

# SCE Global Newsletter

January 2024



Photo credit: UN Women/Pablo Sanhueza

Second  
Chance



## WHAT IS SCE?

*UN Women's Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning (SCE) programme was created in partnership with BHP Foundation to fill the gap in support of women who have missed out on education and are at risk of being left behind. SCE provides them with a second chance to access learning and training opportunities and find pathways to empowerment.*

The SCE programme is now in its sixth year of the innovative pilot phase (2018-2024), which has been implemented across six very different contexts in order to create a broad evidence base for prototyping and model development for scale up.

Throughout the pilot phase, the programme has leveraged partnerships and used holistic approaches and digital technology to provide comprehensive solutions for SCE participants. SCE's three learning pathways of entrepreneurship, employment and return to formal education are tailored not only to participants' needs as learners but also to their future as earners. They may be offered in-person, online or through blended learning.

The pathways form part of SCE's signature features which reflect its holistic approach, encompassing support to address gender-based barriers, gender-transformative life skills, personalized support as well as advocacy and policy work.



Photo (top) : UN Women  
Photo (bottom) : UN Women

# GLOBAL SCE HIGHLIGHTS

## REIMAGINING EDUCATION

Voices from around the world united on 4 September in Abu Dhabi to celebrate the achievements and experiences of the SCE programme, showcasing its impact on women's lives and potential to scale. The event was a reminder that education has an essential part to play in reshaping destinies and creating a brighter future for all.

## A LEGACY OF EMPOWERMENT

**Claire Harbron**, representing the BHP Foundation, emphasized their commitment to breaking barriers and empowering marginalized individuals and communities.

## INSPIRING JOURNEYS

SCE participants from the pilot countries shared their transformative stories. **Yasmeen Bano** from India highlighted how education empowered her to break free from societal constraints and become an independent woman.

**Carmen Areli Tomas Hernandez** from Mexico shared her journey to empowerment and entrepreneurship.

**Azah Yolande Achoasah** from Cameroon showcased her journey of resilience and empowerment through her tailoring business.



## Roundtable Event in UAE

*On September 4, 2023, Abu Dhabi played host to a gathering orchestrated by the SCE programme with the invaluable support of UN Women colleagues in UAE: a roundtable event that brought together implementing partners, participants, private sector partners, government partners and SCE's main donor from 2018 to 2023, BHP Foundation.*

*The event was opened by distinguished dignitaries H.E. Zaki Anwar Nusseibeh and H.E. Sultan Mohammed Al Shamsi, who have played crucial roles within UAE in promoting foreign aid and cultural diplomacy.*

## CATALYZING CHANGE

**Josephine Ngum Niba Epse Awounfac**, Director of the Women's Empowerment Centre in Bertua, Cameroon, has supported hundreds of crisis-affected women through the SCE programme.

**Loreto Ferrari** from AIEP described the programme's significant impact in Chile, with over 3,000 women participating and 1,700 achieving certification. Nearly 40% have seen improvements in income and daily life.

**Flor Lopez** and **Yanai Rezende** from HP reiterated their commitment to gender equality and collaboration with UN Women.

**Paola Lazo**, from the Ministry of Substantive Equality in Jalisco State, Mexico, highlighted the programme's role in promoting women's rights and reducing gender gaps.

**Cyntia Soto**, representing ClaroVTR in Chile, described the programme's role in empowering women in the world of work.

## A COMMITMENT TO EMPOWERMENT

**Sarah Hendricks**, representing UN Women, emphasized the importance of partnering with organizations that share common goals to empower women.

**Anna Parini**, SCE Programme Manager, shared the plan for scaling up the innovative initiative: extending SCE's reach by scaling deep (through normative change), up (through policy reform), and out, by scaling to more countries globally and more women.



Photo (top): UN Women - Global SCE

Photo (middle): UN Women - Global SCE

Photo (bottom): UN Women - Global SCE

For more information on the speakers: [Click here!](#)

# SCE Cameroon

*In Cameroon, the SCE programme has made a profound impact on the lives of refugee and internally displaced women and vulnerable women in host communities. It has created new possibilities for women who have faced adversity, offering them a second chance at education and the chance of a brighter future.*

SCE in Cameroon is active in **seven** out of ten regions, targeting women who have been forced to flee their homes in Cameroon or in neighbouring countries due to conflict, as well as vulnerable women in the host communities. One of SCE's sites is in Bertoua in the Eastern Region, to which women flee from elsewhere in Cameroon, including for example the North West region, which has been grappling with a socio-political crisis since 2016.

