

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028



WHRDHUB
WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS HUB

| Protect. Heal. Nurture



“

Many women human rights defenders are active at the start of a crisis, before it becomes a conflict helping people to reach safety or to find what they need to stay alive. They are present throughout the darkest days, holding communities together.

”

-Mary Lawlor
UN Special Rapporteur
on Human Rights Defenders



STRATEGIC PLAN²⁰²⁴⁻²⁰²⁸



Contents

00	Executive Summary	6
1.0	Description of The Organization	8
1.1	Overview of the Women Human Rights Defenders Hub	8
1.2	Vision	10
1.3	Mission	10
1.4	Overall Goal	10
1.5	The Hub's Principles	10
1.6	Values	11
1.7	Governance and Management	11
2.0	Context Analysis	12
2.1	External context	12
2.2	Internal context	16
3.0	The Strategic Framework: Theory Of Change, Pillars, Goals, Objectives, And Key Activities	19
3.1	Theory of Change	19
3.2	Strategic pillars, goals, objectives, and key activities	20
3.3	Safety/Usalama pillar	20
3.4	Livelihoods/Ustawi pillar	21
3.5	Wellbeing/Jitunze pillar	22
3.6	Femtorship/Ushauri pillar	23
3.7	Movement and cross movement building/Harakati pillar	25
3.8	Institution building	26
4.0	RISKS AND RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES	27
4.1	Closing civic space risk	27
4.2	Governance and leadership risk	27
4.3	Limited resources risk	27
4.4	Partnerships risk	28
4.5	Fiduciary risk	28
4.6	Non-Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements risk	28
4.7	Reputational risk	28
5.0	Resource Mobilization	29

Executive Summary

The Women Human Rights Defenders Hub (the Hub) established in 2019 and registered in 2021 is a feminist organization, led by women, that provides holistic protection to Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs), in all their diversities, in Kenya. This is the inaugural strategic plan to guide the Hub's interventions for a five-year period, 2024-2028.

The Hub was established to respond to the individual, institutional and systemic structures that pose a barrier to the realization of fundamental rights of women and girls in all their diversity. The contextual analysis has underscored entrenched impunity that exists despite a largely positive normative framework, cultural and social attitudes oppressive to women, a rising anti-rights and anti-women agenda- all these in a patriarchal context- as barriers to progress. At the same time, we see increasing attention to the situation of WHRDs at global, regional, and national levels.

The Hub, working with other actors, primarily through networks of WHRDs, supports and engages with the WHRD movement in Eastern Africa and beyond and with regional and global human rights defenders' protection mechanisms to contribute towards addressing and degrading these critical challenges.

The Hub's strategic interventions are organized around six pillars, identified based on context analysis and our own understanding of gaps in the national and regional human rights defenders movement regarding the needs and concerns of WHRDs.

1. **Safety and security** pillar focuses on actions that keep WHRDs safe through a gender-sensitive approach.
2. **Livelihoods** pillar seeks to support investments in startups by WHRDs to empower them financially and economically to sustain their human rights protection work.
3. **Wellbeing** pillar seeks to ensure that women HRDs remain grounded emotionally and physically.
4. **Femtorship** pillar (a gendered phrase preferred instead of mentorship) seeks to grow and expand the next generation of WHRDs and activists.

5. **Movement and Partnership** pillar seek to create strong networks nationally, in the region, and across the continent as this is critical in responding to the anti-rights movement which advances due to fragmentation.
6. **Institution-building** pillar, which is inward-looking, seeks to position the Hub as the premium WHRD organization nationally and regionally. It focuses on having strong governance and management at the Hub, and establishing policies and systems that ensure accountability and efficiency as well as sustainable funding.

At the Hub, we believe that investing in these strategic priorities will create a conducive environment that empowers WHRDs to advocate for fundamental human rights for women in all their diversity and demand for accountability by State and non-State actors.

We look forward to the support of our friends and partners in implementing this strategic plan and realizing our vision of an empowered, just, and equitable society where women human rights defenders thrive to their full potential.

01

Description of The Organization



1.1 Overview of the WHRD Hub

The Women Human Rights Defenders Hub (the Hub) is a feminist, women led, organization that exists to support the work of women human rights defenders in Kenya. It is registered in Kenya as a community-based organization, an interim arrangement as it awaits completion of its registration as a Trust.

It was established in 2019 by women human rights defenders who had worked for many years in the mainstream male-led human rights defenders' movement in Kenya. Their experience was that the broader human rights defenders' movement was not addressing the gendered concerns and needs of women defenders. Capacity and patriarchy were at the root of this.

The niche of the Hub is its focus on protecting ALL women human rights defenders in their diversities. This means women human rights defenders can include but not be limited to, female sex workers; sexual and gender minorities; women with disabilities; racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; and rural women, among others.

