



ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE



Yes! To Financial Freedom



Abstract

Her Initiative is a young women-led non-profit organization committed to reshaping the narrative surrounding the value of girls through redefining societal norms that perpetuate the cycle of poverty and fostering financial resilience among adolescent girls and young women in Tanzania through the fusion of economic empowerment and technology integration.

In addition to our core mission, we are also cultivating a thriving ecosystem of youth-driven and women-led organizations championing the cause of advancing the rights and interests of young women and youth. We achieve this through initiatives such as movement-building, capacity-building, mentorship programs, and the provision of unrestricted seed grants. Our ultimate goal is to catalyze gender equality and contribute to the fabric of inclusive economic growth in the region.

Her Initiative is committed to creating a 'new normal' for these girls and young women—a world where circumstances shackle no girl, be they personal, familial, communal, or financial. Our work aligns with national and global outlook toward gender equality, breaking barriers for the most vulnerable, and recognizing the power of economic rights and justice as a critical intervention to sustainably transform lives of girls and young women. Her initiative is a household name when it comes to the digital technology-economic rights and justice nexus in Tanzania. We want to continue to build on this niche and achieve a just world without poverty in which adolescent girls and young women can influence decisions that affect their rights to life and security, sustainable livelihoods and essential services.

Together with our partners, we aspire to break the chains that bind the aspirations of young women in Tanzania. Join us in crafting a future where every girl is empowered to fulfill her potential, unencumbered by the barriers that currently constrain her. Your support will transform individual lives and contribute to the larger tapestry of positive change in our shared pursuit of a more equitable and prosperous society.



Our Vision

We envision an inclusive society where adolescent girls and young women have the power to choose and create opportunities for themselves as they achieve economic resilience, overcome barriers, and live with dignity.



Our Mission

We are committed to economic rights and justice, and digital inclusion, supporting young women and girls to achieve economic resilience, financial autonomy, enabling them to overcome barriers and live with dignity.



Our Story



In 2016, Her Initiative took root, fully blossoming into action in July 2019, propelled by a visionary team led by Lydia Charles Moyo. This group of young women embarked on a mission to champion the economic independence of girls and young women, aiming to redefine their narrative and establish a 'new normal'.

Lydia's personal journey as a young woman striving for financial independence fueled the organisation's inception. Her own experiences inspired a commitment to seeking solutions not only for herself but for other young women facing similar financial constraints. Today, Her Initiative stands as a testament to a girl who empowers herself to confront social and economic challenges.

Targeting adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 35, Her Initiative's team comprises resilient social change-makers intimately acquainted with the struggles of the demographic they serve. In the face of Tanzania's challenging economy, they lead a bold initiative, channeling the tenacity of young women and girls to drive transformative change.

Lydia's initial motivation stemmed from witnessing her peers drop out of school due to poverty, child marriage, and early pregnancies. In 2012, she rallied fellow high school girls, sparking self-awareness campaigns and events on girls' rights and relevant laws across more than 10 schools in Dar es Salaam. Transitioning to university, Lydia spearheaded entrepreneurship campaigns like Panda events, fostering knowledge on entrepreneurship and facilitating connections with successful industry leaders.

The formation of Her Initiative was a natural progression, catalyzed by a series of impactful events in colleges. Standing for self-empowerment, the organization aligns itself with the resilience of young women and girls who navigate life's challenges with determination.



Target group

Our work supports and prioritizes girls and young women and girls with limited economic opportunities in formal and informal labor markets, excluded from productive markets, and with increased economic vulnerability due to marginalization. We primarily work with and support women who are micro-entrepreneurs (often in the informal sector), small-scale producers, workers in the formal and informal sectors, and financially excluded women.



young women and girls



Where we work

Her Initiative operates in Tanzania mainland and currently works in the following regions;

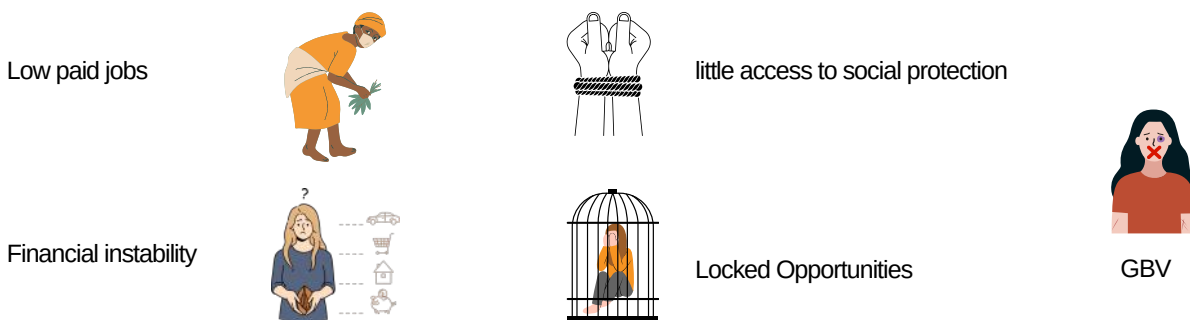


Our Why

Adolescent girls and young women in Tanzania face a distressing reality, trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, limited opportunities, and vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV). 90% of working women are employed in the informal sector, which offers unstable, poorly paid jobs with little access to social protection. Women are 30% less likely than men to access financial services, making pursuing entrepreneurial ventures difficult due to restricted access to capital, limited business skills, and market challenges. Furthermore, GBV remains a pervasive issue, with 40% of women aged 15-49 having experienced physical violence, and 17% experiencing sexual violence, according to the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (2022 TDHS-MIS).

Trapped in a cycle of insecurity, young women's dreams and aspirations are crushed by the harsh realities they face daily, without targeted interventions addressing these systemic challenges, adolescent girls and young women remain trapped in cycles of poverty, limited digital access, and heightened risks of exploitation, ultimately impeding broader progress toward gender equality and sustainable development in Tanzania. In this challenging landscape, the choices available to young women are limited, their voices often silenced in decision-making processes, and their dreams constrained.

Her Initiative believes in the inherent value and potential of every girl and young woman. We are driven by the urgent need to amplify agency and support adolescent girls and young women in Tanzania to challenge oppressive practices and create opportunities for themselves and their communities.



