



Centering Girls' Agency; Voice, Power and Leadership

5 YEARS STRATEGIC PLAN

(2023 - 2027)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023-2027 Strategic Plan (SP) is a second five-year strategy subsequent to the initial one which ended its implementation in December 2022. The purpose of having this SP is the same. That is, to systemize the Msichana Initiative (MI)'s intervention for broader results. The SP has been developed through a consultative process. It has considered a number of issues apart from the context within which MI operates. The coherence has been made to all relevant international and national policy frameworks governing the rights of the girl child. Those ones include the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and, the National Five Year Development Plan (FYDP III).

In this program, the MI plans to stick into its core focus of empowering every girl child to become confident and have own voice against all barriers limiting realization of her potential. The only adjustment made during this 2023-2027 phase is to turn this core focus into a high notch by scaling up some intervention strategies which worked well during the previous strategic plan phase; and also, to innovate new ones which suit best in the current context.

The MI visualizes contributing to the presence of an enabling environment for realization of girl's wellbeing and full potential – as an overarching strategic goal and impact for the next five years. Four key strategies are invoked, namely; pursuing socio-economic, legal and civic empowerments of girls so that they can be assertive of their needs; engage in formal and informal protection and response mechanisms which also include pursuing some policy and legal reforms; and, transforming undesirable social practices through effective community engagements, among other ways. It is also a desire of this organization to further improve its institutional development and sustainability through a range of versatile strategies including adoption of resource mobilization schemes, development of succession plan and establishment of endowment fund.

More so, the Msichana Initiative remains to be envied by its enormous reputation and the goodwill it has gained just within a short period of its existence. As such, principles of corporate good governance and methodic ways of engaging the communities and oversight authorities have been considered in this plan. This is to say, operational policies

including on financial and human resource management are subjected to review in order to reflect all best practices. In this way, this organization will astronomically hike its niche as an authoritative or main girl-led and girl-rights organization in Tanzania.

Four changes (outcomes) are aspired as of 2027, namely:-

- i) **ENHANCING GIRLS' AGENCY;** Empowerment mechanisms on issues pertaining to girl's prosperity are enhanced.
- ii) **POLICY ADVOCACY;** Formal and informal protection and response frameworks on girl's rights improved.
- iii) **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT;** Undesirable social practices impeding girl's rights and wellbeing transformed
- iv) **STRENGTHENED CAPACITY:** Msichana Initiative's institutional development and sustainability advanced.

The MI banks on a web of partners it has gathered over a period of time; and, some lessons from previous interventions e.g. effective engagement of communities through own-made spaces like the Msichana Cafes; in school gender clubs; etc.

Apart from its 'traditional' intervention strategies, several innovative approaches for effective implementation of this SP are considered this time around including widening MI's reach to the grassroots through media, field offices,

alliances and other outreach interventions; and, adoption of evidence-based or data-driven advocacy interventions. Research component as a tool for generating knowledge is emphasized.

Moreover, there is a consideration of a right-based approach in which both duty bearers and right holders are holistically brought on board for this action. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is also strengthened for effective mapping of results and collection of all success stories along the way.

Our Bold Vision for the Future is to Sustain our enhancing girls agency approach and reach more than 35,000 girls directly and 1,000,000 indirectly by 2027. Deepen the advocacy work for the reform of discriminatory legal frameworks and enforcement of gender sensitive approaches through engaging girls, community and relevant stakeholders. **Scale** our Impact through BUILDING Msichana Centre, a multipronged space which provides safe space, legal and psycho-social services to survivors of sexual and gender based violence.

Our funding goal to ensure all of this can happen is US \$ 5 Million between 2023 - 2027





Chapter 1.1

About the Msichana Initiative


1.1 ABOUT THE MSICHANA INITIATIVE

Msichana Initiative is a young women and for young women organization, working to advance **GENDER EQUALITY** through advocating for girls' right to education, as a result, contributing in creating a society where rights of girls are safeguarded, and girls enjoy the recognition, dignity and excel to their fullest potential. The organization has operational mandates covering the whole of Mainland Tanzania.