## Unveiling the Sustainability Realities

### FROM SEEDS OF HOPE TO FIELDS OF OPPORTUNITY

In 2021, the SCE programme functioned as a lifeline for these resilient women. They were provided with crop farming training and start-up kits that included essential farm tools and seeds. With these resources, they started cultivating vegetables and greens in a local marshy area.

Starting with just five members, this determined group has now grown to ten members and expanded their cultivated land from the initial 1,000 square meters, provided by the village head, to 3,000 square meters. Their labour has produced tangible results, as the women involved now collectively earn an average daily income of USD 50.

### EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AND BREAKING BARRIERS

The impact of this newfound income extends beyond the women themselves. It has allowed their children to return to school, breaking the cycle of school dropout that is often associated with displacement and instability. By supporting their families, these women are contributing to the overall development of their communities, strengthening their social fabric and support networks.

### DIVERSIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

Such success stories are not confined to vegetable farming projects. Participants in the Far North Region have also made significant strides in cotton cultivation, ensuring a stable source of income year after year. Others have thrived in cultivating onions, while some have diversified into successful small-scale trading businesses.

SCE in Cameroon is a testament to the resilience and determination of women who, despite the odds stacked against them, are making the very most of the opportunities that SCE offers. These women are not just cultivating crops; they are nurturing hope, breaking barriers, and building sustainable futures for themselves, their families, and their communities.



# SCE Chile



## 100 women from Huechuraba, Maipú and Peñalolén get certified in digital skills

Inés Quintrel is 39 years old and is an entrepreneur from Maipú. She says that this is a very special day for her, because she is being certified in "Digital Skills", an initiative promoted by ClaroVTR and UN Women's Tu Oportunidad Programme, which promotes women's integration into the labour market through the provision of digital skills. Like her, 99 other female heads of household and entrepreneurs from Huechuraba, Maipú and Peñalolén received their certificates.

"It's a wonderful course. It has allowed me to have greater self-empowerment, to acquire tools I didn't have, and it made me realize how necessary it is to be digitized. I learned how to manage social networks and use spreadsheets, which will help me a lot to be able to grow my business", says Inés.

They spent two months in virtual classes and workshops in which they strengthened their socio-emotional and personal leadership skills, as well as learned how to use shared spreadsheets and manage social networks.

Cynthia Soto, Sustainability Manager at ClaroVTR, states that "as a telecommunications company we are convinced that, in order to open doors and real opportunities for women, digital skills are required. That is why for years we have been working on the development of programmes like this one, which allow us to empower women through technology, boosting their development, narrowing the gender gap and promoting their development in the world of work." She adds that this programme has a positive impact not only on the 100 certified women, but also on their families and, consequently, on their community.

Gabriela Rosero, Head of Office of UN Women in Chile, values the generation of such alliances, seeing them as a fundamental pillar for a more inclusive and equitable digital world. "The reduction of the gender digital divide is fundamental to building more inclusive, equitable and fair societies in the digital era. With this new certification we see how this partnership between ClaroVTR and UN Women promotes the full participation of women in technology, not only benefiting them but also their families, and enriching society as a whole by harnessing all the talent and perspectives available," she said.

## ***Tu Oportunidad - A Second Chance Education Programme Leadership School***

### **TRAINING WOMEN LEADERS TO BECOME AGENTS OF CHANGE**

***“It is we who support not only our families but also processes like, in my case, searching for decent housing, not only for myself but also for my neighbours. I feel proud to be an Indigenous woman. I am glad to know that despite the machismo that still exists, more and more indigenous women are taking over leadership spaces in different areas.”***

These are the words of Mireya Reyes Campusano, who graduated from UN Women’s Tu Oportunidad-Second Chance Education Programme Leadership School in Chile. Mireya lives in the city of Puerto Montt, in the region of Los Lagos, where she is the head of the Housing Committee at the informal settlement Chile Barrio, whose purpose is promoting decent housing for its inhabitants.



