

EIRWA.ORG



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE FOR RURAL
WOMEN AND ADOLESCENTS

**“Embrace. Empower. Thrive:
Empowering Rural Women and Adolescents
for Inclusive Growth”**

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FOUNDER'S STATEMENT



As the founder of EIRWA, I am deeply inspired by the milestones we achieved in 2023. From the official registration of our organization in Zambia to the invaluable support and funding garnered from esteemed partners, each success highlights our dedication to catalyzing positive change. Our journey thus far has been a testament to the power of perseverance and the resolute belief in our ability to effect meaningful transformation. Through strategic planning, innovative program design, and meaningful collaboration, we have strengthened our commitment to upholding feminist ideals and advancing social justice.

Looking ahead, we are prepared to expand our impact, reaching a greater number of women and young people across Zambia. Rooted in resilience and guided by our shared vision, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of a future where every individual can realize their full potential, free from the constraints of discrimination, violence, injustice, bias, and inequality. I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated team and supporters whose belief in our mission continues to propel us forward.

Reflecting on the achievements of EIRWA in 2023, let us embrace the words of Margaret Mead, who aptly said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." With each step forward, we reaffirm our collective resolve to drive positive change and empower women and youth across Zambia. Together, let us continue to write the story of progress and possibility, guided by our shared vision of a more equitable and just society where women and girls are empowered for inclusive growth.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ire. Chikatula', written over a light blue background.

Ireen Chikatula



INTRODUCTION

Dear Stakeholders and Supporters,

It is our honour to present the annual report for the Empowerment Initiative for Rural Women and Adolescents (EIRWA) for the year 2023. This report highlights our organization's activities, achievements, and the transformative impact we have made in the lives of rural women and adolescents in rural communities that we serve in Zambia.

Over the past year, our organization has embarked on various initiatives and programs that have empowered and uplifted women and adolescents, especially girls, enabling them to overcome challenges and seize opportunities for growth and development. In particular, we are proud to highlight the significant progress made in our school girls' empowerment program, the sanitary cloth pad-making projects, beekeeping initiatives, supporting women in agriculture, community development initiatives and our rebranding efforts to include adolescent boys in our work.

To help you know us better, here is a brief overview of who we are:

Our Mission: With a strong dedication to social justice, gender equality, and inclusive growth, we are a passionate, feminist, youth-led non-profit organization. Our primary focus is on uplifting and empowering women and adolescents in rural communities. We achieve this through holistic programs covering economic empowerment, education, health, gender equality, leadership, and community development.

We exist “to create an inclusive environment for rural women and adolescents to thrive and achieve their greatest aspirations.”

We envisage “a future where women and adolescents in rural communities are empowered and are at the forefront of positive change.” Our dedication lies in providing comprehensive social and economic support that fosters their growth, resilience, and self-determination.”



THEMATIC AREAS

- Girls' Empowerment
- Adolescents Health and Well-being
- Education and Skill Building
- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- Leadership and Advocacy
- Community Development
- Climate Change
- Agriculture

LOOKING BACK: 2023 ACTIVITIES

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We want to thank our dedicated team, partners, sponsors, and stakeholders for their unwavering support throughout 2023. Together, we advanced and embarked on ambitious projects that have made a significant difference in the lives of countless women and adolescents, fostering empowerment, equality, and sustainable development in rural communities.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2023, we also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. However, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing the rights and well-being of women and adolescents, and we look forward to continuing our journey of empowerment and positive change.





Our Areas of Impact



1. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES

Economic empowerment is one of the major ingredients in enabling women and youth to break free from the cycle of poverty and achieve financial independence. The Empowerment Initiative for Rural Women and Adolescents implemented several initiatives throughout 2023 to promote economic empowerment among its beneficiaries.

These initiatives include the HarvestHers project, entrepreneurship training, business development support, and Tukashi Beekeeping.



1. Life, entrepreneurship and financial literacy skills: Capital alone does not guarantee the success of a business. It is for this reason that we undertook a training in entrepreneurship and business development for the women of Rufunsa. Our short course aimed at exposing women to basic entrepreneurship skills, financial literacy, financial management and balancing work and life. The goal was to help women not only kickstart their businesses but also sustain them. As part of the training, a successful completion of the short course also gave women access to micro, non-collateral-based loans available in the district to start and boost their small businesses within their communities.



