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Sprout

Sprouting Change for Safe Childhood

Learning from the Next Generation Leadership Programme

2025 Impact Report





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About Ignite Philanthropy - Inspiring the end to violence against girls and boys

Ignite Philanthropy is a philanthropic fund that supports bold efforts to ensure every child lives a life free from violence.

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**School of
International
Futures**

About School of International Futures (SOIF)

SOIF is a global non-profit transforming futures for current and next generations. It works with diverse partners to enhance innovation, competitiveness, and resilience; to better understand and manage risk; and to improve strategic decisions.

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Sprout

Sprout: Learning from the Next Generation Leadership Programme

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Introduction

Change doesn't trickle down—it sprouts from the ground up. It grows in the spaces where unheard voices are centred, where lived experience is honoured as vital expertise, and where care meets courage, and collaboration meets bold imagination. It's cultivated by those who've felt the system's flaws firsthand and dare to reimagine something better. A new generation of youth leaders is stewarding this change—but like any sprout, they need to be nurtured to thrive.

In collaboration with the [School of International Futures \(SOIF\)](#) and with the support of Oak Foundation, we launched [Sprout](#)—a bold, transformative learning programme designed to nurture the next generation of system leaders committed to children's safety, rights, and well-being.



Sprout in-person retreat in Naivasha, Kenya, 29 September - 3 October 2024.

From June 2024 to May 2025, Sprout brought together 20 emerging youth leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, many of whom are survivors of childhood sexual violence or deeply connected to survivor communities. Together, they cultivated skills in systems thinking, foresight, and collective action—rooted in care, collaboration, and lived expertise.

Sprout wasn't created to tweak around the edges. It was built in response to an urgent call: to reimagine leadership in the childhood sexual violence sector. To move beyond fragmented, siloed interventions and instead champion a systems-led approach—one that centres youth agency, survivor leadership, cross-sector collaboration, and the bold rethinking of how power flows.

As we close our first-ever Sprout cohort, we reflect on what we learnt from Sprout Fellows—about leadership, about shifting systems, and about the power of trust and lived experience. Throughout the program, Fellows transformed how they saw themselves and their relationship to the system—not only recognising their own value, but also redefining the vital role they play within it. These lessons will shape not only Sprout's future, but ripple out into a broader movement—one committed to nurturing intergenerational, survivor- and agency-driven leadership that transforms systems from the inside out.

The Case for Change

Ignite Philanthropy believes that radically different approaches are necessary to achieve a world where violence against children is eradicated and where children and youth exercise their rights, shape their futures, and live in peace. This means focusing on root causes and strengthening agency—ensuring partners define their own priorities, build stronger connections, and lead sustainable change from within. Because when people own the solutions, they own the future. (Learn more about our strategy [here](#))

But real change doesn't happen in silos—or in a single generation. Ending violence against children requires an intergenerational movement that embraces diversity in expertise and centres lived experiences.

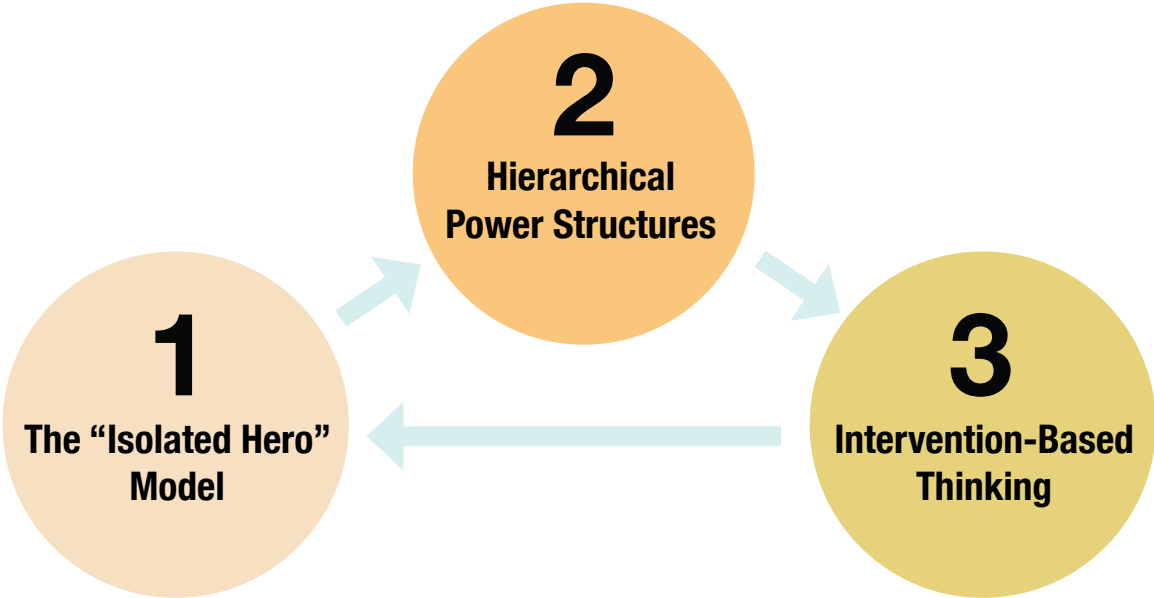
Yet today, the sector is fragmented: isolated leaders, scattered efforts, and competition for scarce resources. To build a true movement, we must shift power, centre agency, and foster deep collaboration across generations. Only then can we transform systems.

