 has been a year of growth. Together with our partners, we set our direction through a 2030 Strategy shaped by their insight and the lessons of our early years. It affirms what matters most: long term commitment, local leadership, and space for innovation.

Across our portfolios, that approach is beginning to take shape. In Africa, we are helping strengthen public health and inclusive green and digital economies, with regional leadership as the next horizon. In Australia, women and girls are creating safer futures and shifting systems to serve them better. And through our new Innovation portfolio, we are beginning to support work on urban futures, helping cities grow in ways that are more inclusive, resilient and fair.

The wider landscape is changing. Global aid budgets are contracting, creating pressure on communities already under strain. At the same time, momentum is building for

localisation, systems change and trust, placing resources closer to those best placed to use them. This combination makes our role clear. We must grow carefully, back good ideas with persistence and ensure they endure.

Judith's commitment has always been to back people who know their communities best. As a young foundation, we have the chance to build on that principle with care. We will keep listening, strengthening our partnerships and staying close to the work, so that our support is practical, steady and shaped by the people we serve.

Simon Freeman
CEO

Simon Freeman © JNF



Supporting over 340,000
small scale farmers
to adopt regenerative
agroforestry

1.5 million
hectares of forests protected in Zambia

450

Equipping police and health
workers with culturally safe
tools to support women and
prevent harm.

200,000

6,200

students learned coding

Coding courses for
unemployed young people
and a new teacher training
program is bringing coding
into schools

**solar
suitcases**

installed for safer childbirth
in rural Malawi

JNF

Creating safer futures for
women and children.

A\$678K

in abuse-related
debts waived in
Sydney

A\$400K

in unrestricted funding
directed to grassroots First
Nations organisations

Shifting power by ensuring First Nations
communities control how funding is distributed.

160

women facing housing insecurity
and financial distress received
free legal support for tenancy
and debt issues in Sydney.

Changing how
systems respond to
women in crisis.

947

emergency
health
providers
trained in
Kenya

800

refugee and asylum-seeking
women received specialist
legal support through the
Women at Risk program
since 2019.

Trauma-informed representation

61%

By connecting
Farmers in
Rwanda to a
guaranteed
market supplying
hospital meals

increase in
household
income
projected

3,700

women furnished with
complete homes in Sydney

By redistributing quality furniture and goods.
Providing stability at a critical turning point in recovery

4,500

women
and youth
accessed
gender-based
violence services
in rural Zimbabwe

Supporting safe
housing, parenting
and domestic
violence education,
and pathways
to financial
independence.

**farmers trained
in regenerative
agriculture in
Rwanda**

Supporting an evolution from
subsistence-level farming to
strategic planning

318,000

people with clean, sustainable
sanitation in Kenya and Zambia

By training teachers to
diagnose and treat malaria

Scaling container based
sanitation in Nairobi and
Lusaka.

8,000

Bringing health, legal and protection
services together in a single location

44%

reduction
in malaria
cases

Leaders of change

Leaders driving change from within

Across Africa and Australia, from emergency rooms in Nairobi to women's refuges in Sydney, local leaders are showing what it takes to shift systems from the inside. They reflect on what drives them, the obstacles they face and the futures they are working toward.

Their accounts show how change takes hold: through persistence, collaboration and the belief that systems can evolve when people closest to the issues lead the way.

Dr. Benjamin Wachira

Founder and Executive Director of Emergency Medicine Kenya Foundation

Nicole Yade

CEO of WAGEC and Co-Chair of KWOOP Coalition, Australia

Concy Aloyo

Founder of Wabedu Kigen Women's Collective, Uganda

Isabelle Kamariza

Founder of Solid'Africa, Rwanda

Barbie-Lee Kirby

Executive Director of First Nations Futures, Australia

Peter Kazickas

Founder and CEO of Uncommon, Zimbabwe

Ren Fernando

Co-Founder of ReLove, Australia

Angela Oduor Lungati

Executive Director of Ushahidi, Kenya



Dr. Benjamin Wachira © EMFK

Dr. Benjamin Wachira is the founder and Executive Director of Emergency Medicine Kenya Foundation

Kenya had no emergency healthcare system a decade ago. Dr. Benjamin Wachira is building one from the ground up, securing national policies, training thousands of providers, and creating county level systems now reaching millions. His vision is to halve emergency related deaths by 2030, proving that timely, simple care can transform national health outcomes.

Treat one patient at a time or help build a system that saves thousands

“During my medical training, emergency medicine didn’t exist in Kenya. I watched patients die in front of me and had no training to save them. That experience drove me into the field. Coming back as one of the first emergency physicians in the country, I realised I could treat one patient at a time, or I could help build a system that saves thousands. Emergency care isn’t about complex procedures, it’s about simple, timely actions that save lives. Building a system to make that possible is what excites me.”

Emergency care isn’t about fancy procedures, it’s about simple, timely actions that save lives.

“We started with a blank slate. Hospitals and ambulances existed, but emergency medical care wasn’t prioritised. There was no expertise, no funding, no policies. Today, Kenya has dedicated laws and strategies for emergency care, a national emergency fund, emergency departments in hospitals, and coordinated county ambulance services. We’ve trained more than 5,000 healthcare providers and developed national

protocols. We’ve moved from zero to around 25%, with a target of 50% in the next few years.”

“Technology can be a game changer. Kenya has advanced rapidly in fintech and digital services, but healthcare has lagged behind. There’s huge potential to use technology in emergency care for efficiency, coordination and patient access. We’ve built county ambulance dispatch platforms and developed a casualty app to connect people to ambulances, since Kenya still has no 911 system. Tech can improve how emergency care is delivered and influence the wider health sector.”

“Policy is not the same as practice. The policies are in place, and that’s a big step. But in Kenya, policy and practice are not the same. The focus now is making sure the systems we’ve worked so hard to design are implemented consistently, so the gains we’ve made translate into real outcomes. That is how we will get closer to our goal of halving emergency related deaths by 2030.”

Women deserve services that meet them where they are

Nicole Yade is CEO of Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) and Co-Chair of the Keeping Women Out of Prison (KWOOP) Coalition.

Nicole Yade leads WAGEC, a feminist, grassroots organisation that supports women and families in crisis. She is also Co-Chair of the Keeping Women Out of Prison Coalition (KWOOP), an alliance working to end the cycles of incarceration in NSW. Under her leadership, WAGEC has piloted From Now, the first program in NSW dedicated to pregnant women and mothers exiting prison, showing how safe housing and wraparound support can provide stability, disrupt cycles of homelessness, and create pathways for long term change.

“Each night in Sydney more than 200 women and children stay with us because they have nowhere safe to go. People often assume everyone who arrives has already decided to leave, but many are still weighing impossible choices. With limited housing pathways, even the best refuges ask women to live with their children in a single room for months while sharing kitchens and bathrooms with other traumatised families. We try to meet people where they are by listening first, building trust, and linking them with legal advice, counselling, housing support and day to day practical help, so no one has to do this alone.”

“We design with lived experience, not around it. At WAGEC we work with a lived experience panel so that our practice reflects the diversity of the people we serve, including Aboriginal women, LGBTQIA+ women and non-binary people. The goal is to ensure our service comes to people, rather than asking people to come to our service. That is hard work in the context of the systems we operate in, including laws, government funding rules and even philanthropy, but it is the work that makes the difference.”

“I know from my own story that leaving takes time, and non-judgment matters most. It took



Nicole Yade © Sally Dingo 2025

me many attempts to leave a violent relationship when I was young, and that experience guides how I lead. Research shows it takes the average woman several attempts before leaving sticks. Judging people only isolates them. What helps is compassion, patience and a door that stays open for as long as it takes. That is what we try to provide at WAGEC.”

“We know, sadly, about 30% of women who enter prison in NSW do so from homelessness, and about 50% leave prison into homelessness. That should not be acceptable, and it is even more concerning when those women are

pregnant. WAGEC's From Now program is our response to this critical gap at the intersection of incarceration and homelessness. With support from the Foundation, we created a program so that pregnant women and mothers leaving prison are not discharged into homelessness. We run a five bedroom residence that is always full, combining safe accommodation with wrap around support that strengthens relationships between mothers and their children. From Now addresses immediate safety and the long work of rebuilding, and it does so with dignity and cultural safety at its core.”

Leaders of change

“Cultural leadership is essential to doing this well. The From Now program is led by Jenny Holmes, a proud Aboriginal woman whose lived experience, empathy and cultural safety are central to everything we do. I think of a mother who arrived pregnant with twins and whose story looked very complex on paper. With safety, care and consistent support she grew into a confident parent and a leader in the house. Today she is in permanent housing, back on Country, close to family, with two thriving children. Seeing that kind of change is why we do this work.”

“Each year over 2,000 women are released from prison in NSW, most without housing or services, and the proportion on remand is high. Alongside WAGEC I co-chair the Keeping Women Out of Prison Coalition. KWOOP is a statewide alliance that coordinates research and advocacy to reduce women’s imprisonment in NSW and to strengthen the network of services that keep women with their children. The need is urgent. First Nations women are 42% of the women’s prison population, despite being only 3% of the NSW

Nicole Yade

female population. KWOOP is calling for the NSW Government to halve women’s incarceration by 2030 and to resource a community of practice that connects services across the state.”

“Progress comes from trust, continuity and honesty. Short funding cycles and rigid reporting make it harder to do what works. Philanthropy can have outsized impact by focusing on the most marginalised, backing Indigenous-led leadership and making longer term commitments. When

women are starting with very little, the right support transforms their lives and their children’s lives.”

“My vision is simple and it is shared by my team. We want safety now and safety for the future. That means crisis refuge in the moment, and the building blocks of dignity that make stability possible, including secure housing, income, health care, legal help, cultural safety and time. If we listen, link people to real options and fix the systems that fail them, women will do the rest.”



Nicole Yade at WAGEC's From Now residence. © Sally Dingo 2025



Concy Aloyo © Wabedu Kigen Women's Collective, Uganda.

Being part of a collective helps to heal and rebuild

Concy Aloyo is the Founder of Wabedu Kigen Women's Collective, Uganda

Concy Aloyo is a community leader from Amuru district in Northern Uganda, working to place women's leadership at the centre of peacebuilding and recovery. In a region scarred by decades of war, where women and girls were abducted and many returned home facing stigma and hardship, she has built a model of collective strength and renewal. Abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army as a child, Concy returned home determined not only to rebuild her own life but to support other women to do the same. She founded Wabedu Kigen (let's have hope) to bring survivors together for mutual support, economic opportunity and a shared political voice. Linked into ActionAid's African Women Voices for Peace coalition, which connects groups across Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Concy has built solidarity across borders where women are reshaping what recovery looks like after war.

“For women returning from captivity, being part of a collective helps them to heal, share experiences, and rebuild their lives free from stigma. Many returnees came home with children whose paternal lineage was unknown, and these children were often labelled as “children of rebels.” Through the group, women have been able to raise funds, buy land, and create new beginnings for themselves and their children, restoring hope and dignity that would have been much harder to achieve alone.”

“I was inspired to form Wabedu Kigen to bring these women survivors together to provide mutual support and collective strength. When we are organised in a group and registered at the district level of government it becomes easier to access services and support from NGOs, government, and Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (community run financial groups where members pool their money and can borrow at low interest to support livelihoods).”

We are creating practical solutions on the frontlines of recovery, showing the power of collective action and how organised, supported women can transform their communities, foster inclusion and create lasting change even in the face of adversity.

“Combining emotional support with livelihood activities strengthens women's recovery and resilience. Through Wabedu Kigen, women share their experiences and heal together, while accessing skills training and entrepreneurship opportunities. This dual approach helps our members rebuild their confidence while growing their economic independence. It nurtures emotional healing and more tangible support to earn an income, support one another, and create sustainable change for their families and communities.”

“Wabedu Kigen is connected to other women's groups across Africa through ActionAid's African Women Voices for Peace coalition.

Through this network, I've been able to meet with other frontline women leaders from different countries and communities, an experience I never imagined possible.” “The solidarity built across borders has been powerful. It's created space for shared learning, mutual encouragement, and exchange of ideas on how women can lead peacebuilding and recovery efforts in their own contexts. Our connection has helped amplify our collective voices and has strengthened the broader movement for women-led peace and security across the Great Lakes region.”

