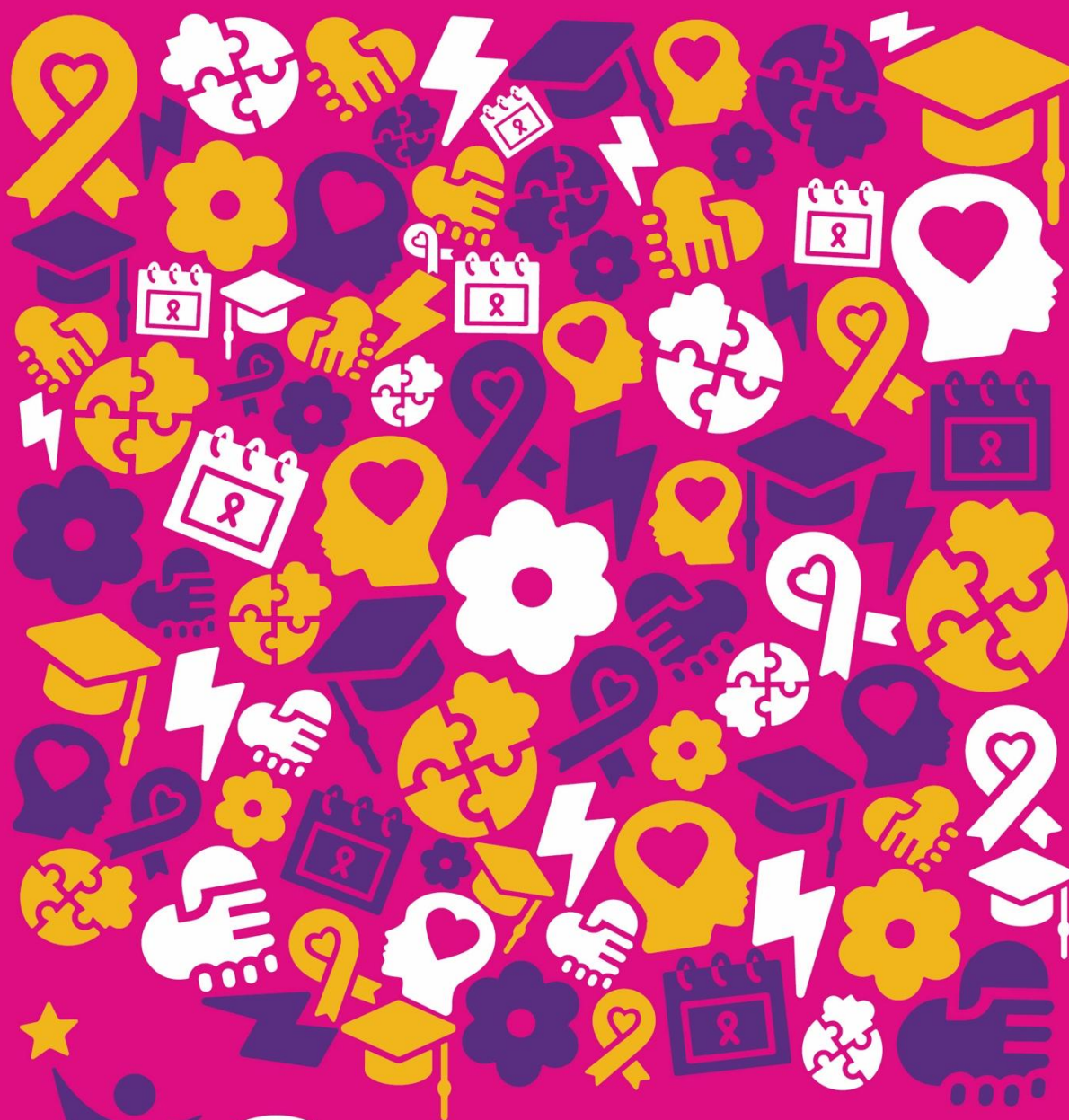




GirlsAct

FROM PROMISE TO PRACTICE:
ASIA GIRLS ACT 2025-
PROGRESS, BARRIERS, AND LESSONS

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1. Acknowledgment

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the AIDS Healthcare Foundation Senior Management of the Global Team, the Asia Bureau Chief, and the Country Program Managers and Directors for their unwavering support of the Asia Girls Act Program implementation throughout 2025. Your leadership, guidance, and commitment have been instrumental in enabling adolescent girls and young women across ten Asian countries to access education, health services, and leadership opportunities, while strengthening HIV prevention, treatment adherence, and empowerment initiatives.

We also wish to recognize the invaluable contributions of the Country Girls Act Focal Points and all Girls Act Members in each country. Your dedication to mentoring, coordinating, and advocating for program participants has been essential in translating our shared vision into meaningful actions on the ground. From providing sanitary materials in Cambodia, developing communication skills in China, mentoring and media advocacy in Indonesia, to supporting vocational training, school retention, and small business initiatives across the region, your efforts have made a tangible difference in the lives of young women.

This compilation of activities, lessons learned, and achievements reflects not only the impact of the program but also the tireless commitment of each member of the Girls Act teams. Your work has strengthened cross-country collaboration, expanded peer-led initiatives, and promoted healthier, safer, and more independent lives for adolescent girls and young women. For your guidance, support, and belief in the potential of young women to lead change, we extend our deepest gratitude. In addition, the Girls Act focal points also provided significant actions in addressing key public health challenges by focusing on the health and empowerment of adolescent girls and young women, who are often at higher risk of HIV and other sexual and reproductive health concerns. Through education, peer support, leadership training, and access to services, the program helps reduce infections, promotes treatment adherence, and encourages healthier choices. By equipping girls with knowledge and skills, it strengthens their ability to make informed decisions while contributing to broader goals of prevention, equity, and community resilience.

**AIDS Healthcare Foundation
Asia Bureau**

2. Introduction

This compilation of Girls Act activities across ten Asian countries reflects the dedication of young women, adolescent girls, and their supporters who worked throughout 2025 to advance HIV prevention, care, and empowerment. Supported by AIDS Healthcare Foundation Asia, the program shares a commitment to reducing new HIV infections among people aged 10–24 and lowering HIV-related illness and death in the same group.

Girls Act addresses key public health challenges by focusing on the health and empowerment of adolescent girls and young women, who are often at higher risk of HIV and other sexual and reproductive health concerns. Through education, peer support, leadership training, and access to services, the program helps reduce infections, promotes treatment adherence, and encourages healthier choices. By equipping girls with knowledge and skills, it strengthens their ability to make informed decisions while contributing to broader goals of prevention, equity, and community resilience.

The program is guided by the core values of HIV prevention, peer support, emotional well-being, skill building, advocacy and leadership, education and school retention, treatment adherence, and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health. These principles are reflected in country activities such as providing sanitary materials in Cambodia, developing communication skills in China, mentoring and media advocacy in Indonesia, scholarships and vocational training in Laos and Myanmar, support for small business start-ups in Nepal, education and outreach in the Philippines, leadership training in Thailand, HIV care and academic assistance in Vietnam, and educational, leadership, and nutritional support for girls affected by HIV in India. Each initiative responded to local realities while remaining true to our shared objectives.

Key successes in 2025 included the growth of peer-led programs, integration of mental and sexual health education, and stronger cross-country collaboration. Challenges persisted, such as economic pressures that push girls out of school, stigma around HIV, and limited access to reproductive health services. Lessons learned emphasized the value of mentorship, investment in leadership, and flexible support that meets young women where they are, whether in schools, communities, or health facilities.

This book exists because of the dedication of every country team. Their reports, photographs, and reflections made it possible to capture the year's impact. We extend our sincere appreciation to the teams in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and India for their honesty and commitment. Their contributions not only shaped this record but also strengthened the movement to empower adolescent girls and young women across Asia to lead healthier, safer, and more independent lives.

3. Girls Act Objectives:

- 1- To contribute towards the reduction of new HIV and STIs infections among young people ages 10 to 24 years in Aisa
- 2- To contribute towards the reduction of HIV/AIDS related mobility and mortality among young people aged 10 to 24 years in Asia

4. Girls Act Core Values:



HIV Prevention



Emotional Support and Wellbeing



Advocacy and Leadership



Stay on Treatment



Peer to Peer Support



Skill Buildings



Education and Staying in School



Sexual Reproductive Health

5. Asia Girls Act Themes:

5.1 Empowerment of Young Women Adolescent and Girls (YWAG) with Education, Knowledge and Skill Building:

- **Economic Empowerment and Income Generation:** For young girls focus on building financial independence and self-sufficiency. Through **financial literacy training**, girls learn essential skills in budgeting, saving, investing, and money management. **Entrepreneurship development** programs provide training on business skills, idea generation, and startup management to encourage self-employment. Additionally, **skills development and vocational training** equip girls with marketable skills in areas such as tailoring, baking, handicrafts, and digital expertise, enabling them to create sustainable income opportunities.
- **Career Guidance Sessions, Mentorship, Apprenticeship Training:** Career Guidance Sessions provide workshops led by professionals to explore career options, educational paths, and growth opportunities while helping participants set goals and create action plans.
Mentorship Programs connect girls with mentors for guidance, career discussions, and networking opportunities to support their aspirations and growth. Apprenticeship Training offers hands-on experience, skill-based training, and internships through partnerships with companies and institutions to enhance employability.
- **Peer to Peer Support and Dialogues:** YWAG find it difficult to seek information and share their challenges with people who are not their peers and improved access to

adequate knowledge, have many myths and misconceptions about; HIV/AIDS, sexual reproductive health, GBV, Drug and Substance Abuse, child marriages, teenage pregnancy, harmful norms and stereotypes, and human trafficking.

5.2 Reduce Risk of HIV and Other STI Infection and Stay in School:

- YWAGs do not have adequate access to HIV testing, comprehensive, safe, and affordable SRH services. They may have intermittent school attendance due to lack of sanitary material and poor menstrual hygiene. Out of school adolescent girls and young women are predisposed to HIV infection as they engage in sex to raise money for sanitary material.
- YWAGs are faced with school fees hardships thus finding it hard to stay in school and may drop out. This exposes them to risky behaviour as a way of obtaining school fees. They are usually unable to obtain the necessary scholastic materials which would help retain them in school. As a result, they tend to search for help from well-wishers, friends and sometimes strangers to help provide them with the required items. This exposes them to risky behaviours. Increased cases of poor antiretroviral drug adherence amongst those infected is important to have a better adherence.

5.3 Building YWAG to Champion Their Own Causes:

- **Advocacy and Leadership:** For policy changes through establishing young women's advocacy groups across Asia and training young women in advocacy, public speaking, and leadership to influence policy change, drug prices, tests, and treatment access.
- **Empowering Girls:** Through media and storytelling helps build confidence, challenge stereotypes, raise awareness about critical issues like education and equality, and reduce unplanned pregnancies. It also creates career opportunities in the media and advocacy, fostering stronger communities by inspiring social change.
- **Cross-Country Collaboration:** Promote young girls' rights and leadership and empower them by creating an Asia Girls Act forum and/or an alumni network to strengthen peer learning, mentorship, and collaboration with leaders in health, business, and government.

5.4 Psychological support for WWAG:

- Young Women and Adolescent Girls (YWAGs) attending HIV clinics will be encouraged to join treatment adherence support groups, which will be established at the clinic level and include both male and female young people. Each group will elect a governance team that comprises a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Mobilizer, responsible for overseeing daily operations in collaboration with the Clinic Management Team. To promote cohesion, build confidence, and attract more youth, each group will receive financial support to carry out an activity of their choice from the Girls Act package. In clinics where support groups already exist, new ones will not be formed; instead, YWAGs will be encouraged to join the existing groups. If specific issues arise during discussions that are unique to YWAGs, they may step aside from the larger group temporarily to address those needs in a more focused setting.