We employ feminist approaches and principles in implementing the core agenda of economic empowerment, inspiring activism and SRHR to inspire adolescent girls and female youth to shape their stories, build their agency and determine their own future. Our niche is in working with girls and young women directly, advocacy for gender-sensitive legal frameworks and engagement with broader national and local women movements in catalyzing and sustaining feminist movements in Tanzania and beyond.



The main focus of Msichana Initiative is on girl's rights, particularly in education i.e. to ensure the quality education is equally guaranteed to girl children e.g. by addressing and finding solutions of key challenges which limit girl child's right to education. Moreover, the Msichana Initiative seeks to strengthen child protection systems; facilitating access to better and affordable menstrual hygiene products and facilities; and, promoting legal and policy reforms that envisions the best interest of a girl child.

The background image shows two women sitting on a green lawn, addressing a group of children. The woman on the left wears a red headwrap and a red and black patterned dress, holding a notebook. The woman on the right wears a red headwrap and a blue and red patterned dress, gesturing with her hands. In the foreground, the backs of several children's heads are visible, including one wearing a straw hat. A white picket fence and trees are in the background.

Chapter 1.2

Msichana Initiative as Exceptional Organization

1.2 MSICHANA INITIATIVE AS EXCEPTIONAL ORGANIZATION

Msichana Initiative is unique in a way that it combines both prevention and response aspects in its interventions whereby primary targets themselves (girls aging between 10 and 25 years) are staged on the front line of the changes envisaged. Msichana Initiative focus is on the girls' empowerment in order to make the same a champion of their own destiny i.e. self-esteemed.

There are several innovative strategies adopted for empowering the girls including informing them of their rights and duties; and then, creating together with them some platforms or spaces where the girls meet to deliberate on and make decisions.

1.2.1 Presence of Safe Spaces for Girls

The safe spaces include Msichana Amani clubs, the Out-of-school platforms and the Girl agenda Forum. Through these spaces strategic topics like emotional intelligence, life skills, sexual and reproductive education are usually covered contextually according to the needs of particular places and girls. Msichana Initiative is among few organizations in Tanzania, which offers such ranges of platforms and agendas for girls.

1.2.2 Multi-Dimensional Approaches

Msichana Initiative's approaches are very unique and multidimensional. One of its key strategies has been a 'right-based approach' in which, apart from empowering girls and giving them voice e.g. to become assertive of their rights, the duty bearers are effectively involved in the processes. Those ones include the State's machinery like learning institutions, local government authorities (LGAs), central government, parents, guardians and even private sector in its broader spectrum. For instance, the Girl's Agenda Forum offers unique opportunities for girls to blend with such other stakeholders.

Through this strategic plan 2023 – 2027, all these interventions will be scaled up e.g. by considering the cross-breeding blend with other countries across Africa and beyond.



Girls aging between 10 and 25 years) are staged on the front line of the changes envisaged

1.2.3 Pursuing Changes by Demonstrating Better Options

The Msichana Initiative's advocacy strategies are distinctive compared with traditional ones which the civil society sector in Tanzania has all along been applying. Part of its advocacy strategies is to pursue changes by demonstrating better models which are feasible despite being uncommon in the country. For instance, the 'one girl one bike' project, which aims at fundraising to donate bicycles to girls who are living 10 kilometers (KMs) away from school, gains ground and now, there are discussion on public transport and dormitories for pupils residing in isolated areas, where an access to schools is an issue of concern. The '*hedhi salama*' (i.e. 'safe menstrual') has similar intentions.

During this phase (2023-2027), several other models to demonstrate better welfare support to girls have been considered learning from Kongwa district (Dodoma region) and Nzega district (Tabora region) models for girls' re-entry into formal education streams. There are also proposed economic empowerment initiatives as subsequent sections of this strategic plan document show.

1.2.4 Innovative Ways of Reaching the Grassroots

The Msichana Initiative has innovatively found ways of grounding its interventions down to the grassroots levels e.g. district, ward and village levels. Despite being

in existence for less than a decade, the organization has managed to reach out millions of people in different regions. This, as further explained in section two of this strategic plan document, has been made possible through a number of outreach engagements including having field offices in Dodoma and Tabora; effective use of media including the community radios; and, grassroots-based forums like Msichana Café which also operate as loose or 'informal' networks involving community members, etc. A scale up of all these for the coming program's phase (2023-2027) is considered.