“Women are natural caregivers both in times of conflict and peace. They nurture children, care for extended families and the elderly, and work tirelessly to provide for their households. Beyond caregiving, women play a crucial role in negotiating and sustaining peace at every level from the family and community to the national stage. Because women are deeply affected by conflict, we must also be at the center of rebuilding efforts. Women's voices, experiences, and leadership are essential in shaping peaceful, inclusive, and resilient communities after war.”

“At Wabedu Kigen, our voices carry the strength of women determined to rebuild their lives despite economic hardship, social stigma, and the lingering effects of conflict.”

“We are creating practical solutions on the frontlines of recovery, showing the power of collective action and how organised, supported women can transform their communities, foster inclusion and create lasting change even in the face of adversity.”

Food can change the direction of a nation

Isabelle Kamariza founded Solid’Africa in 2010 with a few friends, cooking meals for five patients in Kigali’s main public hospital.

What began as an act of compassion has grown into a model for how food systems can strengthen both health and livelihoods. Solid’Africa’s work started in hospitals and later extended to public schools, where it now provides nearly 15,000 meals each day alongside more than 100,000 hospital meals each year. Through its farm-to-plate model, the organisation connects smallholder farmers, many of them women, to steady demand from hospitals and schools, creating a circular system that nourishes people and restores the land.



Isabelle Kamariza © Solid’Africa.

“Food is about dignity and recovery. When we began, patients in public hospitals had almost no access to food because meals are not included in Rwanda’s health insurance package. This meant that people had to rely on relatives, buy snacks from small kiosks, or go hungry. I remember one patient who could only eat soup, but because it cost more than solid food, she chose the cheaper option. That moment stayed with me. It showed me how food determines not only health, but also the basic dignity of being able to heal.”

“Everything is connected, from health to farming and the soil beneath our feet. Globally, agriculture and soil have been deeply deprived, with over 50% of soil nutrients lost due to years

of monocropping and unsustainable practices. Through our farm-to-plate model, we link hospital and school meals directly to local agriculture and invest in regenerative farming practices that rebuild soil health. By encouraging farmers to grow a diverse range of crops rather than relying on monocropping and by purchasing those crops for our meals, we are improving human nutrition while actively restoring the soil through regeneration and biodiversity.”

“Women farmers are the backbone of Rwanda’s agriculture sector. They bring deep knowledge of the land, strong community networks, and a commitment to reinvesting in their families and communities. By partnering with them, we see faster adoption of sustainable practices and greater

stability in food supply chains. Empowering women is one of the surest ways to build resilient, inclusive systems.”

“Innovation helps us reach more people, but purpose keeps us steady.

Our first industrial kitchen, opened in 2019, brought automation and food safety to a mass cooking scale. Now we’re moving toward a digital system that traces food from farm to plate, improves planning, reduces waste and strengthens accountability. But technology isn’t the goal; permanence is. We’re working with government to embed hospital feeding

into Rwanda’s health system so nutritious meals become part of public care.”

“Food can change the direction of a nation.

Stronger food systems create healthier people, better learning outcomes and more resilient economies. By showing that large scale nutrition can be delivered through local sourcing, Solid’Africa offers a model of self-reliance that others can build on. My hope is simple: that every person who depends on public care has access to good food, grown by their own communities.”

My hope is simple: that every person who depends on public care has access to good food, grown by their own communities.

Barbie-Lee Kirby © First Nations Futures, Australia



Barbie-Lee Kirby, Executive Director of First Nations Futures, Australia

Barbie-Lee Kirby is one of the leading voices in a new generation of First Nations leaders in Australia. A Ngiyambaa, Wailwan, Paakintji-Maraura, Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay woman from Far West NSW, she combines deep community connection with experience across finance, governance, data, and philanthropy. Now, as Executive Director of First Nations Futures, she is challenging a sector where less than 1% of funding reaches Indigenous-led organisations, and pushing philanthropy to shift decision making into community hands.

Shifting how accountability works

“Working across finance, governance and philanthropy showed me how power operates and how often it reinforces inequity. I saw who made the decisions and who was excluded, and how little importance was placed on intersectionality. Unless power is shared, the structures that are meant to deliver impact can end up maintaining disadvantage instead of changing it.”

“When communities set the terms, they prioritise what sustains them. That looks different everywhere. A boxing program in Brewarrina needing just a few thousand dollars, an equine therapy program in WA paying vet bills, or a local organisation keeping a community space open. These aren’t the tidy categories funders often expect, but they are the investments that hold communities together. Local control allows for independence, dignity and self-determination.”

“First Nations Futures is shifting how accountability works. Traditional philanthropy is weighed down with reporting and rigid timelines. We still hold accountability to funders, but we put it where it belongs, with communities themselves. They answer to one another and to the people they serve. That change frees up time, reduces barriers, and allows impact to unfold in ways that standard frameworks can’t measure.”

“Wealth redistribution can happen with cultural integrity. Our role as an intermediary is not to control resources but to move them quickly and with trust. We show that funding can flow in ways that keep community and culture at the centre, rather than sidelining them.”

I want to see money flowing into Indigenous-led funds and organisations that know what their communities need.

“The shift I want to see is simple: philanthropy must move capital into the hands of Indigenous-led organisations.

In Australia, philanthropy exists because of colonisation and the dispossession of our people. Too often there has been a culture of holding onto wealth and assets instead of using them for change. Over the next five years, I want to see money flowing into Indigenous-led funds and organisations that know what their communities need. When resources move with respect, trust and the right timing, the impact is deeper, and it lasts.”

When resources move with respect, trust and the right timing, the impact is deeper, and it lasts.”

Genius is everywhere. Opportunity is not.

Peter Kazickas is the Founder and CEO of Uncommon, Zimbabwe

Peter Kazickas is the founder of Uncommon, a social enterprise in Zimbabwe that uses technology education to tackle youth unemployment and connect young people to the global digital economy. An American with deep ties to the country, he has built Uncommon into a bridge between Zimbabwe's young technologists and global opportunities, using his international networks to open doors that local talent are now stepping through.

“Uncommon was born from the conviction that genius is everywhere but opportunity is not. What began with a handful of friends has grown into a bridge between Zimbabwe's young technologists and the global digital economy. The model is bold but practical: train unemployed young adults in technology, support them to launch careers, and have them give back by teaching coding in schools. Out of that exchange, a movement has grown.”

“My connection to Zimbabwe began as a teenager, volunteering with a nonprofit that used sport to teach life skills. Within hours I was in Dzivarasekwa playing basketball until dark, sharing stories and laughs under the trees, and I felt completely at home. After graduating in the US and teaching coding in New York, I knew I belonged

in Zimbabwe. I went back with friends, with laptops, and with the determination to build something together.”

“Young people are at the centre of everything we do Young people are the driving force behind Uncommon. Many of the greatest companies in history were started by young dreamers. Africa has more of them than anywhere else, and the timing could not be better. Cheap internet, renewable energy and artificial intelligence are giving this generation the tools to turn ideas into reality. At Uncommon we see young people who are ambitious, creative and fearless. Our role is to lift them up, to bet on them, and to give them the confidence and skills to thrive.”

“Our model has evolved with time. At first we hired young adults as coding instructors, but the



Peter Kazickas (third from left), with Nedbank Innovation Hub graduates in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. © Jackson Hyland-Lipski.

ceiling was too low. We shifted to focus on their own careers, while keeping youth coding alive. Now, when someone joins our free Bootcamp, they get training, infrastructure, and a supportive community. In return, they teach coding in local schools, reaching tens of thousands of children. That combination builds self-confidence, creates optimism for the future, and spreads the benefits of technology education far beyond the individual.”

“Global connections open doors that once felt out of reach. Each Bootcamp graduate is matched with a mentor from around the world, bringing expertise and encouragement. We connect graduates with remote internships and jobs through our talent marketplace, and we host guest speakers

who share their “Uncommon Stories.” Knowing that someone outside Zimbabwe values your talent changes how young people see themselves and their place in the world.”

The future we imagine, one that is equal, fair and prosperous, will be led by the youth of today.

The vision is for Zimbabwe to become the tech capital of Africa. Step one is making technology education accessible to all. Step two is connecting graduates with jobs at home and abroad, building confidence in Zimbabwean talent and

bringing in foreign exchange. Step three is investing in entrepreneurship, so young technologists can build companies and employ others. We have government endorsement for national expansion, but scaling requires resources. The future we imagine, one that is equal, fair and prosperous, will be led by the youth of today.”



Ren Fernando © ReLove Sydney

We are a movement

Ren Fernando, Co-Founder of ReLove Sydney is one of the most original voices in social innovation in Australia

An architect turned social entrepreneur, Ren co-founded ReLove to tackle two crises at once: waste and housing insecurity. The organisation rescues high quality furniture from landfill and furnishes homes for women and families starting again after violence, homelessness or incarceration, restoring dignity and choice at a critical moment. Its social enterprise arm, ReStory, resells designer pieces to the public, generating income that helps fund ReLove's mission and proving that circular solutions can deliver both social impact and environmental change.

“When we started ReLove we were two people in a shed and look at the scale of it now. We have really only been doing this at scale for about four and a half years and what we are seeing is real change. The power of what we do well at ReLove is collaboration with agencies, with charities, with corporates. When you connect authentically with people who want to make change we become more powerful together as a community. others through language.”

“We are way more than just a charity at ReLove, we are a movement. Shelter is a human right, but a home is more than a roof. In my background being trained as an architect, we were taught that shelter is important, shelter is a human right. But thinking more deeply about what a home means, it is all those things that happen under the roof. Comfort, safety, stability. They need to happen with a safe bed, a place to cook, a sofa you can sit on, a table you can eat around with your children. These are important human interactions.”

“The way we have designed ReLove is to give people choice in how they want their home to look for themselves. It is not just a sofa or a bed. It is cushions sewn by a community group, artwork, candles. Those things matter. They help people feel heard, respected and worthy. The best thing we can do is ask people what they need. Finally arriving at the point of getting housing is so hard. If we are going to make it successful we have to listen and give people choice. Choice really matters because it means people feel heard. By the time people have walked through the homewares section

somebody is hugging, somebody is smiling. A good night's sleep matters. Cooking a meal at home matters. Sitting around a table matters. What we get out of bed to do here every day is to help people move into housing with as much dignity, care, respect, joy and love as possible.”

“There is simplicity to what we do, putting excess and need together. But what we are really doing is the power of people moving this mountain together. It is our community volunteers who turn up, our partners who believe in us, the people who take extra chances and extra time and cost to prove that it is worth it. Now we are talking to hotel groups, corporate relocation firms, big industry players. We could not do ReStory without incredible furniture donated to us, without partners who believe we can keep this service free for people. Everybody is playing their part of the puzzle.”

“ReLove sits at the intersection of housing insecurity and waste. What excites me is that people now know who we are. We are talking to ministers. We have our first government funding. We are bedding down a model that could roll out nationally. At the same time we know landfill in Sydney is full in five years and furniture is the second largest problem.”

“The environment is a huge part of what we are doing. It is exciting to know we are on track to furnish 1,000 homes and there is more we can be doing. The need is huge. The future is about making sure this model has longevity so that it is still here helping people, and helping the planet, for decades to come.”



Angela Oduor Lungati © Ushahidi

Angela Oduor Lungati, Executive Director, Ushahidi, Kenya

Ushahidi is a global, Kenyan-born technology non-profit that has changed how communities share and use information. First created during Kenya's 2008 post-election violence to help citizens report what was happening around them, it has since become one of the world's most influential civic-tech platforms. Today, its tools are used across the world to help people collect local data, strengthen accountability and make their voices count. By turning real citizen experience into actionable knowledge, Ushahidi is helping governments and civic organisations respond more quickly, fairly and transparently, building cities that listen.

Listening to the voices of a city

“When Angela Oduor Lungati walks through Nairobi, she sees a city alive with conversation. “People are constantly talking,” she says. “In matatus, at markets, in WhatsApp groups, ideas are being exchanged all the time. The challenge isn't getting people to speak, it's creating systems that actually listen.”