6. Designated Geographical Areas for Asia Girls Act's Activities in 2025:

No.	Country	Locations/Chapters	# GA Members/ GA Leaders	# GA/HIV Treatment
1.	Cambodia	3 Chapters, Phnom Penh City and Kandal Province (In school and out of school)	224 Members 12 Leaders	64
2.	China	3 Chapters, Guangxi, Guangzhou City (In school and out of school), and Linfen Red Ribbon School	120 Members 8 Leaders	110
3.	India	1 Chapter in Northwest Delhi	34 Members 27 Leaders	02
4.	Indonesia	2 Chapters, Bali Province (High School and University Students) and Jakarta City	68 Members 02 Leaders	11
5.	Laos	5 Chapters in 3 provinces, 2 Chapters in Vientiane capital while Champasack and Khammouan both have 1 chapter.	72 Members 4 Leaders	15
6.	Myanmar	5 Chapters in Yangon City	187 Members 13 Leaders	07
7.	Nepal	10 Chapters in 18 districts within 7 Provinces	168 Members 10 Leaders	100
8.	Philippines	2 Chapters, Iloilo City and Manila City	68 Members 21 Leaders	00
9.	Thailand	2 Chapter in Bangkok with students from Bang Khen School (Waisalee Anusorn), Donmuang Jaturachinda School, and Thammasat Khlongluang Wittayakom School and Migrants Girls in Samuth Sakon Province	211 Members 24 Leaders	00
10.	Vietnam	3 Chapters in Northern Vietnam Provinces, Yen Bai, Thai Nguyen and Phu Tho	116 Members 12 Leaders	74
	TOTAL:	36 Chapters	1,392 Members	383 (28%)

7. Country Program Implementation

7.1 Cambodia:

7.1.1 Background

Girls Act Cambodia was launched in 2019, and since then, the program has grown into a dynamic network of more than 300 members across Phnom Penh and Kandal Province. At the core of this community are eight Girls Act leaders representing different neighborhoods. These leaders consistently bring members together, creating a safe and supportive space for sharing, learning, and collective actions.

The program's central purpose is to improve the lives of adolescent girls and young women by strengthening their bonds with peers, involving families, communities, and local authorities, and fostering confidence, education, and essential life skills. Members come from a wide range of backgrounds and living circumstances, which enriches the conversations they hold and ensures the program responds to the real concerns young women are facing today.

In 2025, Girls Act Cambodia concentrated on meeting both practical and developmental needs. It provided sanitary pads and dispensers in four key locations, including schools, ART sites, and slum communities, and supported transportation allowances for girls in Phnom Penh and Kandal who needed help accessing antiretroviral treatment and other health services. Peer-led programs remained central to the effort. Ten young leaders organized monthly discussions and outreach activities across high schools, informal settlements, and community spaces, while two coordinators oversee planning, management, and reporting to keep the work consistent and accountable.

Building the capacity of these leaders was another important focus. Regular planning meetings, short training, and refresher sessions gave them the skills to lead group discussions, raise awareness, and guide their peers with confidence. Girls Act Cambodia also encouraged its members to join external training opportunities, broadening their knowledge and strengthening their ability to advocate for themselves and their communities.

Through these efforts, Girls Act Cambodia continues to help adolescent girls and young women stay in school, remain on treatment, and develop the skills and self-belief needed for a healthier and more independent future.

7.1.2 Key Activities

- **Capacity Building and Leadership Development:** Girl leaders received short training sessions to prepare them for guiding their peers on sexual and reproductive health, HIV, and related issues. Regular planning meetings and mentoring supported them in organizing events, managing program activities, and reporting on joint AHF initiatives. Leaders were also engaged as speakers and moderators in meetings, conferences, and video talk shows, sharing their experiences with stakeholders, local authorities, and other community leaders.

- **Peer-Led Programs and Community Engagement:** Ten selected girl leaders organized monthly discussions and outreach activities across high schools, slum communities, and other gathering places. Two coordinators provided oversight, planning, and guidance to ensure that peer education remained consistent and responsive to the needs of adolescent girls and young women.
- **Direct Social and Practical Support:** The program provided sanitary pads and dispensers in four key locations, including schools, ART sites, and slum areas. To help girls stay in school and remain on HIV treatment, it offered transportation allowances for accessing health services, assistance with travel costs for training opportunities, and essential support such as food and school materials.

7.1.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 224 Girls Act Members in Cambodia, 64 of them are on HIV treatment and 12 of them are the Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support their team members. None of them access STI services and are pregnant during the reporting period. 116 of them are in school.
- **Peer-led group sessions:** Girls living with HIV and those from poor families actively participated in monthly meetings across three chapters in Phnom Penh and Kandal. Sessions were planned and led by girl leaders, who facilitated discussions on challenges, solutions, and planning for the following month. With support from coordinators, leaders also organized informative presentations, collaborative activities, and thematic discussions relevant to members' needs.
- **Support at ART sites:** Monthly gatherings at ART and community sites brought together girls living with or affected by HIV. Girl leaders facilitated sessions on treatment adherence, life skills, and shared experiences, creating peer support networks and encouraging continued care.
- **Community outreach:** Activities in urban poor areas, such as Anglungkung Thmey in Phnom Penh, were organized in collaboration with community leaders and stakeholders. Sessions focused on practical life skills and addressed daily challenges faced by young girls. In addition, Menstrual Health Day was commemorated in two locations, engaging students, community members, and local authorities to reduce stigma, dismantle misconceptions, and combat discrimination against menstruating individuals.
- **School-based engagement:** High school students participated in sessions on sexual and reproductive health, menstrual health, early pregnancy, and HIV prevention. Comprehensive Sexuality Education was integrated with sexual and reproductive health learning, providing students with a structured package of guidance and resources. To support menstruating students, sanitary pads were also made available in schools and distributed within communities.
- **Capacity building and leadership training:** AHF Cambodia organized a full-day Training of Trainers for 15 girl leaders under the Girls Act project. The training equipped them with

the knowledge and skills to educate and support peers more effectively in schools and communities.

- **Participation in Key Advocacy and Events:** Girls Act leaders actively joined events organized by AHF. They mobilized peers and expanded their involvement in advocacy and outreach to marginalized communities on a broader scale. In July 2025, Girls Act Cambodia and AHF held a coordination meeting with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport to request partnership with four high schools on introducing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). On 15 August, the AHF team and girl leaders co-led a consultation meeting with the Ministry and other NGOs to discuss CSE in schools and agreed to collaborate on developing guidance and supporting changes within the school curriculum.

7.1.4 Challenges

- **Girls are living in poverty:** Members face unfortunate, inevitable repercussions of poverty such as dropping out of school, working full-time or part-time when they are not tending to their academic responsibilities and even during weekends to support themselves. As a result, these circumstances may deprive members of the time and efforts that are meant to be dedicated to their education.
- **The member's allocated time is limited:** Most of the members are still pursuing their educational degrees, and as mentioned above, are working to financially support themselves as well. They can only engage in Girls Act activities during the weekend most times, which can prevent a majority of the members from being able to meet and communicate with stakeholders during their working hours.
- **Members of our chapters still experience shyness with public speaking:** The road to achieving confidence is a steady, consistent progress that members are more than willing to invest in. However, long-persistent factors such as social stigma and discrimination both stand as obstacles in the members' pursuit of using their voices to reach wide ranges of audience on pressing topics that are still considered inappropriate or taboo.

Lessons learned

- **Diverse Girls Act Members:** Engagement of diverse members plays a vital role in increasing a sense of belonging among chapters. The voices of demographics, affected by varying circumstances, are always encouraged to be utilized to their fullest potential in combating any discrimination and acquiring equality. However, voices of non-affected demographics within the chapters can work adjacently to strengthen the magnitude of their affected peers' voices.
- **Collaboration with Local Government and Community:** Involving authority figures and allies in Girls Act Cambodia's events and activities will establish strong support networks for the members, including other unaffiliated individuals who are affected by parallel issues.

- **Learning by Doing:** Chapters are able to gain valuable insight from engaging in events held by AHF to gain firsthand experience. This approach, together with the chapters' exposure to novel activities, motivates them to move forward with advocacy for their own family, peers, and community.

7.1.6 Key Country Activities Photos



In the left picture, Girls Act Cambodia leaders are attending a set up meeting between AHF Cambodia and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. As for the right picture, stakeholders are pictured during the commemoration of Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025 alongside with Girls Act Team.



Girls Act Cambodia leaders and members partake in different advocacy activities such as working together on a mural proposal and actively participating in a training workshop concerning SRHR.



Girls Act Cambodia members' participation in International Condom Day and International Women's Day.



Series of Girls Act Cambodia's monthly discussion on different sessions of SRH, life skill building, and adherence led by the leaders.

7.2 China

7.2.1 Background

The Girls Act program in China, supported by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, provides adolescent girls and young women living with HIV or from vulnerable backgrounds with opportunities to develop leadership skills, build peer networks, and gain personal confidence while accessing critical health, nutrition, and educational support. Through a combination of comprehensive care, skill-building initiatives, and social activities, the program fosters resilience, empowerment, and social integration for girls who face unique challenges in their communities.

The Linfen Red Ribbon School (LRRS) Program specifically supports HIV-infected orphans and children from impoverished backgrounds. Beyond medical treatment, LRRS provides psychological support to promote mental well-being, physical education to enhance overall health, and social skill development to strengthen interpersonal interactions. By emphasizing mental health and social integration, the program helps girls build resilience and develop the confidence needed to navigate daily life.

In Guangxi, the CDC Program serves HIV-infected girls from infancy to young adulthood who live with their families and attend school. Many participants face low self-confidence and a sense of isolation. The program addresses these challenges through peer support and self-empowerment initiatives, including confidence-building and team-based activities that promote emotional resilience, personal growth, and social cohesion.

At Guangzhou Eight People's Hospital, affiliated with Guangzhou Medical University, the program focuses on HIV-infected girls and young women, improving medical adherence and providing comprehensive sexual education. Participants engage in speech skill development and confidence-building exercises, equipping them to advocate for themselves and others while enhancing their leadership potential.

Across all sites, China Girls Act emphasizes advocacy, outreach, and leadership development. Core activities include speech skill development, confidence-building workshops, sexual education courses, and capacity-building initiatives. These programs empower girls to become informed, resilient, and confident members of their communities while preparing the next generation of female leaders in China.

In 2025, Girls Act China implemented a variety of activities to support its two chapters and enhance participants' well-being. The program promoted adherence to HIV treatment across three sites and provided transportation support for parents to facilitate access to care. Story-sharing and collection activities amplified participants' voices and experiences, while nutrition support helped improve overall health. Comprehensive sexual education was delivered through surveys assessing members' knowledge of sex education and psychology. To further empower participants, the program offered training in speech development, self-confidence, and writing, culminating in a Girls Act speech contest to strengthen leadership, communication, and advocacy skills.

By 2025, the program reached over 100 girls and engaged more than 10 girl leaders across Linfen and Guangxi, hosting more than 10 events annually. These achievements highlight the program's commitment to fostering education, empowerment, and social integration for girls living with HIV or from vulnerable backgrounds in China.

7.2.2 Key Activities

In Linfen Red Ribbon School:

- **Medical Adherence Education:** Linked to Girls Act's focus on *reducing HIV and STI risk*, this session emphasizes the importance of consistent treatment adherence for young women and adolescent girls (YWAGs). Through peer dialogue and clinic-based learning, participants will gain accurate knowledge of HIV/AIDS, strengthen ART adherence, and safeguard their long-term health.
- **Mental Health Education:** Reflecting the *psychological support* theme, workshops will provide a safe space to discuss stress, stigma, and self-esteem. Activities aim to normalize mental health conversations and strengthen resilience among YWAGs, equipping them with coping strategies for school, home, and healthcare settings.
- **PE Session:** Sports and physical activities promote teamwork, confidence, and holistic health. Rooted in *empowerment and skill-building*, these sessions foster positive body image, reduce stress, and encourage healthy habits that support YWAGs' overall well-being.
- **Leadership Workshop:** Connected to *advocacy and leadership building*, this interactive workshop nurtures public speaking, decision-making, and confidence. It equips participants to become role models and community advocates, inspiring peers while influencing change within their schools and local communities.
- **Book Sharing:** Reading circles encourage *knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer dialogue*. Girls explore stories of empowerment, equality, and resilience, which spark discussion on real-life challenges such as gender stereotypes, harmful norms, and education opportunities.
- **Art Class:** Using creative expression as a tool for *empowerment and storytelling*, art sessions enable girls to share their voices, challenge stigma, and express emotions in a safe and supportive environment. Art has become a medium for healing and advocacy.

