



Strategic Initiative
for Women in the
Horn of Africa

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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Report Design: Marce Digital
Artwork: Hussein Mirghani

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ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACSI	African Civil Society Support Initiative
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
CSCOV	Centre for Strengthening Community Voices
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EWER	Early Warning Early Response
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEN	Gender Equality Network
GHoA	Greater Horn of Africa
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIHA	Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WHRDs	Women Human Rights Defenders
WMVs	Women Market Vendors
WPAs	Women Peace Activists
WRAs	Women's Rights Advocates
WRA/Os	Women's Rights Advocates/Organizations
WROs	Women's Rights Organizations

MESSAGE FROM THE SIHA MANAGEMENT TEAM

We are pleased to share SIHA Network's 2024 Annual Report at a time when feminist leadership, solidarity, and collective action have never been more vital. Across the Greater Horn of Africa, women and girls continue to organise and advance justice under extraordinarily difficult conditions. In 2024, SIHA was privileged to walk alongside them; supporting their work, amplifying their voices, and strengthening the feminist infrastructure that sustains long-term change.

Over the course of the year, SIHA reached 36,062 women, girls, and community members through integrated programmes spanning protection, access to justice, economic empowerment, movement-building, and regional advocacy. These results were achieved amid escalating conflict, displacement, economic instability, and shrinking civic space. They reflect not only effective programming, but also the strength of partnerships built on trust, flexibility, and shared feminist values.

A cornerstone of SIHA's impact in 2024 was the continued growth and engagement of our membership network. The Network expanded to over 231 member organisations, representing a wide range of grassroots, women-led, and community-based actors across the region. Members remained central to programme delivery, advocacy, research, and movement-building; often operating in high-risk environments while sustaining critical services and organising efforts. In line with our commitment to locally led change, over 90% of SIHA's sub-grants amounting to USD 1.44 million—were disbursed directly to members, enabling them to lead interventions at community, national, and regional levels.

Across all programme areas, SIHA prioritised survivor-centred, trauma-informed, and adaptive approaches. Women and girls accessed legal and psychosocial support in conflict-affected settings; displaced and migrant girls gained skills, mentorship, and safe spaces; women in informal economies strengthened their livelihoods while influencing policy change. At the same time, SIHA ensured that evidence generated at community level through feminist research, documentation, and storytelling shaped advocacy at regional and international platforms.

2024 also reinforced the importance of institutional resilience and accountability. In response to volatile operating contexts, SIHA continued to strengthen internal systems, risk management, safeguarding, and learning processes. These investments enabled the organisation to remain responsive in emergencies while maintaining strategic focus, financial integrity, and duty of care toward staff, members, and partners.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our donors, members, and partners for your continued collaboration and principled support. Your partnership enabled us to combine rapid response with long-term movement-building, and to stand firmly with women's rights organisations at a time when feminist spaces are increasingly under threat. We recognise that this work is collective, and that progress is made possible through sustained commitment and shared responsibility.

As we look ahead, SIHA remains focused on deepening member engagement, strengthening feminist knowledge production, and expanding pathways for women and girls to shape policy, peace, and justice across the region. The challenges are significant, but 2024 has once again demonstrated that when feminist movements are resourced, connected, and trusted, they generate lasting impact.

We invite you to engage with this report as a reflection of what we have achieved together—and as a foundation for continued partnership in advancing gender justice in the Greater Horn of Africa.

In solidarity and on behalf of the SIHA Management Team,



Hala Alkarib
Regional Director
SIHA Network



WHO WE ARE

The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) Network is an indigenous African women's rights network dedicated to women's rights, founded by female activists from Somaliland, Ethiopia, and Sudan. SIHA was established in 1995 by a coalition of women activists aiming to enhance the capabilities of women's rights organizations addressing issues of women's subordination and investigating violence against women and girls (VAWG). SIHA has evolved into a respected feminist network with over 200 members throughout the Greater Horn of Africa (GHOA). Currently, SIHA occupies a distinctive role as a regional civil society network operating in politically unstable environments.



OUR MISSION

SIHA aims to contribute to unlocking the massive potential of the women's rights movement in the GHOA. This will be accomplished by strengthening the education of civil society organizations so that they can build a strong collective that advocates for systemic change. In this way, SIHA works through and in support of broad coalitions of grassroots members to campaign and advocate women's rights and equality.



OUR VISION

SIHA envisions women and girls in the GHOA living in a peaceful, just environment where they can exercise their equal rights as human beings.



STRATEGIC AREAS

Our work focuses on the following strategic areas:

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
- Women and Girls' Access to Justice
- Women's Social Protection and Economic Justice
- Rights of Women and Girls on the Move
- Building Inclusive Women's Movements

COUNTRIES OF OPERATION

SIHA is presently active across 8 countries namely, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somaliland and Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.



OUR VISION FOR CHANGE

As a regional feminist network, SIHA works to shift policies and laws in the GHoA to promote equality, peace, social justice, and human rights through movement-building, knowledge production, and advocacy. Through its members, women's rights activists, and leaders across the GHoA, SIHA recognizes that movement-building strengthens the collective power of women and girls, enabling them to unite in dismantling patriarchy and advancing gender justice. It also draws from the strength of women's diversity, unlocking their potential and providing a platform for them to voice their struggles for equality, justice, and peace. This vision for change is guided by intersectional and feminist lenses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) Network delivered gender justice interventions amidst escalating war, economic collapse, civic repression, and humanitarian crises across the GHoA). Despite formidable challenges, SIHA reached 36,062 women, girls, and community members through feminist programming rooted in movement-building, legal empowerment, violence prevention, economic justice, and transformative advocacy.

This report outlines achievements across SIHA's five strategic pillars: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); Women and Girls' Access to Justice; Women's Protection and Economic Justice; Rights of Women and Girls on the Move; and Building Inclusive Women's Movements. Our work was further strengthened through regional advocacy, cross-border coalitions, trauma-informed care, and the resourcing of grassroots leadership in conflict-affected and displacement settings.

From peace activism under bombardment to cross-border feminist solidarity, SIHA's work in 2024 exemplified adaptability, resilience, and radical care. Notable milestones included strategic litigation, youth-led activism, safe spaces for survivors, feminist peacebuilding, and advocacy campaigns that advanced regional and international policy influence.

SIHA 2024 IMPACT IN NUMBERS



Key Outcomes



Movement Building & Leadership



Knowledge Production & Visibility

38

Publications produced (research, statements, gender alerts, press briefings, memos & toolkits).

5

Newsletters issued with dispatches, testimonies, legal insights & organiser interviews.

13

Multimedia products released (videos, radio shows, podcasts & campaigns).

10

Media appearances by SIHA leadership.

5

Awards & Recognitions received by SIHA staff.

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR REPORT

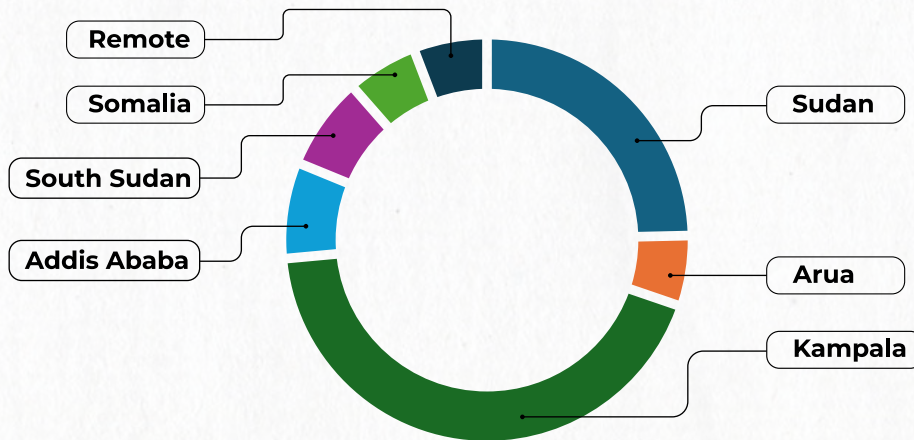
The SIHA Human Resource (HR) Annual Report is a critical pillar reflecting the organisation's overall health, accountability, and the sustainability of its human resources practices. The 2024 report provides both a record and an analytical review of the workforce, offering insights into staff structures, staffing levels, gender balance, turnover, recruitment, training, performance management, and staff welfare.

SIHA COUNTRIES OF OPERATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

AREAS OF OPERATION

SIHA Network continues to operate in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), South Sudan (Juba and Wau), Sudan (Kassala), Somalia (Mogadishu), Somaliland (Hargeisa) and Uganda (Kampala and Arua).

Staff Distribution across countries of operation as of December 31, 2024

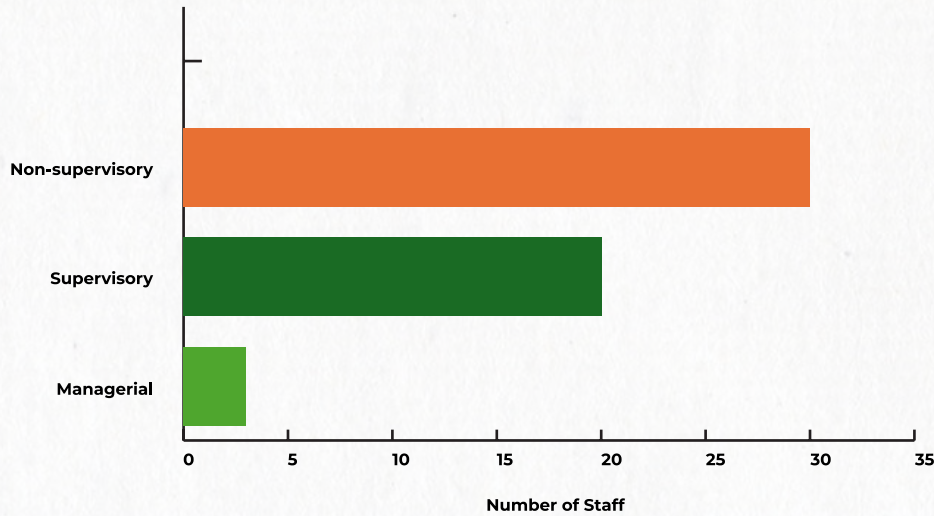


STRUCTURE THE HR DEPARTMENT

The HR department is staffed by two personnel who support the Regional Office and country operations, covering all human resource management functions for over 53 full-time staff, interns, and a pool of consultants. The Regional Human Resource Officer, based at the Secretariat in Kampala, Uganda, and the Sudan Human Resource Officer both operate under the direct supervision of the Regional Head of Finance and Administration.

