

The Power Plan

She's the *first* →

2023-2025



What Power Means to Us



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Although we know the world will be a better place when girls hold **real** power, that isn't the only reason we fight for this cause. For years, we've heard the business case: When you educate girls, a country's economy improves, as educated girls are more likely to join the workforce, delay childbirth, and participate in civic life. Girls' education is even one of the top mitigators of climate change. When girls learn, and more women lead, outcomes are better for communities.

But we don't do this work for the sake of benefits girls will bring in the distant future. We are here because **girls deserve dignity and respect today**. Girls are not a means to an end. They are not a strategy. They are humans entitled to the same rights and opportunities as boys.

Evidently, the world forgets this.



Girls comprise one-fifth of the global population. They shouldn't just have a voice in the room—they need a meaningful vote in the decisions that impact them the most.

That's why our next three years are dedicated to girls' power and the many ways we can all increase it. Join us in celebrating the power girls hold, and help us find new ways for them to exercise it within She's the First, in grassroots organizations, and in communities worldwide.

**At STF, we recognize all who identify with the term "woman" or "girl" as belonging to that category, and we welcome gender non-conforming folks to our ranks as well.*

COVID-19 set back decades of progress for girls.

As a result of lockdowns, researchers estimate 11 million more girls will be pushed out of school permanently; and child marriages will increase, with 13 million more girls married by 2030.



Our Mission & Values



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At She's the First, we team up with grassroots organizations to make sure girls everywhere are educated, respected, and heard. We fight for a world where every girl chooses her own future.

We believe in taking a **girl-centered** and **anti-oppressive** approach to all we do.

Girls know their needs better than anyone, which is why we ethically include girls in our decision-making processes and in our program evaluation. Our resources and trainings for community-based organizations (CBOs) focus on this concept, too.

We recognize that as an international organization founded in the Global North, and as a provider of funding, we need to be mindful of our own power in any given space. We engage in trust-based relationships with our partners, provide flexible funding, ask for only necessary reporting, and actively solicit feedback on our approach.

Finally, we recognize that our staff, too, deserves an equitable workplace. From paid family leave to truly flexible hours and transparent pay scales, we have built a feminist workplace that centers our humanity above all else.

Global Leadership for a Global Movement

As part of our anti-oppressive commitment, we've built out our team in the Global South to ensure that decisions about grantmaking and training happen exclusively in the locations where we fund and host CBO workshops. As of August 2022, Kate Kiama will oversee our coalition-building programs as our Director of Programs and Impact, leading a team of women from Kenya and Guatemala in all of our CBO-focused efforts. Our co-founder Christen Brandt has passionately led this effort up until this point, and she now steps away from her staff role as Chief Programs Officer to see the vision come to life. Global movements require global leadership, and we are proud to say that a truly global team of 10 women from four regions of the world will lead the execution of this strategic plan.

A stylized illustration of a teal vine with several leaves and pink flowers. The vine starts from the bottom left, loops upwards, and then curves to the right. There are several pink flowers with five petals. In the bottom right corner, there are two clusters of small white flowers on teal stems. The background is a solid bright yellow.

Our Strategic Focus

Our Strategic Focus

For the next three years, we'll focus our efforts on two main goals to increase girls' power at multiple levels. We'll:

1

Build coalitions to positively impact girls' agency, access, and equity in community-based organizations (CBOs)

2

Provide girls with the foundation they need to advocate for their rights in their families, communities, and societies

Our programming themes:

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Healthy relationships, with an emphasis on power dynamics
- Mental and emotional health
- Fundamental rights education

Our Strategic Goal for the next three years:

increase girls' power within their homes, organizations, and communities.

Our approach to the strategic planning process

For this planning process, we worked with the experts: **girls!** We held a series of focus groups with girls to determine the issues they most care about in this moment, noting the ways they hoped She's the First could rise to meet the challenge. They helped us to create this strategic focus, and they identified these programming themes verbatim. Everything that our staff, CBO partners, board members and other stakeholders contributed to the process was based on this foundation, resulting in the plan you're reading today (which was ultimately approved by our Girls Advisory Council).