As the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders has written in his 2019 report, Situation of women human rights defenders,

Women of diverse backgrounds promote and protect rights in very different contexts. There are, for instance, women calling for gender equality, indigenous women fighting for land and environmental rights, women in rural areas pressing for socioeconomic rights, girls campaigning on social issues, trans women speaking up against discrimination, lesbians calling for equality, migrant and refugee women advocating for their rights and security, homeless women demanding the right to housing and shelter, women fighting for justice for the disappeared, gender non-conforming persons resisting gender-based violence, women promoting choice and bodily autonomy, women expanding digital rights, women with disabilities fighting for independent living and women involved in peace processes. See 2019 report, Situation of women human rights defenders

The Hub's focus is rural counties and informal settlements. These are where the needs of women human rights defenders are greatest, and at the same time the defenders have least visibility. Border counties and counties with indigenous populations have specific challenges and opportunities for women

human rights defenders. Informal settlements in both urban and rural areas have their unique challenges as well.

The Hub primarily works with networks of women human rights defenders rather than individuals. The Hub envisions a future in which it will become membership based, its members being networks of women human rights defenders.

The Hub's strategic pillars are primarily implemented in Kenya. It also engages with regional and global human rights defenders' networks for advocacy and movement building. The Hub supports strengthening of WHRD networks in the Eastern Africa region through training and capacity strengthening. It is a member of several regional and global networks of women human rights defenders.

The Hub is the only network of women human rights defenders in Kenya. Similar networks exist in Uganda and Tanzania. The Hub is a member of the consortium of Women Human Rights Defenders Protection Networks, East Africa, which is an initiative of three national networks of women human rights defenders based in East Africa, namely: Women Human Rights Defenders Network Uganda, Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders Tanzania, and the Women Human Rights Defenders Hub in Kenya. The consortium was formed by the networks in response to the increasingly complex and difficult contexts in which they operate.

Since its establishment in 2019, the Hub's work has revolved around four pillars – safety and security, femtorship, economic livelihoods, and wellness. These areas of focus were informed by the founders' experiences, while working with mainstream human rights groups, of gaps in the protection of women human rights defenders.

1. **Safety and Security pillar** focuses on actions that keep WHRDs safe through a gender sensitive approach.
2. **Femtorship** pillar seeks to grow and expand the next generation of women human rights defenders and activists.
3. **Livelihoods** pillar seeks to support investments in startups by women human rights defenders to empower them financially and economically to sustain their human rights protection work.
4. **Wellbeing** pillar seeks to ensure that WHRDs remain grounded emotionally and physically.

These four pillars will continue in the strategic plan period, and two more added.

5. **Movement and Partnerships** pillar seeks to create strong WHRD networks and movements nationally, in the region, and across the continent.
6. **Institution Building** pillar to position the Hub as the premium WHRD organization nationally and regionally.

1.2 Vision

An empowered, just, and equitable society where women human rights defenders thrive to their full potential.

1.3 Mission

We amplify and enhance holistic protection programs that invest in femtorship and economic empowerment of networks of women human rights defenders.

1.4 Overall goal

A society where WHRDs achieve wellness, safety, protection, and appreciation, and occupy spaces of decision making in all spheres of development processes.

1.5 The Hub's Principles

The Hub commits itself to upholding the following principles.

- Identify as a feminist organization.
- Identify with and commit to the struggle for WHRDs and women's societal liberation and transformation.
- Support all women human rights defenders in their diversities.
- Recognize and continuously develop WHRD networks as central to women empowerment, sustainable development, and enhancement of participatory and democratic processes.
- Work with and through partnerships and networks of women human rights defenders and allies of women human rights defenders.
- Understanding the lived experiences of WHRDs to leverage their experiences and resources of the community and their allies to address their needs.

1.6 Values

These are the values that guide the Hub internally and in relationships externally.

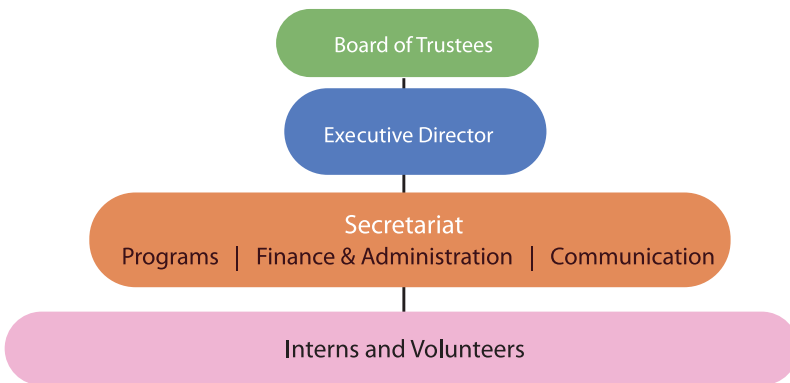
Acting with **integrity**, which means that we are accountable, transparent, honest, and open.

Commitment to equity, justice, empowerment, inclusivity, and diversity is at the core of who we are.

Innovation drives our holistic protection programs for women human rights defenders.