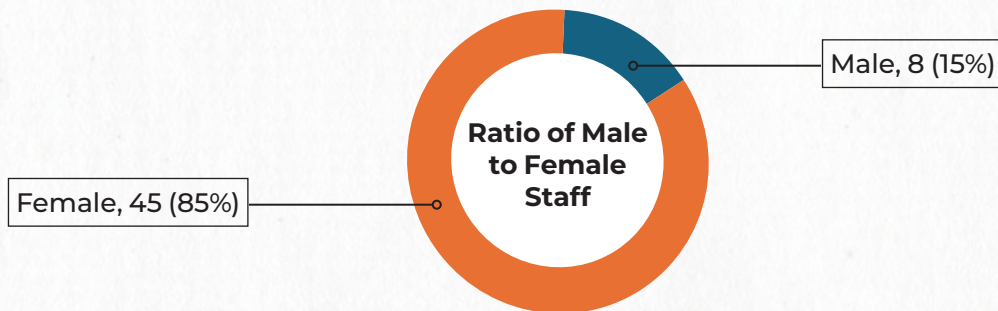
With the consistent increase in the number of projects implemented by SIHA, human resource demands continue to grow, creating a need for the HR department to be more creative and innovative in its support and offerings to staff.

Job level Distribution



RATIO OF MALE TO FEMALE STAFF

SIHA Network’s staffing ratio of 85% female to 15% male reflects its core mandate as a women’s rights and empowerment organisation. This balance mirrors the communities of women and girls served across the Horn of Africa and fosters allyship and shared responsibility in advancing gender equality.



STAFF TRAINING AND STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The HR department, with support from other teams, implements an annual staff training and capacity-building calendar through which tailored trainings are delivered by both internal and external facilitators. Deliberate measures are in place to ensure a rigorous induction process for all new staff, led jointly by HR, Finance, Procurement and Compliance, Programmes, and Senior Management.

Below are some of the trainings that were conducted:

TITLE OF TRAINING	DATE
Digital process review and training	7-Feb-24
Project Management (all staff)	21-Feb-24
SIHA Advocacy & Comms Strategy	11-Apr-24
Monitoring & Evaluation Tool	24-Mar-24
Report Writing	24-Apr-24
Cyber Security Training	12-Jul-24
Advocacy & influencing	28-Aug-24

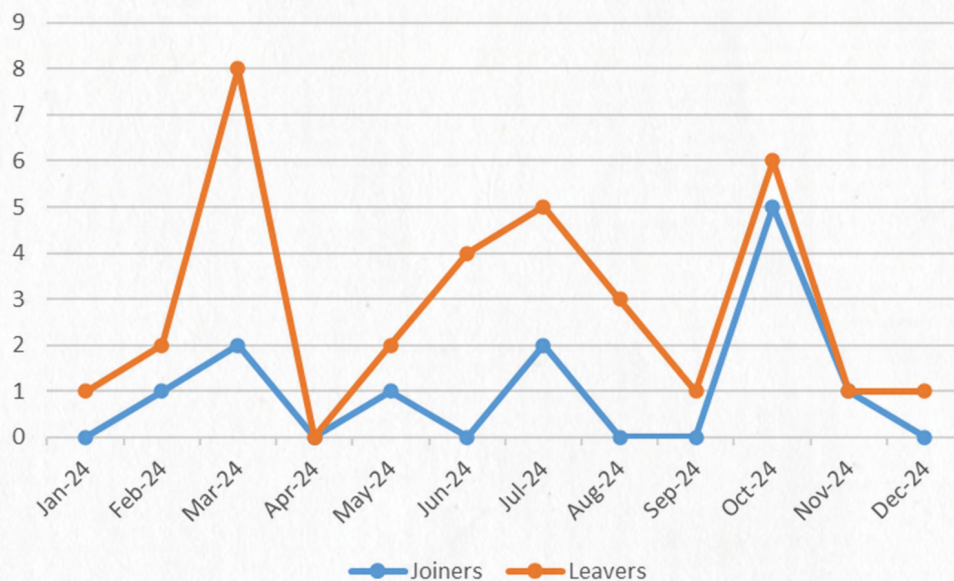
EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Staff departures continued during the year as a result of voluntary resignations and non-renewals linked to organisational restructuring and project closures.

A total of **21 staff members** exited the organisation in 2024, of whom **14 departures were due to contract expiries that were not renewed**, while **7 were voluntary resignations**.

The annual staff turnover rate stood at **36.8%**, with the increase largely attributed to contract non-renewals. The organisation continues to actively mobilise resources to maintain staff numbers, while adapting its operations to the unique and complex working environment of the Horn of Africa.

A graphical representation of staff joiners versus leavers for the year 2024 is provided below:



RECRUITMENTS AND HR EXPANSION

The following positions were filled in a timely manner in line with SIHA's recruitment guidelines, ensuring continuity of operations. The new joiners are highly qualified and experienced professionals who meet the organisation's technical and values-based requirements. They demonstrate a strong commitment to SIHA's mission and feminist, human rights-centred work, thereby strengthening overall institutional capacity.

SN	POSITION	LOCATION	START DATE
1	Regional Communications Assistant	Kampala	12-Feb-24
2	Regional Consortium Associate	Kampala	1-Mar-24
3	Regional Program Associate	Kampala	1-Mar-24
4	South Sudan Field Coordinator	Juba	1-Mar-24
5	Partnerships and Fundraising Specialist	Remote	1-Jun-24
6	Finance and Budget Officer	Kampala	4-Jun-24
7	Regional Advocacy Associate	Kampala	4-Jun-24
8	Regional Research and Advocacy Officer	Remote	1-Oct-24
9	Regional Consortium Coordinator	Kampala	7-Oct-24
10	Project and Advocacy Officer	Addis Ababa	1-Oct-24
11	Sudan Program Associate	Kassala	1-Oct-24
12	Project and Administration Associate	Wau	4-Nov-24
13	Finance and Administrative Officer	Addis Ababa	4-Dec-24

4.2. CROSSROADS INTERNATIONAL – SCHOLARS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE (SSC) AND VOLUNTEER COOPERATION PROGRAMME (VCP)

SIHA also entered into partnership with Crossroads International to host volunteers and Mastercard Foundation alumni attached to the organisation to gain practical work experience in their respective fields of study. Under the Volunteer Cooperation Programme (VCP), one scholar joined SIHA on 2 September 2024 and is currently supporting programme operations.

SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE IN WAU, SOUTH SUDAN

SIHA's operations were directly affected by the shrinking civic space in South Sudan during the reporting period. During an official visit to Wau, Regional Secretariat staff were arbitrarily detained and subjected to harsh conditions, resulting in a temporary paralysis of operations due to unrealistic legal demands imposed by local authorities.

SIHA intervened to secure the release of the affected staff, facilitate their evacuation, and restructure the Wau office, reducing the team from six staff members to one. In the aftermath, psychosocial support was provided to all affected staff, underscoring SIHA's commitment to safeguarding staff wellbeing while continuing to operate in fragile and restrictive civic environments.

STAFF TEAM-BUILDING EVENTS

SIHA convened a joint team-building event in Kampala for the South Sudan team, together with colleagues from the Regional Secretariat. The training combined safety and security, self-care, and team cohesion sessions, delivered through both theoretical and practical approaches.

A total of **13 staff members** participated in the event, strengthening collaboration, resilience, and cross-country solidarity. This initiative directly contributed to SIHA's capacity to sustain effective and cohesive teams in fragile operating environments.

MAJOR HR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

MAJOR HR ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Expanded Presence and Resilient Operations:** SIHA maintained operations across six countries with multiple field offices, despite operating in fragile civic and political environments.
- **Lean but Effective HR Function:** With only two HR officers supporting over 53 staff, interns, and consultants, SIHA demonstrated efficiency and adaptability in managing diverse HR functions across the region.
- **Dynamic Organisational Structure:** A flexible and responsive organisational structure enabled staff participation in initiatives and decision-making, fostering collaboration and accountability.
- **Gender Representation:** The workforce composition—85% female and 15% male—strongly aligned with SIHA's mandate on women's rights and empowerment.
- **Staff Training and Induction:** Annual training and capacity-building programmes were successfully implemented, including structured induction processes across all departments.
- **Volunteer and Scholar Engagement:** Through partnerships such as the

Crossroads International Volunteer Cooperation Programme (VCP), SIHA integrated international scholars and volunteers, strengthening skills exchange and knowledge transfer.

- **Staff Wellbeing and Team Building:** Joint team-building, safety, and security training held in Kampala enhanced resilience, collaboration, and self-care among staff.
- **Crisis Management in Fragile Contexts:** SIHA effectively responded to the detention of staff in South Sudan by securing their release, restructuring the Wau office, and providing psychosocial support—demonstrating a strong commitment to staff safety and wellbeing.

MAJOR HR CHALLENGES

- **High Staff Turnover:** Annual staff turnover stood at 36.8%, primarily due to contract non-renewals (14 staff) and voluntary resignations (7 staff). This level of turnover disrupted continuity and institutional memory.
- **Resource Limitations:** Project-based funding constrained the organisation's ability to renew contracts and maintain stable staffing levels across operations.
- **Fragile Civic Space and Security Risks:** The South Sudan incident highlighted vulnerabilities associated with operating in hostile environments, increasing pressure on HR systems to safeguard staff while sustaining programme delivery.
- **HR Capacity Gaps:** With only two HR officers managing a large, geographically dispersed workforce, the department remains overstretched, limiting deeper strategic engagement.
- **Retention and Motivation:** Limited career progression opportunities and reliance on short-term, project-based contracts continue to affect staff morale and retention.

PROSPECTIVE HR PLANS (JANUARY 2025 – DECEMBER 2025)

- **Retention and Career Development:** Introduce structured career progression pathways, mentorship, and succession planning to reduce turnover and retain institutional knowledge.
- **Strengthening HR Capacity:** Expand the HR department to support a growing workforce and provide specialised support in recruitment, training, and staff welfare.
- **Digital HR Solutions:** Roll out HR information systems to streamline data management, recruitment processes, and performance monitoring.
- **Enhanced Staff Welfare:** Scale up psychosocial support, wellness programmes, and flexible work arrangements to address stress and burnout.
- **Security and Risk Preparedness:** Embed safety and security protocols within HR frameworks to strengthen preparedness for operating in restrictive civic

spaces.

- **Gender and Diversity Focus:** Maintain strong female representation while promoting inclusive policies that engage men as allies in advancing women's rights.
- **Stronger Partnerships:** Expand collaborations with volunteer programmes, universities, and international networks to supplement staff capacity and promote cross-learning.
- **Policy Harmonisation:** Streamline HR policies across SIHA's countries of operation while ensuring compliance with national labour frameworks.