What We Heard From Thinking Partners

To ground Sprout in the real needs of the sector, we began by listening. We engaged in 13 in-depth conversations with a diverse group of thinking partners—researchers, advocates, funders, network leaders, and frontline organisers. Across geographies and roles, one message came through loud and clear: the future of this movement depends on the next generation.

Partners emphasised not only the proximity youth have to children's realities, but also their capacity for bold ideas, innovation, and fresh leadership. And yet—too often—the space to lead isn't given to youth groups.

Through these conversations, we uncovered three dominant paradigms shaping the field today. Despite the best intentions, these patterns continue to hold us back from the systemic, lasting change we seek:



01

The “Isolated Hero” Model

Leaders often operate as isolated heroes, bearing the weight of responsibility alone—leading to burnout and gaps between technical expertise and lived experience. Resources are scarce. Long-term visioning takes a back seat to crisis response. Knowledge is siloed, preventing collective learning. Efforts stay reactive and rescue-driven, rather than preventive and transformative.

02

Hierarchical Power Structures

Power often flows in one direction—from the top down. Children are positioned as passive beneficiaries, survivors seen as victims rather than agents of change. Without a shared vision, organisations remain competitive and fragmented, stuck in adult-centred, exclusionary models that limit meaningful leadership from youth and marginalised voices.

03

Intervention-Based Thinking

Most current approaches are project-based, supply-driven, and isolated. Solutions tend to be narrow in scope, backwards-looking, and reactive—focused more on prosecution than prevention. A short-term mindset leaves little room to address the root causes and structural drivers of childhood sexual violence.

If we want a different future, we must nurture new leadership, shift how power flows, and invest in long-term, systemic transformation.

Sprouting a Programme

To challenge the dominant paradigms holding the sector back, we launched Sprout—a programme designed to cultivate a flourishing, intergenerational network of emerging leaders in the Ending Childhood Sexual Violence sector. But Sprout is more than a leadership programme; it’s a living blueprint for the movement we want to see—one that centres children’s well-being, prioritises agency, and fosters true systemic transformation.

From the outset, we knew that replicating old models wouldn’t cut it. We needed a programme that reflected the future we envision—a future shaped by youth leaders who take bold steps to address deep-rooted issues.

“

The future is now. The group of youth courageous enough to build a bright future together.

— Sprout Fellow —

5

Creating Change at Every Level

Building a world free from childhood sexual violence required us to think beyond individual projects. We knew we had to change people, power, and systems. This is why Sprout was designed with three interwoven levels of change, grounded in co-creation, participation, and shared power.

01

Personal: Growing Community Guides

Understanding one’s own power is the first step toward leading others through change. Through coaching, skill-building, and personal reflection, we supported young leaders to see themselves not as bystanders, but as agents of systemic transformation.

Impact: These leaders embraced their role in shifting systems, leading with clarity, confidence, and care.

02

Relational: Strengthening People Networks

Change is not a solo endeavour—it thrives in collective spaces. We fostered strong, intergenerational networks through learning partnerships, collaboration, and an Impact Fund, creating a shared space for resources and collective action.

Impact: Stronger connections were forged across generations and sectors, shifting the dynamic from hierarchy to reciprocal, trust-based relationships.