In Guangxi CDC:

- **Medical Adherence Education:** Echoing the reduce risk of HIV/STIs theme, this training enhances girls' knowledge of HIV care, the role of treatment adherence, and strategies to manage side effects. Peer support groups are encouraged to sustain motivation and responsibility.
- **Mental Health Education:** In line with the psychological support theme, these sessions address mental health stigma and provide tools for managing anxiety, depression, or isolation. The emphasis is on self-care, resilience, and building supportive peer networks.
- **Leadership Workshop:** Reflecting Girls Act's empowerment agenda, these workshops cultivate advocacy skills, leadership qualities, and teamwork. By learning to voice their

opinions and engage in decision-making, girls are prepared to champion their own causes in health and education.

- **Speech Training:** Aligned with advocacy and media empowerment, speech training builds confidence in public speaking, storytelling, and issue-based advocacy. Girls gain the ability to challenge stereotypes, inspire peers, and raise awareness on critical issues such as HIV prevention, gender equality, and reproductive health.

7.2.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 120 Girls Act Members in the program. 110 of them are on HIV treatment and 8 of them are the Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support their team members. Some of them have access to STI services but none of them are pregnant during the reporting period. 120 of them are in school. 10 of them received financial support from Girls Act for the non-formal education or vocational training.
- **Promotion of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Menstrual Health:** These sessions led by Dr. Guo at Linfen Red Ribbon School and Dongli School provided girls with practical knowledge on sex education and menstrual health. The Chinese editions of Health Guide for Girls During Puberty and Manual for Health Management for Girls were designed by the GAMPO team and printed by LRRS to support ongoing education.
- **Amplification of Girls' Voices and Aspirations:** Guangxi CDC organized a speech contest where GA members shared their personal journeys and dreams. These stories were compiled, designed by the GAMPO team, and printed for distribution, transforming personal experiences into advocacy tools.
- **Building Supportive Peer Networks:** The inaugural GA activity at Guangzhou Eighth People's Hospital included ice-breaking and team-building sessions, fostering solidarity, a sense of belonging, and a foundation for future teamwork and leadership.
- **Health and Educational Outcomes:** 100% of participating girls were on Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). Several members are pursuing higher education opportunities. Members actively advocate on key AHF topics, contributing to community awareness and engagement. Over 10 girls were trained and developed as leaders, strengthening the peer-led component of the program.

7.2.4 Challenges

- **Medical Adherence Difficulties:** Despite 100% of participating girls being on ART, maintaining consistent adherence remains a challenge across program sites. Factors such as travel distances to clinics, competing school or household responsibilities, and occasional disruptions in care can affect adherence.
- **Communication Barriers:** School restrictions on phone use and limited access to online communication hinder consistent follow-up and real-time support for members. This makes it

difficult to provide ongoing guidance, reminders for medication, and timely responses to concerns.

- **Limited Access to Comprehensive Services:** While members have received sexual and reproductive health education and some have access to STI services, coverage remains uneven, and additional outreach is needed to ensure all girls receive the full spectrum of health services.
- **Support for Non-Formal Education and Vocational Training:** Only a small proportion of members (10 out of 120) received financial support for non-formal education or vocational training, indicating a need to expand support for skill-building and alternative education pathways.
- **Sustainability of Peer-Led Initiatives:** Although over 10 girls were trained as leaders and peer networks are being developed, maintaining long-term engagement and leadership capacity requires continuous mentoring and resources.

7.2.5 Lessons learned

- **Empowerment Strengthens Confidence and Leadership:** Providing opportunities for leadership, peer mentoring, and public speaking, such as speech contests and team building activities, helps girls build self-esteem and strengthens their motivation to prioritize both physical and mental health. Empowerment strategies that focus on skill development and personal growth enable girls to take active roles in their communities and advocate for themselves and their peers.
- **Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Education is Vital:** Targeted SRHR sessions, supported by culturally relevant educational materials, enhance girls' knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, including menstrual health and STI prevention. Access to accurate information improves decision-making and fosters healthier behaviors among adolescents.
- **Peer Networks Promote Social Support and Resilience:** Activities that cultivate solidarity, belonging, and teamwork, such as ice-breaking sessions and peer mentoring, strengthen social cohesion among members. Supportive peer networks reinforce positive behaviors, encourage participation in school and health services, and provide a foundation for ongoing leadership development.
- **Integration of Health and Education Interventions Improves Outcomes:** Ensuring all girls have access to ART, STI services, and educational support, including financial assistance for non-formal education or vocational training, demonstrates the importance of holistic programming. Linking health adherence with educational opportunities supports long-term personal development and empowers girls to envision and pursue broader life goals.
- **Youth-Led Advocacy Expands Impact:** Engaging girls in advocacy initiatives, storytelling, and leadership roles enables them to translate personal experiences into meaningful community action. Participation in advocacy not only reinforces knowledge but also strengthens communication, leadership, and confidence, while promoting awareness of key AHF topics at the community level.

7.2.6 Key Country Photos Activities



Pictured on the left is Girls Act China's Linfen Red Ribbon School chapter and pictured on the right is Girls Act China's Guangxi chapter participating in their event.



Girls Act China's Guangxi chapter members engage in a variety of games during their retreat in 2025



Girls Act China's Guangzhou 8th Hospital chapter members foster connections between peers and facilitators through a series of bonding games and activities.



During International Women's Day 2025, members of the Linfen Red Ribbon school chapter along with their fellow students, both young boys and young girls participated to continue celebrating women's rights and gender equality as well as mural project activity.



Girls Act China members' leadership are cultivated through a training workshop as seen in the left picture whereas attendees of Girls Act's held event and study tour for Children's Day empowered children to explore different fields of study.

7.3 India:

7.3.1 Background

In 2025, Girls Act India continued to grow through strong, community-led advocacy. The program involves its members in leading outreach activities for marginalized populations in communities within Northwest Delhi. This helps build trust and real connections between the program and its members' connection with the wider community. By sharing real stories and experiences, they help others understand the challenges faced by adolescent girls and young people affected by HIV, poverty, and gender inequality. Girls Act India resourcefully blends cultural understanding with its advocacy work, making it more relatable and meaningful. Gender equality is at the core of the program. While it empowers girls by building their skills and independence, it also includes boys—supporting them through HIV treatment groups and sessions on sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Events like World AIDS Day include both boys and girls, showing that HIV awareness is a shared responsibility.

Program members act as a voice for youth across India, helping the program better understand and respond to their needs. HIV prevention now reaches beyond just members, aiming to raise awareness and reduce new infections in the wider community. Nutrition boxes are also shared with children and families affected by HIV to support their health and well-being. A major achievement in 2025 was the government's decision to give Girls Act India a dedicated community center, having seen the impact of the continued advocacy by members. This center is now used for leadership and life-skills training. The members led workshops for both other girls and younger boys, and support groups for ART adherence and SRH meet regularly. The center has become a safe space where young people can learn, grow, and prepare to take on leadership roles in their schools, families, and communities.

7.3.2 Key Activities

- **Girls and Women Empowerment:** Commemorations of events such as International Women's Day and Menstrual Health Day took place with the involvement of Girls Act India's members through support provision, empowerment, and opposition against discrimination, all in favor of women's health. On Women's Day, Girls Act India leaders performed acts that encouraged mothers to reflect on their daughters' freedom and opportunities.
- **Life Skills, Education Support, and Capacity Building:** Life skills classes were held for both girls and boys hailing from the slums and educational kits were distributed to over 200+ underprivileged children to support them to remain in school and continue their education. The 34 members of Girls Act India, forming "Kanya Kranti" are especially honed to sharpen their leadership quality with training. Aside from leadership training, capacity-building sessions and interactive activities target the members' life skills and other qualities to further develop with the purpose of addressing the members' issues.

- **Sexual & Reproductive Health:** Over 200 participants, in tandem with the Girls Act members, were in endorsing attendance of the annual Menstrual Health Day hosted by Aids Healthcare Foundation. This act of involvement honors and pays tribute to young female achievers by bringing awareness to societal issues experienced by menstruators as well as reducing stigma surrounding menstruation which all ultimately emphasize that menstruation should not be considered a barrier to any woman's aspirations. In solidarity with this movement, regular access to sanitary napkins for all menstruators is also emphasized and made clear regarding its significance in supporting menstrual health.
- **HIV Awareness & STIs Prevention:** Worlds AIDS Day boasted an immense number of participants as well as it drew in the presence of over 250 individuals. The activities held for the participants included awareness sessions, pre/post questionnaires, and emotional roleplays based on real stories of girls living with HIV. By immersing themselves in the challenges faced by HIV-positive girls, participants were able to bridge the gap between general societal awareness and the lived realities of those affected by the diagnoses.
- **Peer to Peer support:** The members conducted home visits to each other's residences to engage with the members' family members and familiarize them with the program as well. Members demonstrated their commitment to building strong peer relationships which in turn helps extend those connections to the families and broader support networks of their peers.

7.3.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 34 Girls Act Members in the program; 2 of them are on HIV treatment and 27 of them are the Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support team members. None of them use STI services or are pregnant during the reporting period. 25 of them are in school. Of this, 13 received scholarship support from the program, 12 received financial support to non-formal education program.
- **Nutrition Support:** Seventy girls and HIV-affected families received fresh produce to strengthen daily dietary intake. Three orphaned HIV-positive children were also provided with monthly food rations and essential aid. Activities included identifying vulnerable households, coordinating distribution of fresh produce, and arranging monthly delivery of food packages for orphaned children.
- **Leadership Development:** A leadership election was held with support from coordinators, giving members the chance to practice democratic participation and reflect on leadership qualities. Eleven Girls Act India leaders were chosen, with three taking on the roles of president, vice president, and secretary. Activities included orientation on leadership values, organizing the election process, preparing nominees, and facilitating the voting and handover.
- **Advocacy and Training Hub:** Through ongoing engagement with government stakeholders, Girls Act secured a DUSIB community center for use as a training venue. This recognition validated the program's impact and created a sustainable space for youth activities. Activities included regular advocacy meetings with local authorities, coordinating approval for space

allocation, conducting girls-led training sessions for vulnerable boys, and forming support groups on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and antiretroviral therapy (ART) adherence.

- **Awareness and Skills Building:** Members launched a podcast titled *Atmavishwas ke Pankh* (Wings of Self-Confidence) to promote awareness. A member who had dropped out of school was appointed as the Skill Unit In charge, highlighting opportunities for leadership and skill growth. Activities included content development, training members in podcast production, assigning roles within the team, and releasing episodes to the public.
- **Promoting Dignified Menstruation:** Parent sensitization sessions were conducted to address stigma around menstruation and support girls' access to essential menstrual health resources.
- **Securing Safe Spaces for Girls' Activities:** Ongoing engagement with the Urban Development Department focused on securing a larger, dedicated space for Girls Act activities, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for girls' learning and development.
- **Advancing Access to Legal Documentation:** Girls' advocacy contributed to the establishment of local centers for legal documentation, removing the requirement for MLA signatures. This change allows applications to be completed locally and has reduced school absenteeism among girls.