Our HOW

We advance adolescent girls and young women in Tanzania through a holistic approach that combines economic rights and justice, digital literacy and technology for business as well as promoting women rights. Our model includes developing and implementing innovative programs in collaboration with adolescent girls and young women, government bodies, community-based organizations (CBOs), youth development partners, and funders. We provide rights-based education, essential business skills, opportunities, and resources to equip adolescent girls and young women to achieve economic resilience, overcome barriers, and live with dignity.



Economic Empowerment



Digital and Technology

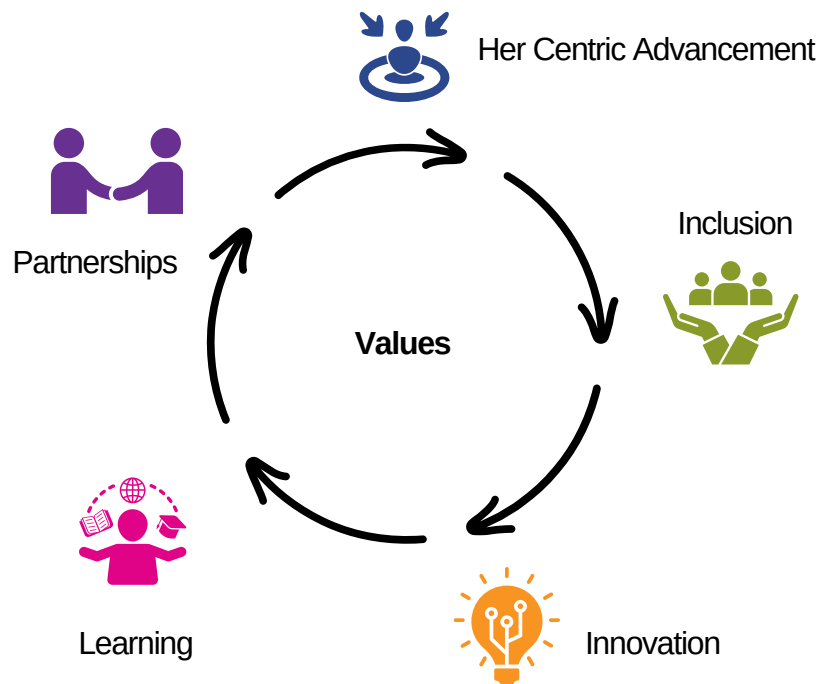


Women's and Girl's Rights



Values

- Her Centric - Our work is deeply rooted in a her-centric philosophy, ensuring that every initiative is designed with and for the needs, dreams, and aspirations, and rights of adolescent girls and young women at its core.
- Inclusion- We are committed to creating an environment where every adolescent girl and young woman feels valued, respected, and empowered, regardless of their abilities, gender, ethnicity, or any other aspect of their identity.
- Innovation- We believe in fostering a culture that encourages creativity, experimentation, and the development of novel solutions to address the unique challenges faced by young women and girls in Tanzania
- Learning - Her Initiative promotes a learning environment where knowledge is shared, skills are developed, and experiences are valued
- Partnership - We believe in the power of collaboration and actively seek to build strong, mutually beneficial relationships with various stakeholders, including government bodies, non-governmental organizations, private sector entities, and community groups.



Our Theory Of Change

We envision a society where adolescent girls and young women in Tanzania achieve economic and financial freedom, are digitally empowered, free from any form of GBV. The mission is to holistically accelerate their economic and financial resilience and enhance their digital skills as a pathway for dignified lives. When a girl or young woman has skills and choices, they are set to succeed in other areas of their lives. To achieve this state we will first implement strategic interventions that seek to understand barriers that prevent adolescent girls and young women from prospering, thereafter, in partnership with adolescent girls and young women, we will address these barriers. Our core program vehicle is an innovative economic rights and justice program that includes entrepreneurship training, digital skills, financial literacy, and access to microfinance, resulting in increased income and financial autonomy. When girls and young women have economic and financial freedom, they are able to make better decisions and choices including bodily autonomy preventing them from GBV and other negative social-cultural norms.

Our Approach

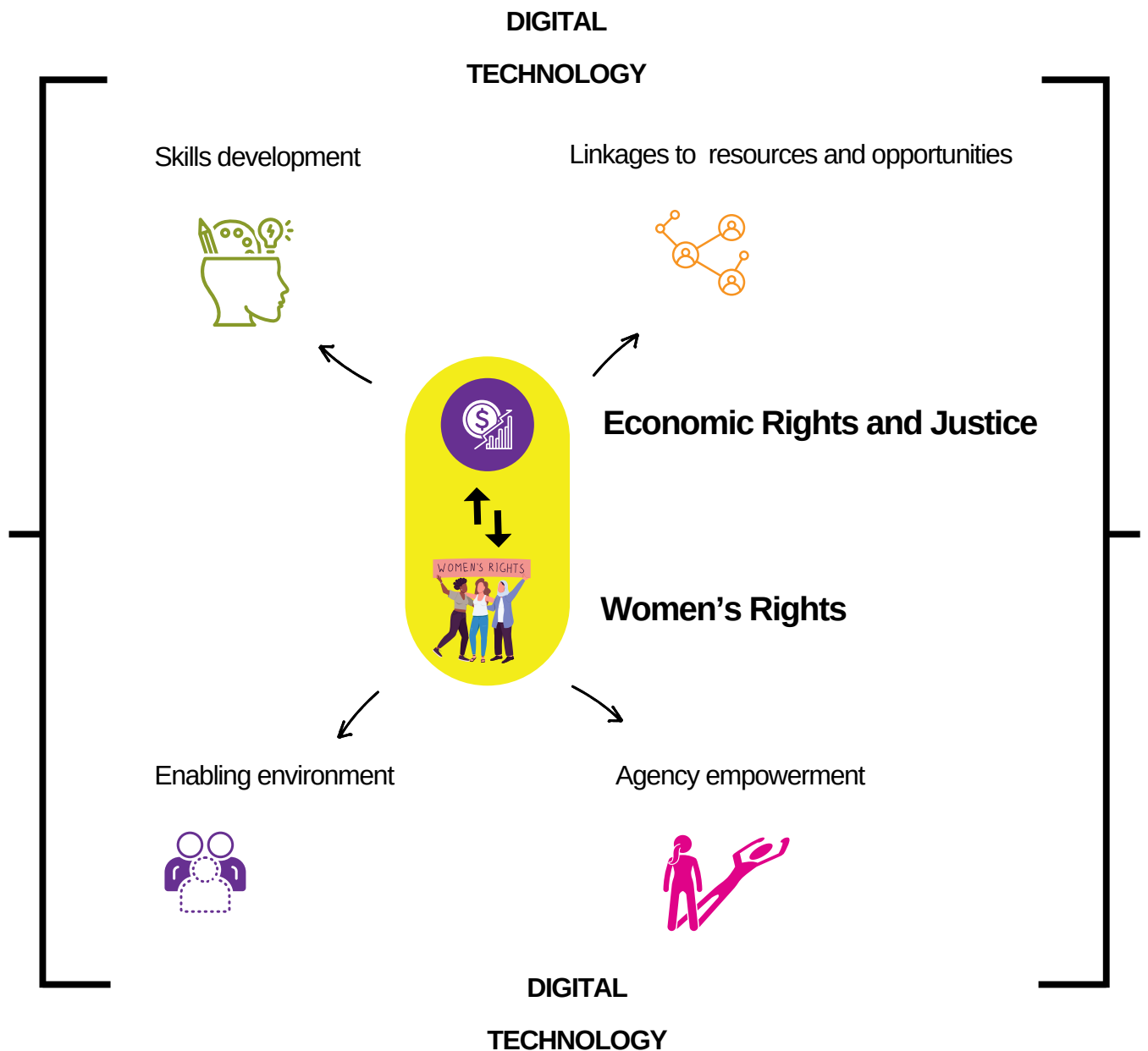
Our approach elevates from breaking barriers to changing behavior, advancing skills, and amplifying voices:

Our holistic approach not only breaks down barriers but also fosters behavioral change, advances skills, and amplifies the voices of girls and young women, creating a comprehensive pathway to advancement and resilience. This comprehensive approach integrates 4 components: skills development, agency empowerment, linkages to opportunities, and the creation of an enabling environment. By addressing these four components, we aim to break the cycles of poverty and violence, leading to a more equitable and empowered future for young women in Tanzania. Our impact will be seen in a society where girls and young women are economically independent, free from GBV, and fully equipped to thrive.

Our Model

At the heart of our programs is the Economic Rights and Justice Program, which includes entrepreneurship and digital inclusion and digital skills training, financial literacy, and mentorship. These initiatives empower participants with the skills and knowledge needed to gain financial independence. To further support this, we build linkages to opportunities through partnerships with financial institutions, including microfinance, facilitating access to loans and grants to start or expand businesses.

Recognizing that economic rights and justice alone is not sufficient for the success of girls and young women, we embed a holistic approach of feminist rights-based education within our model. This program includes feminist, rights-based education, GBV awareness, and prevention efforts. We provide awareness training, counseling, and legal aid, while fostering a supportive enabling environment by creating networks of anti-GBV champions within communities.



*The success of Her Initiative's programs is founded on a comprehensive approach that integrates **skills development, agency empowerment, linkages to opportunities, and the creation of an enabling environment**. By addressing these four components, we aim to break the cycles of poverty and violence, leading to a more equitable and empowered future for young women in Tanzania. Our impact will be seen in a society where girls and young women are economically independent, free from GBV, and fully equipped to thrive.*

Our Strategic Objectives

Strategic Priority 1: Enabling Economic and Financial Freedom - Facilitate economic and financial independence for adolescent girls and young women through digital inclusion, income generation, and job creation initiatives. By equipping them with digital skills and entrepreneurial opportunities, we aim to advance 125,750 girls and young women to secure sustainable livelihoods and contribute to their communities' economic growth.

Strategic Priority 2: Equipping Adolescent Girls and Young Women to Overcome Barriers - Equip adolescent girls and young women to break through the barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential by actively championing against gender-based violence (GBV) and impacts of HIV/AIDS. We will implement comprehensive programs that provide support, education, and advocacy to create a safer and more equitable environment for all women. Tool: Panda Digital Movement

Strategic Priority 3: Developing Innovative Partnerships for Program Delivery
Forge innovative partnerships for program design and implementation, while championing the feminist movement, and support to ensure sustainability of programs. By collaborating with like-minded organizations, we will amplify our efforts and create a greater impact in the lives of young women and girls.

Strategic Priority 4: Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Sustainability
Enhance Her Initiative's institutional capacity and ensure long-term sustainability by building robust operational frameworks, securing diverse funding sources, and developing strong governance practices. This will enable us to deliver on our mission and expand our impact effectively.

OUR PROGRAMS



Mshiko Club:

Mshiko clubs is a project that aims at setting a road map to financial freedom for girls (14-19) in schools by using a hybrid model of economic empowerment that includes the adoption of good financial behaviors, extracurricular income-generating activities, and girls agency empowerment to promote girl's self-esteem and self-efficacy that help girls stay and enjoy school. Since its launch, the project has established five clubs with around 500 girls in Dar es Salaam, providing training in financial management, rights-based education, and income-generating activities. Over the next five years, Mshiko Clubs plan to reach 2,500 adolescent girls, enhancing their financial and academic skills. The initiative also aims to increase academic excellence using digital resources and foster community support by sensitizing teachers, parents, and local leaders to promote positive perceptions of girls' education. Mshiko Clubs keep girls in school by blending economic empowerment with agency-building. Girls learn saving habits, receive financial literacy training, and engage in income-generating activities, boosting self-esteem and financial freedom, all while fostering a positive school experience.



Panda Digital

Panda Digital is a Swahili hybrid e-learning platform using a website and AI SMS to empower young women with skills, business support, and social justice. It tackles unemployment by promoting self-employment and has impacted over 7,000 women, bridging the digital gender gap and addressing sextortion. Panda Digital is a Swahili hybrid e-learning platform using a website and AI SMS to empower young women with skills, opportunities, personalized business support, and social justice. It tackles unemployment by promoting self-employment using digital technologies to generate jobs and achieve financial freedom. It also addresses sextortion challenges by offering legal and psychological aid via its ONGEA HUB.