1.7 Governance and Management

The board is responsible for the governance of the Hub. It will be a woman only board and representative of women in their diversities. The board is responsible for recruiting and supervising the executive director, strategy and policy direction, and exercising broad oversight in the management of the organization. The secretariat is responsible for implementing the programmes and policies of the Hub. The executive director is responsible for day-to-day management of the Hub.



02 Context Analysis



2.1 External context

There are increasing violations against women human rights defenders in Kenya and in the region. Human rights defenders in Eastern Africa, and indeed in many other parts of the world, face a myriad of risks because of the work they do. These risks are well documented in the annual reports of The United Nations Special Rapporteur On Human Rights Defenders and reports of human rights defender groups at regional and national levels.

Women human rights defenders face the same risks that male human rights defenders also face. However, as the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders has stated in her 2019 report, ‘women defenders often face additional and different risks and obstacles that are gendered, intersectional and shaped by entrenched gender stereotypes and deeply held ideas and norms about who women are and how women should be’. See Situation of women human rights defenders

According to the Special Rapporteur, the most common violations reported against women human rights defenders are, in order of the most common, arbitrary detention, arrest, imprisonment or criminalization; threats or intimidation including online; judicial harassment; torture and or ill treatment; and physical attacks. Psycho-social stress and illness is a common occurrence for women human rights defenders faced with these violations, particularly when they are also ostracized by their families and community for their work.

At a convening in August 2023 that brought together national women human rights defenders’ networks from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, targeting of WHRDs in digital spaces was identified as a growing problem. Digital spaces have offered new platforms for WHRDs but at the same time those opposed to their work have used these same platforms to attack WHRDs, taking advantage of the anonymity that digital space offers. Specific online challenges include cyberbullying, defamation, deep flakes, impersonation, online stalking, harassment, surveillance, online fraud, extortion, hate speech, profiling and targeting. The type of HRDs that tend to face these online threats were identified as female politicians, journalists, and bloggers, as well as women activists who are involved in campaigns that challenge patriarchal traditions and norms that discriminate the rights of disadvantaged groups.

Peak periods for WHRDs violations include:

- A. Election seasons i.e. the period before, during, and immediately after elections, particularly during the transition of leadership. Kenya has presidential and parliamentary elections coming up in 2027 which, if history is anything to go by, will be strongly contested by the incumbent, President William Ruto, and the opposition. Elections in Kenya are drivers of increased targeting of human rights defenders.
- B. During and after significant policy, legislative, or judicial moments that are anti-or pro-rights of women and sexual and gender minorities or challenge patriarchal norms. Such moments are taken advantage of to whip up and mobilize anti-women and anti-sexual and gender minorities sentiments that easily escalate to physical and psycho-social violence against WHRDs.
- C. During an influx and/or interest of public or private sector investors, particularly in oil and mineral exploration or mining and large farming projects. These situations tend to escalate risks for HRDs raising their voices against such projects or demanding information, transparency, and accountability in their operations.

Human rights defenders' organizations have in addition faced deregistration and closure, freezing of bank accounts using anti-terrorism and anti-money laundering legislation, restrictions to foreign funding, and onerous regulatory demands, among others, all aimed at frustrating their work of protecting and defending human rights. The risks to human rights defenders and human rights defenders' organizations emanate from both State and non-State actors. In 2015, government froze the bank accounts of two leading human rights organizations in Kenya using anti-terrorism legislation thereby disrupting their work. The bank accounts were unfrozen after a successful challenge in court.

Women human rights defenders are in particularly vulnerable situations when (a) they are working in conflict, post-conflict, and crisis affected regions; (b) they are members of, and working for, marginalized and criminalized communities.

The mainly male-led human rights defenders' movements at national and community levels are often inadequately positioned to respond, with a gendered approach, to the safety and security, psychosocial and wellness, livelihood, and other needs of women human rights defenders. As the Eastern African Women Human Rights Defenders Protection Network has noted in a report following its August 2023 convening, existing HRD organizations do not always understand unique needs of women HRDs, partly linked to their gender roles; women HRDs are not always involved in risk analysis by these mechanisms; the work of these mechanisms are not always grounded in gender or feminist perspective; and the mechanisms tend to have limited investigations into violations of women HRD.

Climate change and natural resources exploitation are exacerbating risks to women human rights defenders. Climate change, with its often-cyclical effects such as droughts and floods, is exacerbating the struggle for livelihoods for women human rights defenders particularly in arid and semi-arid counties. Women human rights defenders at the forefront of environment justice in the face of State and private sector led land grabs and exploitation of natural resources, for example oil exploration, mining, and large-scale farming, also bear the brunt of violence, harassment, and intimidation. These risks will continue to increase in the coming years as climate change worsens and appetite for land grabs and extractives rises.

Dominant social and cultural attitudes persists and shapes human rights violations against women. Women human rights defenders work in a context that is shaped by various social and cultural attitudes. For example, we live in a pre-dominantly patriarchal society which privileges men over women, and men hold much more power than women in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. Patriarchy results in gender inequalities in society. Patriarchal attitudes significantly contribute to violations of the rights of women, and results in early marriages of girls, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, violence, and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence. It leads young girls having lesser access to economic opportunities.