As Executive Director of Ushahidi, Lungati leads one of Africa's most influential civic-tech organisations, a platform built on the belief that collective intelligence can change how societies respond to crisis, govern themselves and grow. Ushahidi, which means testimony in Swahili, was born in 2008 during Kenya's post-election violence, when citizens were trapped in their homes, cut off from news by a media blackout.

“The country was on fire,” Lungati recalls. “We were literally watching cartoons on TV while chaos unfolded outside. Five bloggers came together and said, let's make a map so people can tell the truth of what's happening around them. They built a site where anyone could send a message, and suddenly people could see, in real time, what was really going on.”

That improvised tool became a model for citizen-driven data worldwide. Over the next 17 years, Ushahidi's open source platform was adapted in more than 160 countries, used to monitor elections, track COVID-19 responses, document human rights violations and coordinate disaster relief. “Our role isn't to save the world,” Lunati says. “It's to build tools that empower people to save their own world.”

Now, Ushahidi is pushing that mission further through Distant Voices, an ambitious effort to reimagine how communities

share information and influence decision making. “For years, we focused on gathering data,” Lungati explains. “But people don't engage through surveys anymore. They talk, on Facebook, in barazas, in WhatsApp groups. The question is, how do we meet them where they already are?”

Distant Voices will use AI-powered translation and messaging to draw insights from natural conversation and turn them into usable intelligence for local governments, funders and civic organisations. “It's about reducing friction,” Lunati says. “For communities, it's the friction of being asked to fill in rigid forms. For institutions, it's the friction of wading through endless data before they can act. Distant Voices bridges both.”

She has already seen what can happen when feedback loops fail. In Kenya's Tana River County, for example, local authorities once introduced a

drought resistant tree species to mitigate climate change, only to discover later that the trees were draining the region's scarce groundwater. “It was well intentioned,” Lungati says. “But if communities had been properly engaged, they could have spoken up early. That's what citizen generated insight can do: prevent harm before it happens.”

The project is being piloted in several African countries, from Nigeria to Malawi, combining machine learning with deep community partnerships. “In Nigeria we're working through Facebook groups; in Malawi with UNDP and NYU, bringing in government from the start,” she says. “We want to show that listening at scale is possible.”

African languages and realities are still missing from most AI systems. We've spent 17 years collecting knowledge from communities that rarely get heard.

“African languages and realities are still missing from most AI systems,” Lungati notes. “We've spent 17 years collecting knowledge from communities that rarely get heard. Now we're

asking how that experience can help build more inclusive, ethical AI, harnessing systems that understand the world they're describing.”

Ushahidi's ambition is to amplify 100 million voices by 2035. “Reaching this goal will be about engagement, moving from asking questions to having conversations, and from conversations to action.” For her, technology is only the means.

“A liveable city is one where people feel heard and what they say matters,” she says. “That's what we're trying to build, cities that listen.”

Our portfolios

Across our three portfolios in Africa, Australia and Innovation, we invest in people, places and ideas that can shift systems and create lasting impact.

Each portfolio is distinct, but all are guided by the same commitment: to back local leadership, strengthen resilience and create opportunities that endure. By working with trusted partners and supporting solutions rooted in community, the Foundation aims to help build stronger, fairer societies where progress endures.

The stories that follow capture the people at the centre of that momentum: innovators, educators, health workers and community leaders expanding what is possible in the places they call home.

They show the decisions people make, the opportunities they create and the practical steps that turn ambition into impact. No two journeys look the same, yet all reveal what becomes possible when local expertise is trusted, resourced and given room to act.

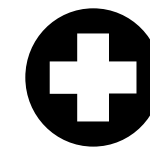


Africa

Backing self-determined and resilient futures

Africa is home to the world's youngest populations and a new generation of leaders, yet many still face barriers to healthcare, opportunity and voice. The Foundation's Africa portfolio supports solutions that strengthen public health, foster inclusive digital and green economies, and advance regional leadership and collaboration. We work in context and through trusted relationships, bringing together community insight and systemic change. By prioritising women, girls and youth, and encouraging collaboration across borders, we aim to contribute to a continent that is more resilient, more connected and better able to shape its own future.

Strengthening public health systems and delivery



Inclusive digital and green economic growth



African leadership, voice and regional influence



Africa



Focus area /
**Strengthening public health
systems and delivery**

United Nations Development Program Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's Mobile One Stop Centres

In Zimbabwe's remote districts, survivors of gender based violence and child marriage often struggle to reach the health, legal and protection services they need. Mobile One Stop Centres bring those services together in a single location, from counselling and medical care to legal aid and civil registration, reducing barriers for women and youth while informing broader national reforms.

United Nations Development Program Zimbabwe

8,000

**women and youth accessed
gender-based violence
services in rural Zimbabwe**





Taking essential services on the road in Rural Zimbabwe

A Mobile One Stop Centre travelled to six remote communities in Nyanga North, bringing legal aid, health care, counselling and civil registration directly to more than 1,300 people who would otherwise be out of reach of government services.

In Nyanga North, essential services are scarce. Poor roads, long distances and the absence of phone networks or nearby police stations make it nearly impossible for many families to access health care, report abuse or secure basic documents. Identified as a hotspot for child marriage and gender based violence, the district shows what happens when state systems do not reach rural communities.

Services that usually exist only in urban centres were offered side by side: counselling, medical support, child protection, economic empowerment, legal advice and birth and ID registration.

Over six days, the Mobile One Stop Centre brought multiple agencies together, from government ministries and the police Victim Friendly Unit to social services, health workers and legal aid organisations. In each village, services that usually exist only in urban centres were offered side by side: counselling, medical support, child protection, economic empowerment, legal advice and birth and ID registration.

The impact was visible in each community. At Avilla, a 21 year-old woman obtained her father's death certificate, which unlocked her own ID and her infant son's birth certificate. A 71 year old grandmother finally received the paperwork needed to apply for an ID and take part in national processes like voting.

In Kazozo, a nine year-old girl approached the Centre for help with problems at school, which led to the discovery of

a complex case involving emotional abuse, child abandonment, child marriage and lack of documentation. In Ruwangwe, a pregnant teenager seeking to return to school was supported through a multi-agency case conference. Each community revealed different patterns of need. In Mazarura, survivors of gender-based violence had begun forming informal groups for

A social worker provides psychosocial support in Nyanga North. © UNDP Zimbabwe/Anesu Freddy.



self help and were linked to empowerment support. In Katerere, more than 400 people attended, including one of the largest men's forums yet held, where domestic violence emerged as a pressing issue. At Kambudzi, three cases of child marriage were reported in a single day, two of them anonymously, a sign that communities were beginning to speak out after years of silence.

Led by Zimbabwe's Ministry of Women Affairs, the Gender Commission, together with UNDP Zimbabwe, the Mobile One Stop Centre has reconnected marginalised families to state systems, reduced barriers to documentation and protection, and showed that even in the most isolated places, coordinated services can be delivered effectively and equitably.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS REGISTRATION ACT [CHAPTER 5:02]

Certified Copy of an Entry of Birth Registered in the District of
Nyanza **in Zimbabwe**

1. Name of child: **NGANOMBE MASONI CLINIC NYANZA**
 2. Sex: **MALE**
 3. Date of birth: **May 2020**
 4. Place of birth: **MAKONI**
 5. Nationality: **MAKONI**
 6. National identity and number: **2020**
 7. Signature of mother: **MOTHER OF CHILD**
 8. Qualification: **KAMUPINGA VILLAGE CHIEF MAKONI MAKONI**
 9. Address: **KAMUPINGA VILLAGE CHIEF MAKONI MAKONI**
 10. Date of registration: **07-04-25**
 11. Entry number: **1001/240/25**
 12. Issued at: **NYANZA**
 13. Date of issue: **7th April 2025**
 14. Signature of Registrar: **CD**
 15. Date of signature: **7th April 2025**

THIS CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED WITHOUT AMENDMENT

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We Care Solar

200,000

**solar suitcases installed
for safer childbirth in rural
Malawi**

Malawi's rural clinics often face life threatening power outages during childbirth, where women with complications face a higher risk of dying. Many facilities experience prolonged and repeated electricity interruptions, leaving midwives without the light and equipment needed to safely manage emergencies.

We Care Solar is providing clinics with reliable solar energy and training health workers to use the new tools, improving safety for mothers, newborns and the staff who care for them.

“

We were totally in the dark. We used to ask mothers to bring candles for delivery.

Health care worker, Dzoole Health Centre.



Light for safe deliveries

Midwives in Malawi's rural clinics struggled to deliver babies safely without electricity, often relying on candles and torches during night time births.



Technicians trained to install and use Solar Suitcases to bring dependable light and power to M'bang'ombe Clinic, Malawi. © Asodzi Photography



Health care workers receive a Solar Suitcase at Msakambewa Health Centre © Asodzi Photography

With solar power now installed across more than 430 health facilities, they describe the difference it has made for mothers, newborns and health workers alike.

“

We almost closed the maternity wing because of lack of power. After 30 years, I have peace of mind. With light I can attend to women at night, and mothers are thrilled to hear their baby's heartbeat on the fetal doppler.

Health care worker, Makiyoni Health Centre



Emergency Medicine Kenya Foundation

Emergency Medicine Kenya Foundation is embedding emergency medical care into Kenya's public healthcare system.

By training healthcare workers, establishing ambulance dispatch centres, and equipping emergency departments, the foundation works nationwide with governments across all 47 counties to reduce preventable deaths and ensure emergency care is a core part of national health delivery. Empowering them to provide immediate lifesaving care and to cascade this knowledge through local units and organised groups, building sustainable community networks that extend far beyond a single training.



Upgraded Emergency Department at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital in Mombasa.
© EMKF

947 Emergency health providers trained in Kenya

37 Public Emergency Departments supported



Emergency care begins before the hospital

In Nakuru County, the first person to reach an emergency is often not a doctor or nurse, but a motorbike rider, taxi driver, public transport worker, or community health worker.

Working within this reality, Emergency Medicine Kenya Foundation and the County Department of Health Services are creating a reliable first response system that connects communities with formal emergency medical care.

By training community health workers as both first responders and instructors in basic first aid, crisis coordination, and the management of the emergencies most common in their areas, they are empowered not only to provide immediate lifesaving care but also to cascade this knowledge through local units and organised groups, building sustainable community networks that extend far beyond a single training.

“This aligns with WHO’s recommendation to train lay first responders in resource-limited settings,

helping bridge the gap between communities and formal emergency medical services,” said Ritah Ochola, County Community Strategy Focal Person. What was once an informal and fragmented response is now becoming structured and

dependable. By strengthening the first link in the chain of survival, communities are experiencing faster action, reduced injury severity and higher survival rates long before patients reach the hospital.

And when patients do arrive, hospital emergency departments - like Coast General Hospital in Mombasa, where infrastructure and systems have been upgraded - are better prepared to deliver timely, reliable emergency medical care. Together, these investments connect the community to the hospital as part of one national emergency healthcare system.

Helping bridge the gap between communities and formal emergency medical services





Save the Children

178,000

Save the Children's Malaria Learner Treatment Kit

Across Malawi's schools, Save the Children is training teachers to diagnose and treat malaria through its Learner Treatment Kit program. By reaching children directly in schools, the model is reducing illness and absenteeism while demonstrating the value of integrating health and education.

**children received school-
based malaria care in
Malawi**



How schools and communities are changing the course of malaria

In the remote village of Namatiti in southern Malawi, malaria was part of daily life. For schoolchildren it meant missed lessons, long walks to distant health clinics, and, at times, dangerous delays in treatment.

At school, sick children queued in a cramped teachers' office, waiting for care. "Sometimes a child would be unwell, but you couldn't attend to them immediately because the room was in use. It delayed care, and that was frustrating," said Deputy Headteacher Omar Nseula.

The response came from the community itself. Parents and elders built a dedicated health block, while Chief Muchilani donated land for maize to support school meals. "No child should be sick and hungry at the same time," he said.

For students, the changes have turned school into a place of both care and learning. "Before, we had to walk 11 kilometres to the nearest health centre. Now, with treatment here at school, our parents save money and time," said 16 year old Isaac.

Fourteen year old Tereza added: "We used to end classes early because we were too weak to learn. Now I stay in class the whole day. I eat. I learn."