2. Tukashi Beekeeping Project: The project aimed at promoting women's access to land and rights, boosting their economic status by offering alternative sources of income, advocating for the forest conservation and promoting community stewardship towards managing and taking care of resources. We trained over 40 women on how to make their beehive in 4 different villages in Rufunsa district translating into 100 beehives.



3. HarvestHers Project: We support rural women in agriculture with skills, tools and knowledge of climate- friendly agriculture practice. Besides this, the HarvestHers women also benefit from a revolving groundnuts pass-on seed grant.

OUR AREAS OF IMPACT

2. MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL GIRLS AND BOYS

1.Engagement of Boys: Our commitment to adolescents in rural communities remains central to our work. Throughout 2023, we remained focused on advancing empowerment programs not only for adolescent girls in schools but also adolescent boys. These programs aims at teaching young girls and boys good social and life skills, personal development, decision making and goal-setting for positive health, life and education outcomes.

2. Girls Can. Project: Launch and Expansion:

In 2022, the Girls Can Project was initiated in a single school with the ambitious goal of empowering school girls aged 10 to 19. As of 2023, the project has blossomed, expanding its reach to 4 different schools within the region. The project's overarching objective is to empower school girls through tailor-made sessions covering a spectrum of essential topics. These include empowerment sessions, sexual and reproductive health education, and literacy coupled with digital skills sessions. By focusing on the diverse needs of girls within the 10 to 19 age range, we aim to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate their formative years successfully.

Growing Support and Partnerships:

The Girls Can Project has not only gained momentum but has also attracted support from esteemed funding organizations. We are grateful for the backing of the **Girls Opportunity Alliance (Obama Foundation)**, the **U.S Embassy in Zambia, Daring Girls** and other dedicated partners.



3. ENHANCING EDUCATION ACCESSIBILITY



1. Engagement and Reach:

Through consistent and impactful efforts, we successfully engaged with over 200 girls in weekly sessions. These sessions provided a safe space for learning, sharing, and growing together.

2. Customized Empowerment:

Drawing inspiration from empowerment curriculums developed by organizations such as **UNESCO, UNICEF, Population Council, and Girls Rising**, we took the initiative to customize content to suit our local context. This ensures that the material is not only relevant but also resonates with the unique challenges and aspirations of the girls we serve.

2. Supplementary Feeding Programs to Support Pupils In Rural Schools:

In Rufunsa, there is an intersection between poverty and limited access to education. Many children from underprivileged communities find it hard to attend school and if they do, lose focus because they often go hungry.

As part of our ongoing commitment to support education in rural areas, we initiated empowerment programs in three different schools across Rufunsa District. During these sessions, one issue emerged – hungry children.

In light of this, we partnered with the **Furrer Foundation's Community Training Farm!** Together, we started supplying wholesome sour milk, a beloved Zambian staple, to the young learners.

Sour milk isn't just delicious; it's incredibly nutritious, offering numerous health benefits. Children deserve proper nutrition to thrive in their educational journey, and this collaboration aims to make that a reality.





Francis (Red striped tshirt), now in Grade, offering supporting to his peers a few weeks before their exams



1. Boot camps for exam preparation: Every year, we organise a special event for rural 7th graders, preparing them for the transition to secondary school. In our community, low transition rates and fear of failure are common challenges. Our event covered exam readiness, time management, coping with anxiety, and bouncing back from setbacks. One unique aspect of our event was peer-to-peer engagement. We involve recent graduates, no more than two years out of 7th grade, to connect with and inspire the current 7th graders. Their experiences provide valuable insights and encouragement.

2. Small rewards for best-performing pupils to boost motivation: Rural schools, which often operate on limited resources and poor conditions as compared to their urban and peri-urban counterparts are particularly vulnerable to student disengagement. One of the urgent issues rural adolescents face is a lack of motivation for school, therefore, the awards presented to well-deserving top performers at Kalundu Primary School from grades 4–7 in Rufunsa district was a push for both recipients and non-recipients. It served as a drive to recipients and a challenge to non-recipients to aim for the top.

3. Community Engagement: Throughout the year we created invited spaces for community engagement meetings to facilitate dialogue to address the challenges faced by adolescent girls in rural communities. Community engagement thrives on participation and voice. When everyone contributes, we see innovation, inclusivity, and stronger bonds. We strive to bring communities at the centre of discussing issues affecting them, for collective action.