“

The most rewarding aspects of being a Learning Partner in this programme were the opportunities for mutual growth and collaboration.

— Learning Partner —

03

Systemic: Driving Transformation

True systemic change comes from a shared vision and bold action. Through futures thinking, collective learning, and co-designed Impact Fund projects, Fellows aligned their efforts with long-term systemic change—working not just to treat the symptoms of violence but to address its root causes.

Impact: Innovative strategies emerged, grounded in collective vision and aimed at tackling the structural foundations of childhood sexual violence.

“

It is never too late to plant; seeds will always sprout depending on how you grow them. Systems can be changed even by the youngest individuals and by little things.

— Sprout Fellow —

6

Elevating Underrepresented Voices

Our goal was to curate a cohort with a broad spectrum of sectors and expertise—advocates, organisers, researchers, technologists, direct service providers, and beyond—all unified by their commitment to building a movement grounded in care, equity, and bold leadership. At its heart, Sprout invested in leaders who embodied the key values essential to dismantling the existing paradigms:

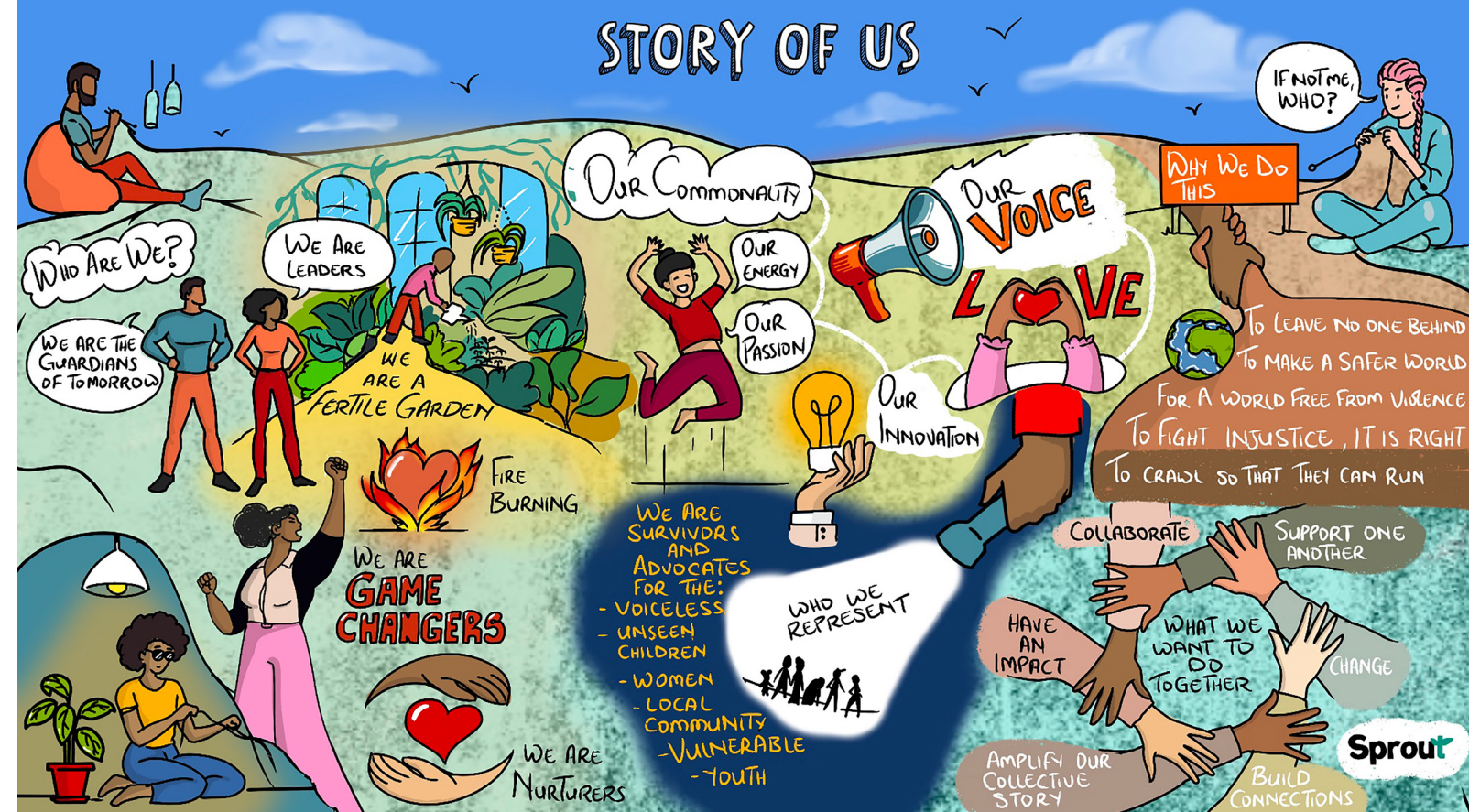
- ✓ **Agency-Centric:** Centring the power of survivors, youth, and marginalised communities.
- ✓ **Creative Spirit:** Bringing courage, innovation, and intersectional approaches to disrupt the status quo.
- ✓ **Futures Orientation:** Embracing forward-thinking, transformative strategies.
- ✓ **Collaboration:** Committing to collective action and intergenerational learning.
- ✓ **Systems Thinking:** Recognising personal impact within broader ecosystems.