A NOTE ON COMPLIANCE

OPERATIONAL LOCATIONS

COUNTRY	OPERATIONAL LOCATION
Uganda	Kampala Arua
Sudan	Kassala
South Sudan	Wau Juba
Somalia	Mogadishu
Somaliland	Hargeisa
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa



ETHIOPIA

SIHA's operations continued to become more established in Ethiopia, as reflected by a slight increase in staff numbers during the year. To accommodate this growth, the office was relocated to a larger space. The address changed from the 4th floor of Dirar Mall, in front of Salitemihret Church (Gurdshola to CMC Road), to Sub-city Yeka, Woreda 09, House Number 825, Office Number 404.

In 2024, SIHA also took steps to better understand and respond to the operational context in Ethiopia by seeking expert guidance to streamline compliance in line with Ethiopian laws and regulations.



SOMALIA

SIHA in Somalia is registered with the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, with its office based in Mogadishu. The SIHA office is hosted by one of its members, SWCCA, and is staffed by two team members.



SOMALILAND

SIHA's office in Hargeisa is hosted by one of its members, NAGAAD Network, and has been registered with the Ministry of Planning and National Development since January 2024. Registration renewal is conducted on an annual basis.



SOUTH SUDAN

SIHA in South Sudan is registered as a national organisation with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, with registration renewed annually.

SIHA operates two offices, located in Wau and Juba. In Wau, the office was relocated mid-year from Rose Hotel to the One Stop Centre, a strategic move aimed at improving project monitoring and implementation.

The Juba office remains within the compound of the South Sudan Council of Churches and was moved to a larger office space to accommodate growing staff numbers.



SUDAN

SIHA's operations in Sudan continued to face significant disruption due to the ongoing conflict. Despite these challenges, the organisation leveraged its registration in Gezira State to maintain operational continuity.

Following the closure of the Khartoum office in 2023, SIHA identified and established an office space in Gezira early in the year, which operated for a short period before the conflict spread to the state, necessitating relocation and the identification of a more secure location.

In March 2024, SIHA successfully established a secure office in Kassala, which remains operational to date. To ensure continued support for women and girls affected by the conflict, SIHA also established focal points in various safe locations to support programme implementation and extend services to those most in need.



UGANDA

SIHA in Uganda operates two offices located in Kampala and Arua districts. The regional office is based in Kampala, while Arua serves as a country office. SIHA is registered with the National Bureau for NGOs and holds a valid registration certificate and operational permit with a five-year validity period, up to July 2028.

SIHA Uganda is fully compliant and registered with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA), National Social Security Fund (NSSF), and the Personal Data Protection Office (PDPO).

MEMBERSHIP

OVERVIEW



In 2024, SIHA significantly strengthened and expanded its membership network across the Horn of Africa. Membership grew **from 153 members in 2023 to 231 members** in 2024, reflecting the addition of 78 new members. This growth demonstrates the increased visibility of SIHA's work, strengthened outreach efforts, and the implementation of a more structured membership application and approval process.

Despite operating in contexts characterized by armed conflict and economic pressures, SIHA remained committed to nurturing a dynamic, inclusive, and resilient feminist membership community.

SUPPORT PROVIDED TO MEMBERS

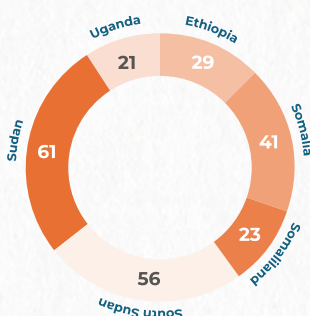
Capacity strengthening remained a core pillar of SIHA's support to its members. Throughout 2024, members benefited from targeted trainings in cybersecurity, digital marketing, communication and networking, leadership and advocacy, gender justice, and survivor support. SIHA also supported practical skills-building initiatives, including shoe-making projects for women in Uganda, as well as technical and vocational skill-building for migrant girls in South Sudan and Somaliland.



Beyond membership growth, SIHA sustained its investment in strengthening member organizations through direct financial, technical, and advocacy support. In 2024, over **90% of sub-grants, totaling USD 1,440,405**, were disbursed to members, enabling them to implement feminist programming at community, national, and regional levels.

Members collaboratively implemented flagship initiatives such as Justice for Women, We Have Rights, and We Cannot Wait, reinforcing collective impact and regional solidarity. SIHA also facilitated joint advocacy and lobbying efforts, including coordinated statements and engagements at national, regional, and international levels.

In addition, SIHA invested in research, knowledge production, and learning, including conducting capacity assessments of members and affiliates to inform tailored support and future programming. Members continued to benefit from regular information sharing, peer learning exchanges, and solidarity spaces that strengthened cross-country feminist collaboration.



MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION BY COUNTRY

As of 2024, SIHA's membership composition was as follows: Ethiopia (29 members), Somalia (41 members), Somaliland (23 members), South Sudan (56 members), Sudan (61 members), and Uganda (21 members).

CHALLENGES FACED BY SIHA IN MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Despite notable progress, SIHA encountered several challenges in managing and sustaining its growing membership.

Membership fee collection: There remains a significant gap between the number of registered members and those able to consistently pay membership fees, including annual subscriptions and dues. This affects the financial sustainability of the membership system.

Economic vulnerability of member organizations: Many SIHA members are grassroots, women-led, or community-based organizations with limited institutional funding and low financial resilience. Economic pressures, inflation, and rising operational costs across the region have further constrained their capacity to meet financial obligations associated with membership. For organizations operating in humanitarian or crisis-response contexts, income instability and reliance on short-term project funding make predictable fee payments particularly challenging.

Uneven engagement and participation levels: SIHA's expanding membership has resulted in varying levels of engagement across countries and organizations. While some members are highly active in network initiatives, advocacy platforms, and collective actions, others face barriers to consistent participation due to insecurity, limited connectivity, language barriers, or capacity constraints. This uneven engagement makes it challenging to ensure equitable access to opportunities and to sustain a shared sense of ownership and accountability within the Network.

Operating in conflict and restricted civic space: SIHA's membership engagement is further complicated by ongoing armed conflict and shrinking civic space in several member countries. In these contexts, members may face surveillance, movement restrictions, or threats to their safety, limiting their ability to participate openly in network activities or formal membership processes. These conditions also disrupt communication channels and delay administrative processes, including fee payment and membership renewal.

CHALLENGES FACED BY SIHA MEMBERS IN THEIR CONTEXTS

SIHA members continued to operate in highly constrained environments that affected their organizational sustainability and participation in network activities.

Armed conflict and insecurity: Ongoing and escalating armed conflict, particularly in Sudan, alongside localized insecurity in parts of Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, disrupted the operations of many member organizations. Several members experienced office closures, staff displacement, loss of assets, and interruptions to community-based programming. In extreme cases, organizations were forced to suspend activities entirely, limiting their participation in network engagements and advocacy processes.

Funding constraints and donor shifts: Many members faced shrinking funding opportunities due to shifting donor priorities, increased competition for limited

resources, and heightened compliance requirements. Grassroots and women-led organizations were disproportionately affected, as short-term funding cycles and rigid donor conditions constrained long-term planning and institutional development.

Shrinking civic space and political restrictions: Members in several countries faced increasing restrictions on civic space, including surveillance, bureaucratic barriers, and limitations on assembly and advocacy. These conditions constrained feminist organizing, reduced public engagement, and heightened risks for women human rights defenders and peace activists.

PLANS FOR MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

To address these challenges and further strengthen its membership base, SIHA will prioritize the following actions in the coming period:

Streamlining the annual membership fee payment process: SIHA will strengthen the sustainability of its membership system by streamlining the annual membership fee payment process. This will include establishing clear timelines and standardized fee structures, alongside timely communication to members regarding payment expectations, deadlines, and the benefits associated with active membership status.

Completing the membership application cycle: SIHA will strengthen and fully operationalize the membership application cycle to ensure transparency, efficiency, and timely onboarding of new members. Each stage—application submission, verification, country-level review, board approval, and feedback—will be clearly defined, time-bound, and consistently applied across all countries. Standard operating procedures will be developed and shared with country teams and board members to reduce delays and ensure uniform interpretation of the SIHA Membership Criteria. Applicants will receive regular communication and feedback on the status of their applications, fostering trust and accountability. Completing the application cycle will also support accurate reporting, maintain an up-to-date membership database, and ensure that new members are promptly oriented and linked to relevant opportunities, trainings, and governance processes within the Network.

Selection of membership focal points for each country: SIHA will designate Membership Focal Points in each country to serve as the primary link between the Secretariat and national members. These focal points will support the application and onboarding process, track membership status and fee payments, facilitate communication, and coordinate member engagement at the national level. They will also play a key role in identifying capacity-building needs, supporting localized networking, and ensuring that member priorities and concerns are effectively communicated to the regional Secretariat.

PROGRAMME INTERVENTIONS

ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCING

In 2024, SIHA's advocacy remained both rooted in grassroots realities and expansive in reach, reflecting a strategic, intersectional feminist response to an increasingly volatile and repressive regional context. Despite widespread insecurity and shrinking civic space, SIHA amplified the voices of women and girls across the GHoA, leveraging grassroots knowledge, community-driven mobilisation, and international policy engagement to influence public discourse, policy, and power structures.

REGIONAL ADVOCACY FOR GENDER JUSTICE AND WOMEN'S PROTECTION

Amid continued armed conflict in Sudan and political repression across the region, SIHA spearheaded multi-level advocacy efforts to expose human rights violations, particularly violence against women and girls (VAWG). SIHA documented conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), forced displacement, and the systemic targeting of women human rights defenders (WHRDs). These stories were strategically disseminated via radio, social media, press conferences, and international forums such as the 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) in New York and African Commission of Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) Ordinary Sessions, ensuring that grassroots experiences influenced global narratives and justice mechanisms.

The Amenat Campaign, launched in Kampala in December 2024, emerged as an important initiative for Sudanese women's advocacy. It elevated testimonies of survival and resilience, while demanding structural responses to gendered violence, discrimination, and impunity. This was reinforced through emergency protection grants for WHRDs, enabling at-risk activists to continue their advocacy work safely.



Women human rights defenders in Kassala discussing the effects of conflict-related sexual violence on the lives of women and girls in the Sudan war during a radio talk show held in Kassala in observance of the 16 Days of Activism

FEMINIST PEACE ADVOCACY AMID CONFLICT



SIHA's feminist peacebuilding work in 2024 was shaped by adaptation to war and displacement. In Sudan, SIHA supported community-based women-led groups called Women's Peace Collectives to continue their organising in Kassala, Dilling, and Kadugli. These groups convened during Women's Peace Week, engaging over **600 participants** through forums, cultural expression, and the co-creation of a Feminist Peace Statement. These efforts demonstrate that even amid fragmentation and militarisation, women's grassroots movements and activists, continue to sustain calls for nonviolence and inclusive peace processes.