7.3.4 Challenges

- **Girls Face Resistance from Their Family Members:** Some members encounter traditional views within their families, especially from the male family members, that restrict their participation in Girls Act activities and events. They may also be discouraged from speaking out or taking on leadership roles. Such resistance creates emotional and social barriers, making it harder for members to fully benefit from Girls Act's efforts to support the personal growth and professional development of adolescent girls and young women.
- **Language Barriers:** Many of the members' proficiency in English is still quite low, limiting their interaction and engagement with program stakeholders and fellow peers on a global scale. Moreover, a portion of the members are not well-versed in the basic language spoken between members, focal points, and coordinators.
- **Lack of Access to Financial and Personal Affairs:** There are members whose financial resource is only accessible through the bank accounts that are under their male family members' management. As for some other members, they do not possess sufficient legal documents due to their migrant status. A lack of legal documentation may hinder members' participation in specific activities and events.
- **Challenging Societal Norms:** During the IDGC event, girls raised their voices against judgments based on dress code, emphasizing the importance of respecting individual choices and promoting gender equality.
- **Engaging Parents:** Public interactions have been held, where girls have educated parents about their rights and gender perspectives, encouraging parents to rethink their stance on issues like mobility and freedom, helping them understand the importance of equality and empowerment.

7.3.5 Lessons learned

- **HIV, Sexual and Reproductive Health Education:** Expanding understanding of sexual and reproductive health is fundamental for combating discrimination and building support for people affected by HIV in their daily lives. Meetings and sessions will continue to highlight adherence support for ART and raise awareness of HIV and sexual and reproductive health, reaching not only HIV-positive participants but also a wider individuals audience.
- **Support for Marginalized Populations:** Marginalized groups will be supported through different means to help improve their quality of life. This includes the continued provision of essential materials to maintain personal hygiene and ensure adequate nutrition intake.
- **Capacity Building through Training and Events:** In response to identified challenges, members will be engaged in events, skill training, and language classes that strengthen their capacity. These activities are designed to reinforce members' participation in advocacy and extend their support to other vulnerable groups within their own communities.
- **Podcast Engagement:** Monthly episodes of the members' podcast, *At Mavish Was Ke Pankh*, provide a platform for consistent engagement. The asynchronous format ensures accessibility for individuals across diverse backgrounds and demographics.

7.3.6 Key Country Activities Photos



Girls Act India members training on leadership and skill development. The eleven elected leaders of Girls Members and President and other members are shown in the right corner picture.



Girls Act India members and attendees during World AIDS Day.



Nutrition and educational materials support for marginalized populations through Girls Act India.



Womanhood honored by Girls Act India during International Women's Day & Menstrual Hygiene Day.

7.4 Indonesia

7.4.1 Background

Girls continue to face significant discrimination in health, education, and access to opportunities. For girls living with HIV, the challenges are even greater, as many feel excluded and in need of stronger support systems. At the same time, awareness of HIV and sexual and reproductive health among adolescents remains low, leaving young people vulnerable to misinformation, stigma, and discrimination. The Girls Act Indonesia program, supported by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), addresses these challenges by creating safe spaces where adolescent girls can learn, lead, and support one another. The program promotes health, empowerment, and equality, equipping participants with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions for their futures.

Girls Act Indonesia was launched in Bali in June 2022 in partnership with the Kerti Praja Foundation, growing out of an extracurricular student group focused on AIDS and drug prevention. Since then, the Bali chapter has expanded to 50 members aged 14–24, and in mid-2025, the program extended to Jakarta, adding 15 members. By 2024, Girls Act Indonesia had reached over 1,500 students from 18 schools in Bali, providing education on reproductive health, HIV, and STI prevention. The program empowers girls to overcome stigma and barriers to education and healthcare while developing leadership, self-confidence, and advocacy skills. Activities include trainings, workshops, school and community outreach, and engagement with government and community stakeholders. Members benefit from mentorship, peer support, and skill-building opportunities, enabling them to become effective advocates for themselves and their communities.

Key advocacy efforts focus on raising awareness about reproductive health, HIV, and STIs, promoting gender equality, and empowering girls to take control of their lives. Education support ensures that members facing financial challenges can continue their studies. Girls Act members also participate in national and international events, amplify their voices through social media, radio programs, and podcasts, and contribute creative works published in the Girls Act book. Peer group dialogues with key stakeholders help address pressing health and social issues, strengthening the program's impact.

In 2025, Girls Act Indonesia implemented a comprehensive range of activities across Bali and Jakarta. These included enhancing advocacy and leadership skills through social media campaigns and radio talk shows, promoting HIV prevention and treatment, reproductive health, and gender equality, and conducting skills-building sessions and educational support initiatives. HIV awareness activities were carried out in schools and communities, complemented by regular Girls Act meetings that fostered peer support and collective action. Members also represented the program at regional, national, and international events, while the Girls Act book launch showcased their creative work and advocacy efforts.

Through these initiatives, Girls Act Indonesia continues to foster a generation of empowered young women equipped to navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and become active change-makers in their schools, communities, and beyond.

7.4.2 Key Activities

- **Girls Act Goes to Schools and Communities and Peer Led HIV Education:** Bali chapter members trained as peer educators led interactive sessions in high schools on HIV, sexual and reproductive health, and stigma reduction. Activities included discussions, games, and pre- and post-surveys to measure knowledge and behavioral changes, supporting advocacy efforts and future representation at national and international events.
- **Skill Development and Capacity Building:** Girls Act Indonesia organized workshops to strengthen leadership, advocacy, and independence. Trainings included public speaking, essay writing, English, social media advocacy, cooking, crochet, and entrepreneurship with financial literacy. These sessions enhanced members' confidence, communication, and economic resilience.
- **Advocacy and Cross-Collaboration:** Members participated in national and international events with young leaders, government officials, and stakeholders. These engagements improved understanding of youth health issues, fostered leadership, and provided platforms to voice opinions, propose solutions, and strengthen networking skills.
- **Education Support:** Twenty members from underprivileged backgrounds received one million rupiah each for tuition and educational expenses, based on needs assessments by Kerti Praja Foundation. Support enabled continued schooling and reduced financial barriers, giving members confidence to pursue their studies.
- **Girls Act Book Creation:** Members contributed stories and essays reflecting their experiences and perspectives on social and health issues. The published book amplifies their voices nationally and internationally, inspiring peers and policymakers alike.
- **Regular Meetings:** Every two months, over 50 members gather to share ideas, discuss challenges, and contribute to planning future activities. These meetings foster collaboration, strengthen bonds, and build ownership of Girls Act, sometimes featuring guest speakers to motivate and provide additional insights.
- **Social Media for Change:** Girls Act Indonesia uses Instagram to share stories, promote HIV and reproductive health awareness, and highlight members' activities. With over 1,190 followers, the platform develops digital literacy, leadership, and creativity while extending the reach of advocacy campaigns.

7.4.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 68 Girls Act Members from 2 chapters in the program; 11 of them are on HIV treatment and 2 of them are the Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support team members. Some of them access to STI services and none of them are pregnant during

the reporting period. 61 of them are in school. Of this, 20 received scholarship support from the program, 43 received financial support to non-formal education program.

- **Expansion to Jakarta, a New Chapter Begins:** In mid-2025, Girls Act expanded to Jakarta, launching a new chapter with 15 members aged 14–22 in collaboration with Yayasan Pelita Ilmu (YPI). The Kick-Off Meeting provided a platform for connection, learning, and shared purpose, setting the stage for leadership development and community engagement.
- **Capacity-Building and Skill Development:** Girls Act Indonesia organized six workshops to strengthen members' leadership, advocacy, and practical skills, including public speaking, writing, English, social media content creation, digital advocacy, and entrepreneurship with financial literacy. Creative activities such as crochet supported mental well-being and income generation. Capacity building continued through the Podcaster Hunt with AHF and KBR Radio on journalism and digital storytelling, and the IEC Media Workshop for Disaster-Prepared Schools with the Bali Provincial Government and Plan International Indonesia, which integrated SRH into disaster preparedness. Life skills and well-being were also promoted through a cooking class with university students and a Badminton Competition Day.
- **Educational Support:** Twenty members from economically disadvantaged backgrounds received IDR 1,000,000 (\$61) each through a needs-based survey conducted by Kerti Praja Foundation. This support addressed urgent school-related expenses, ensuring continuity of education and reducing financial barriers for underprivileged members.
- **Peer Led HIV and SRH Education:** Trained peer educators led interactive HIV and sexual and reproductive health sessions across ten high schools in Denpasar, engaging 473 students. Activities included games, discussions, and pre- and post-tests to measure knowledge, promote HIV prevention, and reduce stigma against people living with HIV.
- **Advocacy and Media Engagement:** Members participated in national and international events to expand advocacy skills and visibility. Two members joined a UNFPA workshop on reproductive health, gender, and media advocacy in Yogyakarta, focusing on ethical storytelling and data-driven communication. Five members joined the AHF-KBR Podcaster Hunt in Bali, developing digital content and podcasting skills to amplify youth voices.
- **Youth-Led Public Health Initiatives:** In partnership with the Denpasar City Government and AIDS Commission, members delivered HIV education to all new students, with sessions recorded and posted online, reaching over 10,000 viewers and gained more than 1400 like on YouTube. At SMPN 141 Jakarta, Girls Act celebrated Menstrual Hygiene Day with 125 students, combining interactive discussions, cultural performances, theater, and a national radio talk show to normalize menstruation and promote inclusivity.
- **Community Engagement:** Further strengthened through the Independence Day celebration, the International Day of the Girl Child event at Level 21 Mall with more than 100 participants, HIV/AIDS education at SMP Wisata Sanur, and reproductive health socialization at Tat Twam Asi Orphanage.
- **Publication and Digital Advocacy:** The first Girls Act Indonesia Book launched and featuring stories written by 14 young members, and the Girls Act Mural Initiative in Jakarta

and Bali, using art to promote self-empowerment, reproductive health, and HIV awareness. Public outreach was also expanded through collaboration with ALSA CLCC LC UNUD during Car Free Day at Lapangan Renon, engaging the wider community in adolescent health education and empowerment.

- **Regular Meetings and Peer Support:** Bi-monthly meetings bring together over 50 members to review progress, share ideas, and plan activities, fostering collaboration, team cohesion, and ownership of Girls Act initiatives.
- **International Representation:** Members represented Girls Act Indonesia at international events, including ICONIK South Korea 2025, where research on condom use among PrEP users was presented, highlighting evidence-based advocacy, youth leadership, and the program's contribution to HIV prevention in Indonesia.
- **Impact Summary:** Across Bali and Jakarta, Girls Act Indonesia advanced youth-led health advocacy through capacity-building, peer education, media engagement, educational support, and public health initiatives. More than 500 students were reached through school campaigns, members developed leadership and professional skills, and the program strengthened its advocacy footprint locally, nationally, and internationally.

7.4.4 Challenges

- **Limited Reach Beyond Core Chapters:** While Bali and Jakarta have active chapters, geographic expansion to other provinces remains limited. This restricts access for adolescent girls and young women in more remote or underserved areas.
- **Financial Constraints for Members:** Despite targeted educational support, some members still face financial barriers that could affect school attendance, participation in activities, or access to resources. Sustained funding is needed to ensure inclusivity and equity.
- **Maintaining Engagement Across Diverse Age Groups:** Members range in age from 14 to 24, making it challenging to design activities and trainings that are equally relevant and engaging for all participants.
- **Stigma Around HIV and SRH Topics:** Cultural and societal stigma surrounding HIV, reproductive health, and menstruation can hinder open discussion, peer education, and participation in advocacy initiatives.
- **Balancing Academic, Personal, and Program Commitments:** Many members are students with varying academic pressures, which may limit their availability for workshops, peer-led sessions, and advocacy events.
- **Digital Access and Skills Gap:** While social media and online tools are leveraged for advocacy, not all members may have consistent access to technology or the digital literacy needed to fully engage in online campaigns or virtual learning sessions.
- **Sustaining Leadership Development:** Training and mentoring members to take leadership roles is ongoing but ensuring that newly developed leaders remain active and motivated over time can be challenging.