By July 2025, 600 teachers trained as Learner Treatment Kit Dispensers had treated more than 99,374 children in Machinga and Zomba. In Machinga alone, 120 schools (over half the district's total) were part of the program. More than ten schools have since built their own learner treatment rooms with community support. Officials report that severe malaria cases are falling as children are treated earlier. "We used to receive children in critical condition, now many are treated early, right at school. Children are taking what they learn back home," said Dr Jones Chise, Director of Health and Social Services.

We used to end classes early because we were too weak to learn. Now I stay in class the whole day. I eat. I learn.



Deputy Headteacher Omar Nseula, Namatiti, Malawi.
© Save the Children.

The initiative is now embedded in Malawi's health and education systems. National guidelines and training manuals have been finalised, ministries have pledged continued support, and the University of Malawi is developing a digital platform for real time monitoring. "Absenteeism is down. Performance is up."

Even teachers say they now know how to care for their own families better because of the training," said Douglas Namikungulu, Chief Education Officer for Machinga.



Learner Treatment Kit dispensers Daud Kasaky, Failosi Mtambalika, Maurine Kapichi, Lonney Ghyamwaka and Asiyato Ayami.
© Save the Children.



AFRICA / Strengthening public health systems and delivery

Fresh Life

Tackling the health risks of poor sanitation

Fresh Life is scaling container based sanitation in Nairobi and Lusaka, tackling the health risks of poor sanitation in rapidly growing informal settlements. The model strengthens public health while creating local jobs and offering governments a replicable approach for safe sanitation

318,000

people with clean, sustainable
sanitation in Kenya and
Zambia







Clinton Health Access Initiative

Cervical cancer remains one of the leading causes of death for women in Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Clinton Health Access Initiative is supporting governments to expand screening, treatment and vaccination, building public health capacity to move closer to the global elimination target.

9,500

women in Zimbabwe and

56,000

women in Zambia screened for cervical cancer





Cervical Cancer Talk at Zambia Camp © CHAI.

Building trust through faith in Zambia's cervical cancer response

In Zambia, where Christianity shapes much of social life, pastors and elders are often trusted more than doctors.

That trust can cut both ways. In some communities, illness is still seen as divine punishment; in others, cultural and religious norms make talk of reproductive health taboo. The effect can result in stigma, silence, and delay in seeking care for diseases such as cervical cancer.

The Clinton Health Access Initiative has sought to turn this dynamic into an advantage. Working with Zambia's Ministry of Health, it partnered with local faith leaders to deliver awareness sessions that were religiously and culturally sensitive. Providers joined women's rallies and camp meetings in Central Province, placing prevention messages in spaces where women already felt safe.

Through religious gathering outreaches we have screened more women ... in areas that were beyond our reach.

Over the year, these gatherings reached around 10,000 women, of whom 45% were screened for cervical cancer. Health providers said uptake outstripped static clinics.

"Through these religious gathering outreaches, we have managed to screen more women than we normally do. These sessions have really helped us in areas that were beyond our reach," said Blessings Chingobe, a cervical cancer provider from Shibuyunji District in Central Province.

In Luano District, where there is only one fixed cervical cancer screening site, Hope Nachinga is a cervical cancer provider. "We are screening more women than we do at static sites. Even those in hard to reach areas. This is great success for us as a district especially that we only have one screening site," she said.

By working through faith networks as trusted community institutions, Zambia's health providers have widened access to cervical cancer services and encouraged more women to take up screening.



Sister Lweendo leads an outreach session in Shibuyunji District, Zambia. © CHAI.



Women at a Camp Meeting in Chibombo District waiting to be screened. The Chitenge cloth acts as a screen for privacy. © CHAI.

Africa



Focus area /

**Inclusive digital and
green economic growth**

Plan International

Plan International's Girls in Crisis 2.0

In Northern Uganda's refugee settlements, adolescent girls and young mothers are learning trades, starting businesses and gaining access to reproductive health and parenting support. Plan International's Girls in Crisis 2.0 project helps young women build financial independence and delay early marriage while engaging boys and men to challenge social norms that limit girls' choices.

14,000

**young people reached
through parenting and
reproductive health
programs in Northern
Uganda**



Young mothers who founded Kotura Restaurant in Boroli refugee settlement, Northern Uganda.
© Plan International.



How three women built Kotura Restaurant in a Ugandan refugee settlement

In Northern Uganda's refugee settlements, adolescent girls and young mothers are learning trades, starting small businesses and rebuilding their lives after displacement.

In Boroli refugee settlement, three young mothers, survivors of domestic violence, took a bold step towards economic independence. Harriet, Susan and Lyn, all trained in catering through local artisans as part of Plan International's Girls in Crisis 2.0 project, are building their economic autonomy. The project, designed to support adolescent girls and young mothers, equipped them with the knowledge, skills and tools to transform their lives.

"We were very fortunate to be selected as beneficiaries of this project because there are so many other young mothers like us in the community," says Harriet. "This opportunity has given us hope and a chance to build a better future."

Kotura Restaurant is now a place of work, learning and independence. For its founders, it represents stability after years of upheaval and a chance to build their own future.

The Kotura Restaurant, founded by the three young women, emerged as a community solution. In Boroli, there were no restaurants, leaving a gap for meals and refreshments. Recognising this need, the young mothers decided to pursue catering as their chosen trade. Over the course of three months, they received hands on vocational training, learning not only how to prepare food but also how to manage a business and handle finances effectively.

After completing their training, Plan International provided them with startup kits, giving them the foundation to launch their own restaurant. The group chose to establish their business near their local Health Centre, a strategic location with a steady flow of people.

To get their business off the ground, they raised 70,000 Ugandan shillings (about A\$19) to support the construction of their restaurant. Harriet was grateful for her husband's contribution, saying, "I want to thank my partner for generously providing us with building materials and dedicating his time to construct the structure we are using today. Without his help, this would have been much harder for us."

With the structure completed, they pooled another 40,000 shillings (about A\$11) to purchase essential items such as salt and meat to start operations. What began as a small initiative serving seven

customers a day has grown into a thriving business with regular patrons. The profits they earn are reinvested into the restaurant, while some support their households, providing basic needs and school fees for their children.

"This project has given us not just the skills to run a business but the confidence to take control of our lives and provide for our families," says Harriet.

Kotura Restaurant is now a place of work, learning and independence. For its founders, it represents stability after years of upheaval and a chance to build their own future.



Young mothers who founded Kotura Restaurant in Boroli refugee settlement, Northern Uganda.
© Plan International.



COMACO

Community Markets for Conservation

In Zambia, Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO) is supporting over 340,000 small scale farmers to adopt regenerative agroforestry and transition away from practices that harm soil, forests and wildlife. Farmers gain higher yields and premium prices through COMACO's "It's Wild!" food products, linking conservation with sustainable livelihoods.

**1.5
million
hectares of forests
protected in Zambia**



Smallholder farmer Magret Banda, Zambia. © COMACO

Zambia's smallholder farmers are beating the worst drought in a century

In 2024, the worst drought in a century hit Zambia's small-scale farmers hard. Fields dried up, harvests shrank, and families faced tough choices about how to feed themselves.

Magret Banda, 68, from Petauke district, has been farming for decades. When the rains failed last year, many farmers in her community lost everything. But Magret had something different. She had planted cassava, a drought tolerant crop that could withstand the dry conditions. With support from COMACO, Magret had adopted conservation farming techniques and turned to climate resilient crops. When the drought came, her cassava grew strong. Instead of losing her income, she expanded her farm, planting even more cassava on two additional acres.

"Cassava has a good market and has helped me earn money even during droughts," she says.

Across rural Zambia, small-scale farmers are adapting to climate change with smarter farming techniques, many for the first time. And, in a nation where economic opportunities often favour men, more than 50% of COMACO's farmers are women, meaning more girls are staying in school, more families are thriving, and communities are more resilient. Magret is part of a bigger movement in Zambia, one that's building food security from the ground up.



Solid' Africa

Solid' Africa is reimagining food systems in Rwanda by linking smallholder farmers to a guaranteed market that supplies nutritious hospital and school meals.

Through training in regenerative agriculture, the initiative helps farmers increase yields and household income while improving the quality and sustainability of food provided to patients and students. It's a model that tackles poverty and malnutrition simultaneously, transforming local production into community health and resilience.



4,500

farmers trained in regenerative agriculture in Rwanda

61%

increase in household income. Nearly all participating farmers rose above Rwanda's extreme poverty line.



A smallholder farming cooperative turns a season of loss into growth

In Nyagatare district, farmers from the CORVNY cooperative saw their rice yields drop sharply after months of water shortages and hailstorms.

Instead of retreating, they regrouped. With Solid' Africa's support, providing access to premium seeds, fertiliser and technical advice through its sustainable agriculture program, the cooperative managed to cut costs and build savings, and then made a bold decision.

Faced with the loss of nearly 15% of their harvest, the cooperative's leaders made an unexpected choice. Rather than focusing only on recovery, they invested their limited savings to buy land and construct their first dedicated post-harvest drying area. Until then, members had relied on borrowed plots and temporary sheds to process their crops.

What began as a difficult season has become a lesson in resilience, proof that when local producers have the tools and autonomy to decide their own priorities, they can turn crisis into opportunity

The new site closes a critical gap, protecting grain quality and income from future shocks.

The investment also marks a turning point: a move from subsistence farming to strategic planning.

CORVNY already records the highest rice yields among nearby cooperatives, and this new infrastructure positions its 577 members for long term growth.

What began as a difficult season has become a lesson in resilience, proof that when local producers have the tools and autonomy to decide their own priorities, they can turn crisis into opportunity and build stronger food systems for the future.







Uncommon

Uncommon.org is working to bridge the digital divide across Zimbabwe by expanding access to practical technology education and pathways into the digital workforce.

Its core programs train unemployed young adults in ICT, coding and AI skills, while also equipping school students with early digital literacy through after-school coding classes. Uncommon is now partnering with teachers, school leaders and Government officials to embed digital learning in classrooms nationwide through a new teacher training model.

Together, these efforts aim to unlock economic opportunity for young Zimbabweans and build a more inclusive, digitally skilled workforce.



Mrs Kaisi with Haig Park Primary School teachers after completing Uncommon's digital and coding workshop in Harare. © Uncommon

6,200

students learned coding

100

teachers trained in digital literacy and tech integration bringing stronger digital learning into classrooms



Headteacher Mrs Kaisi leads a digital skills session at Haig Park Primary School, where teachers are learning to integrate technology into everyday lessons. © Uncommon



In Zimbabwe's classrooms, teachers learn to code before their pupils

In Harare, technology is changing how lessons are taught. At Haig Park Primary School, headteacher Mrs Kaisi saw a way to modernise teaching and close the gender gap in digital skills.

When Uncommon introduced its teacher training program at a national School Heads' Conference earlier this year, Mrs. Kaisi invited the team to run an intensive two day workshop at her school.

The training, held in Haig Park's computer lab, was practical and fast moving. Teachers refreshed their digital and coding skills and explored how to use AI in daily lessons. "The teachers can now create their own documents, including lesson plans, schemes and mark schedules, thereby saving time they would otherwise spend on typing," Mrs Kaisi said.

Teachers also learned about generative AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity, how to use

them for lesson planning and research, and how to guide pupils towards ethical use. With most staff already pursuing further qualifications, she believes the new skills will strengthen both classroom teaching and professional development.

Uncommon is helping teachers bring technology into the heart of the classroom, where it belongs. If we scale this, we won't just catch up, we'll lead.

She sees the program as an enabler of Zimbabwe's heritage-based curriculum. Traditionally the domain of a specialist teacher, ICT is now entering every subject. "The teacher training program aligns with and also

enables the implementation of the ICT pillar," she said, noting that teachers can now access digital resources for an under-resourced syllabus.

The momentum has spread beyond her school. In the nearby Warren Park Cluster, Schools Inspector

Mr Muyambo, once trained in ICT and Scratch coding but long confined to administrative work, joined Uncommon's next pilot cohort himself.

Muyambo saw how the approach demystified coding, integrated technology into ordinary lessons and aligned with the national curriculum. "Uncommon is helping teachers bring technology into the heart of the classroom, where it belongs. If we scale this, we won't just catch up, we'll lead."