Chapter 1.3


Objectives and Mandates of Msichana Initiative

1.3 OBJECTIVES AND MANDATES OF MSICHANA INITIATIVE

The specific objectives and mandate of the Msichana Initiative are more on advocacy for change; namely, to advocate for:-

- i) Practical and relevant education for all girls in Tanzania.
- ii) Safe learning environment for girls, which enhances girls' creativity as well as facilitating the same in realization of their full potentials.
- iii) Change of social norms, customs and traditions that hinder the well-being of girls including on enjoying their right to education.
- iv) Effective handling of all forms of violence against girls, which tend to limit their rights to self-determination.
- v) Reforms of policy and legal frameworks with a view of promoting and safeguarding a safe environment for girls.
- vi) Empowerment of girls through acquisition of quality education and other enabling factors.
- vii) Research on and raise awareness on matters needing reform based on the situation of the education sector in Tanzania.



A young woman with braided hair, wearing a dark purple school uniform, is sitting at a wooden desk in a classroom. She is focused on writing in a notebook with a silver pen. In the background, other students are visible, including one wearing a red cap. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Chapter 1.4

Vision, Mission and Core Values

1.4 VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

1.4.1 Vision

A Tanzanian society where rights of girls are safeguarded and girls enjoy recognition, dignity and excel to their full potential.

1.4.2 Mission

To advocate for reforms of discriminatory legal frameworks and enforcement of gender-sensitive approaches through engaging girls, community and relevant stakeholders.

1.4.3 Core Values

The Msichana Initiative believes and values the following norms in execution of its mandates: -

- a) **Diversity:** Ensuring that work environments respect and recognize the unique contributions of every person and also, maximize the potentials of all employees, volunteers and everyone in realization of MI's objectives.
- b) **Curiosity:** Supporting rarity of ideas by encouraging the employees, volunteers and others to excel at problem-solving, creative thinking and collaboration in discharging their responsibilities for MI.

- c) **Accountability:** Becoming responsible for honest and ethical conduct in line with governing laws of Tanzania and all best practices applicable in the corporate world.
- d) **Innovation:** Encouraging innovative ideas, intervention strategies, etc. including effective use of technological advancement.
- e) **Teamwork:** Working in tandem as a strong team while taking advantage of each other's strengths for attainment of cumulative results the MI intends.



The design of this plan document considered a number of factors in addition to the Msichana Initiative's aspirations gathered from the management and the board e.g. a need to stick to the core functions of this organization. Such factors include: -

- I) The context which would influence the rights and welfare of the girls in Tanzania. The contextual analysis was guided by the current legal and policy frameworks governing rights of girls in education, health care, social security, economic empowerment, technological advancement, civic engagement, leadership, etc. The national and international frameworks including the National Five Year Development Plan of 2021/22 – 2025/26 (FYDP III); the Tanzania Development Vision of 2025; and, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 (SDGs) have been considered.
- II) Contemporary planning and programming approaches which include a consideration of right-based approach (RBA); and, the results-based management approach (RBM). In this way, holistic approaches in this strategic plan's implementation is guaranteed – in terms of ensuring that all key stakeholders e.g. right holders and duty bearers are brought into plan; and that, the results areas (indicated in part three of this strategic plan document) are designed and implemented in compacted and logical forms. Such approaches

(RBA and RBM) are preferred because girl's issues are complex which need not only multi-dimensional interventions, but also well systemized strategies. The plan hand reflects all these needs.

With a view of attaining optimal and sustainable results at much more scale-up level during this phase (2023-2027), the following key factors or needs – as driving forces, have been considered in this plan: -

- I) Taking advantage of technological advancements to reposition its interventions. This has been reflected in the results areas e.g. technology as a means to economically empower and tool for outreach programs to the grassroots levels where Msichana Initiative could not physically reach out.