The first Sprout cohort was carefully curated through a selection process that embraced both innovation and intersectionality. Rather than focusing on professional titles, affiliations, or resumes, our assessment of participants was grounded in how they embodied the five core principles of leadership. We looked at their experiences, aspirations, and their drive to transform the child rights field through the lens of these principles. This approach allowed us to identify young leaders who demonstrated an intrinsic understanding of the sector's needs and a passion for creating systemic change.

We invited applicants to submit not just written responses but also a video and a visual representation of their leadership, allowing their true essence and vision to shine. We prioritised applicants from two strategic regions—Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe—to foster cross-regional learning, collaboration, and to unleash greater energy by subverting the colonialist approaches that continue to exist between these regions.

To build a programme that centres true transformation, we were determined to reach the voices often underrepresented in traditional leadership spaces. We sought a balance of both conventional and unconventional voices, ensuring diverse perspectives and approaches to system change. In doing so, we opened the door to new possibilities.

From a highly competitive pool, we selected [20 Fellows](#) whose values and commitment were aligned with the transformative mission of Sprout.



Sprout Fellows participated in a guided storytelling process where they created the 'Story of Us,' a collective narrative that encapsulates who they are, what they represent, why they are committed to their work and what their collective mission and values are.

Nurturing Leadership and Strengthening Agency

Knowing that transformation requires more than information, we designed Sprout to provide both practical tools and relational spaces where growth happened:

- ✓ **Trauma-Informed Practices:** Recognising that many participants are survivors, we built safety into the programme - from confidentiality agreements to embodied practices that honor personal boundaries.
- ✓ **Safeguarding:** Guided by our [Safeguarding Policy](#), we embedded Safeguarding best practices across every stage of the Sprout project. From programme design to delivery, we prioritised creating spaces and interpersonal dynamics that fostered trust, respect, and a sense of safety for all involved.
- ✓ **Community-Building Spaces:** A cornerstone was our in-person retreat in Naivasha, Kenya, intentionally crafted to cultivate connection, trust, and a shared vision for change.



Affirmation exercise during the in-person retreat in Naivasha, Kenya

- ✓ **One-on-One Coaching:** Each Sprout Fellow received individual coaching sessions, creating space for personal reflection, leadership development, and agency-building.



In a world of possibilities, nothing is impossible. This notion changed my thought and leadership skills during a session with Lenka (leadership coach).

Sprout Fellow

- ✓ **Skills-Building & Sharing:** We focused specifically on foresight, systems thinking, and futures literacy—giving participants the tools to move beyond reactive solutions and imagine new possibilities.



The Sprout programme made me learn how the system works and how to work with it. This was a gap in my journey, and now I feel my impact will increase.

Sprout Fellow

- ✓ **Learning Partnerships:** Each Fellow was paired with an established practitioner (Learning Partner) in the sector, forming intergenerational partnerships. Rather than a traditional mentorship model, this was a two-way exchange, honouring the expertise and perspectives both sides brought.



The commitment in learning from each other, in being open, in working on our strengths. I felt useful to my Sprout Fellow and she has been inspiring for me as a practitioner and specialist, when it came to see new perspectives and needs.

Learning Partner



Group work during the Sprout in-person retreat in Naivasha, Kenya.