7.4.5 Lessons learned

- **Peer-to-Peer Engagement Works Best:** Adolescents respond more positively when learning from their peers, highlighting the importance of peer-led sessions in promoting health knowledge and leadership skills.
- **Safe Spaces Foster Confidence:** Providing a supportive and non-judgmental environment encourages members to participate actively, share experiences, and develop self-confidence.
- **Financial Support Is Essential:** Economic barriers can limit participation, making targeted support such as educational assistance crucial for sustaining engagement among underprivileged members.
- **Continuous Education Reduces Stigma:** Persistent HIV-related stigma and misinformation emphasize the need for ongoing advocacy and health education to improve literacy and reduce discrimination.
- **Holistic Approaches Have Greater Impact:** Integrating advocacy, skill-building, creativity, and economic empowerment produces more sustainable outcomes for adolescent girls.
- **Balancing Commitments Is a Challenge:** Many members struggle to manage school responsibilities alongside program activities, highlighting the need for time management support and flexible program scheduling.

7.4.6 Key Country Photos Activities



Girls Act members participated in a series of capacity-building workshops that enhanced their skills.



Girls Act Indonesia members, as peer educators, led interactive sessions in high schools to raise awareness about HIV and sexual and reproductive health.



AHF and Girls Act Indonesia provided school tuition assistance to 20 members of Girls Act Indonesia's Bali Chapter.



Girls Act Indonesia members actively joined national and international events.



Girls Act Indonesia's newest chapter, their Jakarta chapter.

7.5 Laos:

7.5.1 Background

Girls Act Laos is dedicated to building a healthier and brighter future for adolescent girls and young women across the country. The program takes a holistic approach, combining health, education, and leadership to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions and overcome barriers. Launched in July 2021, the program initially supported HIV-positive girls aged 15–24 with antiretroviral therapy, school materials, hygiene products, and events such as Menstrual Hygiene Day under the theme “Amplify Her Voice.” In 2022, eight peer leaders received training on reproductive health and life skills across four provinces. Despite a temporary pause, five leaders continued monthly group discussions from June 2023, maintaining program momentum.

Girls Act Laos provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, emphasizing HIV and STI prevention, treatment adherence, and access to nutritious food. Education is a cornerstone of the program, supporting girls to remain in school and overcome financial or social barriers. By fostering independence and resilience, the program helps participants build a foundation for future academic and professional success.

Beyond health and education, Girls Act Laos develops confidence, leadership, and life skills. Peer leaders mentor members in communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and advocacy, creating safe spaces for dialogue and peer-to-peer learning.

By 2025, the program reaches 72 girls across four provinces, with five active chapters in Champasack, Khammouan, Savannakhet, and Vientiane Capital. Activities include peer-to-peer education, leadership workshops, and advocacy initiatives that integrate health education, skill-building, and community engagement. Through this holistic approach, Girls Act Laos empowers girls and young women to lead healthier, informed, and confident lives, fostering a generation of resilient leaders who can drive positive change in their communities.

7.5.2 Key Activities

- **Developing Peer Leaders:** Training new Girls Act volunteers and peers to strengthen counseling, advocacy, leadership, and teamwork skills.
- **Promoting Health and Awareness:** Conducting sessions for girls on adolescent sexual and reproductive health, HIV, and AIDS at schools and within local communities.
- **Supporting Education:** Empowering girls to remain in school and succeed academically.
- **Enhancing Health and Nutrition:** Providing interventions that improve health and nutrition to support learning and overall development.
- **Inspiring Participation:** Engaging Girls Act leaders and members in special events such as International Children’s Day, World AIDS Day, Lao New Year, Menstrual Hygiene Day, and the International Day of the Girl Child.

7.5.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 72 Girls Act Members from the five chapters in the program; 15 of them are on HIV treatment and 5 of them are the Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support team members. Some of them have access to STI services and none of them are pregnant during the reporting period. 67 of them are in school. Of these, 56 received scholarship educational material support and non-formal education from the program.
- **Capacity-Building for Peer Leaders:** Trained 5 girl leaders and 14 peers in counseling, advocacy, leadership, and teamwork. These trained members serve as role models and act as vital links between health services and communities, positively influencing health outcomes and inspiring others to take on leadership roles.
- **Health and SRH Awareness:** Over 150 girls reached through school and community awareness activities, improving knowledge and attitudes toward sexual and reproductive health, HIV, and STIs, and encouraging open discussion while reducing stigma and discrimination.
- **Educational Support:** Provided scholarships and school materials to 59 girls, enabling them to stay in school, pursue their education, and make informed life choices.
- **Health and Nutrition Support:** Offered nutritional assistance to 20 HIV-positive girls and adolescents from vulnerable families, supporting both their well-being and academic potential.
- **Youth Participation and Leadership:** Girls actively led and participated in key events such as International Children's Day, World AIDS Day, Lao New Year, Menstrual Hygiene Day, and International Day of the Girl Child, strengthening leadership and community engagement.
- **Menstrual Health Support:** Distributed 5,000 menstrual pads to participants during events and activities, promoting health, hygiene, and dignity.

7.5.4 Challenges

- **Limited Reach in Remote Areas:** Reaching girls in rural or mountainous provinces can be difficult due to distance, poor infrastructure, or limited transportation, which may restrict access to training, health services, and program activities.
- **Balancing Program Participation with School and Daily Life:** Many girls face the challenge of managing school responsibilities, family duties, and program involvement simultaneously, which can limit consistent participation in activities or leadership opportunities.
- **Sustaining Peer Leader Engagement:** Maintaining motivation and consistent activity among peer leaders can be challenging, especially when leaders face personal, educational, or family pressures that compete with their program responsibilities.
- **Addressing Stigma and Misinformation:** Despite awareness campaigns, persistent stigma around HIV, sexual and reproductive health, and menstruation can prevent some girls from fully engaging, accessing services, or speaking openly about their needs.

7.5.5 Lessons learned

- **Peer Led Education is Effective and Sustainable:** Peers are the most credible and relatable messengers for sensitive topics like sexual and reproductive health. When girls and volunteers from the same community share information, it breaks down stigma and social taboos. Training these peers as leaders builds a sustainable network that continues to educate and empower others long after the program extending the project's impact beyond.
- **Health and Education Are Interconnected:** Girls Act Laos demonstrates that addressing both educational and health barriers, such as menstrual hygiene, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS knowledge, creates a stronger foundation for success. By improving their physical, mental, and social well-being, girls are better able to focus on academics and reach their full potential. True empowerment comes from supporting both health and learning simultaneously.
- **Learning by Doing Strengthens Impact:** Providing information alone is insufficient. Practical experience through training in counseling, advocacy, leadership, and teamwork allows girls to apply their knowledge effectively. Participation in special events gives them the opportunity to organize peers, advocate for causes, and practice skills firsthand. This hands-on approach builds confidence, ownership, and transforms participants from beneficiaries into active agents of change.

7.5.6 Key Country Photos Activities



School material supports their education distributed to Girls Act members in Laos



Girls Act Peer Educators conduct health education session to its members in the schools

7.6. Myanmar:

7.6.1 Background

Girls Act Myanmar joined the Girls Act Asia network in the third quarter of 2024, making it the newest member of the regional community. In a short time, the program has attracted nearly two hundred members and built partnerships with five government and civil society institutions committed to supporting adolescent girls and young women. This rapid growth reflects the program's strong sense of purpose and the urgent need for its services.

Education stands at the heart of Girls Act Myanmar's work; members are given access to formal and non-formal learning materials. Moreover, tutoring fees and reading resources are provided to help them stay in school or continue their studies outside traditional classrooms. The program integrates interpersonal skills development and vocational training into its learning approach, offering workshops led by professional trainers who mentor the girls directly. These sessions give participants opportunities to build practical skills, develop confidence, and prepare for future employment.

Health and well-being are equally important. Girls Act Myanmar delivers health education focused on preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, menstrual health, and basic hygiene. Nutrition training and personal hygiene support are also provided to ease daily burdens on members and improve their quality of life. To address immediate needs, the program distributes sanitary pads to adolescent girls and nutrition boxes to girls living with HIV.

In 2025, vocational training has become a defining feature of the main program. Members learn sewing, embroidery, knitting, and tapestry, and they receive the materials and accessories necessary to practice these trades. These opportunities, combined with life-skills coaching, mentorship, and leadership training, are designed to empower vulnerable girls and those living with HIV to build practical skills, teamwork, and social responsibility. By strengthening their capacities and fostering resilience, Girls Act Myanmar ensures that its members are not only supported in the present but also prepared to lead and thrive in the future.

7.6.2 Key Activities

- **Education Support:** Girls Act Myanmar provides comprehensive educational support to ensure that girls and young women can access both formal and non-formal education. This includes distributing educational materials, covering tutoring fees for formal schooling, and providing light literature for non-formal learning. These interventions help participants continue their studies and develop a foundation of knowledge that supports future personal and professional growth.
- **Nutrition, Hygiene, and Personal Development:** The program emphasizes the holistic well-being of its members. Nutrition boxes are distributed monthly to Girls Act members living with HIV, supporting their health and treatment adherence. Adolescent girls also receive

sanitary pads monthly to maintain school attendance and personal hygiene. Life-skills training sessions led by professional trainers equip participants with practical knowledge in areas such as communication, decision-making, and resilience. Workshops, mentorship, and coaching provide hands-on experiences that build teamwork, social responsibility, and leadership skills, particularly for vulnerable girls and those living with HIV.

- **Vocational Training and Capacity Building:** Girls Act offers practical skill-building opportunities through vocational training in sewing, embroidery, crochet, and tapestry. Participants receive materials and guidance to practice these trades, enabling them to develop marketable skills that can lead to income-generating opportunities and greater economic independence.
- **Engagement in Broader Initiatives:** Members are encouraged to participate in international events and contribute to collaborative efforts, including responses during natural disasters. These activities provide exposure to wider networks, build confidence, and foster a sense of civic responsibility and leadership beyond their immediate communities.

7.6.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 187 Girls Act Members in the program; 7 of them are on HIV treatment and 13 of them are Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support team members. 58 of them are in school and receive educational support from the program. 129 of them are participating in non-formal education and vocational training programs. AHF organized two basic vocational training courses (Plastic Basket weaving) and 50 girls joined the training and some of them continue to learn advanced skills.
- **Capacity Building:** AHF supported the hiring of external tutors for five Girls Act team members, provided nutritional support for seven girls living with HIV, and distributed 5,200 sanitary pads. The program also delivered training courses in personal development and communication skills. In addition, AHF supported vocational training in plastic basket weaving and soap making for Girls Act members. Girls Act team members participated in international awareness events, including IDGC and WAD, organized by AHF. They served as masters of ceremony and supported event administration, which helped strengthen their leadership and management skills.
- **Interpersonal Skills Training and Mentorship:** Support and provision of interpersonal skill development training by professional trainers across all 5 sites. It is of utmost importance that the entirety of members equally receives the opportunity to develop interpersonal skills integral to advancing many aspects of both their professional and social lives. The presence of an active mentor to lead them in every step they take provides the members with a solid perception of how interpersonal skills are translated into real life and how they can be implemented into their own individual experiences as well.
- **Educational Guidance and Focal Point Support:** Girls Act members have been enabled to become more capable, confident, and independent. Aside from professional trainers, focal

points work even more closely with their members to ensure that support is present to accommodate different aspects of their members' educational pathway. Their consistent guidance operates as a bountiful origin for their members' positive outlook in moving forward in their academic, personal, and professional growth.

- **Nutritional and Educational Support for PLHIV Members:** PLHIV (People living with HIV) Girls Act members are not only nutritionally supported but eleven of Girls Act members who are still in high school have their education supported as well. It is therefore essential that these members are given equal opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, ensuring their diagnosis does not unfairly limit their potential.