- II) Bringing its interventions into line with current national and international legal and policy frameworks including the FYDPIII, SDGs, etc. as said earlier on. The compatibility of national policy and legal frameworks with international standards and other best practices on girls' rights is an advocacy agenda that the Msichana Initiative continues to pursue through this five-year program. Issues pertaining to early marriage, reproductive rights, safe period, etc. are on top of the advocacy agenda for this implementation phase (2023-2027).
- III) Broadening the outreach coverage through effective use of technology, community radio and other mechanisms. The field offices in Tabora and Dodoma regions will be strengthened to exhaust coverage of all wards and villages as of December 2027.
- IV) Engaging in both prevention and control sides of interventions e.g. economic empowerment and capacity enhancement as preventive strategies. The control or response include institutionalization of legal aid services and adaptation of the psycho-social support systems. Existing referral mechanisms cases involving girls will also be strengthened.
- V) Continue improving its institutional capacities and sustainability. A number of enabling policies including on resource mobilization; risk



management; succession plan; board charter; etc. will be formulated during this program's phase. An endowment fund to support the Msichana Initiative's programs is also eyed for establishment as part of a reinforcing self-reliance agenda.

Summary of the Msichana Initiative's Theory of Change

The MI will operate in the framework that, if the empowerment mechanisms on issues pertaining girl's prosperity are enhanced e.g. through civil and socio-economic programs; and, if the formal and informal protection and response frameworks on girl's rights will be improved as well as where the undesirable social practices impeding girl's rights and wellbeing will be transformed, then girls and young women wellbeing will be realized.

The key driver or attributing factor being the MI's institutional capacity and sustainability e.g. presence of assured financial resources, systems and sound operational policies.

Msichana Initiative's theory of change puts girls at the center where we build their agency and inspire activism to stand for their rights and others within their communities. We also understand girls are not living on an island hence we engage with the community through that digest and find solutions for key pressing issues pertaining to girls. We also maximize use of duty bearers who enforce and protect girls and young women's rights at community level. At the national level we engage in influencing change of discriminatory frameworks that impede girls from excelling to their fullest potential.



Result Area I on Enhancement of Equality and Empowerment of Girls

Outcome 1

Outcome Indicators

Empowerment mechanisms on issues pertaining to girl's prosperity are enhanced.

- Trends of girl's assertiveness, civic and other rights.
- Number of girls benefiting from quality, accessible and affordable social services, particularly in relation to education, health and ICT.
- Number of young women benefiting directly from economic empowerment initiatives.
- Presence of gender-responsive and girl's centered budgetary frameworks at LGA and national levels.
- Trend/ number girls benefiting from psycho-social and physical needs e.g. mobility, accommodation, hygiene, etc.

Result Area II on Improvement of Protection and Response Mechanisms

Outcome 2

Outcome's Indicators

Formal and informal protection and response frameworks on girl's rights improved.

- Knowledge on specific issues affecting girl children in socio-economic and other aspects is generated – to inform the advocacy process.
- Number and trends of reforms of the laws and policies governing girl's wellbeing.
- Performance trends (accountability) of law enforcers e.g. justice institutions and decision makers to enforce the relevant laws.
- Number of marginalized/ needy girls seeking legal redress from formal justice institutions.
- Trend/ number of girls accessed and benefited from the psycho-social response mechanisms.
- Presence of partnership with the private sector.

Result Area III on Societal Transformation from Undesirable Practices

Outcome 3

Outcome's Indicators

Undesirable social practices impeding girl's rights and wellbeing transformed.

- Number and trends of an engagement of stakeholders including the media – on a girls' wellbeing agenda.
- Number of community members engaged in Msichana Initiative agenda.
- Trends of transformation of some undesirable social practices which impede girls' wellbeing.
- Trend of social transformation adopted e.g. against perceived harmful cultural norms.

Result Area IV on Msichana Initiative's Institutional Development and Sustainability

Outcome 4

Outcome's Indicators

Msichana Initiative's institutional development and sustainability advanced.

- Trend of improving institutional performance of Msichana Initiative, headquarter and field office levels (Dodoma and Tabora).
- Trend of improving efficiency of Msichana Initiative – on financial mobilization and management.

Source: Msichana Initiative's Analysis and Results Framework.