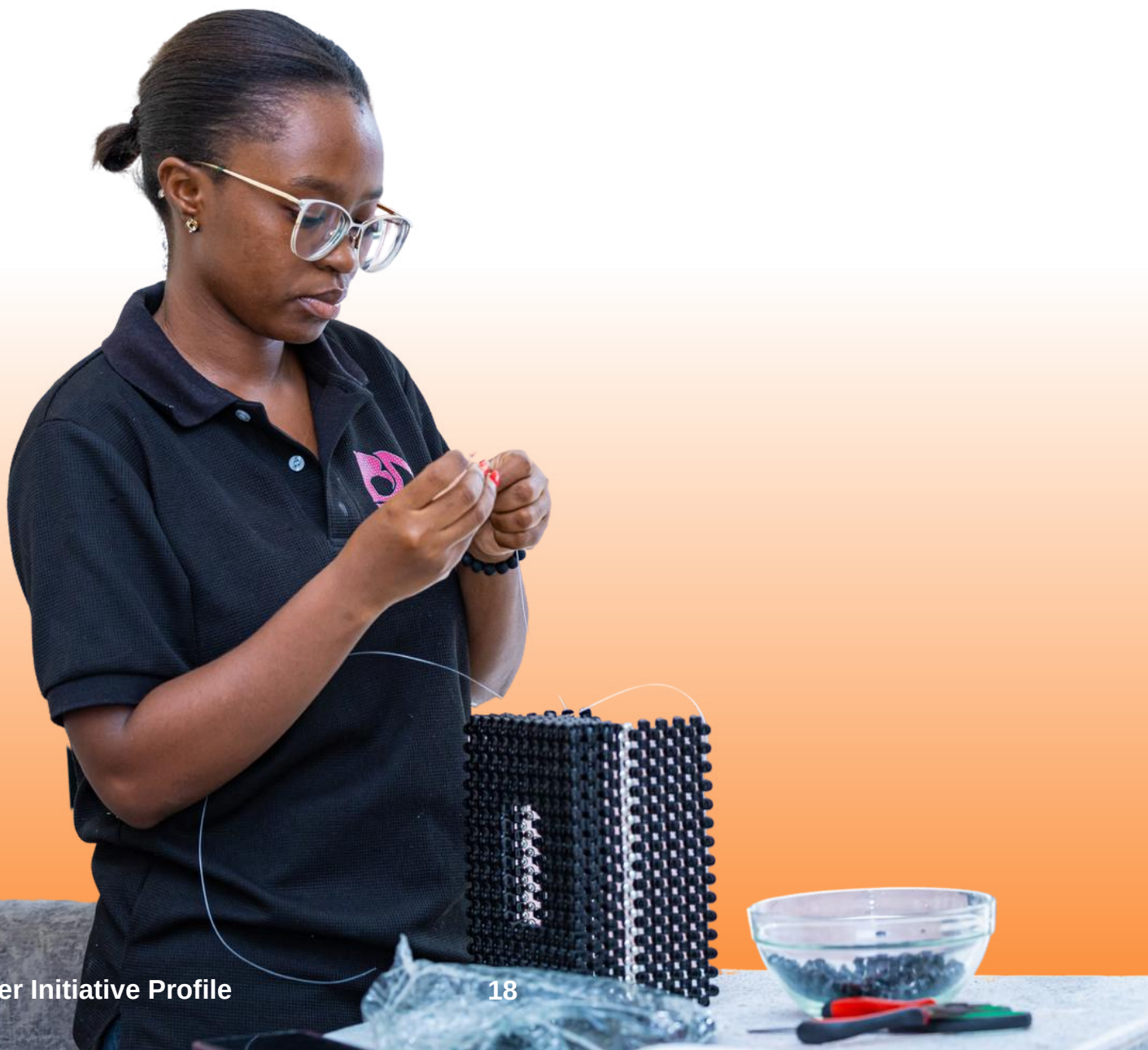
Panda Digital has made significant achievements, including recognition from the Ministry of Health, the Roddenberry Foundation, and Global Citizen. Its impact includes empowering 7,289 women with the skills to start and run smart businesses, 2,806 businesses digitized, and 3,274 sign-ups via AI SMS. Additionally, the platform has reached 31 regions, with 4,015 online sign-ups. Over the next five years, Panda Digital aims to support 50,000 women, expand its reach by 70% in Tanzania and 30% in East Africa, and establish university clubs to foster digital literacy and innovation to 6000 students.



Panda on The Grounds

Panda on the Ground is a project that aims at planting a seed of financial freedom for women aged 18-35 who have the desire to start businesses through income generation and job creation. The program offers hands-on entrepreneurial training, mentorship, and financial linkages, impacting 210 women who have launched their businesses. Panda on The Ground enables financial freedom for women aged 18-35 through income generation and job creation.

The program offers hands-on entrepreneurial training, mentorship, and financial linkages, impacting over 210 women to launch businesses, and fostering financial independence and job creation. Over the next five years, the program aims to support 500 women in starting and formalizing businesses, enhancing digital skills, and promoting job creation, aiming for a 70% success rate in sustaining businesses. This initiative is expected to generate around 1,500 new jobs, significantly impacting the livelihoods of women and fostering economic growth in their communities.



Digimali

DigiMali comes from the two Swahili words “Digitali na Mjasiliamali” translating to “Digital and Entrepreneur” in English, the project aims to transform and uplift communities through the power of digital literacy and technology. The program intends to boost self-employment by training young entrepreneurs to run sustainable businesses helping them transform traditional businesses into digital enterprises. Since its inception, DigiMali has directly empowered 201 individuals and reached an additional 2,806 through its Training of Trainers (TOT) model. The project's future goals train 500 youth and women business owners to reach 12,000 youth business owners beneficiaries over the next five years transforming their traditional business to digital business.