4. INTERGRATED EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

4. Leaving No One Behind; The Boys Too Need Us!

Our Empowerment Program for Rural Adolescents is tailor-made to address the needs of both boys and girls in school and beyond. By including both boys and girls, we're championing gender equality and challenging traditional roles, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable society.

2023 took us on a transformative journey when we rebranded to include adolescent boys in our empowerment programs. We undertook working with adolescent boys, a pivotal moment that reshaped our approach towards empowerment.

Our journey took an unexpected turn when adolescent boys began asking the crucial question: "When will it be our turn?" This simple yet profound inquiry served as a wake-up call, reminding us that empowerment should be inclusive and diverse. The boys' curiosity sparked a realization that our mission to empower communities for inclusive growth was incomplete without addressing the needs and aspirations of young boys. We acknowledged the need to adapt our approach in response to community dynamics and in the new year we will expand to include more boys.



5. Supporting Teenage mothers in school and vulnerable children

in view of our commitment to empowering rural school girls who have experienced teen pregnancy. Our mission is to provide them with the support they need to overcome challenges and achieve their dreams.

Here is how we helped throughout 2023:

- **SRHR Information:** We provided comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information to help these young moms make informed decisions about their health and well-being.
- **School Re-entry Discussions:** We engaged in meaningful discussions to explore the best options for school re-entry.
- **Child Care Support:** Addressing childcare issues is crucial for these young moms. We offer assistance and resources to help them manage their responsibilities as mothers while pursuing their education.



5. ADVOCACY & AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS

To drive sustainable change and create an enabling environment for women and adolescents, the Empowerment Initiative conducted advocacy and awareness campaigns throughout the year. These campaigns aimed at challenging gender norms, raise awareness about women's rights, and advocate for policy changes to address gender inequalities.

The organisation collaborated with local communities, government entities, and other stakeholders to promote dialogue, share knowledge, and foster a supportive ecosystem for women's empowerment. Through workshops, community events, and media engagement, the initiative amplified the voices of women and adolescents, encouraging them to become active participants in advocating for their rights.



1. ZambiaActNow: Last year as alliance partners: Empowerment Initiative for Rural Women and Adolescents, Zambian Feminist Voices Collective, Bingiza Foundation and Children Inspired Evolution - CIE through the ZambiaActNow Campaign pledged their commitment through collaborative efforts to unite against GBV through challenging the stereotypes that perpetuate violence.

I'm Lwiza Nalwamba

I stand against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)!

Together, let's break the silence, amplify our voices, raise awareness, and act to end Gender-Based Violence in Zambia.

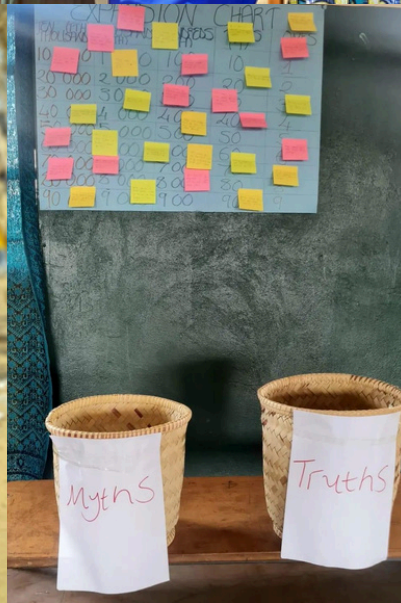
#ZambiaActNow

#NoExcuse
#16DaysOfActivism

2. "RISE for HER" (SRHR program) Campaign – a Rural Initiative for Self-Transformation and Empowerment, for Health, Education, and Rights. It aimed at enhancing access to information on SRHR for adolescent girls. Among other activities, we conducted training in DIY sanitary cloth pad making, interactive games on myths and truths about menstruation, open chat/ discussions about all things girls, puberty, personal and menstrual hygiene and the menstrual cycle.



DIY REUSABLE CLOTH PAD MAKING PROJECT



PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Apart from the many impact areas that EIRWA is involved in, there are other activities that compliment the work that we do. With These include partnerships & collaborations, national and international commemorations, funding & support and community engagements.