CROSS-COUNTRY SOLIDARITY AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

SIHA strategically fostered cross-border solidarity through joint advocacy forums. Through the We Cannot Wait (WCW) Consortium SIHA hosted the 2024 Regional Gender Forum, bringing together consortium partners, feminists, and grassroots women's rights organizations from Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan. Over the 3-day forum, participants-built solidarity and leveraged cross-learning to craft localized strategies for confronting rising anti-gender backlash and bolster women's agency and resilience.



Our Regional Director, Hala Alkarib (left), at the "New Voices for Peace" panel during the 2024 UN Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security. The session, hosted by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and its Executive Director, Ambassador Melanne Verweer (right), highlighted the challenges women and girls face in conflict zones

In Ethiopia and Sudan, SIHA hosted advanced strategic litigation and legal reform trainings for 44 female lawyers. The trainings focused on gender-sensitive legal approaches, including documentation of CRSV and engagement in regional legal advocacy. These lawyers are now equipped to lead policy dialogues and pursue justice in highly constrained legal environments.

Additionally, SIHA's leadership participated in high-level international spaces such as the CSW68, the 1st Joint Forum of the Special Mechanisms of the ACHPR, 2024 FriEnt

Peacebuilding Forum in Berlin, ACHPR Ordinary Sessions, and the 23rd Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), positioning grassroots feminist realities at the centre of global gender justice debates. SIHA's participation ensured that regional and national patterns of gender-based repression and civic space erosion were acknowledged in international policy spaces.

YOUTH-DRIVEN AND COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCACY

Youth forums in the Somali Region, South Sudan, and Sudan tackled issues including Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C), political participation, and peacebuilding. In Internally Displaced Camps (IDPs), adolescent girls participated in and led menstrual health campaigns, established safe spaces, and shared stories through creative toolkits like Aida's Migration Story, reshaping public perceptions of girlhood and migration through collective storytelling. In South Sudan, SIHA worked with youth and the local community to break the silence and stigma around menstrual hygiene.

"From this session I've learned to maintain hygiene and gained the courage to ask my father for money for pads." – young girl participant, SIHA menstrual hygiene day awareness session in South Sudan

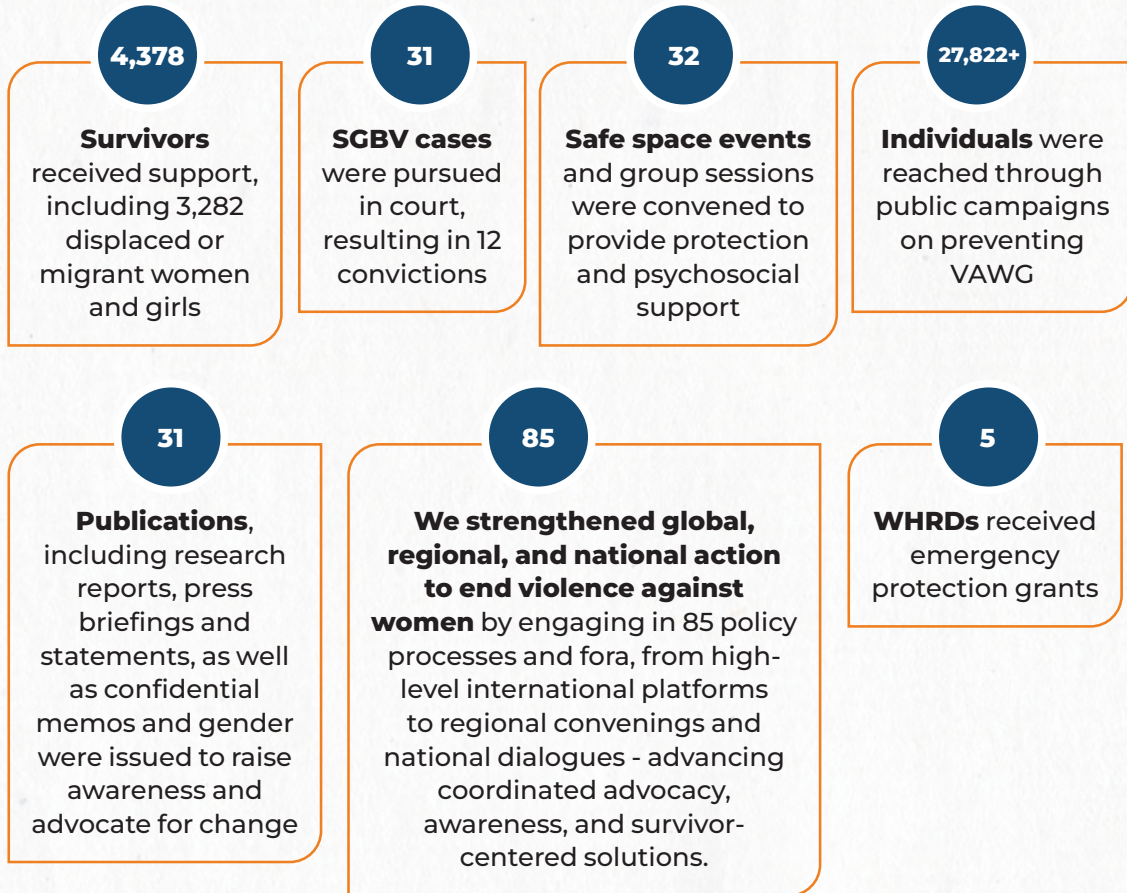


A cross section of participants during a three-day Regional Migrant Adolescent Girls Training of Trainers held in Kampala, Uganda. Ten (10) adolescent girls from Somaliland, South Sudan, and Sudan took part in this transformative event, which equipped them to become mentors and sources of inspiration for vulnerable internally displaced adolescent girls within their communities

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a core strategic pillar of SIHA's feminist mission across the Greater Horn of Africa. In 2024, amidst escalating conflicts, mass displacement, and backlash against women's rights, SIHA expanded its multi-layered, survivor-centred approach to interventions to combat gender-based violence through community engagement, service delivery, legal reform, movement-building, and feminist advocacy. Women and girls most affected by intersecting marginalisations – including displacement, informal labour, disability, and youth – were centred in all interventions.

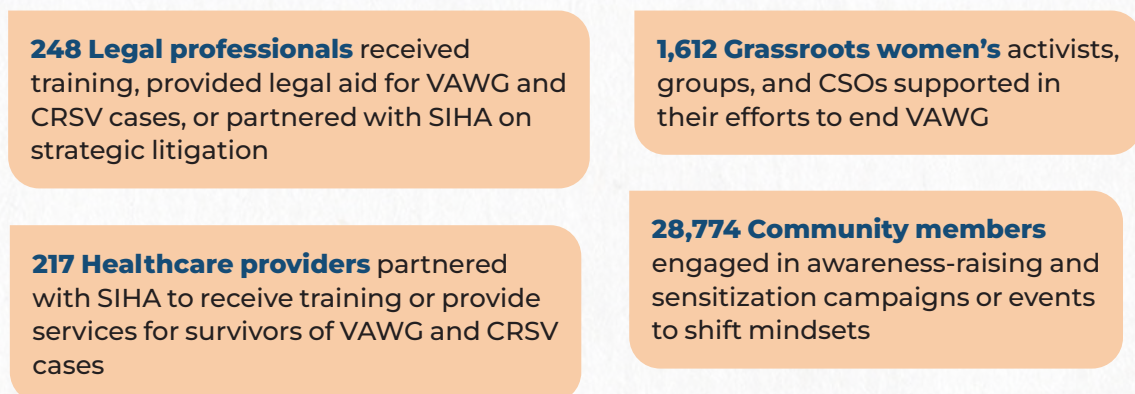
IMPACT SNAPSHOT



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

Across the Greater Horn of Africa, SIHA reinforced cross-sectoral collaborations with grassroots women’s groups, civil society coalitions, legal professionals, and healthcare providers. In Sudan, Ethiopia, and the Somali Region, SIHA built partnerships that positioned women survivors and activists at the forefront of documenting gendered violence, influencing legal reform, and challenging impunity for perpetrators of VAWG.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT



LEGAL EMPOWERMENT AND ADVOCACY

Women lawyers from Ethiopia and Sudan were trained in survivor-centred legal approaches, CRSV documentation, and strategic litigation. In the Somali Region, SIHA and local partners continued to push for the long-delayed Sexual Offences Bill and supported direct legal and psychosocial aid for SGBV survivors.

- 81 women lawyers, 44 from Sudan, received training on documenting conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and 37 from Ethiopia, using strategic litigation as a tool for feminist legal advocacy.
- 50 paralegals across five IDP camps were given support to allow them to provide legal aid and referrals to survivors within the camps.

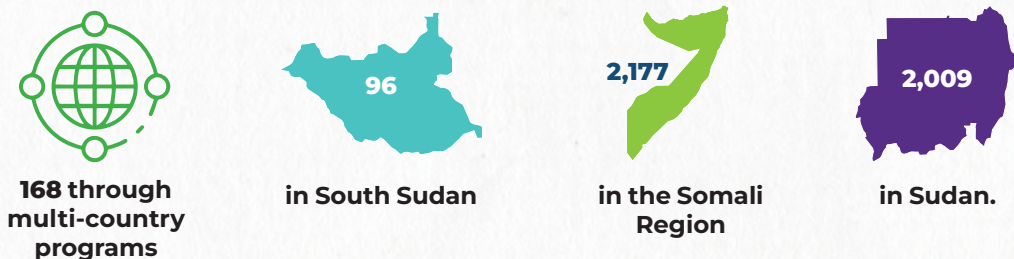


A group photo of women lawyers from Ethiopia during a training on survivor-centred legal approaches, CRSV documentation, and strategic litigation

SERVICE DELIVERY

In Sudan, South Sudan, and the Somali Region, SIHA scaled up its direct support to survivors of SGBV through medical, legal, psychosocial, and material assistance. Mobile clinics, shelter-based counselling hubs, and emergency protection grants were leveraged to support survivors, IDPs, and WHRDs' access to care even in active conflict zones.

A total of **4,378 survivors** received legal and/or psychosocial support across all SIHA interventions in 2024, including:



EMERGENCY, MICRO, AND SUB-GRANTS

SIHA provided 162 grants to over 200 survivors of VAWG and at-risk WHRDs. The grants provided urgent relocation, medical assistance, psychosocial support. This support in several cases allowed WHRDs to continue their legal advocacy work. For example, one grant supported a female journalist to undergo an urgent surgery, allowing her to continue reporting on SGBV. Another grant enabled a women's human rights lawyer, who had been abducted, to safely relocate and resume providing legal aid to civilians facing harassment and detention.