***“Tu Oportunidad - Second Chance Education Programme Leadership School” aims to promote women’s leadership and participation in the community and to strengthen their skills, knowledge, and tools in order to boost their roles as agents of change, promoting transformation. It is aimed at women from all over the country who exercise leadership roles in their communities, with a special focus on the Araucanía region and the southern region.***

The school provides online training for 10 weeks with three modules and three workshops of two hours each, and a celebration and closing ceremony at the end of the training programme. The participants receive personalized assistance from a female mentor, who is responsible for communicating the general and specific objectives of the school, as well as ensuring that the participants have everything they need to actively take part in all activities. The mentors provide individual support to women, constantly motivating them and being available to assist them with and oversee the homework given by the school.

The school’s chart displays the topics covered in the workshops of the programme. These workshops are based on ontological coaching, and on constructivist, and experiential learning approaches; all activities have a gender perspective. This specific programme gathers self-knowledge and personal growth activities that contribute to the empowerment of women leaders.



***Mireya expresses the importance of the programme for its participants:***


***“This training instance gives us the possibility to learn new tools to lead and have an influence in the territories, but above all, these are instances that allow us to appreciate the real importance that women leaders have in different areas.”***

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## **Tu Oportunidad participates in the Pacific Alliance Youth Volunteering Programme**

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***In the framework of the collaboration between the Chile Ministry for Youth (INJUV) and UN Women, and as part of the closing activities of the Pacific Alliance Youth Volunteer Programme, Javiera Vergara, Coordinator of UN Women's SCE programme in Chile, 'Tu Oportunidad', gave a talk on sustainable development with a gender perspective.***



The volunteer programme aims to enable young people from the member countries to contribute to overcoming the challenges of the region through an experiential learning experience. The event took place on August 18th at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and was attended by representatives of the UN, Government and Civil Society, as well as the 25 young volunteers who were selected from over 500 applicants from Chile, Peru, Mexico and Colombia for the project entitled "Youth, feminism and memory". This seeks to highlight the historical memory of women social leaders in the last 50 years, as well as strengthen advocacy skills and project development with a gender perspective.

# Promote the participation of Afro-descendant women in Chile

## STORY OF ELIAZARD ANTCHO

### PARTICIPANT OF THE TU OPORTUNIDAD PROGRAMME (SCE CHILE)

In the rich mosaic of Chile's cultural diversity, Eliazard Antcho, a 32-year-old Haitian woman, symbolizes resilience and empowerment. Arriving in Chile six years ago in search of better opportunities, Eliazard's journey intersected with the SCE Programme in Chile, 'Tu Oportunidad'.

Initially settling in Renaico, Araucanía, Eliazard worked as an intercultural facilitator, concurrently joining Tu Oportunidad. Now in Santiago, she studies Social Service and applies her knowledge at the Dolores Sopeña Foundation, guiding and advising Haitians. Her joy comes from witnessing users receiving residency permits, marking a step toward a new life.

Eliazard also leads Génesis, teaching parenting skills and Spanish in Puente Alto. Recognizing the language barrier, she strives to bridge this gap, understanding that effective communication is pivotal for integration.

Eliazard's SCE journey transforms not just her but her community. Workshops, especially on self-esteem, equipped her with tools like SWOT analysis, proving vital at the Dolores Sopeña Foundation.

Eliazard believes initiatives for Haitian women must adapt to the women's socio-cultural background. Her experience highlights the importance of female facilitators, which encourages higher enrollment and challenges gender roles.

She advocates for a cultural shift, dismantling beliefs that limit women's progress. Eliazard proposes initiatives that take into account caregiving responsibilities, promoting economic autonomy for Haitian migrant women.



As a translator for five years, Eliazard witnessed the impact of irregular migration on Haitian women's mental health. She dreams of creating a space for Haitians in Chile, offering mental health support. Her heart also yearns for family reunification, as she has navigated those complexities for six years.

Eliazard's journey illustrates the transformative power of education and community engagement. Her commitment mirrors SCE's global values, showcasing how education catalyzes change for women.