By the end of the course, Muyambo had become one of its strongest advocates. He urged Uncommon to expand its training team and called for a national rollout "so every teacher can teach ICT and coding, and every student learns to code in the classroom."

At Haig Park, Kaisi says Uncommon has "left a challenge" with her administration: the

organisation delivered its promise to teachers, and now the school must mobilise the infrastructure to sustain it. She plans to work with the School Development Committee to equip every classroom with the technology needed for digital teaching.

The school also hopes to extend the partnership. Its Early Childhood Development IT Play Centre is not yet fully functional, and Haig Park is seeking Uncommon's support to introduce child friendly coding and robotics, giving learners early exposure to technology.

For schools like Haig Park, Uncommon's teacher training is creating the conditions for teachers to teach with technology rather than around it, a small but significant shift in how Zimbabwe prepares its students for the digital age.

Schools Inspector Mr Muyambo during Uncommon's teacher training pilot in Harare, where he joined local educators to refresh digital and coding skills. © Uncommon





MasiSports+

How a Cape Town internship became a pathway to work

MasiSports+ is strengthening opportunities for young people in South Africa's Masiphumelele community by using sport as an entry point to education, life skills and safer pathways. The organisation builds and maintains sports facilities, employs local coaches, and partners with schools to create structured, engaging programs that keep children connected to learning.

As it grows, MasiSports+ is expanding its model to include mental wellbeing, health, employability and youth development, building local partnerships to offer services that extend beyond the sports field. The approach is rooted in community, providing young people with role models, support networks and exposure to new possibilities.



Masiphumelele High School
sports fields @MasiSports+





From internship to work in Cape Town

In Masiphumelele, a crowded township on the Cape Peninsula, early work opportunities are limited.

High unemployment and a lack of structured after school activities mean many young people have little exposure to professional environments. MasiSports+ was created to help fill this gap by using sport to keep children connected to school and to open pathways to education, skills and work.

When Zintle joined MasiSports+ as an intern, she expected to spend her time behind a desk. Instead, the program exposed her to coaching,

workshops and day to day responsibilities that helped her build confidence and practical skills.

She had completed office administration studies but was unsure which career path to follow. She liked teaching and she liked sport, but had not yet seen how these interests might come together. The internship quickly broadened her view.

"When I got to MasiSports, I got exposed to a lot of things like coaching, not just doing admin only," she says. Working across different activities gave her

new exposure and helped her work out what she enjoyed.

Collaboration became an important part of her experience. "Whenever they would appoint me to do a particular role, I would be like, okay, can you also add this person, and then we can work together to actually achieve the goal." Learning to work in teams strengthened her sense of responsibility and supported her development.

MasiSports+ places strong emphasis on local role models, and the guidance of staff helped shape her ambitions. "Being around mentors really pushed me to want to become that kind of person too." The chance to learn on the job was key. "The internship is definitely a learning experience where you can make your errors and get corrected by your supervisor, and then you actually get on your feet eventually when you go." After completing the internship, Zintle accepted

a part time role while continuing her studies. Balancing both has been challenging, but it has helped her manage her time and develop stronger professional habits.

The experience expanded her sense of what is possible. She now sees more ways to bring together sport, education and business in her future career. What has not changed is her desire to work with children and create environments where they feel supported and able to thrive.

The internship forms part of MasiSports+ broader efforts to strengthen youth employability in the community. Alongside its sports and life skills work, the organisation is developing partnerships that connect young people to opportunities in health, vocational training and social enterprises, helping build safer and more stable pathways in a community with few formal options.

Being around mentors really pushed me to want to become that kind of person too.

Africa



Focus area /

**African leadership, voice
and regional influence**

King George VI Centre Zimbabwe

Children with disabilities are gaining access to education and life skills at the King George VI Centre, Zimbabwe's only institution offering disability inclusive primary, secondary and vocational education.

By equipping teachers, parents and health workers with training in inclusive education and sign language, the Centre is strengthening leadership within communities and creating pathways for greater inclusion.



At King George VI Centre, parents learn sign language to improve communication and strengthen family connection. © JNF.

200

**parents, teachers and health
workers trained in disability-
inclusive education and sign
language**



How a Zimbabwean disability centre is reshaping inclusion

In Zimbabwe's Bulawayo, a small centre and school is quietly changing how Zimbabwe thinks about disability inclusion.

King George VI Centre and School is the country's only institution offering disability inclusive primary, secondary and vocational education, alongside therapy, sign language training and outreach to children with physical disabilities and also the Deaf. Its model is practical, community rooted and focused on unlocking opportunity.

It is estimated that one in ten children in Zimbabwe has a disability, and only one in three of these children is enrolled in school. For many parents, especially mothers, caring for a child with a disability means balancing stigma, economic hardship and limited family support. The Centre's community outreach program addresses that gap by building networks of mutual support and training parents and communities to create a more inclusive society.

In Bulawayo, parents gather each week at King George VI Centre to learn sign language. Three years ago, the Centre began offering classes to help families of Deaf children communicate more effectively. Attendance was limited at first, mainly because of transport costs. Today, lessons are

held not only at the school but also in community centres, teacher training college, hospitals and clinics across the city.

In one session, parents sit in a crowded room at King George VI Centre, repeating hand signs in unison. Many have travelled long distances, driven by a single motivation: to speak with their children.

One father, Mr Succeed Chirozve, met a nine-year-old Deaf boy named Sean while visiting relatives in Chinhoyi. The boy had never been to school. Mr Chirozve brought him to Bulawayo, enrolled him at King George VI School and began learning sign language himself. His daughter joined the classes too, so she could play and communicate with Sean. After Mr Chirozve shared the experience at his church, the congregants offered support with the schooling of Sean. Across town, in the high-density suburb of Emganwini, a group of mothers meet each week beside a church, a central point, bringing their children with disabilities for therapy. They socialise while waiting for their children. One child wears a King George VI uniform, as she is now enrolled in the school after receiving therapy from the community-based program.

Before the Centre's outreach team reached them, most of these children had no access to therapy, which in local hospitals is paid out of pocket. The Centre fills that gap by providing therapy free of charge in the community. Outside the Centre's support, families faced stigma and superstition. "People here think disability is caused by sorcery," one mother says.

With help from the outreach team, the parents formed a support group. "We can't just sit idle at home," one recalls. "We have to do something." They now share childcare so they can run small businesses to sustain themselves. "They are my sisters," another mother says.

At the Centre, a child starts school, a mother steps back into her community, and a family learns a language to communicate with their deaf child. These moments are small, but they change what daily life can hold. Across Bulawayo, families are shaping what inclusion looks like in their own communities, through sign language classes, peer support and shared care that eases the pressure on individual households. Together they are building connection, confidence and a sense of possibility.

Africa has the world's youngest population and its fastest growing cities. As those cities expand, inclusion work like this will help shape who is supported, who is heard and who can participate. In Bulawayo, the work of King George VI Centre shows that inclusion is where progress begins.



Mr Succeed Chirozve learns sign language at King George VI Centre in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, to communicate with his daughter and with Sean, a Deaf child he helped enrol at the school. © JNF.



ActionAid

ActionAid's African Women Voices for Peace

Across Kenya and Uganda, women who have survived conflict related sexual and gender based violence are building a cross border, survivor led movement to shape peace and accountability. They are accessing health care, justice and economic opportunity while forming networks that elevate their voices in national and regional peace processes.

ActionAid, a global women's rights organisation, has established the African Women Voices for Peace initiative, the first regional platform of its kind in Africa. Bringing together women's rights organisations across both countries, the initiative creates safe spaces for survivors to heal, organise and advocate for lasting peace.



Women leading peace in East Africa

In Kenya's Baringo County, women affected by conflict are finding new roles in peacebuilding through ActionAid's African Women Voices for Peace platform.

Among them is Sarah, whose path from survivor to advocate traces the challenges and resilience of many women across the region.

Sarah was born into a polygamous family in rural Baringo, the third of nine children. While still in primary school, she fled to her uncle's home to escape the threat of female genital mutilation, a fate planned by her father. Despite strong grades, her father refused to pay her secondary school fees and accepted a bride price from an older man instead. Sarah resisted the marriage, securing bursaries that allowed her to finish school.

Peace starts from you. Then you can impact the community.

At 21, seeking stability, she married but faced further violence and hardship. After the birth of her first son, she experienced physical abuse that left her with post pregnancy complications. The violence continued, and during periods of regional conflict her family was displaced for years, losing livestock and sheltering in forests. When they eventually returned, her husband brought another wife into the home, deepening her distress. Renewed banditry again forced them to flee, and this time he left, taking their children with him. In 2024, Sarah joined activities under African

Women Voices for Peace. There she met women who, like her, had endured conflict and displacement. The program created space to reflect, rebuild confidence and learn practical skills in advocacy and leadership. She came to understand how women's participation is essential to sustainable peace, and how recovery begins with recognising their own agency.

She later attended the 41st Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Summit in Ethiopia, a gathering that brings together women leaders from across Africa to influence African Union decisions on peace, security, and development. Standing among them reinforced her conviction that women's leadership must be central to peace processes.

"Peace starts from you," she says, "then you can impact the community."

Sarah now mobilises other women in her region to reclaim their agency and take part in building peace. Her story reflects the persistence of women driving change across East Africa, and the collective strength transforming exclusion into leadership.

Australia

Advancing equity for women and girls

The Foundation's Australia portfolio works to create safer, fairer and more inclusive systems for women and girls experiencing intersecting disadvantage. We focus on strengthening Sydney's support sector, backing First Nations women's leadership and economic participation, and improving justice outcomes. Our partnerships are grounded in lived experience and trusted relationships, recognising the intergenerational impact of inequality on women and girls, and on their children. By combining frontline support with efforts that shift the systems around them, we aim to contribute to lasting change that advances equity across Australia.

Investing in Sydney's support sector and strengthening systems



Backing First Nations women and girls



Justice for women and girls



Australia



Focus area /
**Investing in Sydney's support
sector and strengthening systems**

Centre for Women's Economic Safety

Sydney's Money Clinics provide women experiencing economic abuse with confidential, trauma informed financial counselling.

The service helps women escape financial control, address debt, and begin to rebuild long term security.

Centre for Women's Economic Safety

A\$678,000

**in abuse-related debts
waived in Sydney**

© CWES





Australia / Investing in Sydney's support sector and strengthening systems

Money Clinics help women break cycles of economic abuse

Melissa arrived at the Sydney Money Clinic burdened by debts that had mounted after years of post-separation financial abuse. She was owed \$83,000 in unpaid child support over the last decade, which had caused severe financial hardship.

To cover basic costs after separation she was forced to rely on credit cards, adding to her debts, while also struggling with unpaid utility bills that had been placed on repayment plans. Rather than providing relief, those plans drove her further into financial difficulty.

On top of this, Melissa had been repaying a large Centrelink debt caused by her former partner under-reporting his income. Over the past few years she has already repaid more than \$10,000, with a balance still outstanding on a fortnightly plan that continues to cause ongoing stress. She was too fearful to lodge a change of circumstances form with the Child Support Agency, as the process would have required submitting bank statements that risked disclosing her address to the person using violence who is still unaware of her location.

The Sydney Money Clinic intervened on her behalf, negotiating with debt collection agencies and her utility provider. In total, about \$8,000 in debt was waived, giving Melissa immediate relief.

Securing multiple debt waivers totalling more than \$35,000 gave Jennifer the chance to move forward, focusing on re-establishing financial stability for herself and her two children.

Jennifer had endured over 15 years in a financially abusive relationship. During Covid, she was coerced into withdrawing \$20,000 from her superannuation fund, which her partner transferred into his own account. She was

left carrying a Centrelink debt due to his under-reporting of income and a tax debt arising from a work arrangement he had set up in her name, one she did not fully understand. In addition, she was forced to take out multiple credit cards and payday loans, all in her name, while only being given a small allowance to make minimum repayments and cover family expenses.

Centre for Women's Economic Safety



Sydney Money Clinic Financial Counsellor Faiza Jawad. © CWES.