162 grants to over 200 survivors of VAWG and at-risk WHRDs across the region

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS



A participant of a peaceful march organized to raise awareness on strengthening advocacy and support for sexual violence survivors in IDP camps in Somaliland

In 2024, SIHA reached over 27,000 people through community dialogues, radio broadcasts, multi-media campaigns, webinars, safe space conversations, among other events and initiatives dedicated to ending VAWG. In Sudan, radio forums broadcast across Kassala and Kadugli addressed SGBV, early/forced marriage, and protection for

survivors of VAWG and CRSV. The Gezira Press Conference was particularly powerful as speakers called for protection, humanitarian assistance, and safe evacuation routes for civilians, particularly for women and girls, fleeing Gezira, Sudan. During the press conference refugees from the conflict provided firsthand accounts of the violence and human rights abuses they witnessed. In Ethiopia, SIHA convened national dialogues with youth activists and CSOs to challenge the exclusion of women from transitional justice processes and highlight the urgent need for protection measures for women in conflict-affected zones. In Somalia and Somaliland, SIHA hosted workshops with religious leaders and traditional authorities, challenging participants to interrogate gendered barriers to justice and calling for stronger enforcement of existing laws.

During the 2024 16 Days of Activism, SIHA facilitated 9 events across the region, targeting women, girls, youth, community members, healthcare providers, and law enforcement to galvanise support for ending VAWG. These events were grounded in addressing the root causes of violence and underscoring the crucial role of holding perpetrators accountable.

CREATION OF SAFE SPACES

SIHA convened 32 feminist safe spaces through a mixture of physical and digital platforms. These safe space events included trauma support circles, storytelling events, and youth-led peer support networks. The safe spaces sought to enable survivors to build resilience and reclaim public narratives around VAWG.

A total of 32 feminist safe spaces were organized across the region, including 6 in the Somali Region, 16 in South Sudan, 5 in Sudan, and 5 in Uganda.



Young mothers and girls during a Safe Space event in Arua City, Uganda, which provided a platform for open dialogue and self-expression about the realities of early motherhood, often marked by lost childhoods and the pressure to prioritize their children's survival, and highlighted the challenges they faced in accessing sexual and reproductive health services, including fear and societal stigma

WOMEN AND GIRLS' ACCESS TO JUSTICE

In 2024, SIHA strengthened access to justice for women and girls in some of the GHOA's most repressive and fragile environments. Through legal capacity building, community-driven protection, strategic litigation, and advocacy for legal reform, SIHA pursued a feminist justice model that centred survivors and challenged patriarchal policies and legal systems.

COMMUNITY-LED LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

SIHA supported WPAs and WHRDs in leading community-driven legal initiatives across the Greater Horn of Africa. In Sudan, 87 Peace Collective members facilitated youth forums and protection dialogues, spotlighting CRSV and early/forced marriage. Their testimonies informed the Gezira State and the Forgotten Atrocities Report, laying groundwork for continued transitional justice advocacy efforts.

In Ethiopia, WRAs convened national forums calling for women's inclusion in transitional justice, while in the Somali Region, SIHA and partners like Somaliland Women's Research and Action Group (SOWRAG) and Voice of Somaliland Minority Women's Organization (VOSOMWO) led school workshops, community outreach, and legal education sessions.

In Ethiopia, SIHA collaborated with the Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA) to conduct peace dialogues and amplify voices of women with disabilities.

In South Sudan, SIHA facilitated legal awareness forums and developed position papers demanding women's inclusion in justice systems and legal processes.

In the Somali Region, menstrual health campaigns and legal referrals supported IDP girls' access to legal rights and health services.



Participants of the South Sudanese Women Leaders Round Table in Juba on August 16, 2024, convened to discuss women's political participation, legislative reforms, and key barriers to gender equality and the peace process

LEGAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND STRATEGIC LITIGATION

In Sudan and Ethiopia, SIHA deepened its investment in feminist legal empowerment by providing trainings for a total of 81 young female lawyers. The trainings were guided by a comprehensive Training of Trainers (ToT) manual on strategic litigation, law reform, and survivor-centred legal advocacy that SIHA co-developed in partnership with the Ugandan Association of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Uganda). This manual was adapted for conflict and post-conflict settings, with special focus on documenting CRSV. Some of the key topics covered in the manual include gender-sensitive policy reform, legal documentation, digital safety, and litigation strategies. As an outcome of the trainings, legal support networks were formed in both countries to challenge discriminatory legislation from a place of solidarity.

FEMINIST LEGAL NARRATIVES AND PUBLIC ADVOCACY

Throughout 2024, SIHA promoted legal activism through storytelling, documentation, and public mobilisation. In Sudan, the “Women’s War Stories” blog and a video documentary on Sudanese WHRDs and CRSV survivors, bring to light the realities of resistance, CRSV, and displacement. The Amenat Campaign used visual storytelling to demand justice for displaced Sudanese women.

In Uganda, SIHA partnered with FIDA-Uganda to conduct legal literacy sessions across four regions. These reached over 1,500 community members.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

A total of 28 publications on women and girls’ access to justice were also released, including 8 research reports, 16 statements, gender alerts, and press briefings, and 4 confidential memos shared with key stakeholders. By country of focus, these publications included 3 multi-country, 6 for the Somali Region, 1 in South Sudan, 17 in Sudan, and 1 in Uganda.

WOMEN’S PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

In 2024, SIHA expanded its efforts to advance women’s protection and economic justice across the Greater Horn of Africa. In response to the ever-changing contexts within which SIHA works, our interventions were adapted to better address the needs of women and girls in displaced populations, informal workers, and women living with disabilities. Through the integration of grassroots mobilisation, vocational skills training, cooperative development, psychosocial support, and public advocacy, SIHA created inclusive economic opportunities while safeguarding dignity, agency, and collective power.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND ECONOMIC ADVOCACY

SIHA's programming supported 3,617 women and girls in accessing vocational training, tools, and advocacy platforms. In Uganda, 400 women market vendors (WMVs) participated in occupational safety and GBV prevention trainings.



Results showed that of the 400 WMVs who participated:

- **98% of women** reported feeling **safer** at work,
- **76% noted reduced harassment** and increased awareness,
- **75% reported** an increase in **income**

Furthermore, SIHA facilitated a joint advocacy statement with the WMVs, bringing together vendors from Kampala and Arua, to collectively demand the domestication of ILO Convention 190. SIHA also supported the Naguru Women Market Vendors Cooperative Society in establishing a shoemaking and crafts hub, which functions as both a vocational training site and a community advocacy centre.

Between July and December 2024, SIHA supported the Arua City Women's Council in developing a landmark SGBV Ordinance. This process included a series of structured engagements – ranging from the bill's first reading, consultative meetings, and committee discussions, to its second and third readings within the city council. The ordinance garnered strong support from local policymakers, male allies, civil society organisations (CSOs), and the wider community, marking a significant milestone as the first bill ever passed by the city council. It is now set to be submitted to the State Attorney General at the national level for final approval, a critical step toward formalising the ordinance into law.



Event attendees at the launch of the Shoes and Craft Making Community Training Centre viewing products created by members of the Naguru Women's Market and Street Vendors' Cooperative. The centre is open to community members from Naguru and surrounding areas, aiming to equip them, especially women and girls, with vocational skills to strengthen economic resilience

In the Somali Region, women's rights organisations trained by SIHA and its partners participated in budget advocacy forums with the Ministry of Finance. Trainings included modules on financial literacy, public expenditure tracking, and gender-responsive budgeting, leading to increased representation of women in fiscal consultations. SIHA also provided start-up kits to young women, to support their ability to grow in their career field. In South Sudan, cooperatives trained by SIHA began engaging local governments to lobby for reduced market fees, safer vending zones, and inclusion in post-crisis recovery planning.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

To support women's protection and economic justice, 10 publications were produced in 2024, comprising 2 research reports, 3 statements, gender alerts, and press briefings, 4 confidential memos shared with key stakeholders, and 1 toolkit. By country of focus, these included 3 multi-countries, 1 in South Sudan, and 6 in Sudan.

Vocational Training and Livelihood Support

SIHA continues to use vocational training as means to help women and girls have more opportunity to access sustainable economic stability and independence.

The trainings focused on tailoring, baking, and hairdressing equipped girls with practical skills, and upon completion of the programmes, participants received start-up kits tailored to their respective fields, such as sewing machines, baking ovens, and hairdressing tools. In South Sudan, trainees from one of SIHA's vocational training programmes have since formed a cooperative that now operates a successful catering venture.



IDP girls from Somalia participate in a vocational training session that equipped them with comprehensive IT skills including graphic and web design, programming, and CCTV installation as well as Level Two garment-making training

In Somaliland, girls not only received vocational training but also actively challenged gender stereotypes in the process, advancing their own economic prospects while re-shaping community narratives around gender roles and career paths. Ten girls completed training in CCTV installation, graphic design, and advanced tailoring. Graduates of the programme were also provided with toolkits to support the launch of their small businesses.

A total of 16 training sessions were conducted, benefiting 351 participants, while 229 start-up kits were provided to 40 recipients.

SPORTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In recognition of the vital link between recreation, protection, and empowerment, SIHA facilitated sports events for girls in IDP camps, affirming the right of all girls to move freely, play, and enjoy leisure activities.

In South Sudan and Chad, girls' groups were equipped with sports gear and supported through mentorship, leading to the establishment of regular, structured recreational activities that:

- Increased girls' physical activity
- Improved mental health and emotional resilience
- Challenged gendered norms around public space use
- Strengthened peer networks and solidarity among adolescent girls
- Enhanced girls' leadership and teamwork skills
- Built community support for girls' inclusion in recreational and public life

SIHA also facilitated dialogues between boys and girls that promoted shared access to recreational spaces, contributing to attitudinal and mindset shifts among youth and camp leaders.



Group photo of Girls' Association members who participated in a volleyball game at the Ibrahim Mahmoud Shelter Center in Kadugli, Sudan. The event brought together associations for a day of games and fun, fostering unity and helping integrate girls affected by war into host communities

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND SAFETY

Recognising that psychosocial wellbeing is not only a basic need but also a foundational building block for economic empowerment, SIHA prioritised trauma-informed care within its economic programming. The creation of safe space conversations, peer-to-peer support groups in IDP camps, and extensive psychosocial support referrals were key components of SIHA's efforts to economically empower women and girls across the region.

In parallel, dignity kits were distributed to 348 women and girls facing displacement and economic vulnerability. These interventions strengthened emotional resilience and restored participants' capacity to engage in learning, organising, and entrepreneurship.