7.6.4 Challenges

- **Political instability has caused difficulties in reaching out on a community level and to higher educational institutions.** Girls Act Myanmar's engagement can only be extended towards the chapters who are situated in institutions they are already closely working with at the present time. Aside from this movement, their program's outreach cannot be extended towards other girls in higher educational institutions and communities. This limit delays Girls Act Myanmar's delivery of support to other marginalized girls who continue to reside with unfavorable circumstances that disrupts their rights to education and a better quality of life.
- **Communication with members can be tricky because of language barrier as some of members do not speak English while some members who come from ethnic groups cannot speak Burmese either.** The language barrier between members and focal points would frequently require the presence of translators for communication in relation to any concern, inquiries, or activity planning to proceed smoothly. This matter is also reflected in the training sessions non-Burmese speaking members receive from professional trainers.
- **Some of the members experience shame or have low self-esteem due to the lack of self-confidence.** Members often experience feelings of humiliation due to the persistent social stigma and discrimination attached to vulnerabilities such as living with HIV, having a disability, being orphaned, or having been in conflict with the law during their youth.

7.6.5 Lessons learned

- **Expansion Beyond Institution-Based Approach:** An institution-based approach is effective but limiting. Girls Act Myanmar's plan of actions is currently limited to what can be provided for members at the chapter sites as opposed to new, additional ventures in external locations that the members can participate in alongside non-members including community members, other peers, and authority figures.
- **Enhanced Support for HIV-Positive Girls:** There are fewer PLHIV girls than non-PLHIV girls among the combined chapter sites. As such, the development of a new extension to further support HIV-positive girls is currently under consideration.

- **Strengthened Professional and Vocational Training:** Professional training is not yet provided at a satisfactory level, which will be addressed by providing professional training at a more frequent rate in the future. In conjunction with this new arrangement, continuous monitoring of vocational training sessions will be conducted for members as it is beneficial for building their income generation.

7.6.6 Key Country Activities Photos



Members during their training session for expanding their knowledge on STI and its prevention, RH, and capacity building.



Girls Act Myanmar during Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025.



Girls Act Myanmar members and attendees celebrated International Women's Day 2025



A few representatives of Girls Act members took part in one of Girls Act Asia's quarterly meeting.



Girls Act Myanmar members contributed to the efforts of the Earthquake Relief planning and execution.

7.7 Nepal:

7.7.1 Background

Girls Act Nepal has quickly become an active and visible part of the Girls Act Asia network, reaching all seven provinces of the country. Although newer than some of its regional counterparts, the program has already built a meaningful presence by connecting with adolescent girls and young women from diverse communities and by forming partnerships that strengthen its ability to respond to local needs.

AHF Nepal's Girls Act program operates through four key chapters: **Income Generation Support, Educational Support, Advocacy, and Skill Development Support**. Together, these areas empower young women by promoting education, health awareness, and leadership development. The program actively addresses gender-based violence and discrimination, while removing barriers to education by providing resources, skill-based training, and community support.

Skill development is a central focus, viewed as a pathway to independence and leadership. In 2025, eighteen girls from eighteen districts are receiving targeted training in practical skills that can be applied within their communities. To encourage self-sufficiency, Girls Act Nepal is also providing seed money to at least one girl or young woman in each province to help launch small businesses or self-sustaining projects. These initiatives aim not only to generate income but also to build confidence and strengthen community resilience.

Educational support remains at the heart of the program. Seventy girls from disadvantaged backgrounds are receiving assistance such as school uniforms, stationery, and basic first aid supplies, helping to ensure that financial barriers do not interrupt their studies. Beyond direct support, the program engages schools through health initiatives that deliver sessions on adolescent sexual and reproductive health, access to health services, mental health, and overall well-being. These efforts broaden awareness and contribute to safer, more informed school environments.

Recent initiatives include certified barista training, support for vocational paramedic and pharmacy education, goat distribution to a family for income generation, seed money for small businesses, and regular community meetings to raise awareness of girls' rights. Participants have also expressed interest in future training opportunities such as beauty parlor services, tailoring, and sandal-making. Through these efforts, the program helps girls build confidence, strengthen decision-making skills, and create sustainable opportunities to thrive in their communities.

Through this combination of interventions, Girls Act Nepal strengthens the capacities of young women and supports their development as leaders in their communities. Its approach blends education, economic opportunity, and health awareness, ensuring that girls have both the resources and the confidence to shape their futures and contribute to broader social change in Nepal.

7.7.2 Key Activities

- **Education Support:** Members' education is supported through the provision of necessary learning materials, tutoring fees for formal schooling, and light literature for non-formal education. This ensures that girls from disadvantaged backgrounds have the resources to stay in school, improve literacy, and access educational opportunities that might otherwise be limited. Additional support includes school uniforms, stationery, and basic first aid supplies for 70 girls from marginalized communities, helping to reduce barriers to consistent attendance and academic participation.
- **Vocational Training, Skill Development, and Income Generation Support:** Girls Act Nepal organizes vocational training sessions in sewing, embroidery, crochet, baking, computer skills, cosmetology, and tapestry to provide participants with practical skills that can lead to income-generating opportunities. In addition, 18 girls across 18 districts participate in skill development training programs, and selected girls or young women in each of the seven provinces receive seed money to launch small businesses or self-sustaining projects. These initiatives support economic empowerment, promote self-sufficiency, and foster entrepreneurial skills.
- **Hygiene Support, Health, and Well-being Programs:** To safeguard health and personal well-being, the program provides monthly nutrition boxes to members living with HIV, while adolescent girls receive regular supplies of sanitary pads. Through school health programs, secondary-level students are educated on adolescent sexual and reproductive health, access to health services, mental health, and overall well-being. These sessions aim to increase awareness, reduce health risks, and equip girls with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions about their bodies, relationships, and personal care. In addition, members living with HIV receive care and treatment services at AHF-supported ART clinics. These interventions improve overall quality of life while building confidence and skills for navigating daily challenges and planning for the future.
- **Advocacy:** Girls Act Nepal conducted a workshop to advance the draft of the HIV bill, aimed at protecting the rights of people living with HIV. This was followed by a series of stakeholder meetings. The draft has been submitted to the Ministry of Health for review before its final submission to the Federal Parliament for approval.

7.7.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 168 Girls Act Members in the program; 100 of them are on HIV treatment and 10 of them are the Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support team members. Some of them access STI services and have become pregnant and gave births during the reporting period. 73 of them are in school and received scholarship support from the program. 4 of them are participating and received financial support in non-formal education and/or vocational training. 110 of them are in school and 6 dropped out from school during reporting period.

- **Skill Development and Vocational Training:** An extensive range of training for many types of retail and service businesses has been provided to the members according to their interest and needs. The different types of training consist of basic tailoring, cosmetology, four-wheel driving, baking, barista service, and computer skills which education support is specifically provided for as well. This approach yields a multitude of pathways ultimately leading to skill development and financial independence.
- **Diverse Training for Financial Independence and Agricultural Income Generation:** Aside from training opportunities, support for income establishment is being allocated to the necessary materials being provided for members who are working in agriculture as well, specifically chicken and goat farming alongside animal husbandry.
- **Seed Money for Small Business Establishment:** Most importantly, Girls Act Nepal supply seed money for small businesses establishment to at least a member from each of the provinces that they oversee.

7.7.4 Challenges

- **Timing for Girls Act Members:** Time constraints among members vary due to their busy schedules, which may not always align when planning activities that involve all or most participants.
- **Local Authority Collaboration:** Certain activities require permission from authority figures, which can delay implementation and reduce the program's effectiveness. Such postponements may limit members' engagement and can be particularly discouraging, as girls benefit most from consistent and well-timed support given their already demanding schedules.
- **Political Challenges:** Political strikes and unrest can disrupt the timing or location of activities and meetings, affecting the program's ability to reach members as planned.

7.7.5 Lessons learned

- **Comprehensive Financial Independence Support:** To help adolescent girls and young women achieve financial independence, support can be provided in various forms such as seed funding, training opportunities, or even materials that are necessary to the operation of existing professions or businesses. Moreover, support is both crucial and necessary at any stage and an individual is at in their journey to financial independence, including the earliest stage, education in school.
- **Participatory Advocacy and Leadership Development:** Involving members, even at an observational level, in advocacy that aligns with Girls Act's core value demonstrates how discussions and collaborations are to be facilitated with important individuals. This demonstration should reflect in the younger generation for when they champion their own causes through effectively working with individuals who are integral to the cause they are advocating for such as authority and official figures.
- **Business and Income Generation and Capacity Building Development:** In Gorkha, AHF Nepal supported a young mother from a low-income background to achieve a long-held dream

of owning a sewing machine. Having learned sewing since the age of 14, she began taking work by 16 but lacked the tools to fully pursue her skills. Through the program's provision of a sewing machine and essential tailoring tools, she is now able to generate income, gain financial independence, and build a better future for herself and her child. This support illustrates how targeted, skills-based interventions can foster self-reliance, motivation, and empowerment, transforming long-standing aspirations into tangible opportunities.

7.7.6 Key Country Photo Activities



Girls Act Nepal members demonstrate commitment and dedication to establishing financial independence and a career for themselves through the training support from Girls Act Nepal.



Skill development training towards career establishment is provided for members. Necessary materials for provided for those who are in animal husbandry and agriculture.



Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025 included key speakers sharing their experience, encourage engagement among attendees, and performances for the event as well.

7.8 Philippines:

7.8.1 Background

With only two active chapter sites in two cities, Girls Act Philippines continues to build a strong presence through ongoing community outreach focused on HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), safe sex, and menstrual health. The girls and young women leading the program are passionate about their communities and take pride in helping others make informed, healthy choices. Their work reflects a deep commitment to improving the lives of young people across their cities.

Girls Act Philippines encourages adolescent girls and young women to take control of their sexual and reproductive health. Through school outreach, health education sessions, and youth-led discussions, members provide practical information on topics such as safe sex practices, contraceptive options, menstrual hygiene, and HIV prevention. These efforts go beyond sharing facts; they aim to create safe, open spaces where young people feel supported and empowered to ask questions, speak freely, and make informed decisions about their bodies and futures.

In schools, Girls Act Philippines members lead initiatives that empower their peers to better understand their health and rights. These moments demonstrate not just outreach numbers, but the growth of a movement of young women becoming leaders, ready to create lasting change in their

schools and communities. Members also assist peers in accessing SRHR services, referring them to trusted clinics and helping reduce stigma around topics often considered too sensitive to discuss.

This advocacy is not simply about raising awareness; it is about building a generation of informed and resilient girls who lift each other up. Their impact comes from inspiring other young women to lead with knowledge, confidence, and compassion. As a result, Girls Act Philippines is not only spreading critical health information but also cultivating a community of future changemakers.

In 2025, the program will focus on a range of activities to strengthen Girls Act Philippines and expand its impact. This includes participation in all AHF annual activities, including Girls Act-specific initiatives, as well as partnership building with both private and public sector stakeholders. The program will conduct comprehensive sexuality education in schools and communities, organize seminars and lectures on menstrual health, and participate in HIV testing outreach. Multiple training sessions, including basic mental health training, will be offered, while girl leaders and other members will take part in symposiums and conferences on sexual and reproductive health and youth engagement. Additionally, the program will further develop the Girls Act social media platform, highlighting member profiles and producing advocacy content, including videos addressing issues such as International Women's Day, International Day of the Girl Child, and Menstrual Hygiene Day.