Youth Employability Boot Camp

The Youth Employability Boot Camp (YEB) focuses on honing the skills of young graduates, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Through training, mentorship, and placements, we equip youth with essential technical and soft skills, increasing their employability in the job market. This initiative focuses on providing youth with vocational skills to enhance professional skills and competence through comprehensive training in CV writing, cover letters, digital skills, and business acumen, supported by mentorship and job placements. Having already assisted 145 graduates, YEB plans to support 1000 graduates annually over the next five years, including 50 with disabilities. The program will also engage 250 employers, 30 mentors, 50 trainers, and 2 government agencies to ensure a holistic approach to career development.

Employers provide job opportunities and insights into market needs, mentors offer guidance and support, trainers deliver essential skills, and government agencies help align the program with broader employment and inclusion policies. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance employability, promote inclusivity, and foster sustainable career growth. This boot camp bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills for young graduates. Through training, mentorship, and placements, it enhances employability and promotes women's leadership, impacting 145 graduates with essential skills and opportunities.



“

*Thanks to the Youth Employability Bootcamp, I learned how to create a standout CV, gained confidence for interviews, and learned how to present my experiences effectively. These skills made all the difference in landing my job as a junior tax officer - **Agaton Erick***

Plan B Project

Plan B project aims to support out of school adolescent girls, unemployed and young mothers aged (15-24) in Tanzania overcoming barriers of gender based violence whilst building their financial resilience through entrepreneurship skills and seed support resources. Since its inception, Plan B has empowered 108 girls in Kisarawe District, helping 40 of them start businesses and join saving groups. The project has increased advocacy and leadership skills, improved confidence, and raised awareness about gender-based violence within the community.

Plan B aims to support 1,000 girls over the next five years, providing resources, education, and mentorship to build sustainable livelihoods. It combines gender-based violence prevention with financial literacy, offering holistic support through non-traditional education, business pitching, and seed funding. The project also engages local communities and government officials to foster inclusivity and resilience. The program reduces violence risk by equipping girls with skills, finances, and support, aiding both prevention and recovery.

FIKIA+

The FIKIA+ Project targets HIV prevention and economic empowerment for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) aged 15-24 living with HIV (PLHIV). So far, the project has supported 103 AGYW in Nyamagana district, Mwanza region by providing economic empowerment, agency empowerment and comprehensive SRH education to create demand for HIV testing services and retention to treatment services among AGYW PLHIV (15-24) in Tanzania. The project formed 6 business groups and established 35 businesses, providing training in digital marketing and business skills to foster economic opportunities and encourage HIV testing and ART uptake. The project utilizes peer-led education, data-driven SRH sessions, and mobile clinics to improve community-centered service delivery and economic resilience. FIKIA+ integrated HIV prevention, care, and economic empowerment for AGYW aged 15-24 in Mwanza. The program trains participants in business and digital skills, supporting health and economic opportunities for young women, enhancing HIV treatment access and retention.





The Plan B Project has been instrumental not only in changing Leah's life but also in providing a pathway for many young women in Kisarawe to escape the cycle of poverty and violence.

Leah's experience stands as a powerful example of how targeted support and training can lead to meaningful and lasting change.

STAWI Lab

The 'Stawi Lab' (Flourish Lab in English) project is at the forefront of an ambitious ecosystem-building initiative, with a singular goal: supporting youth-led organizations dedicated to championing the rights and interests of girls and women. Our approach is multifaceted, weaving together capacity-building, mentorship, and the provision of unrestricted seed grants. In our collective movement, these youth-led organizations passionately advocate for the decolonization of funding, rallying for research, data, and empirical evidence to underpin funding approaches that are not only inclusive but also imbued with deep meaning. To date, Stawi Lab has proudly supported 38 organizations across six regions in Tanzania, marking significant strides toward our commitment to empowering the next generation of change-makers. Stawi Lab's mission is to 100 empower youth-led organizations and create a supportive ecosystem where they can thrive.

Panda Digital Movement

The Panda Digital Movement is committed to addressing the myriad injustices that impede women's bodily autonomy and economic empowerment, thereby hindering young women from realizing their full potential. These challenges include sextortion and sexual harassment.

By leveraging technology, the Panda Movement expedites the reporting of sextortion cases and employs a Training of Trainers (TOT) model centered around young women, empowering them to lead the charge against all forms of gender-based violence. Over the past three years since 2021, the Panda Movement has fostered 30 anti-sextortion champions who have directly assisted over 800 young women and indirectly reached 25 million individuals through impactful online campaigns, raising awareness and offering effective strategies to combat sextortion.



OUR IMPACT



Total Direct reach

31,823

Total Online Reach

25,000,000



210

Young women launched new businesses in sectors such as beauty, agriculture, and baking.



8735

Young women accessed skills and opportunities through the Panda Digital website and SMS services.

202



4173

202 Youth business owners trained with digital business skills through TOTs, Trained other youth and women business owners 4173 to transform their businesses from traditional to digital



Established 5 clubs across 5 public secondary schools in Ubungo Municipal Council, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



500

Adolescent girls were engaged in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership training through Mshiko clubs.

500



Parents, 10 teachers, 10 local government officials, and 150 boys engaged to support girl's inclusion in education.

245



Enabled 245 youth graduates to improve job search techniques and placement opportunities

103



103 Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) living with HIV in Mwanza received economic empowerment training, forming six business groups and establishing 35 businesses, leading to a 100% improvement in treatment adherence.

38



Yuth-led organizations strengthened, impacting 10,000 girls and young women through collective advocacy and capacity-building efforts.

108



School drop-out girls in Kisarawe empowered to address gender-based violence as agents of change in their community

90



School drop-out girls established new businesses and linked to resources, education, and mentorship

Meet

OUR TEAM

At the heart of our mission, we are a dynamic team of young women leaders who intimately understand and resonate with the challenges faced by our peers. Our identity is rooted in being girl-centric, where the needs and aspirations of young women and girls are at the forefront of every endeavour we undertake. As torchbearers of positive change, we confront the challenges of Tanzania's economy with resolved tenacity through bold, young women and youth-led initiatives.