There were two additional areas of concern girls wished to see addressed that aren't listed here: digital and financial literacy. While STF does not currently have the capacity to tackle these areas fully, we will look for future partnerships and opportunities to honor this request from girls. We mention it here for accountability and knowledge-sharing purposes.

Coalition-Building for Girls' Power



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At She's the First, we know that grassroots, girl-focused community-based organizations (CBOs) are best positioned to create sustainable change for girls. We also recognize that by sharing our power we create more equitable spaces. That's why our coalition-building programs are designed **with** partners and girls, brainstorming together on how we can collectively contribute to girls' power. We ground our work in understanding the dynamics of oppression, power, and privilege, as well as the ways they intersect, for girls and CBOs around the world.

These programs provide flexible funding, customized resources, and bespoke training to improve girls' agency, access, and equity. Our key programs include:

STF Partner Coalition

A cohort of CBOs from 12 countries working toward a shared set of goals for girls' rights. We provide them with flexible funding and customized trainings.

Girls First Summit & Ellas al Frente

Two training programs, one in East Africa and one in Latin America, which focus on delivering girl-centered design principles to practitioners.

Girl-Centered Incubator

A program for early-stage entrepreneurs under age 30 focused on organizational development and feminist leadership, including living stipends and program grants.

Ongoing trainings and resource development

STF creates toolkits with thousands of downloads and hosts practical workshops year-round to support CBOs in their work to increase girls' power within their organizations and communities.

**Over
the next
three
years**

1

We'll continue to advocate for and train organizations in ways to expand girls' power. Through our trainings, we expect to impact **nearly 600 organizations**, which will allow us to reach **160,000+ girls** globally.

2

To further scale our trainings that increase girls' power within CBOs, we will recruit and train a team of **30 global practitioners** who are skilled in girl-centered design methodology. They will host localized trainings that let us reach **an additional 100 organizations** and **45,000 girls**.

3

We'll launch a girl-led granting initiative, where girls will set program parameters for funded initiatives, which will then be workshopped and implemented by a small coalition of grassroots organizations.

Spotlight: Partner Coalition

Our partner coalition is the longest-running program at She's the First. Community-based organizations within the coalition are locally-run with women at the helm. They receive a combination of flexible funding, trainings on increasing girls' power, and resources to implement programming.

As we've developed trust-based relationships with our partners, we've implemented an updated design for this program: Our partner coalition now sets their own impact goals for their six-year cohort (with input from girls in their programs). Starting in 2023, the first cohort aims to strengthen mentorship programs to promote girls' agency and leadership. Before the start of the year, the cohort will set their own indicators and develop a long-term plan for joint measurement.

Programmatic themes

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), fundamental rights education, healthy relationships with an emphasis on power dynamics

2023

Partner Coalition Cohort 1 officially begins, with self-determined impact goals.

2024

Launch site-specific trainings with partners and girls on increasing girls' power within our organizations and communities.

2025

Incorporate learnings from Cohort 1 and add Cohort 2 to the program, with its own self-determined impact goals.

Quick Stats

By 2025, we'll have two partner coalition cohorts with 23 total organizations in 12 countries.

Throughout STF's history, we've supported CBOs with more than \$5.5 million USD in flexible funding.

Spotlight: Girl-Centered Incubator

The Girl-Centered Incubator fiscally sponsors and trains organizations and leaders under the age of 30, who are transforming outcomes for girls in their community. Over three years, leaders embark on a learning journey that includes topics such as non-profit governance, financial management, program design, and impact evaluation, with the ultimate purpose of sustaining themselves independently. Girl-Centered Incubator organizations will receive seed grants in the second and third year of the fellowship, a living stipend for the organization's primary leader, and fiscal sponsorship by She's the First, when of interest. GCI Fellows receive mentorship and guidance from our program staff as well as external facilitators.

Programmatic themes

Sexual and reproductive health and rights, fundamental rights education

2022

Provide seed grants and living stipends to current GCI participants

2023

Based on learnings from Cohort 1, add a second cohort to the program

2024

Graduates of Cohort 1 may apply for the STF Partner Coalition to receive larger grants and ongoing support

Quick Stats

Two of these leaders started their journey with STF as students in secondary school.