# SCE India

***"Big jobs with decent earnings are for the rich. I never thought I'd have the chance to pursue a GDA [General Duty Assistant] course in such a prestigious institute."***

## **BREAKING THE SHACKLES: SHABNAM ARA'S MOTIVATING JOURNEY**

Shabnam Ara (21) a powerful young woman from the small village of Maltola in the northern Indian state of Bihar, defied societal norms to chase her dreams. She completed her 12th grade with a vision of securing a decent job. However, opportunities were scarce around her, and she watched her days pass by amidst household chores.

In October 2019, the SCE programme commenced at Kishanganj, Bihar by PRADAN, opening new doors for young women of the region.

Shabnam, like many others, was approached by an SCE trainer during the mobilization phase. Initially, she had reservations about the programme's safety and viability, but orientation sessions at the Women Empowerment Hub\* by Himalayan Group\*\* provided clarity and hope.



Taking this opportunity, Shabnam enrolled herself in the vocational course- General Duty Assistant (GDA), convincing her parents to allow her to travel approximately 1,717 km away to the state of Himachal Pradesh. This was no easy feat, as rumours and criticism from relatives and neighbours poured in. However, with regular counselling and support from PRADAN, Shabnam and her parents managed to disrupt the limiting societal norms at stake.

In February 2020, Shabnam embarked on her journey to Indian state Himachal Pradesh with four other participants. Her first days were challenging, with no classes and a vast, empty campus. When classes finally began a few days after arrival, Shabnam found herself thoroughly engaged in her training. But soon after, the COVID-19 lockdown took over the country and she had to return home. After the lockdown ended, she returned to the hub and completed her training in December 2020. She later found employment, initially at a reputed Hospital in the state of Haryana and then in the state of Bihar. She now works in a town closer to her village for a lucrative salary.



## **Testimonial from SCE graduate**



***"I can now confidently speak in Tamil language with the patients. Learning the local language has helped me in understanding the patient's problems and providing the necessary assistance".***

**-- Sanskriti from Gaya, pursuing Diploma in Ophthalmic assistant at Sankara Eye hospital, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.**

\*Established at the district level via implementing partners, a hub is a safe physical space for women and girls to convene and access work opportunities, effective services, livelihood support, as well as educational and vocational learning support.

\*\* Himalayan Group is a private vocational institute from where Shabnam graduated as General Duty Assistant.

Photo (top): Shabnam Ara, UN Women - India

Photo (bottom): Gaya, UN Women - India



# Sustainable Art: Transforming Dreams through banana crafting in Maharashtra



In Maharashtra's Jalgaon district, the SCE programme and its local implementing partner, Head Held High Foundation, are undertaking a 10-day Banana Fibre Craft Training with 40 women. The goal of the training is to enable these women to learn the craft and build products to sell within the One District One Product initiative of the Government of India, to foster sustainable local employment and drive holistic socioeconomic growth.

One amongst the women undergoing training is Rina Umesh Koli (25), a young, widowed mother, who until this training was uncertain about her future. During the training, she has inculcated new technical skills and gained the confidence to interact with her peers. Five expert trainers provide the training, which consists of crafting 20 unique banana fibre products.

***Rina aspires to start her own business and become self-reliant, with the primary goal of providing a bright future for her children.***

Alongside these creative skills, Rina and her peers are gaining essential entrepreneurial insights, including in regards to pricing, packaging, branding, exhibition practices, logistic experience, operations management, and enterprise development. This knowledge equips them to establish and manage their businesses effectively. After training, market linkages will be facilitated through exhibitions, online and offline platforms, and various distribution networks, thereby supporting their path to economic independence.



## Video of SCE Participant



***Meet Rinku Kumari, a remarkable participant from Bihar, India.***

***She overcame numerous obstacles to earn her Class 12 Senior Secondary Certificate and now proudly operates her own home-run shop, providing for her family and pursuing her dreams of a brighter future for her children.***

***Discover more about Rinku's story at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jb4KMGokXdg>.***

# SCE Jordan

## Stitching Hope: Taghreed's Oasis Centre Journey



At the Muwaqqar Oasis Centre in a village located 30 km southeast of Amman, Taghreed embarked on a transformative journey. It began when she relocated from war-torn Syria to Jordan in 2013. Taghreed became a part of the Oasis Centre community, enrolling in a Sewing course that would be the foundation of her transformation.

The overall goal of the Oasis programme is that vulnerable Jordanian women and Syrian women refugees obtain better access to humanitarian structures and resilience-building initiatives in Jordan.