Lydia Charles Moyo
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



Tariq Ghusuob Salim
SENIOR OFFICER PROJECT
& COMMUNICATIONS



Amanda Mosses
FINANCE OFFICER



Wendy Shewiyo
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION
OFFICER



Celine Julius
PARTNERSHIP AND
SAFEGUARDING OFFICER



Nemes Umela
MONITORING & EVALUATION
OFFICER



Nusura Myonga
PROJECT LEAD AND M&E
OFFICER



Daniel Robert
COMMUNICATIONS AND
FIELD OFFICER

OUR BOARD

**VANESSA ANYOTI,
Chair of the board**

Vanessa Anyoti, who currently serves as the CEO of the Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete Foundation, is a seasoned professional holding a Master's degree in epidemiology and biostatistics. With a remarkable 8-year career spanning development, program management, and youth leadership, Vanessa showcases versatility and unwavering commitment in her field. Her global perspective is evident through significant roles in both national and international civil society organisations, reflecting her ability to navigate diverse cultural contexts.

From Tanzania to Switzerland, Vanessa's impact resonates through her dedication to community-led change. Renowned for her emphasis on collaboration, she firmly believes in the transformative power of collective action to drive sustainable and inclusive development. Vanessa's leadership style is characterised by her dedication to fostering partnerships and empowering communities. Grounded in her belief in the potential of every individual, Vanessa envisions a future where societal progress is driven by the collective contributions of all.



LYDIA CHARLES MOYO

Executive Secretary

Lydia Charles is a visionary feminist and a passionate dreamer who has dedicated her life to supporting young women and girls through economic empowerment and technology. As the founder and Executive Director of Her Initiative, and the innovative mind behind Panda Digital, Lydia has been at the forefront of efforts to break the cycle of poverty and build financial resilience among young women, all while championing women's and girls' rights. Her achievements have not gone unnoticed; she is the proud recipient of the 2024 Global Citizen Prize and the KBF Africa Prize, reflecting her impact on the global stage.

Lydia has a rich background in communication, leadership, and management, having worked in international and local organizations and the private sector in various roles such as communications, ASRHR consultancy, and social change-making. She has over 8 years of experience working in international development and media. She is currently working to influence adolescents and young women's financial freedom and women rights outcomes

Lydia's leadership style is deeply rooted in her core values of authenticity, Integrity, innovation, and nurturing. She remains steadfast in her beliefs, prioritizing the needs of rural girls by customizing the Panda Digital platform in Swahili, ensuring that it remains accessible and free, despite pressures to monetize it for profit.

Lydia measures success by an ability to turn dreams into reality, as evidenced by the creation of Her Initiative. Her journey is deeply personal, having grown up in a community where many girls were unable to complete their education due to extreme poverty and lack of resources. This experience fueled her passion for empowering girls to overcome these barriers. From launching self-esteem and rights awareness campaigns in secondary schools to a leading organization that promotes financial independence among young women at university,

Her Motto

She believes that when girls are financially independent, they have a choice. Her motto is: "Girls should not be limited to dreams, the bigger the dream the bigger the chance."



ANNA MEELA KULAYA

Board member

Anna Meela Kulaya has nearly two decades of service in the legal sector and has been an influential figure in the community, specializing in networking, coalition building, advocacy, governance, law, gender, and development. Graduating with a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Dar es Salaam in 2000, Ms Kulaya has furthered her education with diplomas in Human Rights and Humanitarian Law from the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Lund – Sweden, Leadership Development from St. Francis Xavier – Coady Institute Canada, and a Master's in Migration and Refugee Laws from the University of Dar es Salaam.

Her journey with Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) began in 2001 as a legal officer, evolving through various roles like Program Officer in Legal Education and Training, Program Officer in Advocacy, and Program Officer for Monitoring and Evaluation. Currently, as the National Coordinator of WiLDAF Tanzania, she oversees a team of 14 employees, showcasing her leadership and supervisory skills.

Ms Kulaya's extensive involvement includes chairing the Legal Aid Committee of the Tanganyika Law Society from 2014 to 2016, serving on the board of TANLAP (a network for legal aid providers), and holding the position of Board Chairperson for TANGO, an association comprising over 100 Civil Society Organizations. Notably, she played a pivotal role in coordinating the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Tanzania, transforming it into a national movement. Her commitment is further exemplified by her membership in the Committee of GBV Multi-Sectorial coordinated by the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children.



SAMWEL NDANDALA
Board Member

Mr. Ndandala, is an expert in economics, finance, and taxation, specializing in international tax and transfer pricing. As a partner at Deloitte Consulting Tanzania, he brings a wealth of experience in advising corporate clients on transfer pricing, value chain strategy, and taxation. Samwel's expertise extends to compliance, consulting, planning, and dispute resolution, having worked with some of the world's largest multinationals and collaborated with tax authorities to resolve disputes and establish private rulings/APAs. With a Master's Degree from SOAS, University of London, and a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and Finance from Mzumbe University, Samuel is a certified chartered accountant, Certified Public Accountant (CPA-T), and a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA-UK). He actively contributes to thought leadership in economics and taxation, publishing articles in leading Tanzanian newspapers and engaging with professional and business associations such as ACCA, CPA (T), CEO's Roundtable, and the British and European Union Business Groups.

Beyond his professional endeavours, Mr. Ndandala has a longstanding commitment to youth activism in Tanzania, serving leadership roles in organisations like Youth of the United Nations of Tanzania, where he held the position of national treasurer. As the founder and inaugural president of the Tanzanian Association of Accounting, Auditing, and Finance Students, he demonstrates a passion for financial literacy, conducting personal finance training and workshops to empower young people with the skills needed to manage their finances effectively.



ANDREW MAHIGA

Board Member

Andrew Mahiga is a seasoned development professional currently serving as the Country Director for the Department for Business & Trade at the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In this role, he leads efforts to strengthen trade and investment relations between Tanzania and the United Kingdom, fostering economic growth and business partnerships.

Before joining the British High Commission, Andrew was the Commercial Specialist at the Embassy of the United States of America in Tanzania, where he played a pivotal role in advancing commercial diplomacy and facilitating trade between Tanzanian and U.S. businesses.

Prior to his diplomatic engagements, Andrew served as the Director of Policy, Research, Advocacy & Lobbying at the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF). His expertise in policy engagement and formulation contributed to creating a more enabling business environment, improving access to quality education, and fostering entrepreneurship and business development in Tanzania.