Patriarchal attitudes also mean that women human rights defenders are often delegitimized by their own families and communities, and by some human rights defenders' organizations, because they are seen to have stepped out of their traditional and cultural roles as mothers, wives, caregivers, etc. Moreover, they juggle their roles as human rights defenders with their other roles as mothers, care givers, and bread winners.

Impunity thrives despite largely positive normative framework for human rights defenders in Kenya. The normative framework for the protection of human rights defenders in Kenya, including women human rights defenders, exists. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Human Rights Defenders sets out an elaborate framework. In 2016, the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights passed the Resolution on Measures to Protect and Promote the Work of Women Human Rights Defenders

Moreover, women human rights defenders are entitled to the whole range of human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various international and regional human rights instruments. Nationally, human rights defenders are entitled to the range of rights in the Constitution and other laws.

Despite the normative framework, violations against women human rights defenders are growing. Impunity is at the core of this situation. Violations against human rights defenders continue primarily because there is a long history in Kenya where violators, particularly State actors such as those from

security agencies, have not been held to account due to politically influenced law enforcement, corruption, and weak judicial systems.

Violators know they can and will get away with their acts. Strengthening the normative framework with laws specifically protecting human rights defenders is important and this needs to go hand in hand with enforcing existing laws.

Kenya does not have a law that focuses specifically on the protection of human rights defenders, unlike some African countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Niger. The passage of such a law would significantly improve the normative framework for human rights defenders in Kenya.

Women human rights defenders lack economic empowerment. While lack of economic empowerment impacts both male and female human rights defenders, women human rights defenders bear the brunt of it, as women, as heads of families, and as human rights defenders. Women human rights defenders working at community levels in rural and urban areas are likely to be struggling with where the next meal for the family will come from. Many lack basic health and social insurance.

Women human rights defenders' networks at the community level are few, and weak. In recent years, counties in Kenya have become important sites for the exercise of political and economic power, as well as for abuse of these powers, expressed through corruption, skewed allocation of development resources in favour of political strongholds of incumbents, ethnically or clan-driven appointments to the County public service, and violence and intimidation of human right activists monitoring and reporting on such abuses.

Human rights activists working at the County level are in a much more vulnerable position. They are often isolated from each other, lack access to national human rights defenders' protection mechanisms, and have limited understanding of and access to necessary legal knowledge and tools that can be supportive of their work. As is to be expected, the situation of women human rights defenders working at County levels is exacerbated by gender and dominant cultural and religious narratives.

Creating and strengthening human rights defenders' networks at the county level, and particularly networks of women human rights defenders, is critical to building and sustaining accountable County governments.

There is increasing attention to the situation of women human rights defenders at global, regional, and national levels. There has been increasing attention to addressing the needs and situation of women human rights defenders at global, regional, and national levels.

The UN Special Rapporteur has led in profiling the situation of women human rights defenders. Women human rights defenders' initiatives and networks are

emerging at national and regional levels. In Kenya, the Women Human Rights Defenders Network, established in 2019, is the first initiative focused on women human rights defenders in the country. The Uganda Women Human Rights Defenders Network and the Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders Tanzania, also recently established, are playing similar roles. At the regional and continental levels, Women Human Rights Defenders Protection Networks-East Africa, and the African Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders have been established.

Shrinking civic space. Civic space has been shrinking in the region and in Kenya, experienced through regressive legislation, heavy compliance and regulatory requirements that restrict civil society organizations, State surveillance, cyberbullying, public threats against activists and civil society organisations leaders, and specific actions to restrict civil society organizations operations like such as freezing their accounts. The rise of the anti-rights and anti-gender movement across the world comes within this context.

Funding is declining. Funding for human rights organizations in Eastern Africa has been declining in recent years due to a myriad of reasons, including shifting donor priorities by Western bilateral funders, who have traditionally supported human rights organizations in the region, turning their attention and resources to respond to the war in Ukraine and the Middle East and the migration crisis as well as the classification of Kenya as a middle-income country (hence shift from aid to trade frameworks in relations with the developed world). The funding situation is, and has always been, worse for women human rights organizations. Competition for the available resources can be fierce. Innovative fundraising from new and non-traditional donors, with a focus on long-term unrestricted funding, is urgently needed. Human rights organizations must do more with less, and they must be even more innovative in how they deliver their programmes impactfully and efficiently.

2.2 Internal context

2.2.1 The Hub's strengths

Committed board and experienced secretariat

Board members have long experiences relevant to the Hub's mandate. Presently, there are four members of the board who are drawn from the legal fraternity, media, women-led community networks, and professional bodies.

The current lean team at the Secretariat, led by the executive director, bring passion, commitment, and experience in human rights generally and particularly in protection of women human rights defenders.

Strong unique brand

Despite being relatively young, the Hub is quickly building a strong, unique, and visible brand. It is the only organization serving women human rights defenders in Kenya, in their diversities, with a rural, grassroots, and informal settlements focus.

Innovative programming

With support of the Hub, women human rights defenders are increasingly organizing at the community level in rural and often isolated contexts.