LOCAL RESOURCING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To strengthen local leadership and promote sustainability, SIHA provided support to grassroots women's rights organisations and activists, including:



RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS ON THE MOVE

In light of escalating conflict and displacement across the Greater Horn of Africa, SIHA's commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of displaced, migrant, and refugee women and girls was more critical in 2024 than ever. In addition to direct support, such as legal, psychosocial, and medical care referrals, SIHA's interventions adopted a holistic approach, enhancing safety, dignity, autonomy, and leadership among women and girls navigating mixed migration. Programming integrated legal aid, psychosocial support, vocational training, mentorship, and narrative advocacy to address the complex and intersecting risks these communities face.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The vocational training programmes SIHA organized in South Sudan and the Somali Region provided displaced and migrant young women with skills, start-up kits, and a sense of collective strength. These programmes aimed to enhance the economic

independence and self-confidence of over 300 girls who have lived through the traumas of mixed migration, conflict, and displacement. These efforts were not just about skill-building, they also aimed to challenge gender norms. For example, girls in Hargeisa noted that their training helped them break into male-dominated fields and reclaim public spaces traditionally denied to them.

SAFE SPACES, MENTORSHIP, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

In 2024, SIHA supported the establishment of 14 girls' safe spaces and protection circles across Sudan, South Sudan, and the Somali Region. These spaces offered monthly peer mentorship sessions, trauma-informed support, and opportunities for collective healing. In Sudan, 22 adolescent girls were trained to provide psychological first aid, with particular focus on conflict-affected contexts.

In displacement camps in Sudan and Chad, SIHA supported the formation of girls' associations and trauma support centres, which collectively hosted over 1,600 participants through awareness sessions on SGBV. These safe spaces served as critical sanctuaries for girls facing the unique challenges of mixed migration, including CRSV, early/forced marriage, sexual and labour exploitation, physical abuse, and other intersecting risks.

- **14 Safe Spaces Created across Sudan, South Sudan & Somali Region**
- **22 Girls Trained in Psychological First Aid, enabling girls to support peers in conflict zones**
- **1,600+ Girls Reached in Displacement Camps**

RESOURCING LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Recognising the importance of localised leadership, SIHA prioritised resourcing grassroots groups at the forefront of responding to the needs of women and girls in displaced and migrant communities. In 2024, SIHA's investment in local leadership ensured that critical resources, including start-up kits and dignity supplies, reached those most affected by conflict and mobility.



- **8 grants** were awarded to grassroots groups supporting migrant and IDP girls.
- **73% of the start-up and dignity kits** SIHA allocated in 2024 reached displaced and migrant women.

ADVOCACY AND NARRATIVE POWER

Girls and young women in migrant and IDP communities led and participated in advocacy events, such as the 16 Days of Activism and International Day of the Girl Child commemoration events among others. Event participants shared personal stories that resonated across community forums, helping to shift public perceptions about gender roles and rights as well as increasing awareness and empathy for the experiences of dis-

placed and migrant women and girls. The adolescent-centred toolkit, Aida's Migration Story, was deployed widely, fostering collective learning through storytelling, games, and creative expression. Translated into Somali and Arabic, it served as a platform for girls to envision futures rooted in safety, self-determination, and solidarity.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION



A total of 14 knowledge-building publications on mixed migration and displacement were released, comprising 5 research reports, 4 statements, gender alerts and press briefings, 4 confidential memos shared securely with key stakeholders, and 1 practical toolkit.

By country of focus, these publications included 4 multi-country outputs, 5 focusing on the Somali Region, and 9 on Sudan.

RECREATION, HEALING, AND PROTECTION

SIHA strategically integrated sports and recreation into its healing and protection initiatives for displaced women and girls. In IDP camps across Sudan and South Sudan, SIHA provided sports equipment to support structured programmes that fostered confidence, enhanced mental health, and encouraged teamwork. Girls formed volleyball or football teams to reclaim public spaces and assert agency over their bodies, well-being, and right to recreation. Alongside these efforts, SIHA continued to prioritise psychological safety through regular mentoring, and integrated security and relocation support for at-risk girl leaders and WHRDs in crisis settings.



One of the players from Mohamed Mooge IDP Camp in Somalia during the Girls' Football Tournament

BUILDING INCLUSIVE WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

Building inclusive, intersectional feminist movements across the GHoA Region has always been the cornerstone of SIHA's work, as the initiatives within this strategic area underpin all other goals and aspects of SIHA's mission and vision. In 2024, even as armed conflict, political repression, and economic instability intensified across the region, SIHA continued to strengthen coalition-based solidarity, resource grassroots

actors, and amplify marginalised voices. SIHA's work to advance women's political participation and advocacy extended across local, national, regional, and international levels. Through trust-building, capacity development, and strategic partnerships, SIHA deepened its engagement with young women, women with disabilities, displaced communities, and informal workers, ensuring that those most affected continue to shape the future of feminist movement-building across the region.



Members of the Africa Family Law Network and regional partners pose during the 3-day Regional Strategic Consultation on Family Law Reform in Africa in Kampala, Uganda (March 25–27, 2024), where participants gathered to discuss shared challenges and strengthen cross-border collaboration toward advancing family law reform across the continent

STRENGTHENING COALITION-LED ORGANISING

Despite severe disruptions caused by the war in Sudan, SIHA supported over 109 Peace Collective members with registration aid, digital tools, and safe space establishment. In Ethiopia, SIHA partnered with Lawyers for Human Rights to launch a strategic litigation campaign on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) grounded in survivor testimony from the Tigray, Amhara, and Afar Regions. In the Somali Region, SIHA promoted sustained cross-learning and advocacy through Women Peace Workshops, challenging the entrenched exclusion of women from political and legal systems. These efforts saw tangible success with the election of women to municipal councils in Puntland – a major achievement in shifting political norms and expectations. SIHA also contributed to continental feminist organising as a core member of the KOMBOA Consortium. Through this platform, SIHA supported the mobilisation of feminist movements resisting anti-gender backlash across Africa. SIHA's involvement included safety trainings, cross-border convenings, and resourcing grassroots actors with emergency and long-term support—reinforcing its broader strategy to strengthen inclusive feminist organising across the Greater Horn of Africa.



1,777 people mobilised to build women and girl-led movements across the GHoA



84 SIHA-led coalition-building events engaging minorities, IDPs & grassroots groups organised

STRATEGIC INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

Across the region, SIHA's partners continued to engage directly with state and customary law institutions to transform policy and practice. In Uganda, SIHA-supported WRO/As entered traditionally male-dominated institutions such as the Acholi Ker Kwaro, the Lango Itogo Council, and the Protocol Committee of the Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church, where they are now shaping debates on social justice and women's rights. In South Sudan, following targeted capacity-building efforts, 30 women were appointed to national positions. Notably, a long-time SIHA ally joined the Reconstituted Constitutional Review Commission, and another assumed the Deputy Chairperson role at the National Political Party Council. While parliamentary resistance blocked the passage of the Anti-GBV and Family Law Bills, SIHA's advocacy led to the temporary withdrawal of the bills to enable broader consultations with women-led CSOs.

Along with its partners in the KOMBOA Consortium, SIHA contributed to legislative victories against FGM/C rollbacks, youth-led mobilisation, the protection of feminist spaces, and meaningful engagement with African Union and United Nations mechanisms. Through Komboa, conducted safety trainings, and convened cross-border feminist dialogues, building regional solidarity and responsive feminist infrastructure.

Internationally, SIHA facilitated the participation of grassroots Sudanese activists in regional mechanisms, including at two ACHPR Sessions and CSW68. SIHA's 2024 advocacy contributed to the United Nations' decision to establish a fact-finding mission for Sudan, underscoring the role of local testimony in influencing international justice processes.



SIHA's Regional Programme Manager, Faizat Badmus-Busari, delivering a statement at the 81st ACHPR session in Banjul, The Gambia, calling for urgent action to address violence against women and girls in conflict zones

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION



A total of 8 knowledge-building publications were released, comprising 4 research reports, 3 statements, gender alerts and press briefings, and 1 practical toolkit.

By country of focus, these publications included 2 multi-country outputs, 1 focused on the Somali Region, 1 on South Sudan, 3 on Sudan, and 1 on Uganda.

RESOURCING MOVEMENTS FOR IMPACT

SIHA leveraged resourcing as a tool for empowering and sustaining feminist movements across the Greater Horn of Africa. A total of 23 grants were issued to women's coalitions and grassroots groups in Sudan, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and the Somali Region, alongside an additional 78 grants which were distributed to feminist organisations and activists across the continent. These resources enabled locally led organising, strengthened collective advocacy, and enhanced the resilience of frontline actors facing systemic repression and conflict.

These allocated grants supported diverse efforts, from legal and policy campaigns to grassroots mobilisation. In South Sudan, local movements mobilised to generate national advocacy around the Anti-GBV and Family Law Bills. In Sudan, SIHA's emergency resourcing allowed women human rights defenders, conflict survivors, and displaced women to continue their organising, even under direct threat. In Ethiopia, a women-led cooperative strengthened its network and capacity to advance local economic justice. In the Somali Region, grassroots partners were enabled to train 192 girls in civic engagement and advocacy. Meanwhile, 34 youth mentors trained in Uganda and Sudan are now leading peer-led advocacy across three countries, including youth forums in Sudan that have convened over 200 participants to shape feminist agendas on peacebuilding, legal reform, and the prevention of SGBV.



1,777 women, girls, and allies mobilised across the region



84 coalition-building events convened



Youth-led advocacy expanded into new displacement sites



Cross-border solidarity and movement infrastructure strengthened

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM IN SUDAN

Building on the emergency grant programme launched in 2023 to enhance the protection of women and girls affected by the conflict in Sudan, SIHA Network provided 98 emergency grants to over 100 individuals and organisations across the country in 2024. Beneficiaries included individual women, families, women human rights defenders (WHRDs), and grassroots organisations based in conflict-affected areas such as Khartoum, Kassala, Central Darfur, Northern Darfur, and South Kordofan—including several IDP camps such as Abu Shouk and Zalingei.

Support was delivered in various forms, with most recipients receiving a combination of cash assistance, in-kind support, and direct services. These services covered medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid, and emergency relocation. Grant values varied to reflect the urgency and complexity of each case. The majority of recipients were women and girls, including adolescent girls, female-headed households, and WHRDs at immediate risk. Several beneficiaries received repeat support due to continued exposure to violence, displacement, or targeted threats.

Despite operational challenges such as delays in fund disbursement, communication blackouts, and logistical barriers in reaching displaced communities, this emergency response program continues to enable urgent service delivery and sustained support for survivors navigating complex crises.