Beyond his professional roles, Andrew is an influential thought leader and social commentator, particularly on issues of youth empowerment, civic engagement, business development, and innovation in Tanzania.

He holds an MSc. in Public Policy & Management from SOAS, University of London, and a B.S. in International Studies from The City College of New York (CUNY).



EMMANUEL KYARWENDA

Board Member

Emmanuel is a seasoned and accomplished business leader, boasting a remarkable 12-year track record across diverse industries, including consulting, real estate, and manufacturing, within both public and private sectors. His expertise is underlined by a robust finance background, and he holds a proven record of successfully developing and leading high-performing teams. Emmanuel's noteworthy career includes pivotal roles at leading sugar and cigarette manufacturers in Tanzania, showcasing his strategic acumen and leadership prowess.

Presently serving as the Finance Director at Coca-Cola Kwanza Limited, Emmanuel plays a pivotal role in crafting and executing the strategic plan while overseeing a dynamic finance team of 38 employees.

His commitment to excellence is reflected in his active membership with the ACCA and his designation as a registered tax consultant with TRA, underscoring his dedication to professional growth and expertise in the finance domain. Emmanuel's multifaceted experience positions him as a valuable asset in steering organizations towards success.



CATHERINE MWAKASITU

Board Member

Catherine Mwakasitu is a seasoned Finance and Risk professional with over 11 years of experience spanning both the private and public sectors across Eastern and Southern Africa. She currently serves as the Head of Finance Operations at Vodacom Tanzania Plc, where she leads financial management, compliance, risk assessment, and operational efficiency initiatives within the organization.

Before joining Vodacom, Catherine was the Finance and Operations Lead at Financial Sector Deepening Trust (FSDT). In this role, she was responsible for overseeing finance, compliance, grants management, procurement, project delivery, and human resources, ensuring the smooth functioning of FSDT's governance and effective communication between the board and management.

Previously, she worked as a Senior Manager, Risk Advisory at Deloitte Consulting Limited, where she specialized in risk management, compliance, and strategic financial consulting for various organizations. Her expertise extends across corporate governance, strategy development, business process improvement, and stakeholder engagement.

A Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE), Catherine holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Accounting and Finance from Mzumbe University (2011) and pursued a Master's in Business Administration at the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute in 2022. Her extensive background and leadership in financial management and risk advisory position her as a key figure in Tanzania's financial sector.





SUCCESS STORIES

Panda Beneficiary

Amina Haruna Ndanzi is a determined young woman who joined the Panda program in 2020 with the dream of transforming her mobile nail technician service into a fully-fledged beauty salon. Before the program, Amina faced many challenges, including a lack of formal training and the funds needed to grow her business. Her mobile nail services provided some income, but it was inconsistent, and she struggled to expand.

With her goals in mind, Amina enrolled in the Panda program, hoping to gain the skills and resources to make her dream a reality. She joined the beauty and nails category, eager to learn how to establish her nail beauty clinic. During the program, Amina learned valuable skills like financial literacy, digital marketing, and practical nail art training. These skills not only helped her connect with others in the industry but also enabled her to attract more customers and advance her career.

By 2024, when the Her Initiative team visited Amina, her progress was impressive.

"The Panda program changed everything for me," Amina shared with a smile. ***"When I first joined, I was just doing nails at home, and it felt like I was stuck. But now, I own two thriving businesses! I have a nail beauty salon in Mwenge, right opposite TRA, and I've also started a cosmetics and handcrafts business. The financial education and digital marketing skills I gained from Panda were game-changers. I'm now able to use digital tools to reach more customers, and my businesses have grown so much that I've hired an additional employee. My revenue has more than doubled since I started, and I owe it all to the support I received from Her Initiative."***

Amina's story highlights how the right support and training can empower young women to achieve their dreams and build successful businesses.



Stawi Lab program beneficiary

Suzan Yumbe

Suzan Yumbe, an aspiring leader and social change maker, is the Founder and Executive Director of Afya Plus, a non-profit organization focused on WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) initiatives. Before enrolling in the STAWI Lab program, Afya Plus faced several significant challenges that hindered its growth and ability to secure funding.

The organization struggled with inadequate organizational systems and poorly defined policies, which limited its ability to meet the stringent requirements of major funding bodies. Suzan and her team grappled with these structural issues, finding it difficult to navigate the complex landscape of grant applications and compliance.

When the opportunity to join the STAWI Lab program arose, Suzan saw it as a chance to overcome these obstacles. The program provided crucial training in areas such as organizational development, policy formulation, and resource mobilization.

Thanks to the support from STAWI Lab, Afya Plus was able to overhaul its internal systems and establish the necessary policies. This transformation proved pivotal when the organization applied for the Malala Fund. “Receiving the Malala Fund was a monumental step for us,” Suzan reflected. “The grant required us to have comprehensive policies and well-structured organizational systems in place. Thanks to STAWI Lab, we were able to develop these critical elements effectively.”

She continued, ***“The training we received from STAWI Lab was instrumental in shaping our policies and systems. Without their support, Afya Plus would not have been able to meet the stringent requirements of the Malala Fund application process. We are immensely grateful for this life-changing program.”***

Suzan’s experience underscores the critical role that STAWI Lab played in addressing the challenges faced by youth-led organizations, enabling them to secure essential funding and drive meaningful change.





AMANDA MOSSES

Finance Officer at Her Initiative

Amanda Mosses, currently serving as the Finance and Logistics Officer at Her Initiative, embarked on a transformative journey with the organization back in 2020 as a finance volunteer while pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Accountancy. Her commitment and dedication to her role were quickly recognized, leading to promotions and advancements within Her Initiative. Amanda's evolution from a finance volunteer to her current position is a proof of her hard work, tenacity, and the nurturing environment provided by Her Initiative.

Amanda's proficiency in financial reporting, budget preparation, cash book management, financial audit, and project activity implementation showcases her versatility and competence in the finance profession. Her Initiative's commitment to mentorship and professional development has empowered Amanda to flourish in her role, culminating in her promotion to Finance and Administration Officer in June 2022.