7.8.3 Key Activities

- **Women's Empowerment and LGBTQ+ Inclusion:** Girls Act Philippines and its members actively promote women's empowerment through participation in the Amplify Her Voice campaign and by leading educational discussions on gender equality and Violence Against Women (VAW). Members marked women-focused observances, including International Women's Day and Women's Month, through joint efforts with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health, CBOs, and other partners. During Pride Month, members participated in queer pride celebrations with FPOP (Family Planning Organization of the Philippines), using interactive games to engage attendees and provide information on SRHR and LGBTQ+ rights.
- **Menstrual Health Support:** Members successfully led the celebration of Menstrual Hygiene Day, advocating for accurate information, practical support, and encouragement regarding menstrual health in rural areas of Bulacan. Additional outreach took place in an Indigenous community and a church community. The Dignified Menstruation campaign was implemented across seven schools to address stigma and barriers surrounding menstrual health, particularly for vulnerable populations. These efforts established safe spaces for young girls to learn about and take charge of their menstrual and reproductive health and rights.
- **Comprehensive Sexuality Education, Reproductive Health and Right Education:** Members conducted educational discussions on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and safe sex across multiple sites, including International Condom Day and Valentine's Day events. SRHR-focused sessions were hosted in schools, underserved communities, and barangays, advancing awareness of HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health rights.

In Iloilo City, the chapter partnered with FPOP during the Dinagyang Festival, engaging attendees through face-painting and games that reinforced SRHR knowledge. The program also distributed free condoms and IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) materials to raise awareness.

- **Capacity Building & Leadership Training:** Twenty newly recruited Girls Act mentees participated in comprehensive capacity-building sessions designed to prepare them for active roles within the program. Strong partnerships with Community Support Organizations, the Local Government Unit, and the Schools Division Office amplified the success of these sessions. The training strengthened participants' problem-solving, collaboration, and conflict-resolution skills, while fostering leadership and strategic thinking. Trained mentees are now recognized as leaders in their schools and are equipped to champion programs promoting health, empowerment, and peer support.
- **HIV Awareness:** Members observed the International AIDS Candlelight Celebration to honor people living with HIV/AIDS and those who have lost their lives. Collaboration with Community Support Organizations enhanced HIV prevention efforts, expanding young people's understanding of HIV, its prevention, and the importance of reducing stigma surrounding the disease.

7.8.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 68 Girls Act Members in the program; none of them are HIV positive and 21 of them are the Girls Act Leaders who play roles to support team members. None of them accessed STI services and became pregnant during the reporting period. 68 of them are in school, and none of them dropped out of school during the reporting period. 55 of them are in school and received scholarship support from the program.
- **HIV Prevention Advocacy and Stigma Reduction:** Girls Act Philippines took part in the media conference about the rising cases of HIV in the Philippines. Strengthening HIV prevention among young people has always been a key focus of the program's efforts, as demonstrated by its consistent and active involvement in youth-focused interventions. The media conference provided the platform for Girls Act Philippines to challenge stigmas and misconceptions while still placing emphasis on the significance of advocacy for HIV prevention. In addition, one Girls Act Team Leader from the Philippines, joined a podcast with the AHF global public health team to discuss on sexual health, comprehensive sexuality education, and the changes they hope to see in public health in the future. All these efforts aim to reduce the impact of HIV on youth and ensure that an HIV diagnosis does not impact the quality of life of those who are HIV-positive.
- **Capacity Building and Empowerment of Mentees:** Over 80 Girls Act mentees throughout 4 years of Girls Act in the Philippines were empowered, on top of refining their capacities. Mentees of Girls Act Philippines actively and consistently participate in trainings, events, or

activities for the purpose of fostering their continuous learning and development. Equipped with the necessary skills they had worked hard to enhance, the members could extend their contributions and support to fellow members and even non-members, who would greatly benefit from the advocacy of the Girls Act and its shared values.

- **Partnerships for CSE and SRHR Integration:** Girls Act Philippines shares significantly close relations with local government units and schools through joint efforts to lead discussions about CSE and SRHR. The program's association with units that work to serve their local communities plays a pivotal role in integrating CSE and SRHR into local development and educational agendas. This strategic alignment with institutions that directly serve communities not only enhances the outreach of CSE and SRHR initiatives and strengthens program impact at a community level. It additionally paves the way for the program and its members to deepen their engagement with local communities in a feedback loop that informs and improves future strategies for CSE and SRHR initiatives over time.

7.8.4 Challenges

- **Insufficient Training for HIV and Community-Based Screening:** While Girls Act Philippines leaders play a vital role in promoting HIV awareness and community engagement, there is a need to strengthen their training in community-based screening practices. Although the leaders demonstrate strong commitment and leadership potential, more in-depth training would enhance their capacity to serve as informed peer educators and community advocates. Addressing this gap will better equip them to support early detection efforts and connect HIV-positive individuals with essential health services.
- **Limited Financial Support for Community Outreach and School Seminars:** Advocacy is a crucial and sustainable intervention for sexual and reproductive health, particularly within communities and schools. Strengthening funding for these programs would improve service delivery and support long-term, youth-led health initiatives. Without adequate financial resources, however, the reach and frequency of interventions are limited, reducing their ability to effect lasting behavior change and reinforce health-promoting practices over time.

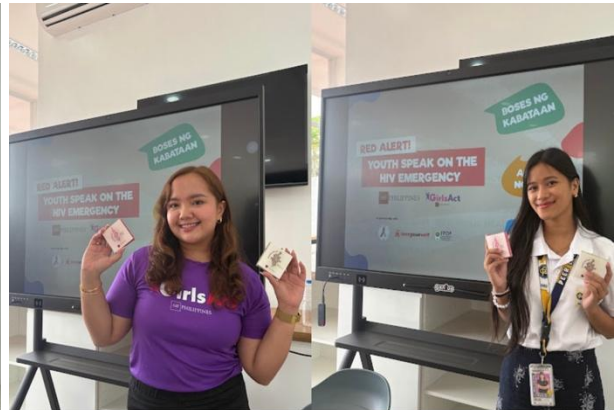
7.8.5 Lessons learned

- **Girls Act Empowerment:** Empowering girls through basic education on SRHR, CSE, and women's empowerment, along with providing necessary materials such as menstrual products and educational support, gives members the confidence and resources to thrive in life.
- **Key Testimony from Girls Act Members:**
 - Participating in Girls Act has helped me hone my skills as a youth leader and understand the real challenges faced by young key populations, especially adolescent girls. It

inspired me to take action, use my voice and knowledge in my community, and stand for equality, health, and empowerment.

- “Being part of Girls Act for several years has exposed me to new perspectives and created profound personal growth. It has challenged me, pushed my limits, and revealed strengths I never knew I possessed. My involvement has not only provided knowledge and skills but also deepened my understanding of myself and my community, igniting a stronger sense of purpose and confidence. I believe Girls Act nurtures agents of positive change, fostering advocacy and a genuine commitment to community well-being.”

7.8.6 Key Country Activities Photos



Girls Act Philippines participated in the media conference “Youth Speak on the HIV Emergency” and global podcast to advocate for accessible sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services for all.



To break down stigma, share vital information, and foster a supportive community for menstruators, Girls Act Philippines held a Menstrual Hygiene Day event for young adolescents. Attendees were also encouraged to share what they have learned from the event on a shared bulletin board.



Girls Act Philippines participated in the Love Walk HIV Campaign, free condoms and sanitary pads were distributed to visitors to promote safe sex and menstrual hygiene and the mural project



Girls Act Philippines, in collaboration with FPOP, conducted a seminar about SRHR for school students

7.9 Thailand:

7.9.1 Background

AHF launched Girls Act Thailand in partnership with the local youth organization *Little Birds* around 2021. The program was created to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education, peer leadership, and advocacy support in schools and communities. Since its inception, Girls Act Thailand has grown into a sustained platform for youth empowerment. Over the years, the program has trained peer leaders, built volunteer networks, and organized outreach campaigns to raise awareness about HIV prevention, treatment, and sexual health. Safe spaces for dialogue have become a cornerstone of the program, allowing young women to share experiences and build confidence while reducing stigma and misinformation. For girls living with HIV, the program has emphasized treatment adherence, nutrition, and ongoing support to help them thrive. By 2025, the initiative marked five years of continuous activity, demonstrating resilience and commitment despite the challenges of stigma and maintaining consistent participation.

Today, Girls Act Thailand works in close collaboration with government agencies, civil society, and educational institutions to strengthen youth-friendly health services, reduce HIV and STI transmission, and advocate for gender equality. The program is aligned with AHF's broader regional mission to empower adolescent girls and young women, ensure access to care, keep them in school, and protect their rights.

With the support of AHF Thailand and the Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand (PPAT), the program partnered with three schools to establish a model of youth-led advocacy and health education. Activities included an orientation meeting to explain the implementation process and ensure sustainability, followed by capacity-building workshops to equip peer leaders with knowledge and skills in sexual education. These girl leaders were then supported to design and organize peer-to-peer health activities in their schools, while periodic follow-up meetings allowed for reflection and review of progress. Toward the end of the cycle, a lesson-learned meeting was held to evaluate achievements and challenges, strengthening future implementation. The program also provided educational and life support to disadvantaged students in the three schools, alongside the production of youth-friendly information, education, and communication materials. In 2025, Girls Act Thailand entered a new phase, focusing on empowering girl leaders to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) among migrant girls in Samutsakorn Province, equipping them with the skills they need for their future and grooming them into becoming leaders in their community.

Through this holistic and evolving approach, Girls Act Thailand continues to nurture a new generation of girl leaders who are equipped to make informed decisions, challenge stigma, and inspire change in their schools and communities.

7.9.2 Key Activities

- Organize an orientation meeting to explain the implementation process, focusing on continuity and sustainability.
- Conduct workshops to empower 21 girl leaders with SRHR knowledge and leadership skills.
- Support the girl leaders to organize activities for their target beneficiaries in three schools.
- Conduct periodic follow-up meetings to review project performance.
- Organize a lesson learned meeting to review and evaluate project performance.
- Provide life/education support for poor students in need in the three target schools.
- Form the Girls Act chapter in three secondary schools.
- Establish new Girls Act Chapters with migrants' girls.

7.9.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 211 Girls Act Members from the two chapters of the program. None of them are on HIV treatment and accessing STI services and are pregnant during the reporting period. 24 of them are the Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support team members.

173 of them are in school. They all received health education sessions and trainings through the program in Thailand.

- **Capacity Building and Leadership Development:** A key achievement was the training and active engagement of 21 girl leaders across three secondary schools. Through workshops on reproductive health, comprehensive sexuality education, and counseling skills, these leaders gained the confidence to speak publicly, share opinions, and take initiative in their schools. The program successfully introduced new leaders to replace those who had graduated, ensuring continuity and sustainability of the initiative.
- **Peer Education and Outreach:** The trained girl leaders applied their knowledge by leading peer-learning activities, creating safe spaces for discussion, and addressing sensitive topics with empathy and confidence. Their efforts reached more than 800 students, with over 300 participating regularly in program activities. This demonstrated the effectiveness of peer-to-peer approaches in breaking down stigma and encouraging open conversations on SRHR.
- **Support and Mentorship:** Girls Act leaders became trusted figures among their peers, providing not only health information but also personal guidance. A notable example was their direct support to a peer facing pregnancy, showing the program's role in offering practical and emotional assistance. Their growing credibility has reinforced the value of peer mentorship in adolescent health programs.
- **Institutional Collaboration and Sustainability:** The program worked closely with school administrators, project advisors, and AHF Thailand representatives to adapt activities to each school's context. This collaboration has been critical to the success of the program, with administrators and teachers recognizing the positive changes in student leadership and communication skills, thus attributing to the program's continuation.
- **New Chapter Established:** A Girls Act new chapter was successfully established and held its first workshop in September 2025 in Samut Sakon Province, home to the largest Myanmar population in Thailand. The event drew 23 Myanmar girls, exceeding the expected 20 participants. The workshop was designed to be both educational and engaging, with interactive games and activities that helped participants learn in a fun and participatory way. The sessions were well-received, creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Key activities included delivering SRHR and comprehensive sexuality education through flexible, context-appropriate methods.
- **Key Strengths:** The training program is well-designed that's firmly based on SHRH principles. Tailor-made interventions initiated by girl leaders in discussions for the needs from themselves with participatory approach and empowerment as core to the program. Involvement of school administrators and teachers are keys sustainable components.