- We collaborated with our long-time partners **Bingiza Foundation** to deliver a capacity-building workshop on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and reusable sanitary cloth pad making. We facilitated the training in pad making which was delivered to a diverse group of participants.
- We were invited by the **Centre for Global Education** in **Canada** to deliver a virtual presentation on Women's Day, under the theme: Embrace Equity, where we delivered a keynote speech/presentation to adolescents between the ages of 10 and 15 on how each one of us can actively support gender equity within our sphere of influence. We continue to challenge gender stereotypes, call out discrimination, draw attention to bias, and seek out inclusion.
- In light of our commitment to empowering adolescent girls and boys in rural communities, we also partnered with **Mission of Mercy**, –an association of the **BMGA Foundation alumni** to deliver the event. We engaged the participants in sessions on; promoting realization, access and use of life and soft skills (with a focus on communication skills, time management, emotional intelligence, goal setting and decision-making), increasing critical awareness, fostering agency, career diversity, and enhancing opportunities for further education and employment.



OTHER ACTIVITIES: NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMMEMORATIONS

Throughout 2023, we joined the rest of the country and the world in commemorating national and international commemorations.



1. On Women's Day, we gathered to celebrate women's achievements and contributions to the fight for women's rights, recognise the current struggles and ponder upon the roadmap to the achievement of a gender-equal, violence-free future.



2. National Youth Day.

We joined the rest of the country in commemorating the national youth day under the theme "Transforming Minds for accelerated youth development". Achieving accelerated youth development requires multifaceted input of efforts, from both youths and leaders.



3. National Farmers Day: In these challenging times, we cannot stress enough the significance of local production, embracing indigenous methods of food preservation, and promoting organic farming. Moreover, it's crucial to acknowledge the vital role that women play in food production and their role in combating climate change through agriculture.

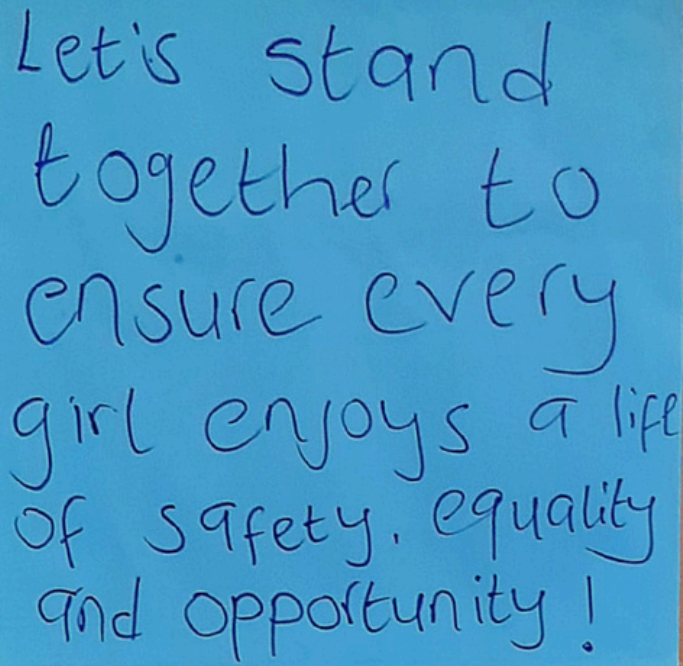
OTHER ACTIVITIES: NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMMEMORATIONS



4. Celebrating the International Day of the Girl Child: On this special day, we had the privilege of bringing together young girls from three different schools for an inspiring event. In line with this year's theme, "Invest in girls' rights: our leadership, our well-being," we joined forces with the Furrer Foundation to empower and expose these young minds to a world of diverse career opportunities. The highlight of our day was an eye-opening tour of the newly established Zambia Industrial Parks/Entrepreneurs College. Here, brilliant women in various fields demonstrated their remarkable skills, not only showcasing their expertise but also sharing their incredible journeys. They spoke of overcoming self-doubt and breaking free from stereotypes that limit what girls can achieve.



OTHER ACTIVITIES: NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMMEMORATIONS



Let's stand together to ensure every girl enjoys a life of safety, equality and opportunity!

5. International Day of Rural Women: We joined the rest of the world in the celebration and commemoration of international day of rural women under the theme “Rural Women Cultivating Good Food for All.”

As EIRWA, we remain dedicated to empower, support and provide opportunities for rural women to thrive in feeding their families and communities.



6. International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: An incredible day in Rufunsa, Zambia, as we used art and performance to spread awareness about Gender-Based Violence. Curating content and delivering through drama, dance and music to uniquely deliver crucial messages.



NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMMEMORATIONS

7. World AIDS Day: We organized our event around young people by creating invited, non-discriminatory spaces for them to meet and discuss common issues that affect them.