Safety and security are being redesigned by the Hub to be delivered in ways that are responsive to the lived experiences and needs of women human rights defenders. Our approach will be in designing initiatives that deliver both physical and digital safety and security for the women human rights defenders.

Economic empowerment for women human rights defenders, despite its challenges, offers the potential for sustainable engagement and resilience of women human rights defenders by addressing their livelihood needs. The economic empowerment initiatives will be intentional and co-created with the women rights defenders to ensure they are fit for purpose and responsive to their needs and experiences.

Femtorship is creating pathways for young female human rights defenders to prepare to step into the shoes of veteran defenders, thereby sustaining the feminist agenda. The Hub will co-develop and leverage tech-based solutions for protection of women human rights defenders accessible at community levels.

2.2.2 Opportunities for organizational strengthening

Strengthening the board

The Hub seeks to have a board that is inclusive of women in all their diversities and is nationally representative. A search is under way for more board members. There are additional skills that are needed in the board, for example financial oversight, media and communication, and tech. A board charter needs to be developed.

Strengthening the secretariat

The team needs to grow its capacities to enable effective delivery of the strategic plan. Priority will be given to existing staff to acquire needed additional capacities. The Hub will also need to be continually intentional and alive to the protection and wellness needs of her own staff members.

Strengthening organisational policies and systems

The Hub will need to quickly build the pillars of a healthy organization, including developing core policies on safeguarding, IT, human resource management, finance, procurement, and governance.



03

The Strategic Framework: Theory Of Change, Pillars, Goals, Objectives, And Key Activities

3.1 Theory of Change

An empowered, just, and equitable society that works for all (the Hub's vision) is possible only when women in all their diversities can meaningfully challenge structural and patriarchal barriers that hinder their realisation of human rights. For this to happen, WHRDs must be able to work effectively and impactfully.

WHRDs can only work effectively and be impactful when they have sustainable livelihoods, and when they and their allies can defend women's human rights in a holistically safe, secure, and healthy environment while working in a strong and vibrant movement. At the same time, it is necessary to empower the next generation of WHRD.

The Hub's contribution to the realization of an empowered, just, and equitable society that works for all is investing in: sustainable livelihoods for WHRDs in all their diversities; holistic protection for WHRDs (safety, security, wellness); strong WHRD movements; and inter-generational WHRD organizing. The Hub's focus is on WHRDs in rural areas and informal settlements when the need is greatest and WHRDs are most vulnerable and invisible.

The Hub understands that entrenched impunity, cultural and social attitudes oppressive to women, a rising anti-rights and anti-women agenda- all these in a patriarchal context- are challenges that stand in the way, and the Hub, working with other actors must contribute towards addressing and degrading these critical challenges.

3.2 Strategic pillars, goals, objectives, and key activities

Informed by the theory of change, the Hub will focus on six strategic pillars—safety, livelihoods, wellbeing, femtorship, movement building, and institution building—that have been identified based on the organization’s understanding of gaps in the human rights defenders’ movement concerning the needs of women human rights defenders as well as analysis of the external context. The goals, objectives, and key activities under each pillar are described below.

In addition, the Hub has the following cross-cutting approaches across all pillars:

- i. Partnerships with State and non-State actors
- ii. Advocacy in strategic national, regional, and global spaces
- iii. Capacity building of women human rights defenders’ networks
- iv. Leveraging technology.
- v. Working inter-sectionally.

3.3 Safety/Usalama pillar

Under this pillar, the Hub develops appropriate preventive and responsive strategies for the safety and security of WHRDs both offline and online. The Hub conducts an ongoing analysis of trends of the women human rights defenders’ working environment to inform the development of safety strategies tailored to meet the context and work of the defenders.

The **‘Usalama’** pillar will focus on holistic safety and security interventions informed by trend analysis. The Hub will conduct risk assessment on reported cases of threats to the WHRDs and for organizations and networks led by and for WHRDs. Under this pillar, the Hub will collaborate with protection partners on provision of suitable gender respecting interventions for the WHRDs.

GOAL

To create a safe and secure environment for WHRDs through holistic protection.

Objectives

1. To enhance the capacity of WHRDs on safety and security.
2. To advocate for an enabling legal and policy environment.
3. To enhance access to referral pathways with duty bearers and other stakeholders.

Key Activities

- i. Undertake ongoing situational and trends analysis of risks faced by WHRDs.
- ii. Develop a customized safety/usalama training curriculum for WHRDs.
- iii. Conduct physical and digital safety and security training for WHRDs.
- iv. Provide responsive and gendered protection, including psychosocial support to WHRDs based on risk assessment.
- v. Engagement with referral partners including working closely with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights to advocate inclusion of WHRDs needs and concerns in the model policy for protection of HRDs.
- vi. Undertake research on key issues and concerns of WHRDs to inform advocacy.
- vii. Capacity strengthening on human rights-based approaches to advocacy.
- viii. Participate in and engage with relevant key policy spaces such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, the African Court, Africa Union, and regional and UN special mechanisms.