In our first cohort, six fellows represent five countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and India.

Our goal is that at least three organizations from our first cohort "graduate" into the STF Partner Coalition.

Spotlight: Ellas al Frente

Ellas al Frente is a joint venture by She's the First and MAIA (a partner in Guatemala) to equip grassroots leaders with girl-centered design skills and ultimately improve outcomes for girls in the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras). In its pilot year, this capacity-building program will bring six organizations together for a one-week training intensive, followed by a year of individual and group coaching sessions. By the end of the year, organizations will have integrated girls' voices into their programming decisions, increased girls' power within their organizations, and have improved methods of evaluating their programs' success.

Programmatic themes

Sexual and reproductive health and rights, fundamental rights education

2023

Host a one-week intensive with six organizations on increasing girls' power within their organizations.

2024

Gather learnings from pilot year, with a focus on participants' implementation of girl-centered program design. Consider hosting a second week-long intensive.

2025

Conduct site visits with the pilot group attendees to collect additional learnings on their application of girl-centered design; finalize monitoring and evaluation learnings from the program.

Quick Stats

We spent 2021 mapping girls' organizations in the Northern Triangle and found fewer than 30 grassroots organizations actively working on girls' programs.

We plan to measure change in girls' outcomes over time to understand how girl-centered design impacts the overall success of girls within a program.

We hope that at least three participating organizations will join the STF Partner Coalition in 2025.



Girl-Led Advocacy



Girl-Led Advocacy



We believe in the power girls have to advocate for themselves. Their ideas matter and they are more than ready to lead. Our Girl-Led Advocacy programs create spaces and tools for girls and their allies to advocate for their rights within their families, schools, and communities. Whether they're planning to approach a teacher, a friend, or their local government, girls will leave these programs better equipped to promote their needs.

In addition to our signature STF Campus programming, we're expanding our digital advocacy footprint and growing our resources, trainings, and Youth Ambassadors programs. Over the next three years, our programs will go deeper into self-advocacy and community activism, providing girls with pathways and support to speak up for themselves and their peers at local and global levels. From leading a chapter on campus, to designing an activism campaign on Instagram, to reflecting on their identity through guided journaling, girls in these programs will tap into their own power to create change.

Our Girl-Led Advocacy programs include:

Self-Advocacy

Girls constantly tell us that advocacy for girls' rights starts with advocating for yourself. Our toolkits and trainings for girls allow them to build their self-esteem and confidence over time so they can speak up for themselves at home and among peers.

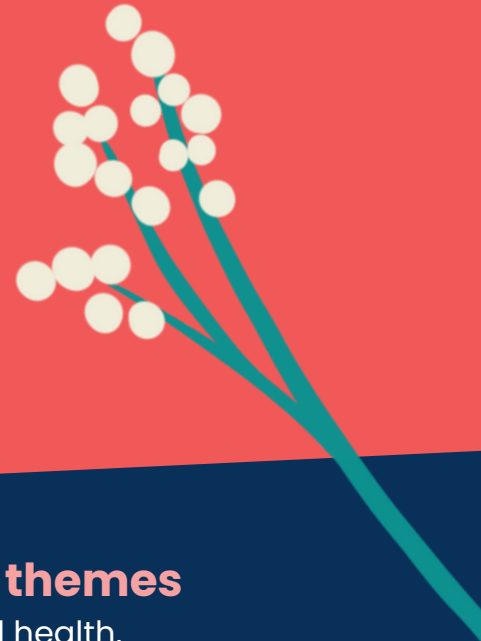
STF Campus

This is our longest-running advocacy initiative! Students at high schools and universities worldwide meet regularly as a club to discuss girls' rights, and then they host events on campus to inspire change.

Community Activism

Girls learn the skills they need to advocate for change in their local community and on the global stage. Whether they want to petition their city council, organize a local protest, or launch a social media campaign, our Community Activism program provides them with resources and platforms to take the lead on the issues they care about most.