At EIRWA, we remain committed and intentional about working with women and young people for social change and inclusive growth. We spread Awareness on HIV Prevention and GBV through Art and Culture and conducted a community outreach program to educate the public on issues related to HIV prevention, treatment and control, human rights, and community-based interventions.

We utilized creative and entertaining means to sensitize the masses on these crucial topics. The event culminated in a spectacular showcase of art, culture, and dance, marking a stylish end to the year.





ACHIEVEMENTS

In the Forefront of Empowerment Programs for Rural Women and Adolescents

The core of EIRWA focuses on empowering women and youth, particularly girls in rural Zambia. Our programs are customized to address the specific requirements of the communities we support. In 2023, we expanded our programs to include support for young boys to promote gender equality and foster inclusive development.

Since 2020

A LOOK AT OUR IMPACT THROUGH NUMBERS



In 2023, we received formal support for the first time and were approved for **4 (four) grants** simultaneously to enhance empowerment projects in Rufunsa.

We are expanding the **Girls Can. project** to 5 more schools across the region.

10 000+ people
Reached through commemorations and Awareness-raising outreaches

1000 School children
Fed through supplementary school feeding program

200 children
Involved in our support programs for vulnerable children across the region

100
Girls empowered with reusable cloth pad making skills

200 school Girls
Mentored for better health, education & life outcomes

60 women
Empowered with life, Agro and entrepreneurship skills

50 young adults
Equiped with essential life skills

Trained **10** menstrual hygiene champions

Created **2** safe spaces for 50 women (Sisters in Solidarity).

10 Partnerships
Partnerships & collaborations

2 Advocacy campaigns
Launched. #Riseforher & #ZambiaActNow





Funding Support: 2023 & Beyond

Every action, every donation – contributing to a brighter tomorrow.

U.S Embassy Zambia

- Support for setting up Water Sanitation and Hygiene facilities at Mpanshya market, Rufunsa.
- Funding support to the organisation to Implement the Girls Can. Project in 4 schools across Rufunsa.

Girls Opportunity Alliance

- Funding Support from the Obama Foundation's Girls Opportunity Alliance to expand the Girls Can. Project and implement in a 5th school.

The Furrer Foundation & Other Supporters

- Ongoing Support for various activities (Feeding programs in schools, Commemorations and technical support).
- Private, individual donations from well-wishers (Support for girls education, child care and menstrual health).

2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

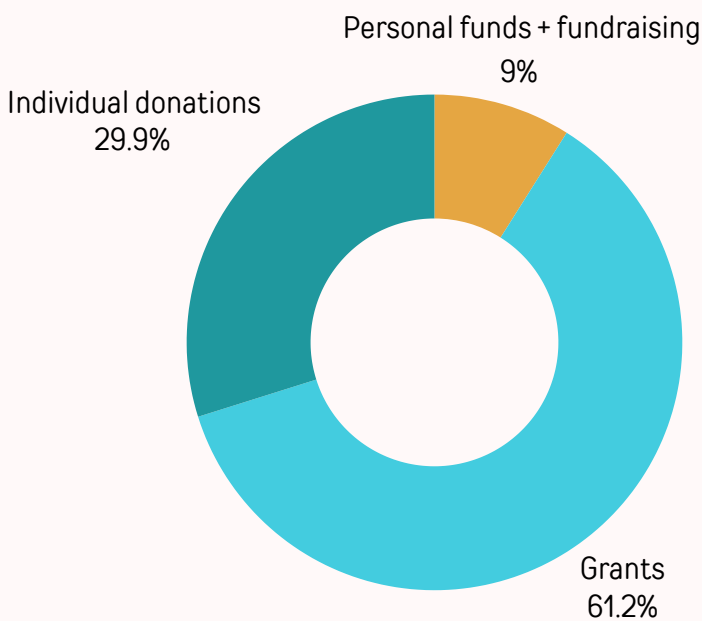
Empowerment initiative for Rural Women and Adolescents (EIRWA) has in the past relied primarily on individual donations, personal funds, and social media micro fundraising initiatives as its main sources of income. These funding streams have played a crucial role in sustaining our organization and supporting all our programs and initiatives. The dedication and commitment of our founder, Ireen Chikatula and her family, have been crucial in providing financial resources to sustain the organization.