The Sydney Money Clinic worked directly with her lenders and was able to secure multiple debt waivers totalling more than \$35,000. Eliminating those debts gave Jennifer the chance to move forward, focusing on re-establishing financial stability for herself and her two children.

Names have been changed to protect privacy.



Australia / Investing in Sydney's support sector and strengthening systems

The Older Women's Network

The Older Women's Network (OWN) works to ensure dignity, security and opportunity for women as they age.

Through its Older Women's Employment Program, OWN provides tailored, one on one support for women over 50 seeking to re-enter the workforce. The program also partners with employers to challenge ageism and open pathways to stable, meaningful work.



The Older Women's Network

Challenging ageism in the job market

When Claire, 53, moved from Queensland to Sydney to escape domestic violence, she retrained in events management, only to have the pandemic shut down her new career.

After years of unstable work, she joined the Older Women's Employment Program. Over several months, the Older Women's Employment Program team supported her with job applications, interview coaching and confidence-building. When a legal firm offered her a six month

contract, the team continued to mentor her as she settled into the role. By the end of the contract, Claire's performance had earned her a permanent position. "I've been supported with genuine care, empathy and respect," she says. "This opportunity has completely changed my life."

Lily, 54, came to the program after a serious car accident left her unable to work and close to homelessness.

With tailored guidance and encouragement from the Pathways team, she quickly secured new employment and stabilised her housing. "I could hardly believe how my life had turned around," she later said. "I never imagined being in such a

positive position at this stage of my life." Together, stories like Claire's and Lily's show how targeted support can break down systemic barriers for older women, helping them regain security, purpose and pride in their working lives.



Australia / Investing in Sydney's support sector and strengthening systems

Sydney Community Foundation's Doorways to the Future

Women in Western and South Western Sydney are taking practical steps to overcome barriers to work and financial security.

Through Sydney Women's Fund's place based, co-designed approach, Doorways to the Future supports women to identify the challenges they face, such as childcare, transport and limited job opportunities, and shape community-led pathways into stable and meaningful employment.



Recently arrived Afghan women share their experiences of settling in Liverpool during a Doorways to the Future listening session, supported by an interpreter and the NSW Refugee Health Service. © Sydney Women's Fund.

Listening first, building futures: Women in Liverpool shape what comes next

In Liverpool, the early months of Doorways to the Future have been about listening. Led by Sydney Women's Fund, the program began its community engagement in January 2025, meeting women where they are and creating space for their experiences to guide what comes next.

One of the earliest conversations brought together eight recently arrived Afghan women. Initially hesitant to participate, the women soon began sharing their personal stories and the challenges of settling into a new country. With the support of a skilled interpreter and the NSW Refugee Health Service as co-facilitator, the conversation unfolded in a safe and trusting environment.

The women spoke openly about their experiences, from navigating unfamiliar systems to finding community connection in the face of language barriers, and about what they needed most: practical information, community links, and support that recognised the realities of resettlement.

These insights are now shaping the program's co-design work, ensuring the next phase reflects the lived experience of women building new lives in Liverpool.

I want to work, but in a part time job so I can manage both things, my pay and my house,

Across the past few months, the Doorways to the Future team has heard from more than 100 women in the Liverpool community through focus groups, pop up kiosks at Liverpool Plaza, Green Valley Plaza and the Network 2168 Hub, and conversations

with local organisations. Women spoke about the pressures of childcare, the rising cost of living, the difficulty of finding flexible work close to home, and the pride they feel in Liverpool's diversity.

In a session with Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections, 15 women described the challenge



At a pop up listening kiosk in Liverpool, local women speak with the Doorways to the Future team about life in Liverpool, highlighting the strength, diversity and sense of inclusion they feel in their community. © Sydney Women's Fund.

of wanting to work while managing family responsibilities. "I want to work, but in a part time job so I can manage both things, my pay and my house," one woman said. Another shared how often she applies for jobs: "We apply to many, many, many companies, but they just don't have it."

These conversations, honest, specific and grounded in everyday life, are becoming the foundation for the next stage. Over the coming months, Sydney Women's Fund will bring local

organisations together for a series of co-design workshops in Liverpool, drawing on what women have shared to shape practical initiatives that reflect community aspirations. A Reference Committee of local leaders continues to guide this work, helping ensure the program stays rooted in Western Sydney's priorities and lived expertise.

Doorways to the Future is still at the beginning, but the direction is clear: real change starts with listening.



Australia / Investing in Sydney's support sector and strengthening systems

ReLove

Families leaving crisis accommodation can set up safe homes furnished with dignity and choice.

By redistributing quality furniture and goods, ReLove provides stability at a critical turning point in recovery.

3,700

women furnished with complete homes in Sydney

ReLove





Australia / Investing in Sydney's support sector and strengthening systems

Fair Agenda

Fair Agenda campaigns nationally to strengthen the systems that respond to sexual, domestic and family violence.

Its advocacy has delivered stronger protections for survivors, new investments in frontline services, and reforms to ensure timely access to forensic care.



Survivor advocacy drives reform of forensic care in Queensland

When survivor-advocate Evie Clayton spoke out about her experience of being unable to access a timely forensic medical examination in Queensland, she gave voice to a systemic failure.

An regional and remote areas in particular, survivors of sexual assault could wait days for an exam, if they were able to access one at all. The delay not only compounded trauma but also risked the loss of crucial evidence.

In 2024 Clayton partnered with Fair Agenda to campaign for reform. Survivors and advocates had long called for investment in forensic medical services, and new commitments had been announced. Clayton and Fair Agenda worked to ensure these promises translated into real improvements, particularly for regional communities.

In early 2025 Fair Agenda members wrote to their MPs calling for permanent forensic clinician positions and faster access to examinations. That same month Clayton and Fair Agenda met with senior decision-makers, including the Attorney-General, Deputy Premier, Victims of Crime Commissioner, the office of Minister Amanda Camm, and three MPs from Townsville.

The campaign produced results. Every Hospital and Health Service in Queensland has since received funding to expand access to forensic examinations. Fifty specialist roles, including nurses and counsellors, are being recruited. More clinicians are being trained, and Queensland Health has committed to quarterly public updates on system capacity.

"I'm extremely elated that the Queensland government has taken the concerns of myself, Fair Agenda, the Auditor-General and victim-survivors seriously and has acted accordingly. Today we see action, soon we will see change, and with that we will see lives saved," Clayton said. "Without the collective on the front line, we never would have had the means to fight."

Her advocacy, backed by Fair Agenda's members, helped deliver structural reform. Survivors across Queensland will now be able to access trauma-informed forensic care closer to home, with the system held to public account for its performance.



Australia / Investing in Sydney's support sector and strengthening systems

Global Sisters

Women recovering from violence are building financial independence through self-employment. Support includes business skills, networks and advocacy to remove welfare barriers, opening pathways to long term economic security.

“

To be reassured that being nervous, scared and overwhelmed is normal was the biggest thing for me. It made me feel part of a wonderful community where I can be safe in both feeling those things and succeeding.

Kate (name has been changed to protect her privacy)

Global Sisters

Enterprise as a path to independence

Kate is a single mother of three living in Geelong, Victoria, rebuilding her life after domestic violence and the trauma of nearly losing her life during childbirth.

Living in a regional town has compounded the challenges of parenting alone and managing financial strain, while she navigates a complex Income Support system and works to take her first steps into self-employment. Despite these challenges, she has held onto a vision for a social enterprise designed to support other parents like her.

Her idea is a social enterprise travel app designed for families often overlooked by the travel industry, particularly solo parents and those on low incomes. The app helps parents create affordable, child-friendly itineraries and discover local adventures, making travel and connection more accessible.

Through Global Sisters she has completed My Big Idea and Sister School, and is now enrolled

in First 10 Customers to prepare for market. She has developed a brand, secured practical tools including a laptop and phone plan, and translated her vision into a pitch deck, market research and draft financials.

“To be reassured that being nervous, scared and overwhelmed is normal was the biggest thing for me. It made me feel part of a wonderful community where I can be safe in both feeling those things and succeeding.”

Her next step is to launch her app, laying the foundation for her family's financial independence while building a venture designed to open opportunities for others.

Australia



Focus area /

Backing First Nations women and girls

Karrkad Kanjdji Trust

The Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT) was created by Traditional Owners of West and Central Arnhem Land as a bridge between two worlds, philanthropy and First Nations leadership.

It brings together eight community-controlled organisations working in land management, two-way education, on Country employment, carbon abatement and the preservation of Indigenous languages. Through this collaboration, KKT is helping to sustain Country, culture and community for future generations.



Water blessing given by Larrakia Traditional Owners

400

First Nations women united through the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network

Karrkad Kanjdji Trust



Australia / Backing First Nations women and girls

Women rangers unite for Country and community

Across the Northern Territory, First Nations women, many working as rangers, are building a collective voice to care for Country and lead change in their communities.

The Strong Women for Healthy Country Network, now a formally constituted organisation governed entirely by First Nations women, has more than 135 members.

Over the past year, the Network has elected its inaugural Board, held regular gatherings and embedded best practice workplace principles across ranger groups and partner organisations. More than 400 women from 32 ranger groups are connected through its advocacy, mentoring and training, ensuring women's knowledge and leadership remain central to land management and cultural preservation.

"We are working to become an independent organisation and an incorporated body so that we can continue what we're doing, supporting women

and community," says Sheila White, Director of Strong Women for Healthy Country Aboriginal Corporation.

For founding advocate Annette Miller, the motivation is deeply personal: "My mum was a Strong Woman as well. I said to myself, look, she's getting old, it's my turn to step in. I wanted to lead women, to set up something like this for all women. They travelled so far to share feelings and struggles. It meant a lot to me."

The Strong Women for Healthy Country Network is moving from vision to institution, a collective led and governed by First Nations women, built to endure for generations to come.

Karrkad Kanjdji Trust

“

My mum was a Strong Woman as well. I said to myself, look, she's getting old, it's my turn to step in. I wanted to lead women, to set up something like this for all women. They travelled so far to share feelings and struggles. It meant a lot to me

Founding advocate Annette Miller



Warddeken daluk (women) rangers undertaking drone training in West Arnhem Land. © Warddeken Land Management.



Australia / Backing First Nations women and girls

First Nations Futures

This Indigenous-led philanthropic platform is shifting power by ensuring First Nations communities control how funding is distributed.

Resources are directed through local decision making structures, strengthening women's leadership and ensuring investment reflects community priorities.

First Nations Futures

A\$400,000

in unrestricted funding directed to grassroots First Nations organisations



©First Nations Futures



Australia / Backing First Nations women and girls

Tangentyere Council

Tangentyere Council is strengthening frontline responses to domestic, family and sexual violence.

The Prevent Assist Respond Training, designed to centre the voices of victim/survivors, particularly Aboriginal Women, is equipping police, health staff and community workers with culturally grounded tools to support women and prevent harm.



@ Tangentyere Council

Tangentyere Council

450

frontline workers trained to respond to domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory



Australia / Backing First Nations women and girls

Health workers in East Arnhem Land take the lead on family violence response

In East Arnhem Land, a remote region of Northern Australia, First Nations health workers are being trained to respond to domestic, family and sexual violence in ways rooted in language and culture.

The program, co-facilitated by Aboriginal leaders, reached more than 50 Miwatj Health staff in 2025, alongside other frontline workers in Nhulunbuy, Galiwinku and Milingimbi.

In 2025, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation invited Tangentyere Council's Prevent Assist Respond training team to deliver workshops for its community-based health and domestic violence staff. Health workers took part across Nhulunbuy, Galiwin'ku and Milingimbi, joined by other frontline responders. For many, it was the first time such training had been brought to their communities rather than delivered from afar.

The sessions were co-facilitated by an Aboriginal trainer with cultural ties to the region

and conducted partly in Yolŋu Matha, the local language. This grounded the content in community realities and created space for difficult conversations. "Having a trainer who could deliver in Yolŋu Matha, people's first language, and was knowledgeable about the area was so valuable," reflected one participant. Another described the experience as "mind-blowing" because the stories and examples came from the Territory itself.

"Training highlighted the strength-based approaches people are already using, so they felt validated by the work they're already doing," one attendee explained. Others noted that the trainers "created safety in the training environment by building genuine relationships" and "didn't just drop the content and leave", an approach that was particularly important given the number of staff disclosures during the sessions.