Spotlight: STF Campus



Our STF Campus Chapter program launched in 2010 with a series of fundraisers at universities in the United States, and it wasn't long before STF Campus evolved into STF's largest advocacy initiative. Students pushed for more resources and a place to learn and develop their skills as advocates and activists, and that's what the program exists to do today.

Over the past decade, high school and college students on six continents have advocated for girls' rights locally and globally. Given increased challenges to girls' and women's rights in communities near and far, She's the First is doubling down on our efforts to equip student leaders with the resources they need to be confident and vocal advocates for girls (including themselves).

Programmatic themes

Mental and emotional health,
fundamental rights education

2023

Launch the Campus Mentors volunteer program to provide current STF Campus students with support from a recent alum.

2024

Students produce three regional advocacy events based on their interests.

2025

In addition to STF Summit, coordinate workshops for girls and their allies to engage in community activism and self-advocacy.

Quick Stats

**Our campus program involves
146 chapters with a total reach of 48,500 students globally.**

**By 2025, we'll work with 20 mentors and
200 chapters to reach 73,000+ students each year.**

**The average campus member volunteers in their
community for at least 12 hours each school year.**

Spotlight: Community Activism



Over the next three years, our Community Activism program will provide girls with resources and a strong community to support their advocacy efforts. Our Youth Ambassadors will learn to use social media for social good by producing digital activism campaigns.

With the input of our Girls Advisory Council, we'll develop new workshops to help girls take action online and in-person in their communities, on topics ranging from public speaking to organizing a petition.

Five years after its initial launch, we'll update The Global Girls' Bill of Rights and our accompanying resources by working with a massive bloc of girls from around the world. As girls grow their self-confidence, we'll be there to support them in defending girls' rights in all aspects of their lives.

Programmatic themes

Fundamental rights education, healthy relationships with an emphasis on power dynamics

2023

Youth Ambassadors will produce a digital advocacy campaign, with goals for the campaign determined by girls themselves

2024

Update of The Global Girls' Bill of Rights (originally developed with input from 1,000 girls around the world in 2019)

2025

Organize two workshops focusing on community activism; specific topics will be determined in consultation with our Girls Advisory Council and Youth Ambassadors

Quick Stats

Our first cohort of Youth Ambassadors represented five countries and used our platforms to speak out on a variety of girls' rights issues, including societal gender norms, safety from violence, and freedom from exploitation.

To date, our toolkits have reached more than 100,000 girls globally.

Girls' Power Pathways at STF



Girls' Power Pathways at STF



Girls' involvement within an organization exists on a spectrum from inclusion to participation to power. We're keen to ensure girls have true power at She's the First — but we remain vigilant that girls' engagement does not become their unpaid labor.

In preparation for this strategic plan, we held a number of focus groups with girls. And while they were immensely helpful in identifying our focus areas for the next three years, they also identified another area of growth for She's the First: ways to increase girls' power at STF without crossing the line to unpaid labor.

Working with girls, we identified the following needs when creating pathways for power:

- Girls need varied methods of participating in decision-making processes to account for varied levels of access, ability, and time.
- Given their variable schedules and the fact that many girls are not in charge of their own time, girls need to be able to engage (and disengage) throughout the year.
- Girls deserve compensation for their time. This may be in money, certifications, or training, but there should be an equal trade for their time.

The Next Three Years

Over the next three years, STF commits to exploring these pathways thoroughly and producing a report on our findings. We plan to create numerous ways for girls to engage in decisions about our programming, from sending one-off WhatsApp voicenotes to answering surveys or engaging in regular meetings. We'll work with them directly to continue identifying new methods of engagement, and we'll create programming as requested and compensate them for their data and time according to their wishes. We'll also launch a girl-led granting initiative, where girls actively design programs for their organizations to receive implementation funding.

Our goal is for more girls to engage in STF's programming process in ever-increasing ways that fit into *their* lives, instead of making girls conform to meeting schedules, styles, and platforms that work for practitioners. The more we can incorporate their thoughts, ideas, and goals into our work, the more successful we'll be at building a world where every girl is educated, respected, and heard.



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JIVAM Foundation
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