3.4 Livelihoods/Ustawi pillar

The pillar focuses on WHRDs not just as caregivers but also amplifying their contribution to the socio-economic fabric of society. The **'Ustawi'** pillar will focus on empowering WHRD networks to venture into business startups to enable them to meet their livelihood needs as they undertake their activism work; advocate for food security, water, health, and land sector reforms at county and national levels; and foster innovation and creativity of WHRDs by utilizing local resources as well as patenting the innovation with a view of building the profile of the WHRDs.

In the first half of the strategy period, the Hub will focus on two aspects only: building its internal capacity on the livelihood pillar through training and learning exchanges among others and analyzing and understanding the livelihoods ecosystem and the opportunities and challenges particularly in the context of human rights work. The sustainability of livelihoods initiatives is a key issue that the Hub must continually address.

GOAL To enhance the welfare of WHRD networks through economic empowerment programs.

Objectives

1. To foster linkages amongst WHRDs networks, government funds, private sector, and financial institutions.
2. To develop the entrepreneurial capacity of WHRD networks.
3. To highlight and celebrate WHRD's entrepreneurship initiatives.
4. To celebrate the efforts of WHRDs networks in the development and support of the human rights agenda.

Key Activities

- i. Build the Hubs internal capacity on livelihood interventions.
- ii. Establish linkages and partnerships for financing, marketing, and branding with relevant private sector, State, and non-State institutions.
- iii. Support WHRDs networks to map, identify, and package relevant and contextualised entrepreneurship opportunities.
- iv. Support WHRDs networks to undertake needs assessment/baseline survey to identify their gaps in relation to identified entrepreneurship opportunities.
- v. Develop a training guide based on the livelihoods/ustawi model.
- vi. Skills and capacity strengthening to WHRDs networks on identified entrepreneurship opportunities.
- vii. Support networks of WHRDs to set up collectively owned and managed livelihood initiatives.
- viii. Facilitate annual county-based exhibitions to showcase WHRDs entrepreneurship initiatives.
- ix. Train and create awareness among WHRDs networks to apply and access affirmative funding opportunities.

3.5 Wellbeing/Jitunze pillar

This pillar will focus on encouraging WHRDs and by extension human rights organizations to prioritize wellbeing and self-care within their work. The Hub seeks to focus on: investing on research to establish circumstances that may cause psychological distress to WHRDs; establish early warning systems and response mechanisms and protocols; enhance WHRDs skills and knowledge levels; as well as invest in response mechanisms to stress and other emotional disorders that WHRDs may face. The **'Jitunze'** pillar will enable WHRDs to focus more on their psychological, mental, and emotional rejuvenation to ensure maximum productivity in all areas of the WHRDs life.

To empower Women Human Rights Defenders emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Objectives

1. To establish early warning systems and response mechanisms for WHRDs.
2. To enhance WHRDs skills and knowledge levels on self-care.
3. To motivate WHRDs to prioritize well-being/self-care in their daily lives.
4. To connect WHRDs with referral pathways for wellness services.

Key Activities

- i. Needs assessment on wellbeing and wellness to identify areas for capacity strengthening of WHRDs networks.
- ii. Conduct debriefs and wellness clinics for WHRD networks.
- iii. Develop a toolkit for responding to trauma by WHRDs.
- iv. Provide one -on-one therapy sessions with a Counsellor on need basis.
- v. Develop an app-based platform for providing psychosocial support to WHRDs in need through a toll-free phone line, short text messages, chats, and video calls.
- vi. Establish referral pathways for cases requiring specialized care.
- vii. Basic counselling training for WHRDs.

3.6 Femtorship/Ushauri pillar

This pillar, now renamed from mentorship to femtorship, will focus on building alternative women leadership, also for the activism movement in Kenya. The **'Ushauri'** pillar will focus on building the capacity of young upcoming WHRDs through fellowship, study tour, advocacy, exposure visits and attachment to women community led initiatives for purposes of learning.

The pillar will also focus on enhancing their ability to run community initiatives professionally, leadership opportunities including collaborating with partners, and offering Political Leadership Development Program (PLDP) with a view of building WHRDs capacity to venture into political leadership thus opening spaces for the young activists to occupy. To cater for the various needs of WHRDs, the pillar seeks to create linkages with professional bodies with a view of expanding the WHRDs worldview and femtoring those who are pursuing different professions. Some of the professional bodies targeted are the media, medical, and legal fraternities, and business enterprises.

The pillar also hopes to expose the WHRDs and their initiatives to other spaces at national, regional, and international arenas where they will be exposed on how to engage with the national, regional, and international human rights systems with a view of bringing their voices on the decision-making table. This pillar will also focus on knowledge generation on the contribution of WHRDs in promotion and protection of rights as well as contribution of women in the liberation struggles of Kenya.

GOAL

To cultivate and nurture a culture of human rights among Women Human Rights Defenders for sustainability and continuity of human rights advocacy.