Tangentyere Council

@ Tangentyere Council



“

Understanding the community context and the impacts of colonisation made people feel seen.

Program participant

By embedding culture and community knowledge into professional practice, the program is building confidence among frontline health workers and strengthening the local capacity to respond to violence. As one participant put it: "Having the trainer's Yolŋu knowledge was so important.

Without her, it wouldn't have been so great. Understanding the community context and the impacts of colonisation made people feel seen."



Australia / Backing First Nations women and girls

Rethinking how police respond to family violence in the Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory, police are receiving specialist training to improve their response to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Delivered through Tangentyere Council's Prevent Assist Respond training program, the training equips both new recruits and in-service officers with the knowledge and tools needed to improve intervention strategies and foster a deeper, more empathetic understanding of the challenges faced by Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence.

For new police recruits, the five day course is immersive. Many arrive with limited knowledge, but leave with a deeper understanding of the gendered nature of violence and the role of colonisation in shaping high rates of abuse in the Northern Territory. "I did not have much knowledge about DFSV before this course. I feel like I am now equipped to recognise it and use techniques to help the victim-survivor," said one participant.

I did not have much knowledge about DFSV before this course. I feel like I am now equipped to recognise it and use techniques to help the victim-survivor

For officers already in service, the two day version of the course builds on experience and can challenge long held practices. Here facilitators focus on reflection rather than criticism, opening space for learning. Officers reported greater awareness of coercive control, misidentification and trauma informed policing. "I found the facilitators were non-judgemental, just wanting improved knowledge and practice," said one officer.

Participants consistently valued the training's relevance to their work. As another new recruit put it: "With the knowledge I now have, I believe I will be able to not only assist those experiencing violence more effectively, but also educate colleagues who may not have gone through this training."



Australia



Focus area /
**Justice for women
and girls**

Keeping Women Out of Prison (KWOOP) Coalition

The Keeping Women Out of Prison (KWOOP) Coalition is a NSW network working to improve outcomes for women who come into contact with the legal system

By bringing together frontline organisations, researchers and lived experience advocates, KWOOP strengthens diversion pathways, supports reintegration and builds a more coordinated system of housing, health and social supports. The coalition's aim is to reduce criminalisation and help women and their children achieve long term stability in the community.

Keeping Women Out of Prison (KWOOP) Coalition



Corinne Kemp, KWOOP Program Director, and NSW Attorney General Michael Daley at the KWOOP Strategy launch. © KWOOP Coalition.



Keeping Women Out of Prison is reaching a turning point in NSW

Supported by Sydney Community Foundation, the Keeping Women Out of Prison (KWOOP) Coalition is shifting the pathway for women who come into contact with the NSW criminal justice system.

Supported by Sydney Community Foundation, the Keeping Women Out of Prison (KWOOP) Coalition is shifting the pathway for women who come into contact with the NSW criminal legal system. What began as a volunteer led alliance has grown into a coordinated, statewide voice for justice reform that brings together lived experience leaders, community organisations and researchers with a shared goal of keeping women out of prison and keeping families together.

Drivers of women's imprisonment are deeply connected to systems that respond to disadvantage rather than resolving it.

This year included a major milestone with the launch of the KWOOP Strategic Framework 2025 to 2028 at NSW Parliament House, where ministers, advocates and community partners gathered to support a clear plan to reduce women's incarceration. The framework sets out three priorities: diversion and bail support, trauma informed care and reintegration planning from the first day of a sentence.

Momentum is building at the same time across government. After years of advocacy and evidence gathering, conversations have shifted from asking why alternatives to custody are needed to asking how they can be delivered. NSW Corrective Services is developing its new 10 year strategy and KWOOP, along with its member organisations, has played a significant role in shaping its

direction. The emerging strategy reflects KWOOP's emphasis on diversion programs that address the causes of offending rather than the consequences of incarceration.

Across NSW, many women entering prison experience trauma, violence, poverty and housing instability. A large proportion are held on remand without conviction and 60% are mothers. First Nations women remain disproportionately affected, representing 42% of the women's prison population while making up only 3% of the state's female population. As KWOOP Program Director

Corinne Kemp has said, "the drivers of women's imprisonment are deeply connected to systems that respond to disadvantage rather than resolving it".

A wider change in mindset is also emerging across agencies that influence women's pathways through the justice system. Corrective Services has begun placing trauma informed care at the centre of its planning. Justice Health invited KWOOP to explore opportunities for collaboration. Treasury's Social Policy Network engaged with KWOOP's economic analysis and focused on practical questions of implementation. The NSW Office for Women reinforced this shift when it dedicated its most recent grant round exclusively to supports for criminalised women, with eligibility restricted to KWOOP member organisations. Taken together, these engagements signal a meaningful change in how government is approaching reform.

KWOOP's progress is grounded in the work of its members. Organisations such as the Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre, Community Restorative Centre, Success Works and Dress for Success are part of the KWOOP Community

of Practice and support women every day with housing, safety, mental health care, employment pathways and reintegration. A dedicated KWOOP coordinator, is strengthening and expanding this statewide network. The Community of Practice shares evidence, identifies gaps, coordinates advocacy and supports consistent practice across services.

The challenge now is sustaining this momentum. Reducing the number of women in prison requires long-term investment, stable services and reforms that prioritise safety, housing and recovery. For the first time, the pathway forward is clearer. Government, community organisations and lived-experience leaders are increasingly aligned around practical solutions that prevent criminalisation and support women to build stable lives.

KWOOP's progress this year shows what becomes possible when the sector is resourced to work collectively and with shared purpose. As conversations shift from whether to invest in alternatives to how to implement them, the coalition's role as a trusted adviser and convener is more important than ever.



Leaders across government, advocacy and community came together for the launch of the KWOOP Strategy: NSW Minister for Corrections Anoulack Chanthivong; Nicole Yade, KWOOP Co-Chair; NSW Women's Safety Commissioner Hannah Tonkin; NSW Minister for Families and Communities Kate Washington; Professor Eileen Baldry AO, KWOOP Co-Chair; NSW Minister for Women Jodie Harrison; NSW Attorney General Michael Daley; Corinne Kemp, KWOOP Coordinator; Loredana Fyffe, CEO of Sydney Community Foundation. © KWOOP Coalition.



Success Works

A criminal record locks many women out of employment, reinforcing poverty and the risk of returning to custody.

Success Works' Breaking Barriers program provides a structured pathway back into work through job readiness training, mentoring and tailored support. The organisation also partners with hundreds of employers willing to hire women with lived experience of the criminal legal system, helping create the conditions for stable employment. By combining practical preparation with a committed employer network, Success Works is restoring women's financial independence and supporting families to stabilise for the long term.

more
than **200**
women accessed
employment pathways

Why employment support matters for women leaving prison

Released from custody and wanting to rebuild her life, Brittany had no work history, confidence or a clear path into employment. The stigma of a criminal record made the search even harder.

When Brittany joined the Success Works program, she was determined to start again. Through the Breaking Barriers program, she attended job readiness workshops and was matched with a volunteer mentor. That relationship became pivotal. Her mentor offered practical support and steady encouragement, helping her prepare for interviews, revise her resume and stay motivated during the job search.

From the outset, what stood out was Brittany's quiet determination. She showed up to every session and fully engaged in the program, even when progress felt slow. Her willingness to do the work laid the foundation for what came next.

Eight weeks after joining the mentor program, Brittany secured a part time administration role with an employer from the Success Works network. The workplace was welcoming and committed to second chances, giving her the stability she needed to begin rebuilding her confidence.

Since then, Brittany has continued to grow. She has received positive feedback from her manager, taken on additional responsibilities and begun exploring part-time study to further her career. She

remains in regular contact with her mentor, who continues to be an important support. This stability has had wider effects. With secure work and renewed confidence, Brittany has begun the process of regaining access to her child, a step she describes as life changing and something she could not have imagined before entering the program.

Brittany's journey reflects the program's core insight: with support, meaningful employment and a workplace willing to give women a chance, long-term change becomes possible.



Members of the Success Works team.
© Success Works.



Justice and Equity Centre

Many women caught in the legal system are themselves survivors of violence and poverty.

The Justice and Equity Centre provides dedicated, trauma-informed legal representation that helps divert women from custody and connect them with housing, health and social support. By addressing the root causes of criminalisation, the service is reducing reoffending and opening safer pathways back into the community.

160 women

**recieved free legal support
related to tenancy and debt
management**



Legal advocacy as prevention

Many women caught in the legal system are there because of violence, homelessness and poverty.

The Justice and Equity Centre's lawyers work with women whose lives have been destabilised by abuse, eviction and coercive control, helping them navigate complex systems and avoid further harm.

Sara's story reflects how quickly things can escalate for women experiencing domestic violence. Throughout her five year relationship, she was subjected to violence and controlling behaviour. After separation, these concerns continued. When she sought legal advice regarding a property settlement, her former partner threatened to make a complaint to police, suggesting he had accessed her email. The next day, he lodged a report alleging she had assaulted him 18 months earlier.

When police questioned Sara, she disclosed her history as a victim of violence. A week later she was charged and arrested. Justice and Equity Centre lawyers took on her case, providing evidence that raised questions about the circumstances of the complaint. They also highlighted relevant guidance under the NSW Police Code of Practice for domestic violence incidents. On the day of her hearing, all charges were withdrawn.

Bronte's experience shows how complex vulnerabilities can compound risk. A young Aboriginal woman living with complex post-traumatic stress disorder, she called police during an incident involving her violent ex-partner. Despite an existing Apprehended Domestic Violence Order protecting her, she was the one arrested and held for 24 hours. Her bail conditions led to homelessness, forcing her to stay in overcrowded accommodation with family. Her mental health declined, and her ex-partner continued to harass her.

Justice and Equity Centre lawyers are representing Bronte to challenge the charge, arguing she was misidentified as a domestic violence perpetrator despite being a victim-survivor. The Justice and Equity Centre's community caseworker also connected her to mental health support, safe emergency housing and an Emergency Violence Payment. With ongoing help, Bronte is now safely housed in social housing.

Together, their experiences show how early, trauma informed legal support can help interrupt cycles of abuse, homelessness and misidentification that often lead to criminalisation.



*The Homeless Persons' Legal Service (HPLS) Women's Service team.
© Justice and Equity Centre*



Refugee Advice and Casework Service

Women seeking asylum in Australia often face overlapping risks such as gender-based violence, poverty and visa uncertainty.

Through its Women at Risk program, the Refugee Advice and Casework Service provides free, specialist legal clinics where refugee women can safely seek help and be heard. Each consultation takes place in a supportive, trauma-informed setting, where women can discuss visas, safety and family protection with lawyers who understand their experiences. The service achieves lasting legal outcomes, such as permanent residency for survivors, while helping women rebuild a sense of safety, stability and control over their lives.

800 refugee and asylum-seeking women supported through the Women at Risk program since 2019

The long road to protection

In her home country, Jenna and her children were subjected to violence and abuse from her husband. The family moved to Australia almost a decade ago but the violence continued here.

Following the birth of her third child, Jenna was feeling increasingly afraid for her family's safety. With the support of a friend, Jenna reported her husband's violence and was given safe accommodation. He was eventually detained and deported for repeatedly breaching the Apprehended Domestic Violence Order against him.

In late 2024, Jenna was scheduled to attend a hearing on her protection application, at the Administrative Review Tribunal. She came to RACS for help.

By this point, she had been living in Australia for over seven years, was a single mother of four children, and heavily pregnant with her fifth. She was isolated and faced language barriers, especially in navigating the asylum process. Jenna continued to fear harm from her first husband if returned to her home country. She didn't want to lose custody and guardianship of her children.

In all this time she had had yet to receive detailed advice and assistance with her family's protection claims.

Through the Women at Risk program, RACS was able to clarify her circumstances and prepare a

comprehensive statement of claims. Her lawyer helped Jenna safely collect evidence of harm suffered by her and the children. Her lawyer was also able to ensure the Tribunal included all her children in the application.

Jenna's RACS lawyer prepared detailed legal submissions and represented her at the hearing. With complexities around Jenna's family size and multiple applications previously lodged, Jenna's lawyer was able to effectively guide the Tribunal around the material.