- ✓ **Impact Fund:** Co-designed with Fellows, the fund wasn't just about resourcing projects—it was about challenging outdated practices of philanthropy, redistributing decision-making power, and modelling how funding can reflect trust and collaboration.

Meet the Sprout Fellows



Janet Aguti, 32
Mpigi District, Uganda

[READ THE BIO](#)



Brendah Aryatugumya, 33
Mbarara, Kampala, Uganda

[READ THE BIO](#)



Christie Banda, 33
Blantyre, Malawi

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Lloyd Bock, 27
Windhoek, Namibia

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Pauline Faith Gartor, 30
Monrovia, Liberia

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Namaweje Hajarrah, 24
Uganda

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Berinyuy Naomi Kibula
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Lamecks Kiyare, 34
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Abdul Ntale, 30
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Raphael Oyeniyi, 26
Lagos, Nigeria

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Zorana Parezanović, 32
Belgrade, Serbia

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Meet the Sprout Fellows



Stephanie Quintao, 31
Brussels, Belgium

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Demitila Faustine Sambaiga, 34
Mwanza, Tanzania

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Zahra Salehe, 35
Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

[READ THE BIO](#)



**Anonymous
Fellow**



**Anonymous
Fellow**



**Anonymous
Fellow**



**Anonymous
Fellow**



**Anonymous
Fellow**

Learn more about Sprout Fellows [here](#).



*YOU are POWERFUL and the step to recognising it is a MASSIVE step.
The sprouting began and it's impossible to stop.*

Sprout Fellow

Our Power-Shifting Journey: Dispelling the Myths of Power

At its core, Sprout was created to reimagine power—not as hierarchy or control, but as a shared, expansive, and transformative force.

Power is often perceived as a barrier, concentrated in the hands of a few. But what if power itself is not the issue? What if recognising, unlocking, and redistributing it is the key to building the intergenerational movement we need?

Sprout's story is a journey through power—one where we confronted entrenched myths that restrict and distort it. By challenging these beliefs, we uncovered new ways to share power, nurture leadership, and drive lasting transformation.

Myth 1: Power is “Out There.”

Many believe power depends on credentials, approval, or external validation, leaving young leaders doubting their own worth.

To shift this perspective, we helped participants recognise their inherent power through coaching, storytelling, and embodied exercises. They reframed self-doubt, embraced their lived experiences as leadership strengths, and moved from seeking permission to confidently owning their roles

TRUTH: Power is Within

Power is not something granted—it already exists within each of us. Recognising personal agency builds confidence, fuels leadership, and shapes the world around us. Systems change starts with self-awareness, trust in our abilities, and embracing our unique strengths.

“

My new source of power is ME. For a long time, I have downsized my capabilities and felt stagnated by fear. I always thought that I needed people to give me power, that I needed certain levels of education to feel powerful. But even with these, I still struggled. My coaching with Lenka was a lightbulb moment for me. It is within ME to make things work.

Sprout Fellow



Sprout Fellows co-created their vision of the future.

Myth 2: Power is Scarce

This mindset breeds competition, isolation, and burnout. When people view power as finite, they prioritise self-preservation over collaboration, stifling collective action and growth.

We countered this scarcity narrative by cultivating a culture of abundance. Through resource-sharing, collaborative exercises, and a collective Sprout Resource Toolkit, we reinforced that power expands when shared. Meditations on emotional wealth and community care fostered an environment where participants saw their leadership as interconnected, not isolated.

TRUTH: Power Grows Through Sharing

Power is not limited—it expands through collaboration and mutual support. Shifting from competition to connection builds stronger networks, healthier movements, and more sustainable solutions. When we embrace ‘Power With’ rather than ‘Power Over,’ we build communities where everyone can thrive.

Myth 3: Power = Control

Power is often equated with exerting force, demanding compliance, or enforcing rigid structures. Leaders frustrated by stagnant systems may default to top-down approaches that prioritise immediate fixes over long-term, relational change.

We redefined power as a tool for nurturing transformation. Through shared visioning, alternative futures exercises, and embracing discomfort as a catalyst for growth, participants realised that lasting change is built on relationships, collective purpose, and sustained effort.

During our gathering in Kenya, Sprout Fellows co-created tangible representations of their collective vision, reinforcing the idea that systems evolve through care and collaboration — not coercion.