Objectives

1. To establish a structured femtorship framework at county and national levels that allows the young WHRDs to grow, learn and build their confidence to lead and undertake their work impactfully.
2. To enhance participation of WHRDs in leadership and decision-making processes and platforms at county and national levels.
3. To enhance the capacity of WHRDs to incubate local networks for human rights advocacy and collaborate with like-minded partners.
4. To create linkages between upcoming WHRDs; experts in law, health, and media; and professional bodies, with a view to expanding the WHRDs worldview.
5. To expose WHRDs and their initiatives to other spaces at national, regional, and international arenas.

Key Activities

- i. Build the capacity of young upcoming WHRDs through fellowships, study tours, exposure visits and attachments to women led initiatives.
- ii. Support engagement of upcoming WHRDs with relevant national, regional, and global spaces such as the African Union, African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, and the UN Commission on Status of Women.
- iii. Train the young WHRDs on leadership and governance and women participation in decision making using the Human Rights-Based Approach.
- iv. Link the potential women leaders with femtors/ role models (seasoned WHRDs).
- v. Identify and curate the right femtors and role models that can undertake structured femtorship.

- vi. Create linkages for women leaders to take up/vie for leadership positions at different local and national levels.
- vii. Facilitate media engagements with the potential women leaders.
- viii. Enhance the capacity of elected women leaders at both county and national levels so that they are effective gender equality champions.

3.7 Movement and cross movement building/Harakati pillar.

The Hub seeks to build strong networks and initiatives by WHRDs at community, national, and regional levels, with a view of solidifying collective actions that will bring change. The Hub also needs to be in the spaces of policy making and influencing such as the African Commission on Human and People's Rights and the Commission on Status of Women (CSW). Creating strong networks in the region and across the continent is critical as a response to the anti-rights movement which advances due to fragmentation of the movement. Moreover, change happens when there is collective engagement.

GOAL To enhance collaborations and solidarity for sustainable change.

Objectives

1. To build strong human rights movements that inform leadership and decision-making processes at county and national levels.
2. To create communities of practice for joint advocacy.
3. To create a network of like minded WHRDs to enable them plug into WHRD conversations.
4. To foster collaborations, partnerships, and networks of stakeholders supporting the work of WHRDs at local, national, and regional levels.

Key Activities

- i. Develop county WHRDs networks databases.
- ii. Capacity strengthening of network leaders on leadership, good governance, and resource mobilization for resilient networks.
- iii. Facilitate joint advocacy campaigns for WHRD networks for collective action.
- iv. Strengthen linkages with male champions (feminist activists) and build their capacity as change agents to publicly voice support to women's leadership and link them up with WHRD movements.

- v. Strengthen the WHRDs movement in the region and enhance collaboration with national networks in Uganda, Tanzania, and beyond.
- vi. Visioning and scenario building convenings at the regional level.

3.8 Institution building

The Hub must focus on and prioritise its institutional infrastructure. Effective governance, strategic leadership, engaged staff, mobilization of diversified quality funding, financial sustainability, efficient structures and processes, and visibility, among others, are critical.

GOAL

To position the Hub as the premium women human rights defenders organisation nationally and regionally.

Objectives

- 1. To strengthen staff capacity, motivation, and retention.
- 2. To establish an effective, representative, and engaged board.
- 3. To provide effective, efficient, and sustainable services for WHRDs.
- 4. To build financial independence for the Hub through sustainable financial streams.

Key Activities

- i. Develop and implement policies and procedures for governance board (board charter).
- ii. Fill up board positions informed by skills audit.
- iii. Staff skill set assessment and capacity development plan.
- iv. Staff performance reviews.
- v. Facilitate annual staff and board team building activities.
- vi. Develop and keep updated key organizational policies on financial management, people management, and procurement, among others.
- vii. Develop and operationalize a resource mobilization and sustainability strategy.
- viii. Establish and regularly update donor databases.
- ix. Develop robust IT strategy and infrastructure.



04 Risks And Risk Mitigation Strategies

4.1 Closing civic space risk

Risk: Closing civic space can result in physical attacks, online attacks, surveillance, de-registration, and assets freezing for women human rights defenders and women human rights defenders' organizations.

Mitigation: A rigorous and updated analysis of the operating environment and having a robust crisis response strategy in place is needed.

4.2 Governance and leadership risk

Risk: If the board does not properly discharge its visioning and fiduciary roles or there are capacity or integrity gaps by management, effective implementation of the strategy will be hampered. Founding board members could also overstay due to 'founder member syndrome'.

Mitigation: The Hub will prioritise continually strengthening the board and having management with the needed competences. Board will exercise effective oversight on management. The board will commission a governance audit every two years and implement recommendations. The governance charter and the board charter will have clear board membership terms.

4.3 Limited resources risk

Risk: The Hub's strategic ambitions may be frustrated by limited financial and human resources. The funding environment for women human rights work, already constricted, could worsen.