Taghreed first learned about the centre when she brought her daughter, who has a disability, to a course held in the same building. Intrigued by the centre's offer, she discussed it with participating women and decided to register herself. "The decision to register was challenging, as I have a daughter with a disability who requires constant care. However, with the help of my other daughters, I was able to register and be part of the Oasis centre." Taghreed shares.

Initially enrolling in just one course, Taghreed now considers the centre as her second home, and the people there as her family. Over the years, she has not only grown personally but also developed impressive skills, eventually becoming a trainer herself.

"I am extremely thankful that I no longer have to rely on my neighbors for financial support or have to defer supermarket payments. Life was very tough before I joined the Oasis Centre and started earning a salary. Additionally, the course helped me become a better tailor, leading to the expansion of my business. Having witnessed the impact of the course on my life and the positive changes it brought, I totally recommend it to every woman I know. I also advise any unemployed woman to pursue their passions and find ways to work from home. It not only provides a source of income but also serves to release stress and anxiety, to discover one's self-worth, and to foster self-belief," Taghreed passionately states.

Looking to the future, Taghreed dreams of expanding her business further and of supporting her daughter by continuing her studies.

***"Women here are ambitious, they love to learn and improve themselves. I learned many new techniques during the course, which made me a better tailor and improved my business. My personal growth has been remarkable; I feel more confident now. The Oasis Centre has truly transformed me"***



# SCE Mexico

## Fostering Women's Growth Through Mentorship: A SCE Success Story

In Mexico, the SCE programme is changing lives through the transformative power of mentorship. At the San Juan Cosalá learning hub in Jalisco, four SCE mentors are making a difference.

Mentorship at this hub goes beyond just having formal sessions every two weeks – it's an ongoing, personal journey. The mentorship starts with the mentors joining the participants in a human development workshop, allowing mentors to understand each participant's unique needs and goals. These mentors, who aren't SCE graduates themselves, accompany women in their trades, guide them on finances and life projects, and support their entrepreneurial journey.

While there are common themes for the mentorship sessions, mentors adapt their approaches to address the specific needs of each group. The participants are encouraged to share their personal stories, perform SWOT analyses, and focus on topics like self-esteem and time management. What is most remarkable is how mentorship fosters camaraderie among participants, enabling them to support each other.



The mentors maintain a strong bond with the women they guide. They provide reminders, offer personal support, and inquire about various aspects of their lives, including their well-being and the health of their children. This personal connection is pivotal to the success of the programme, allowing participants like Wendy to openly share their concerns and aspirations.

SCE mentors adapt to the ever-changing needs of the participants. Some participants require ongoing support after graduation. This adaptability is crucial to the programme's success. Effective mentorship is the key to unlocking participants' potential. For instance, Monica found a sense of belonging and comfort within the programme. She describes the supportive and caring environment created by her mentor, emphasizing that it allows participants to focus on personal growth and development.

Effective mentorship in the SCE programme nurtures strong peer support networks. Participants come together as a family and collaborate on various aspects of their projects. They learn to help each other, building a sense of camaraderie and unity. This supportive environment fosters trust and cooperation among the women, which is integral to the programme's success.

In the eyes of participants, mentorship is fundamental to their transformation, providing emotional support and motivation. Graciela, a participant from Guadalajara, mentions how the program was a second chance for her and how her mentor has become like family. She attributes the transformation of her life to the mentorship component and the strong bonds she has formed with fellow participants.

The SCE programme has given many participants newfound confidence, helping them overcome insecurities and fears. This transformation is often made possible through effective mentorship. Participants have noticed increased self-assurance in their lives, which positively influences their decisions and self-esteem.

## Engagement with Ximena Sariñana

Singer-songwriter, gender equality advocate and Mexico's Good Will Ambassador

In October, an exchange of experiences with Second Chance Education participants took place with Ximena Sariñana, Goodwill Ambassador, and Belén Sanz, UN Women Representative in Mexico. The private and safe space chosen for this was the greenhouse "La Soledad" in the State of Mexico, where a group of SCE women grow and harvest tomatoes, chard, and other vegetables for commercialization and consumption. Eleven graduates attended the meeting and shared stories on how SCE impacted their lives. Ximena Sariñana is Mexico's first Goodwill Ambassador. A mother, actress, model and singer-songwriter, she has released four studio albums and is preparing her fifth product, largely made with women. As a Goodwill Ambassador, Ximena is committed to using her voice to promote women's economic empowerment and access to education.