98 emergency grants delivered to 100+ women, girls, WHRDs & grassroots groups across conflict-affected Sudan



Support reached communities in Khartoum, Kassala, Central & Northern Darfur, South Kordofan, and major IDP camps



Assistance included cash aid, essential supplies, medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid & emergency relocation



Majority of beneficiaries were women and girls facing acute risk—including adolescent girls & female-headed households



Continued service delivery achieved despite fund delays, communication blackouts & severe access barriers

KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

In 2024, SIHA Network continued to advance feminist knowledge production as a strategy for advocacy, accountability, and resistance. SIHA's commitment to participatory research and feminist documentation is driven by the conviction that knowledge generation is a collective and political act. SIHA's 2024 outputs – including feminist research, policy briefs, video campaigns, training manuals, and confidential memos – were disseminated widely to community organisers, national stakeholders, international actors, and regional institutions. They served as vital tools for movement-build-

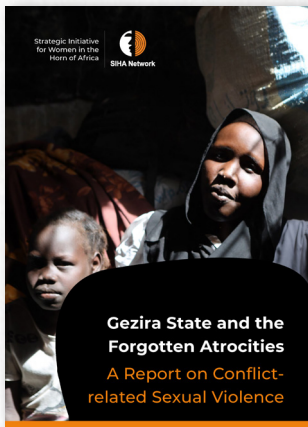
ing, rights education, documentation of atrocities, and policy engagement. Other forms of knowledge generation included community consultations, youth-led surveys, and storytelling toolkits like Aida’s Migration Story. These different knowledge products were disseminated virtually, in-person, and through training to enable localised, accessible engagement. For example, the Aida’s Migration Story toolkit was translated into Arabic and Somali and distributed in schools, safe spaces, and community centres in Sudan, South Sudan, and the Somali Region.



A total of 38 knowledge-building publications were released, comprising 10 research reports, 23 statements, gender alerts and press briefings, 4 confidential memos shared securely with key stakeholders, and 1 practical toolkit.

By country of focus, these publications included 5 multi-country outputs, 9 focused on the Somali Region, 1 on South Sudan, 21 on Sudan, and 1 on Uganda.

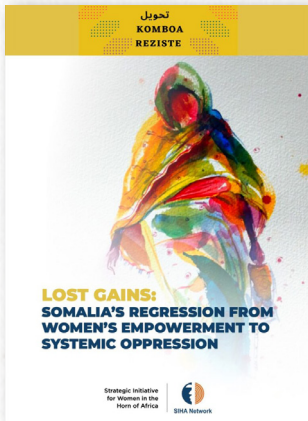
2024 PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS:



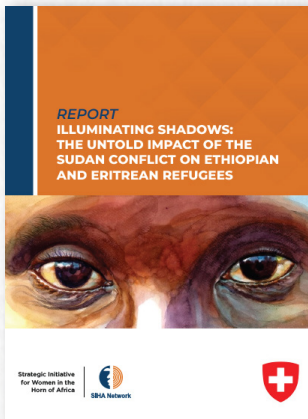
Gezira State and the Forgotten Atrocities – This report seeks to shed light on the rise in conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Gezira State—an issue that remains severely under-reported and insufficiently addressed. The findings are based on recent accounts from individuals displaced from Gezira and Western Sennar States, supported by corroborating evidence gathered through social media monitoring and SIHA’s investigative efforts. Together, these sources expose a disturbing pattern of systematic conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence experienced by residents of Gezira State. The report is available in both English and Arabic.



Silenced Suffering: Unveiling Sexual Violence Against Displaced and Minority Women in Somalia and Somaliland –This briefing paper that shines a light on the alarming rise in sexual violence in Somalia and Somaliland, with a particular focus on displaced and minority women and girls. Drawing on survivor testimonies and field research, the report exposes systemic gaps in prevention, protection, and accountability, and highlights how conflict, displacement, and structural discrimination compound risks. The publication was released alongside a joint statement from women’s rights organisations, calling for urgent, coordinated action to strengthen response mechanisms, advance legal reform, and centre the voices of affected communities in national and regional policy processes.



Lost Gains: Somalia's Regression from Women's Empowerment to Systemic Oppression – This Briefing Paper is intended to support and strengthen feminist resistance movements and collectives across Africa. It aims to empower these groups to advance gender justice while remaining inclusive and resilient in the face of mounting attacks from anti-rights movements. The paper traces the trajectory of the feminist movement in Somalia, highlighting both its early achievements and the growing backlash against the rights of women and girls. This backlash is reflected in the repeal of key protective policies and the introduction of regressive laws in recent years.



Illuminating shadows: The untold impact of the Sudan conflict on Ethiopian and Eritrean Refugees – This report explores the overlooked consequences of Sudan's ongoing war on long-settled refugee communities. For decades, Sudan served as a place of refuge for those fleeing conflict and persecution in neighbouring countries, including over 125,000 Eritreans and nearly 70,000 Ethiopians. However, the current conflict has reversed this long-standing migration pattern, forcing more than 47,000 refugees, particularly Ethiopians, to return to countries they had once fled. Those who remain face deepening uncertainty, disrupted livelihoods, and a growing humanitarian crisis. The report draws attention to the specific vulnerabilities faced by refugee women, including heightened risks of harassment and violence. Produced by SIHA Network with support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, this research sheds light on a largely neglected dimension of the Sudanese conflict and calls for more inclusive and protection-centred responses.



This research paper highlights the roles and resilience of grassroots women's groups in Sudan amid ongoing conflict. It focuses on the economic impact of looting, particularly in Khartoum, analyzing how it affects women differently based on factors like age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.

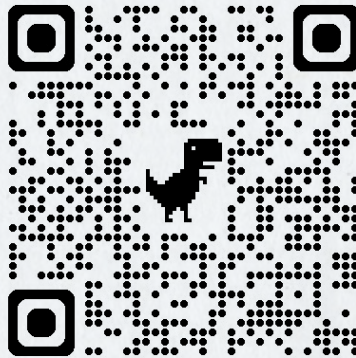


This research documents and analyzes feminist initiatives in Sudan, focusing on the experiences of women in grassroots efforts amid conflict, violence, and displacement. Using a qualitative approach, including remote interviews, focus groups, and literature reviews, the study highlights how these women's groups address needs, resist intimidation, and challenge war and peace narratives.

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CHALLENGES AND SECURITY THREATS

Operating in some of the world's most volatile environments, SIHA Network and its partners encountered escalating challenges in 2024. Armed conflict, mass displacement, rising anti-gender ideologies, and shrinking civic space significantly disrupted feminist organising, service delivery, and movement-building across the Greater Horn of Africa. Yet, these conditions also revealed the strength, resilience, and adaptability of SIHA's networks. Despite the immense threats, SIHA sustained its programming through grounded relationships, flexible implementation models, and survivor-centred approaches.

ARMED CONFLICT AND MASS DISPLACEMENT

The civil war in Sudan continued to severely disrupt SIHA's operations throughout 2024, particularly in Khartoum, South Kordofan, Gezira State, and Blue Nile. Amid escalating violence and aerial bombardment, SIHA was forced to relocate its operations from Gezira State to Kassala, suspend activities in Blue Nile for four months, and shift to remote modalities in Port Sudan and El Fasher. By the end of the year, over 10 million

people had been displaced both within Sudan and across its borders. Among those affected were thousands of women and girls at heightened risk of exploitation, early/forced marriage, and gender-based violence. In South Sudan, intercommunal violence and persistent insecurity, particularly in Wau, Juba, and IDP camps, restricted safe access to services. One particularly alarming incident involved four SIHA staff members who were held hostage in South Sudan for nearly two weeks. Meanwhile, in the Somali Region, climate-related emergencies – most notably severe flooding – displaced over 81,000 people and affected more than 268,000. This led to overcrowding in camps and exacerbated risks of SGBV.

ATTACKS ON FEMINIST ORGANISING AND SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE

Throughout the region, feminist organisers and WHRDs faced ongoing threats to their safety and ability to operate.



In Sudan, grassroots women’s rights organisations were subjected to abductions and enforced disappearances, while WHRDs in both Sudan and Somalia reported increased digital surveillance and harassment. Legal threats and arbitrary detentions were particularly prevalent in Sudan, Somalia, and South Sudan. The legislative environment across the region also became increasingly hostile. In the Somali Region, the Sexual Offences Bill remained stalled amid growing conservative resistance. In Uganda and parts of Kenya, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation further restricted the operating space for feminist allies and movement partners. In Ethiopia, feminist legal reform efforts were hindered by the closure of civic forums and the intimidation of rights-based organisations, particularly in Amhara and Tigray. These conditions collectively contributed to a shrinking civic space that significantly constrained grassroots organising and policy advocacy.

OPERATIONAL AND LOGISTICAL CONSTRAINTS

Operational and logistical challenges continued to impede programme delivery across several countries. In Sudan, frequent internet shutdowns and telecommunication blackouts disrupted the coordination of legal documentation and survivor support, making communication with displaced collectives and staff exceedingly difficult, and limiting access to digital tools critical for emergency relocation efforts. Widespread travel restrictions, military curfews, and security checkpoints further constrained safe movement for both SIHA staff, partners, and programme participants – especially in Sudan, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. In the Somali Region, additional logistical barriers led to programme delays, including setbacks in translating and disseminating key toolkits, as well as difficulties sourcing materials needed for reconstructing safe spaces and distributing business start-up kits to women and girls.

MENTAL HEALTH STRAIN AND BURNOUT

The mental health toll on frontline organisers was particularly severe in 2024. Members of Peace Collectives, WHRDs, and adolescent mentors, especially those working in conflict-affected zones, reported significant levels of burnout, trauma, and emotional exhaustion. In Sudan, women peacebuilders frequently cited vicarious trauma, personal grief, and the psychological strain of displacement as major obstacles to sustained activism. Access to mental health support remained limited, with many psychosocial service providers themselves displaced or operating under threat. In response, SIHA expanded its trauma-informed care initiatives, integrating support across safe spaces, mentoring sessions, and collective care retreats. However, the demand for mental health services consistently outpaced available resources, highlighting an urgent and ongoing gap in regional response efforts.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is crucial to reflect on the events of 2024, in order to extract the lessons that SIHA, as a knowledge-building and advocacy institution and a grassroots women's rights network, can use to inform future feminist strategies, approaches, and initiatives.

One of the clearest lessons from 2024 was the **importance of building adaptability for programming modalities and delivery mechanisms**. When communications infrastructures were compromised in Sudan, for example, SIHA successfully transitioned from internet-based outreach to radio programming, reaching over 15,000 people. Similarly, activities were relocated from conflict affected El Gezira to another location within Sudan, where displaced women and girls were able to access safe space networks and psychosocial support.

Embedding trauma-informed approaches proved essential to sustaining participation, particularly among women and girls affected by violence and displacement. A collective care session in Kassala equipped 17 women peace activists with tools for peer-based trauma support, with all participants reporting improved understanding

of self-care and emotional resilience. In Sudan's IDP camps and Chad's Adré refugee camp, trauma healing circles and psychological first aid trainings became central to organising efforts, replacing traditional education and advocacy activities that were no longer feasible.