Finally, in late 2025, the Department granted their permanent protection visas. Jenna's lawyer was able to deliver this news to her

In 2025, Jenna and her lawyer received the positive Tribunal decision: her matter had been remitted with the children. But the journey was not yet over. She still had to satisfy health and character checks. After

assembling the fees for health examinations for herself and the children, Jenna waited for the Department to grant the permanent protection visa. While they waited, Jenna's lawyer ensured their welfare was being managed and they were well connected with support.

Finally, in late 2025, the Department granted their permanent protection visas. Jenna's lawyer was able to deliver this news to her on the phone, with Jenna relieved and grateful for the work that had been done to support her and her family.



Safer Futures Toolkit. A new national resource for frontline workers

Refugee women often carry the weight of trauma, fear and uncertainty when seeking help. The Safer Futures Toolkit, launched by RACS is helping frontline workers recognise that and respond with care.

Co-designed with refugee women and developed with partners including the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, the Toolkit offers clear, practical guidance for lawyers, caseworkers, health staff and interpreters supporting women at risk of gender-based violence. It shows how small changes, from language and setting to timing and tone, can transform a woman's experience of safety and trust.

The Toolkit brings together insights from hundreds of women with lived experience and is already being used across Australia to strengthen trauma-informed practice. It is part handbook, part reminder: that every service encounter is a chance to restore dignity, agency and hope.



Lina Kolehlat, RACS Research and Project Coordinator, and Magdalene Konneh, JRS Specialist SGBV Caseworker speaking at the launch of RACS's Safer Future Toolkit in Sydney.





Australia / Justice for women and girls

Anti-Slavery Australia

Anti-Slavery Australia, based at the University of Technology Sydney, is a national leader in legal, policy and advocacy work to end modern slavery.

Through specialist legal services and a dedicated policy team, the organisation supports people affected by trafficking, forced labour and forced marriage and helps shape the reforms needed to strengthen Australia's national response.



Poorvaja Nirmaleswaran, a Lawyer with Anti-Slavery Australia, says the challenging work "often requires us to find solutions in systems that do not account for our client's experiences. I am grateful to be working in an organisation that can support and advocate for these vulnerable people." © Anti-Slavery Australia.

Over
400
people per year supported
with legal advice

Anti-Slavery Australia

Legal support that changes lives and systems

When Maya first contacted Anti-Slavery Australia, she was stranded overseas with her young child after being trafficked by her husband under the guise of a family visit.

Her passport had been taken, her visa had been withdrawn without her consent, and she was left without legal status or support.

Anti-Slavery Australia undertook urgent legal and policy advocacy with the Department of Home Affairs to verify the fraudulent withdrawal and reinstate her visa application. The work required close coordination across government, including the Department of Home Affairs, Australian Border Force and the Australian Federal Police. Anti-Slavery Australia also referred Maya through the Additional Referral Pathway, ensuring she could access specialist support through the Support for Trafficked People Program, and provided legal representation throughout the process.

Following this coordinated effort, Maya and her child were granted a permanent visa and safely returned to Australia. They were met on arrival and supported into safe accommodation arranged by the Australian Red Cross.

Maya's case reflects the precision and persistence of Anti-Slavery Australia's legal practice. It was a concerted effort that combined technical legal work, survivor advocacy and inter-agency cooperation to achieve a life changing outcome.

Cases like hers illustrate the increasing complexity of exploitation patterns, particularly involving exit trafficking and forced marriage. Anti-Slavery Australia is now receiving requests for assistance every week from individuals facing similar situations, highlighting the vital role of sustained legal intervention in achieving safety and justice.

For survivors like Maya, this combination of specialist legal help and national advocacy is transformative.

This frontline work sits within a year of broader national impact. Anti-Slavery Australia played a central role in shaping Australia's modern slavery response,

coordinating civil society engagement during the UN Special Rapporteur's visit and having its recommendations reflected in the final report. The organisation also contributed to key national reforms, including the review of the Modern Slavery Act and the development of the Federal Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Strategic Plan. Anti-Slavery Australia led the national working group that produced new trauma informed practice guidelines, now used across the sector.

For survivors like Maya, this combination of specialist legal help and national advocacy is transformative. Anti-Slavery Australia's work protects individuals while helping strengthen the systems that determine how Australia responds to modern slavery.



Community Restorative Centre

The Miranda Project supports women impacted by both domestic and family violence (DFV) and the criminal legal system, providing diversionary options alongside effective trauma- and violence-informed therapeutic post-release support.

Delivered by the Community Restorative Centre in partnership with Women's Health Centres, the program assists clients with a range of needs, including housing, health, safety and legal matters. Its focus on recovery, stability and practical support helps women establish viable alternatives to returning to prison.

More than

280

women received casework, legal support or referrals through the Miranda Project.

How intensive, trauma informed support can change a woman's trajectory

Diane is a victim-survivor of domestic and family violence who was referred to the Miranda Project due to her involvement in the criminal legal system, which included having an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) taken out against her as a result of being misidentified as the aggressor during an incident.

At the time of her referral she was staying in temporary accommodation and there were additional concerns about her mental health following a series of traumatic events. When police attended the home she had shared with her former partner, officers found her confined in a room with a bucket to use as a toilet. Diane told workers she believed she had been held there for several days and she reported that this had happened previously. In the past year, she had also disclosed two separate incidents of sexual assault, one involving a family member and another while staying in temporary accommodation. Diane expressed significant fear of her former partner, who was on remand at the time.

Diane has a two year old child who was living with her grandparents, and her efforts to maintain contact often led to breaches of her AVO conditions. The combination of trauma, instability and being separated from her child had left her extremely vulnerable. Her case worker worked closely with Homes NSW to progress a priority housing application and Diane was referred to the Justice and Equity Centre. Here, lawyers supported her to report the two sexual assaults through the Sexual Assault Reporting Option and to lodge victims' compensation claims. She received assistance to apply for an Escaping

Violence Payment and was referred for domestic violence counselling. The case worker also worked with Diane's parents and Legal Aid to explore amendments to her AVO conditions in order to reduce the risk of further breaches.

Over time, Diane's circumstances improved. She submitted sexual assault reports, and Homes NSW approved her for a townhouse. She has begun feeling safer in her own home, and people connected to her past do not know where she now lives. She can speak about her experiences and her daughter without becoming overwhelmed. Diane has not breached her AVO and she has been able to visit her daughter when she is staying with other family members.

For the first time, Diane is also considering making a formal domestic violence report about her former partner, something she previously felt too unsafe to contemplate. These shifts, while gradual, represent what the Miranda Project is designed to achieve: safety, legal stability and a path away from repeated crisis. With a secure home, coordinated support and trauma-informed care, Diane now has the foundations to plan her next steps and rebuild her life with greater confidence.



Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre

Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) is a specialist domestic and family violence service supporting women and children across Sydney.

Through crisis accommodation, outreach casework, and community programs, WAGEC helps women rebuild safety, stability and independence. WAGEC delivers the From Now program, a post-release housing and support initiative for mothers leaving prison, addressing the critical gap in safe accommodation, parenting support and pathways to long term stability.

155

women and

107

**children were provided
with safe accommodation
and holistic wrap around
support.**

Why stable housing shapes women's chances of rebuilding their lives

When Sara arrived at the From Now program, she described herself as exhausted: "lost, broken, and stuck in a cycle that seemed impossible to break."

She had just been released from jail and was trying to work out how to be the mother she wanted to be while carrying what she called "shame, regret and fear of failure."

What she found at From Now was the first moment of stability she had felt in years. She recalls being met "with warmth, understanding, and a deep belief that I could do better, not just for myself, but for my daughter." For the first time, she was living in what she called a "normal household," surrounded by people who cared about her and her child. She emphasised that she "wasn't just another case number," but someone whose potential others saw long before she did.

From Now gave Sara "more than just a place to stay." It offered the chance to heal, to grow, and to rebuild her life. Sara says the program gave her the tools to work through her past, develop new skills and become self-sufficient. The support helped her transition into housing, something she never thought would be possible, and begin piecing her life back together.

She credits the program's creator, Jenny Homes, for designing a refuge that goes beyond basic needs. In Sara's words, From Now is "a lifeline" built on understanding, patience and the belief that women are worthy of a safe future. "They

helped me see my worth," she says, reflecting on how the program empowered her to imagine a different life for herself and her daughter.

Today, Sara stands on her own feet with what she calls "a heart full of hope and gratitude." Her message to other women is simple: with the right support, change is possible. "If I can do it, so can you," she says. "You don't have to do it alone. You deserve a life full of love, happiness and stability."

Sara's experience reflects what the From Now program was created to address: without stable housing, women leaving prison struggle to stay safe, rebuild routines and parent their children. With it, they can stabilise, avoid returning to crisis, and take the first practical steps toward independence.

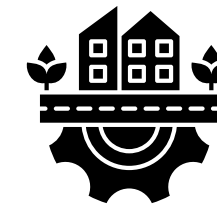


Innovation

Backing bold ideas with global reach

Our Innovation portfolio opens space for bold ideas that can spark radical, positive change. With a global outlook and a focus on lived experience, we invest in early initiatives and transition-to-scale efforts that are imaginative, inclusive and grounded in community. Our starting point is Urban Futures, where we back innovations that make cities safer, more resilient and more vibrant. By encouraging experimentation and supporting approaches that can influence wider systems, the portfolio aims to create space for creativity, connection and lasting impact.

Urban futures



Design for inclusion

Construction for resilience

Systems for transformation



Investing in innovation for changing cities

When the Judith Neilson Foundation launched its Innovation Portfolio in 2025, the aim was clear: to fund brilliant people with bold ideas to radically improve people's lives.

Innovation means doing things differently to achieve better outcomes, whether that's greater impact, quality or efficiency. It draws on new knowledge, traditional wisdom, creativity, and experimentation", says Abi Taylor, Director Innovation for the Judith Neilson Foundation. For the Innovation Portfolio it means investing in uncertain outcomes. "We know the work will be impactful, but we don't always know how".

The aspiration is to drive better urban futures all over the world, creating cities that are more liveable, inclusive, resilient and joyful. The first year of the portfolio has been focused on building relationships across places and sectors, learning to be an ally to innovators who see problems and opportunities differently, and building trust so support can be provided in the way it is needed. "We have faith in our innovators and their teams, ideas, ambition and capability. The Innovation Portfolio gives us permission to work with them to take smart risks, to test, to learn and to evolve", says Taylor.

The growing portfolio is diverse. In Sierra Leone, new drone mapping work is underway with the

Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team and their partners, helping local crews chart informal settlements so that governments can plan services and communities can increase their own resilience to landslides and flooding. In Kenya, Ushahidi is future proofing its civic tech platform to strengthen public voice and accountability.

We have faith in our innovators and their teams, ambition and capability

Meanwhile, a disability-led organisation, Assistive Technologies for Disability

Trust, is developing Africa's first early stage investment fund for assistive technology ventures, expanding access to devices that enable participation in education, work and everyday life.

In parallel, the Million Lives Collective is launching an open call fund that will connect innovators and ecosystem actors in cities across Africa, from Dakar to Yaoundé to Nairobi, to design solutions for more inclusive and sustainable urban growth.

Each partnership is a test case, exploring where philanthropic capital can be most catalytic: in building capacity, connecting ideas, and unlocking access to finance.



Abi Taylor, Director of Innovation, with the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap and Freetown City Council teams, pictured with a drone used for urban mapping in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

"Philanthropy can take the early risks that others cannot," says Taylor. "We can test new models and connect local innovators to global networks of capital, policy and knowledge. This is our learning phase, where curiosity is as valuable as results."

As the Portfolio evolves, its value will lie not only in impact but also in insight. It is an investment in experimentation itself, a quiet, deliberate effort to understand how innovation takes root, and how philanthropy can help it flourish.



The Ushahidi team.
© Ushahidi.



Our team

The Judith Neilson Foundation team brings together people with diverse backgrounds and deep commitment to the Foundation's mission.

Grounded in Judith Neilson's long standing commitment to this work, we combine experience in international development, philanthropy, program management and community impact. Together with our partners, we support ideas and initiatives that help communities thrive.