Amanda attests, "Her Initiative has changed my life, offering me the space to grow my career and enhancing my knowledge and skills in Finance. The exposure, adaptability, and experience gained have enabled me to demonstrate competence in my work." Partnering with Her Initiative not only transforms the lives of professionals like Amanda but also contributes to addressing the challenges young women face. By providing opportunities for volunteering and skill-building, Her Initiative empowers young women to secure jobs and actively participate in the development sector.

Stakeholders interested in fostering women's empowerment and supporting skill development initiatives will find Her Initiative's impactful work aligning seamlessly with their goals.

Fikia + beneficiary

Perpetua's Journey

From Isolation to Empowerment

At just 23 years old, Perpetua faced a series of daunting challenges. As a young widow living with HIV, she grappled with treatment interruptions, stigma, financial hardships, and a lack of motivation. These barriers often led her to isolate herself, further complicating her health and well-being.

Her situation took a turn for the worse when, shortly after beginning her engagement with our program, her husband passed away. The grief and stigma she faced were overwhelming. She struggled to afford basic necessities and found it increasingly difficult to maintain her treatment regimen. This period of isolation seemed insurmountable, and Perpetua contemplated giving up on both her treatment and her dreams.

However, the turning point came when she was introduced to enhanced adherence counseling and mentorship through our program. With persistent support and encouragement, Perpetua found the strength to return to the program. She delved into Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) education, which provided her with valuable insights and renewed motivation to resume her treatment and collaborate with fellow young women in the group.

Months of engagement and support led to a remarkable transformation. Perpetua regained the confidence to move beyond her fears of stigma and began pursuing her goals with determination. She launched a fruit business in the local market and also became an active participant in a group business initiative.

With her newfound financial independence, Perpetua could afford a balanced diet, significantly improving her overall health and supporting her continued treatment. This positive change not only reduced her HIV viral load but also bolstered her resilience against health vulnerabilities.

Perpetua's journey reflects a powerful narrative of overcoming adversity and finding hope. Through determination and the support of our program, she has turned her challenges into opportunities, illuminating her path to a brighter future filled with dreams and possibilities.

Youth Employability Bootcamp

Agaton Erick

Agaton Erick, a finance graduate from the class of 2021, faced significant challenges in securing employment despite his academic qualifications. Twelve months after graduating, he was still struggling to land a job. Frustrated and unsure of his next steps, Agaton stumbled upon the Youth Employability Bootcamp through an Instagram post and decided to apply, hoping it would be his ticket to a successful career.

Before joining the bootcamp, Agaton's job search was hampered by several factors. He lacked essential skills for job applications and interviews, such as crafting an effective CV, writing compelling cover letters, and presenting himself confidently in interviews. These gaps in his skillset left him at a disadvantage compared to other candidates.

The Youth Employability Bootcamp proved to be a turning point for Agaton. The program provided him with practical training on creating a standout CV and cover letter, as well as crafting impactful cover emails. Additionally, the bootcamp's focus on interview skills was particularly beneficial. Agaton learned how to enhance his body language, boost his confidence, and effectively communicate his strengths and experiences. These skills were crucial in improving his overall presentation during job interviews.

With his revamped application materials and polished interview techniques, Agaton applied for a tax officer role at the Tanzania Revenue Authority. His newly acquired skills and confidence paid off, as he excelled in the interviews and secured the position of junior tax officer.

Agaton's success story highlights the significant impact of the Youth Employability Bootcamp on his career trajectory. The program not only addressed his immediate job search challenges but also equipped him with the skills and confidence needed to thrive in a competitive job market.



ASHA MOHAMED

Panda Digital

Asha, a 24-year-old entrepreneur from Keko, once faced significant challenges with her retail business specializing in wholegrains and cereals. Before joining Panda Digital, her business was struggling with low profitability and inefficient operations. Relying solely on walk-in customers and lacking a solid foundation in business management, Asha found it difficult to gain traction. Her efforts to communicate her brand online were met with minimal engagement, leaving her feeling stuck and frustrated.

Despite these setbacks, Asha was determined to make her mark in the market. Her dedication to building a well-defined business and digital marketing strategy was unwavering. The turning point came when she heard about Panda Digital from a friend during a casual conversation about celebrities. "I remember that evening, I was gossiping with my friends about celebrities when one of them mentioned Panda Digital as a platform that helped her improve her digital marketing skills. After she said that, I was very interested to know more about this platform, and that marked the start of my interesting business journey," Asha recalls.

Motivated by her friend's success, Asha promptly enrolled in the Panda Digital platform, specifically taking courses in MASOKO YA MTANDAONI (Online Marketplaces) and MUUNDO WA BIASHARA YA KANVASI (Business Structure). These courses were a game changer for her. ***"After taking these courses, I started operating my business online, using Instagram to showcase my products and interact with customers, which in the beginning, I had no idea how to do. I have managed to identify my niche, thus increasing engagement with potential customers," Asha explains.***

The training provided her with the skills needed to streamline her business operations both online and offline. Asha now has a clear structure, well-defined channels, and efficient functions within her business. The result has been a notable increase in customer engagement and a more organized and profitable business.

Asha's story highlights the transformative impact of targeted digital training. Through Panda Digital, she was able to turn her struggling business into a well-managed and successful venture, effectively bridging the gap between her offline operations and the online market.



RECOGNITIONS



- October 14, 2021: Panda Digital was recognized by the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders, and Children for being the first Swahili-focused digital platform dedicated to girls' education in Tanzania.
- April 27, 2022: Panda Digital was acknowledged by the +1 Global Fund under the Roddenberry Foundation, receiving a USD 12,000 prize for its substantial contribution to advancing education in Africa through digital technology.
- July 2023: Her Initiative, through Panda Digital, was honoured with an award for championing justice advocacy using digital platforms at the Tanzania Digital Awards.
- 2024: Her Initiative is officially recognized as the Laureate of the King Baudouin Foundation Africa Prize 2023-2024, receiving a significant prize of 200,000 euros.
- 2024 Global Citizen prize winner for women and girls.



NEWS

LETTER

SUMMER 2024



She Knows Where She's Going
Her Initiative wins KBF Africa Prize



Yes! To Financial Freedom



10 Asmara Street | Mikocheni A, Dar Es Salaam

@herinitiative.or.tz



www.herinitiative.or.tz