7.9.4 Challenges

- **Sensitivity around SRHR and Time-Consumption:** The experience confirmed that girl leaders are powerful messengers. Their ability to create safe spaces and share knowledge with empathy allowed over 800 students to engage with SRHR topics in ways that traditional

teaching often struggles to achieve. Peer mentorship also extended beyond health to personal support, reinforcing its importance for adolescent well-being. Limited fundamental knowledge among students made SRHR education a sensitive and time-consuming topic.

- **Competing Academic Priorities:** While initial workshops equipped girl leaders with valuable skills, continuous training remains necessary. SRHR is a sensitive and broad subject, and consistent capacity building helps leaders feel confident in handling diverse questions while sustaining their roles despite academic and personal pressures.
- **New Chapter Expands Reach but Requires Careful Adaptation:** The successful launch of the Samut Sakon chapter with 23 Myanmar girls showed the program's adaptability to new communities. However, it also highlighted the importance of tailoring contents to different audiences, given varying levels of fundamental knowledge and cultural sensitivities around SRHR while ensuring their security due to their illegal status.

7.9.5 Lessons learned

- **School Engagement Is Essential for Sustainability:** Active support from school administrators and teachers was key to the program's success. Their involvement not only validated the activities but also created an enabling environment for continuity, integration into school life, and long-term sustainability.
- **Peer-to-Peer Education Builds Confidence and Breaks Barriers:** Training and empowering girl leaders to share knowledge with their peers proved highly effective. This approach created safe spaces, reduced stigma, and encouraged open dialogue on sensitive issues such as sexual and reproductive health. It also helped leaders grow in confidence, communication, and leadership.
- **Relevant and Practical Curriculum Strengthens Impact:** Tailoring SRHR contents to the context of each school and community made workshops more engaging and acceptable. Using interactive methods such as games and peer-led activities ensured that the information was not only understood but also applied, increasing participation and long-term impact.

7.9.6 Key Country Activities Photos





Training workshops are conducted multiple school chapter sites of Girls Act Thailand, topics range from necessary health information such as SRHR to capacity building.



This series of photos showcase the activities participated by Girls Act Thailand's newest chapter that consists of migrant girls from Myanmar.

7.10 Vietnam:

7.10.1 Background

Girls Act Vietnam began in 2020 in Phu Tho - a mountainous region province and has since expanded to the northern provinces of Thai Nguyen and Yen Bai, reaching a broader network of adolescent girls and young women. The program currently includes 116 active members, in which have 12 youth leaders who guide and mentor their peers. A central goal of Girls Act Vietnam is to ensure that every member remains in school and completes her education, with more than half of the members continuing their studies without barriers in 2025.

To address the diverse needs of its members, the program has adapted its educational delivery to suit both remote and urban environments. Older members, many now in university, provide mentorship and peer-to-peer guidance, supporting younger members through online learning and practical advice. For HIV-positive members, Girls Act Vietnam removes barriers to care by covering transportation costs to ART clinics and providing essential learning materials, ensuring that health challenges do not interrupt education.

The program offers comprehensive training in areas such as HIV and STI prevention, gender equality, contraceptive knowledge, sexual and reproductive health, and life skills including communication, teamwork, and leadership. These training courses equip members with confidence, informed decision-making skills, and opportunities for personal and professional growth, while also encouraging exploration of identity, gender, and diversity.

Girls Act Vietnam works closely with local partners and health workers to strengthen support networks, raise awareness, and create opportunities for girls and other marginalized groups. In 2025, the program will operate three chapters in Phu Tho, Yen Bai, and Thai Nguyen, implementing a range of activities including school and ART transportation support, one-day trainings on treatment adherence and soft skills, and awareness and empowerment events for International Women's Day, the International Day of the Girl Child, and other key occasions. A pilot online teaching initiative will provide high school students with twice-weekly lessons in core subjects to support exam preparation. Additionally, hygiene pads will be distributed to promote health and well-being among adolescent girls. Through these integrated approaches, Girls Act Vietnam continues to empower young women to overcome educational and health barriers, build leadership skills, and grow into confident, informed members of their communities.

7.9.2 Key Activities

- **Education Support:** 98 members of Girls Act Vietnam have received financial support intended for their education, allowing them to finish high school and obtain their degree even in the face of lack of education supporting materials, lack of transportation accessibility to school, or the inability to physically attend school. As a result of assistance and dedication from the members, 48 members are continuing their studies with online classes while 10

members have successfully concluded with their final year of high school and were able to pass their university entrance examination.

- **HIV Support, Health and Nutrition Support:** Members who are HIV-positive are supported through the provision of transportation fees, enabling them to access antiretroviral therapy (ART) clinics regularly and maintain their long-term health and well-being according to their needs or personalized treatment plans. At this moment, 74 members' health are receiving the essential health services, contributing to a better quality of life, with the supporting transportation fee. Members' health and nutrition support are supplementarily met with the provision of organic eggs and menstrual pads distribution.
- **Peer to Peer Support:** 8 members of Girls Act Vietnam, given their university level education, are dedicated volunteers who assume the role of mentors for the other Girls Act members. They take part in holding online classes for the other Girls Act members, ensuring that every member receives equal opportunity to expand their knowledge. Moreover, peer support is facilitated between members in an online group chat to encourage interaction, share information, discuss important matters, and stay connected
- **Health Education, Social, Learning, and Capacity Building:** Nine training courses on the critical topics of HIV, STIs prevention, ART adherence, contraceptive usages, gender equality, diversity, adolescent reproductive health, unintended pregnancy prevention, and soft skills (communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving) are offered to all members.

7.9.3 Key Achievements

- **Girls Act Members:** There are 116 Girls Act Members from the three chapters in the program; 74 of them are on HIV treatment and none of them access STI services and are pregnant during the reporting period. 12 of them are the Girls Act Leaders that play roles to support team members. 98 of them are in school and received scholarship support from the program and none of them drop out form school during reporting period. 10 of them are participating in non-formal education and/or vocational training.
- **Education Support and Barrier Removal:** Members receive comprehensive support to complete their education, including transportation to school and ART clinics, educational materials such as notebooks, and nutrition support through initiatives like the Food For Health program. These efforts eliminate obstacles that once hindered personal and professional growth, enabling girls to continue their studies and pursue higher education or vocational training.
- **Life Skills and Career Development:** Training courses equip members with essential life skills, including communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving. High school girls receive career orientation sessions to prepare for future employment or further education, helping to expand opportunities beyond traditional gender roles and early marriage expectations.
- **Gender Equality and Identity Awareness:** Members participate in courses on gender diversity, gender equality, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health, including contraceptive methods and proper condom use. They are encouraged to explore their identities

and understand how multiple social roles intersect, fostering self-awareness and empowerment.

- **Health and Hygiene Support:** Adolescent girls receive sanitary pads and other resources to support their health and well-being. Peer-to-peer support through platforms like ZALO group chats allows members to discuss health, education, and personal development topics, share experiences, and stay connected.
- **Peer Leadership and Community Engagement:** Equipped with confidence, knowledge, and skills, Girls Act members lead meetings, workshops, and discussions with their peers, sharing insights and encouraging active engagement on issues important to girls and women. This builds leadership capacity and strengthens community advocacy for education, health, and gender equality.
- **Promoting Access to Opportunities:** By combining education, vocational training, and awareness of gender equality, the program challenges traditional norms in ethnic minority communities, creating pathways for girls to pursue university, trades, or industrial employment while breaking stereotypes that limit girls to household or farm work.
- **Empowering girls and mobilizing communication power among youth:** In the context of reduced funding sources for HIV/AIDS prevention and control from international NGOs (PEPFAR/USAID and the Global Fund) in Vietnam, increasing the mobilization of available domestic resources becomes more important. We developed a volunteer team of students at the university. They were led by Girls Act Leaders to help build communication channels to share knowledge aimed at young people.

7.9.4 Challenges

- **Persistent Social Stigma:** Advocacy on topics related to women's sexual and reproductive health, such as HIV awareness, STI prevention, and unplanned pregnancy, remains sensitive outside Girls Act sites and health-supporting settings. Discussing or applying knowledge gained on these topics may be discouraged at home, in communities, or even in schools, limiting members' ability to fully engage with and share information.
- **Language Barriers:** Most members cannot communicate in English, which can restrict their participation in activities or events on an international level.
- **Geographical and Connectivity Constraints:** Mountainous locations of some Girls Act Vietnam sites limit contact and communication. Poor data connectivity can complicate online interactions between coordinators, focal points, and members. For example, online classes held by older members may not be equally accessible to all participants, creating disparities in learning opportunities.

7.9.5 Lessons learned

- Girls Act Vietnam's close collaboration with partners and health workers strengthens relationships and enhances the visibility and credibility of both the program and its members.

This collaboration also helps attract potential partners engaged in women's empowerment and accessible health services, particularly for marginalized groups.

- Members' knowledge of health education and personal development has been significantly enhanced through consistent training courses and the program's ongoing support for completing high school education.
- The wide range of learning opportunities provided by Girls Act Vietnam has helped members build confidence and make the most of available resources, enabling them to pursue their goals and shape their future according to their aspirations.
- University-level members who participate in volunteer activities within Girls Act gain valuable experience, expand their capacities, and strengthen their engagement in supporting other adolescent girls and young women in advancing their education, health, and personal development.
- In universities, many clubs operate in the health and communication sectors. They are large in number, youthful, creative, and sensitive to "trends" on social networks. Mobilizing their participation will be a great source of support for the HIV/AIDS program.

7.10.6 Key Country Activities Photos





This series of photos showcase the activities participated by Girls Act Member in Vietnam in the different trainings provided by AHF Vietnam on different subjects including Sexual Reproductive Health Prevention, Condom Prevention, Gender Equality



8. Suggested Key Priorities for Girls Act Asia in 2026

Girls Act has continued to grow across Asia, supporting girls and young women to protect their health, stay in school, and build a stable future. As we move into 2026, all activities should clearly align with the four core goals of Girls Act, which reflect AHF's public health mission: preventing STIs and HIV, supporting treatment adherence for girls and young women living with HIV, keeping girls in school, and preventing unplanned pregnancies.

Girls Act remains a prevention program, with advocacy as a complementary function grounded in community experience. In planning for 2026, teams should focus approximately 80 percent of activities on the four core pillars and 20 percent on skills building, advocacy training, and empowerment. Where possible, boys and parents should be included in sexual and reproductive health education to strengthen community-level impact.

8.1 Improve Health, Well-being, and Social Supports for Girls Act Members

- Ensure reliable access to ART, STI services, menstrual health products, and nutrition support for vulnerable girls.
- Preventing unwanted pregnancy and better access to sexual and reproductive health information and services.
- Integrate mental health and psychosocial resilience training, including peer counseling and safe spaces for emotional support to young girls.
- Address stigma and gender-based barriers by engaging families, schools, and local authorities in awareness and advocacy.

8.2 Continue Education and Stay in Schools

- Strengthening education and retention support through expanding scholarships, school supplies, transportation, and school material support to prevent dropouts, especially for girls living with HIV and those from poor households.
- Scaling up comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) Across Schools and create a regional campaign to normalize menstruation and promote inclusive school policies.

8.3 Improve Economic Empowerment for Individual and Family

- Scale up vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and seed funding for small businesses to strengthen financial independence.
- Provide flexible learning opportunities (online, community-based, or blended approaches) to reach girls balancing work, family, and school responsibilities.

8.4 Leadership, Advocacy, and Sustainability

- Strengthening Girls Act Members leadership through continuous training, mentoring, and opportunities in public speaking and advocacy.
- Partnerships with schools, ministries, and local governments to embed Girls Act in education and community systems.
- Promote regional collaboration and knowledge-sharing across Girls Act chapters in Asia, including joint advocacy campaigns and exchange visits.
- Use media platforms (radio, podcasts, social media) to amplify girls' voices.



girlsact.org