TRUTH: Transformation Emerges Through Care and Nurturing

Lasting change is not driven by control—it flourishes through connection, care, and shared vision. When we use power to nurture rather than dictate, we create conditions for transformative change. The future is not just a continuation of the past—it is something we actively shape together.

Lessons for the Sector: Hopeful Power

At the heart of our journey lies hope—not as passive optimism, but as a radical force that fuels action, trust, and transformation. *Hopeful Power* shows up across three distinct dimensions:

- ✓ **Hope in Ourselves Unlocks the Power to Lead:** Recognising our own agency and potential allows us to step into leadership with confidence.



Nothing is impossible—the possibilities inside of you are endless!

Sprout Fellow

- ✓ **Hope in Others Unlocks the Power to Trust:** Embracing abundance, interdependence, and collaboration helps us build stronger communities and networks.



Connection and knowledge sharing make us more powerful. Together, we can use our talents to change the system.

Sprout Fellow

- ✓ **Hope in the System Unlocks the Power to Reimagine the Future:** Letting go of old constraints frees us to envision and create new possibilities for systems change.

Incorporating Hopeful Power Into Your Work

Embracing these lessons allows the sector to reimagine power—not as control, but as a force for nurturing relationships, building inclusive spaces, and sharing power to create a stronger, interconnected movement. The truths shared by Fellows are a call to rethink leadership, power, and transformation.

And there's no better way to do that than by listening to and following the lead of the next generation. Here's what Fellows expressed are **key ingredients for lasting, transformative change**:

Personal Level



There's a light inside me that's waiting there to shine.

Sprout Fellow

- ✓ **Coaching & Personal Development:** Sprout Fellows emphasised the need for spaces dedicated solely to their personal growth—discovering their strengths, leadership potential, and unique voices.
- ✓ **Interdisciplinary Skills:** Exposure to diverse skills like facilitation, criminology, policy-making, and research equips them to lead in various contexts.
- ✓ **Well-being:** Emotional support and dedicated self-care are essential for personal well-being and sustainable leadership.



Group discussion during the Sprout in-person retreat in Naivasha, Kenya.

Relational Level

- ✓ **Networking & Leadership Access:** Connections to organisations, funders, and spaces like the UN create pathways for new voices in key leadership spaces.
- ✓ **Inclusive Decision-Making:** It's about more than performing inclusivity; it's about actively making room for diverse perspectives in decision-making spaces.
- ✓ **Intergenerational Learning:** Fellows call for collaborative, intergenerational learning ground rather than traditional top-down leadership models.
- ✓ **Community Spaces Built on Collaboration:** Spaces that prioritise cooperation over competition foster trust and collective growth.

Systemic Level

- ✓ **Policy Representation:** Youth and survivor voices need to be reflected in policy-making to shape frameworks that address the most pressing issues.
- ✓ **Participatory Funding Approaches:** Sprout Fellows advocate for funding models that involve those on the ground, ensuring that support is meaningful and aligned with real needs.
- ✓ **Global Advocacy Networks:** Sprout Fellows call for a unified global network to amplify voices, coordinate efforts, and create broad, systemic impact.

Conclusion



Our legacy—a community of young dreamers who are changing the world fearlessly.

Sprout Fellow

As we reflect on the transformative journey of the Sprout programme, one thing becomes abundantly clear: by embracing new visions of leadership and power—ones rooted in trust, agency, and collaboration—we can build a movement that is visionary and unified.

Sprout has shown us that leadership doesn't come from followership —it comes from nurturing relationships, supporting others, and creating spaces where every voice has a seat at the table. The lessons from our Fellows remind us that true transformation happens when we listen, when we share power, and when we make space for the leadership of those who have long been excluded.

The journey towards systemic change is not easy, and it will take more than short-term solutions. But with the bold, hopeful leadership of this new generation, we are one step closer to a world where childhood sexual violence is eradicated, where children's voices are heard, and where safety, rights, and well-being are the birthright of every child. Let's follow the lead of Sprout Fellows, centre their expertise and lived experiences, and build a future that is as inclusive, compassionate, and powerful as they envision.



Sprout Fellows co-created the collective vision during the in-person retreat in Naivasha, Kenya.

Acknowledgements

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Mariam Topchishvili

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