## Testimonies of SCE Participant

**Yesenia Xilonzochitl Becerra**  
38 years old  
San Juan Cosalá, Jalisco  
Completed the programme in January 2023

"Before, my life was about serving others: my children, my husband, and I didn't think about myself. Here, at SCE, I started to think about whether I liked something or not and started to understand that my priority is me. Now when I make a decision, I first think about what it looks like to me, whether I like it or not. I also learned to communicate better with my husband and children, to say when I don't like something, for example, when I don't like the way they talk to me, and that has made big changes in my family. It has been very important to learn to say no to things I don't like."

**Daniela Castillo Mitre**  
40 years old  
San Pedro, Puebla

"Honestly, my interest when I first entered the programme was the digital skills course and that it was only for women, but when I entered and started training, it was like discovering a new world with everything I learned and the treatment I received, it was just what I needed to get out of my depression, it made me feel appreciated and I started to feel excited, I started to belong to a group and to feel connected with other women and I also learned a lot, the digital skills training gave me just the learning I needed to take off."



Photo (top): UN Women - Mexico  
Photo (middle): Yesenia Xilonzochitl Becerra , UN Women - Mexico  
Photo (bottom): Daniela Castillo Mitre , UN Women - Mexico

## Graduations at SCE MEXICO

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SCE Mexico had seven graduation ceremonies to celebrate the women who completed their SCE training! In total, **418** women received a diploma in what were very cheerful graduation ceremonies in Huixquilucan, Toluca, and Lerma (Estado de México), Tehuacán and Ajalpan (Puebla), and Tlaquepaque, San Juan Cosalá and Guadalajara (Jalisco).

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It was the first time SCE held graduations in Jalisco. The three events were very different but all very moving. One of them was at the CEMEX learning center, which is located within the company's community center in Tlaquepaque. Another was in a beautiful space a few blocks away from the ProMéxico learning centre, in the small town of San Juan Cosalá in the Chapala Lake bank.

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The one in Guadalajara requires a special mention, as it was an event organized along with the Government of Jalisco with high-level political guests. UN Women's Mexico Country Representative, Mrs. Belén Sanz, attended the ceremony, along with Jalisco's Secretary for Substantive Equality between Women and Men, Mrs. Paola Lazo, the General Strategic Coordinator of Social Development of Jalisco, Mrs. Anna Barbara Casillas, and Mrs. Joanna Santillan, Coordinator of the Jalisco Volunteer Program and First Lady of the State of Jalisco. The graduation was hosted by the President of the DIF Guadalajara, and attended by state authorities, legislators, and dozens of families celebrating this achievement of the 152 graduates.

Photo : UN Women - Mexico / [Dzilam Mendez]



# GETTING TO KNOW THE SCE TEAM

## Javiera Vergara

PROGRAMME MANAGER OF SCE CHILE

### *When did you join SCE and what are your responsibilities?*

I joined in late 2018, as the Programme Manager. My major responsibilities include overseeing the overall implementation of the programme, from the implementing parties working directly with the women, to developing alliances, monitoring budgeting and guiding the team working in the country.

### *What is your favourite thing about SCE?*

One of my favourite things is all the innovative work that has come in while developing the programme. From designing learning and measuring tools to work in an online only modality, to the alliances with institutions working in digital inclusion and STEM. I believe SCE has opened doors for UN Women in terms of becoming a reference in economic empowerment through the use of digital tools.

Another thing is knowing the impact the programme has had throughout the years on the women, knowing their stories and how the programme provided them with tools to improve their livelihoods, and also their agency and overall self-confidence, as a community of women.

### *What are the most challenging parts of your role?*

Administrative-wise it has been a learning experience. Resource mobilisation is also a bit challenging, but it has presented a window to do advocacy for the programme and to disseminate the impressive results the programme has had.



### *What are your expectations for the team and for the whole programme for next year?*

We expect to have the team on board working fully on advocacy, strategic partnerships, and implementing the programme through our allies, reaching girls and women from all over the country and focusing on rural areas.