Mitigation: Innovative and diversified fundraising, lean and efficient operating model, working with and through strategy and value aligned consortia, and developing strategic partnerships will collectively contribute to addressing this risk. Another mitigation strategy is phasing the implementation through prioritisation planning with a focus on deepening the initiatives working and building out the most viable ideas step by step. Consistently reflecting on the scope and realistic planning will be helpful in not only realising impactful work but also ensuring staff wellness.

4.4 Partnerships risk

Risk: Patriarchal attitudes in the human rights movement may result in the Hub not being welcomed by some given its strategic focus on women human rights defenders only and feminist identity.

Mitigation: The Hub will continue to reach out to all in the human rights defenders' movement while maintaining a clear-eyed focus on women human rights defenders and calling out patriarchal attitudes in the human rights movement. There will also be an intentional focus of consistently messaging the importance of having a women rights defenders focus and the value it brings to the ecosystem.

4.5 Fiduciary risk

Risk: Financial mismanagement could occur in the organization leading to financial loss and reputation risks.

Mitigation: Having qualified staff overseeing the financial management whilst establishing, and enforcing robust financial policies and controls, strong board oversight, and rigorous internal and external audits will contribute to mitigating this risk.

4.6 Non-Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements risk

Risk: Non-compliance on statutory deductions and taxation and non-compliance with statutory regulatory requirements (for example workplace safety) could lead to fines and penalties.

Mitigation: Key staff will be trained on statutory and regulatory requirements. The management team will champion full compliance. Internal and external audits will help identify compliance gaps.

4.7 Reputational risk

Risk: The Hub's reputation could be compromised by unethical, unprofessional, or illegal conduct of board or staff members. Reputation risks can also arise from misinformation and disinformation by those opposed to the Hub's work.

Mitigation: Ethical conduct will be championed by the board and leadership and any ethical issues will be promptly investigated and action taken. The communication team will regularly monitor social media for any concerning references and take appropriate action.



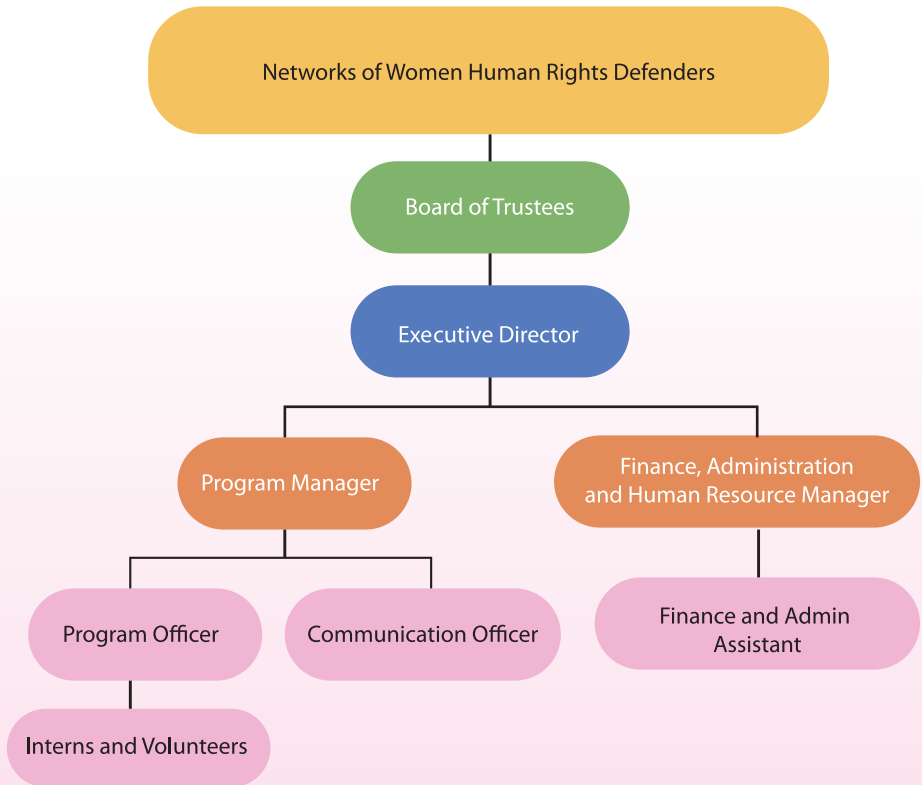
05 Resource Mobilization

The Hub has developed a resource mobilizations strategy. It will be mobilizing resources in a context in which funding for human rights work from traditional funders has been declining for a range of reasons. We raise resources from North based, regional, and national foundations such Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, Urgent Action Fund, and Hivos; bilateral donors active in the country; the European Union; and high net worth individuals, among others.

We will seek funding both individually and in strategy and values aligned consortiums. The Hub's niche, protection of women human rights defenders, is an area where several donors still retain keen interest.

The Hub's goal is raising quality funding – trust-based funding that is long term, aligned to its strategy, and as unrestricted as possible.

ORGANOGRAM





“

*Injustice is a sixth sense,
and rouses all the others.*
- Amelia Barr

”

P.O. Box 7403 - 00100, Nairobi, Kenya
Email: info@whrdhub.org
www.whrdhub.org