EIRWA has also leveraged social media platforms to engage in micro-fundraising initiatives. Through strategic campaigns and awareness efforts, we have successfully mobilized support from a wide network of well wishers.

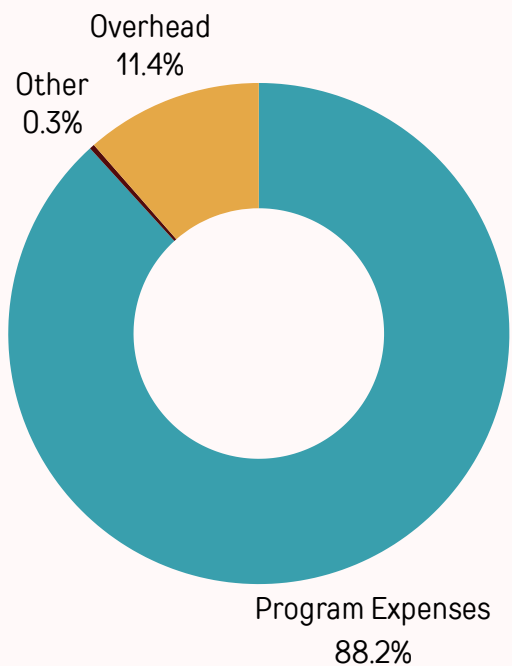
However, we are thrilled to have diversified our funding sources by securing a US embassy grant to finance some of the projects to be undertaken. As we move forward, we remain resolute in pursuing more financial sources through corporate sponsorships, organization fundraising galas and form Partnerships with like-minded organizations that will assure sustainability, continuity and effectiveness of our programs.

We are grateful to all our sponsors for their generous contributions to our financial resources. Your faith in our mission drives our efforts to create positive change. We remain accountable and transparent in managing our finances and are committed to making the best use of the funds entrusted to us.

TOTAL INCOME: USD 33,500



TOTAL EXPENSES: USD 30,600



A QUICK LOOK INTO THE FUTURE: 2024 AND BEYOND

Planned activities for the new year include:

- Building an Adolescents Empowerment Centre/Community Library
- Launching the Bonse Pamo GBV program for victims' support
- Expanding the Girls Can mentorship program to empower school girls
- Establishing a physical hub for programs and community engagement
- Continuing the Rise For Her program for girls' health and rights
- Focusing on women's economic empowerment and climate justice through various programs
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation for program impact assessment
- Seeking partnerships and networks to empower rural women and adolescents.

Commitments:

We remain committed to serving our community in the following areas:

- i. Ending Period Poverty
- ii. Advocating for Quality Education
- iii. Combating Violence against Women and Girls
- iv. Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), services and information for women, girls and boys.
- v. Demanding Transparency and Accountability from leaders
- vi. Peace, Security and Order



THE BOARD



Ireen Chikatula
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Docas Tembo
Vice Chairperson



Benjamin Furrer
Ex Officio Member



Dorothy Mwale
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Mapesho Bweupe
Secretary



Queen Nyirenda
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Mervis Nangoyi Soko
Member



Felistus Njobvu
Member

THE TEAM



Ireen Chikatula
Chief Executive Officer



Docas Tembo
Executive Assistant



Lwiza Nalwamba
Communications & Outreach
Specialist /Peer Mentor Coordinator



Michelle Yande
Volunteer Social
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LEAD PEER MENTORS



Elizabeth



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OUR 2023 IN PICTURES



International Day of The Girl Child



Rufunsa Zambia



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are incredibly grateful for the dedication and support of all the contributors to the success of the Empowerment Initiative for Rural Women and Adolescents (EIRWA). Your commitment has been instrumental in driving positive change and empowering women and adolescents in rural communities. Together, we have made significant strides towards a more inclusive and equitable society. Thank you for your invaluable contributions to this important cause. Your efforts are truly appreciated and have not gone unnoticed.

Report by : Lwiza Nalwamba

Lwiza Nalwamba serves as a Communication and Outreach Specialist at Empowerment Initiative for Rural Women and Adolescents (EIRWA), she is also a Peer Mentor Coordinator for the Binti Shupavu program, a project currently implemented by EIRWA in Mpanshya, Rufunsa. A graduate of the University of Zambia where she obtained her bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Lwiza is also an emerging leader and a YALI SA RLC alumnae passionate about women and girls rights with a focus on female representation in higher political positions. She hopes to one day see a parliament with as much female MPs and Ministers as men.

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