Localised, grassroots advocacy remained one of the most resilient pillars of SIHA's work. In 2024, over 109 Peace Collective members across Sudan continued their advocacy despite displacement. In Uganda's Arua district, women market vendors successfully advanced local gender-responsive policy, including the passage of an SGBV ordinance. Girls' associations in Kassala, Hargeisa, and others exemplified the power of collective organising in displacement contexts, leading sports programmes, advocacy campaigns, and mentorship sessions.

Safe spaces – both physical and digital – continued to serve as critical infrastructure for feminist activism. Where possible, physical safe spaces provided secure environments for organising and healing across the region. Digital platforms such as the Women War Stories blog and video documentation projects amplified grassroots narratives further, reaching global audiences and informing institutional advocacy. These spaces were integral vehicles for visibility and resistance, particularly during periods of internet shutdowns and heightened state surveillance.

SIHA also observed that **holistic empowerment** – combining vocational training, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and feminist leadership development – yielded more durable outcomes. In South Sudan and Somaliland, 31 adolescent girls completed vocational training and follow-up support through start-up kits enabled them to launch small businesses. In Uganda, 76% of the 400 women market vendors who were engaged by SIHA's initiatives reported increased income, while 98% stated they felt safer following project interventions that included training, public advocacy, and peer exchanges. These successes demonstrate the importance of implementing a layered approach to enhance both individual agency and collective power.

Finally, **regional solidarity and cross-movement collaboration** significantly bolstered SIHA's influence. SIHA's participation in the 79th ACHPR session resulted in the adoption of one of our recommendations in the ACHPR Resolution 588. Similarly, a SIHA-facilitated exchange between women vendors in Arua and Kampala culminated in a joint advocacy statement calling for the domestication of ILO Convention 190. These efforts underscored the importance of inter-country learning and unified feminist strategy, especially in the face of political repression and backlash.

AS A RESULT OF THIS AGILITY, SIHA:



Reached over 15,000 people in Kadugli, Sudan through low-tech radio advocacy during blackout periods



Supported 109 active Peace Collective members across Kassala, Dilling, and Kadugli



Trained 17 WHRDs in Kassala, with 100% reporting increased understanding of self-care and trauma support



Provided vocational training to 31 adolescent girls in South Sudan and the Somali Region, with all Somaliland participants receiving start-up kits



Improved safety, income, and reduced harassment for women market vendors in Uganda (98% safer, 76% higher income, 76% reduced harassment)



Successfully influenced high-level advocacy, with SIHA recommendations integrated into ACHPR Resolution 588

FUTURE OUTLOOK AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

As SIHA moves into 2025, the Network stands at a critical juncture shaped by escalating conflict, mass displacement, economic precarity, shrinking civic space, and intensifying backlash against feminist organising across the Greater Horn of Africa. These realities have reinforced the urgency of adaptive, locally led, and well-resourced feminist action. In response, SIHA will enter a new strategic phase anchored in the launch of its **2025–2028 Strategic Plan**, designed to strengthen resilience, deepen impact, and sustain feminist movements in increasingly volatile contexts.

LAUNCH OF THE SIHA 2025–2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2025, SIHA will officially launch its new **four-year Strategic Plan (2025–2028)**, building on lessons from frontline implementation in crisis and conflict settings. The strategy is informed by extensive engagement with members, partners, staff, and allies, as well as by the lived realities of women and girls most affected by violence, displacement, and exclusion. It prioritises flexibility, movement-building, and feminist care as core organisational principles, ensuring that SIHA remains responsive to rapidly shifting political and humanitarian landscapes while maintaining a clear long-term vision for gender justice.

The new strategy will consolidate SIHA's five core programme pillars while strengthening cross-cutting approaches to trauma-informed care, feminist research and knowledge production, safeguarding, and regional solidarity. It will also sharpen SIHA's role as a convener and amplifier of grassroots feminist voices in national, regional, and global policy spaces.

DEEPENING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND LOCALLY LED ACTION

A central priority for the coming period is the **strengthening of SIHA's membership network**, which has grown significantly despite challenging operating environments. SIHA will focus on enhancing meaningful member engagement through improved onboarding processes, clearer membership governance structures, strengthened communication, and the designation of country-level membership focal points. These measures aim to ensure equitable participation, shared accountability, and stronger links between grassroots action and regional advocacy.

SIHA will continue to prioritise direct resourcing of members, recognising that sustainable feminist change is driven by locally rooted organisations. Investments will focus on capacity strengthening, peer learning, joint advocacy, and solidarity spaces that enable members to respond collectively to violence, legal barriers, and economic injustice.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE AND SYSTEMS

To sustain impact in volatile contexts, SIHA will continue investing in **institutional strengthening and operational resilience**. This includes enhancing internal systems for financial management, human resources, safeguarding, risk management, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. These investments are intended to improve efficiency, accountability, and staff wellbeing, while enabling the organisation to scale rapid response and emergency support when crises escalate.

SIHA will also prioritise staff care and development, recognising that feminist organisations can only thrive when those leading the work are supported, protected, and valued. This includes embedding trauma-informed practices across organisational policies and programmes.

ADVANCING FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE, ADVOCACY, AND INFLUENCE

Building on its strong track record in feminist research and documentation, SIHA will expand its investment in **knowledge production as a tool for accountability and movement-building**. This will include participatory research, survivor-centred documentation, and accessible storytelling that centres the experiences of women and girls affected by conflict, displacement, and economic exclusion.

At the advocacy level, SIHA will continue to strengthen its engagement with regional and international human rights mechanisms, while ensuring that grassroots realities shape policy debates. Strategic litigation, coalition-led advocacy, and cross-border feminist collaboration will remain key strategies for challenging impunity and advancing legal and policy reform.

SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Finally, SIHA recognises that responding effectively to the scale and complexity of challenges in the region requires **strong, principled partnerships**. The Network will continue to work closely with donors, feminist funds, civil society allies, and regional institutions to promote flexible, long-term resourcing for women's rights organisations and movements.

The period ahead presents significant risks, but also critical opportunities. Guided by its new strategic plan and grounded in the strength of its members and partners, SIHA enters 2025 with renewed clarity, resilience, and commitment to advancing justice, dignity, and collective power for women and girls across the Greater Horn of Africa.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The financial statement for the year 2024 has been prepared to provide a clear overview of the SIHA Network income, expenditures, and overall financial position. This statement is intended to support transparency and accountability.

SIHA NETWORK STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024	2023
INCOME		
Grant Income	4,617,313	4,562,936
Other income	38,083	17,708
Total income	4,655,396	4,580,644

EXPENDITURE		
Activities	3,020,215	2,478,351
Administrative Costs	664,058	399,497
Audit Fees	23,349	21,571
Equipment and Supplies	17,607	25,687
Human Resources Costs	853,324	1,156,453
Travel Expenses	44,920	82,964
Other Expenses	17,161	27,756
Foreign exchange loss	21,011	17,402
Bad debts recovered/(written off)	(16,884)	303,861
Total EXPENDITURE	4,644,761	4,513,542

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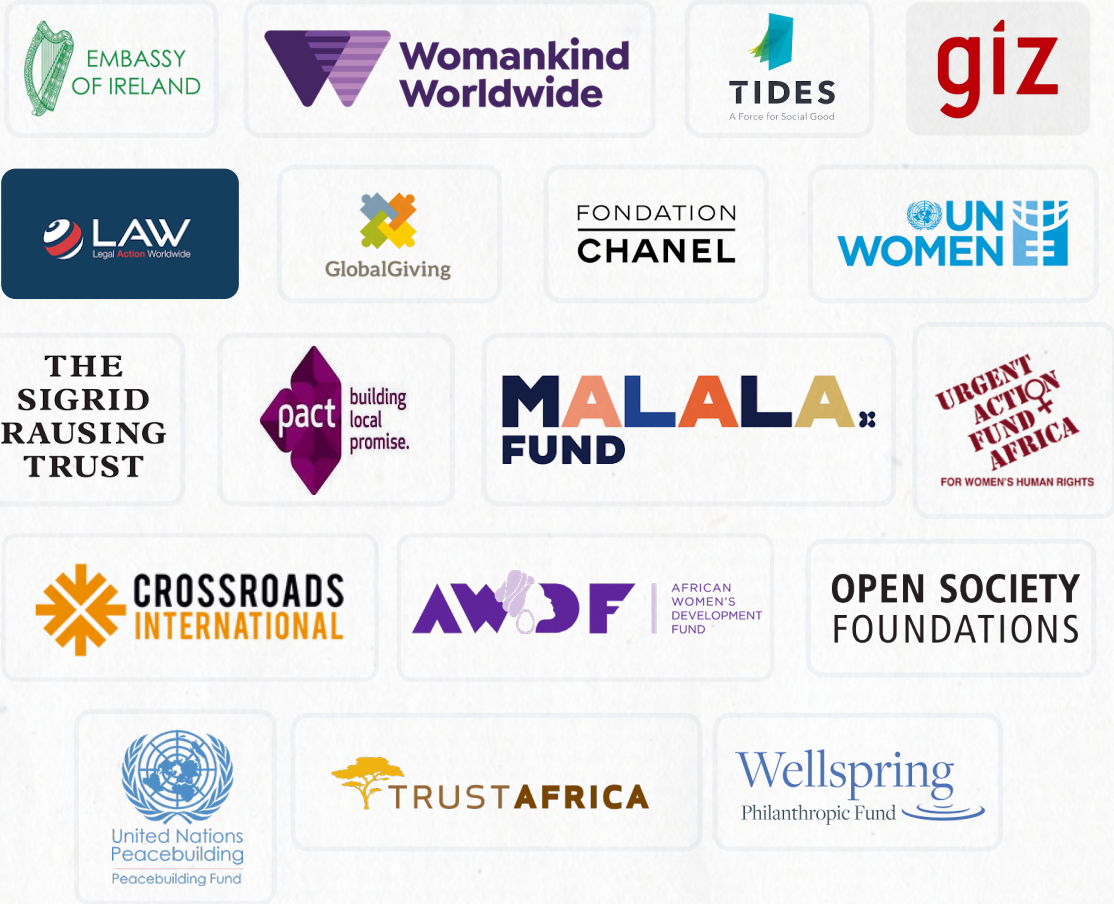


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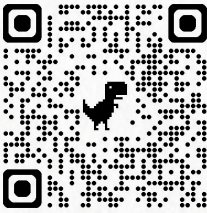
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We are deeply grateful to our development partners whose generous support made our 2023 interventions possible. Your commitment to gender equality and human rights enabled impactful programming across the Greater Horn of Africa, even amid heightened insecurity and humanitarian need. Through your partnership, we sustained critical services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, amplified marginalized voices, and advanced regional advocacy for the rights of women and girls.

TO HELP US CONTINUE MAKING A DIFFERENCE, DONATE HERE
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