JOURNEY WITH US

Our Impact and Journey Ahead
2024–2026

zana AFRICA
AFRICA HAS THE FASTEST-GROWING, YOUNGEST POPULATION OF ANY CONTINENT.

By 2050, one in three young people on the planet will be African.


“At ZanaAfrica, we’re nurturing the potential of Africa’s youth, equipping the next generation with the knowledge and tools they need to shape a thriving, equitable future.”

Megan Mukuria
Founder, ZanaAfrica
At the heart of our mission lies a simple yet profound belief: every girl deserves to be the architect of her destiny, steering her life with confidence and control over her body, decisions, and future.

In recent years, global setbacks have affected the lives of girls around the world. Across Kenya, disturbingly high rates of sexual and gender-based violence, unwanted pregnancies, and school dropouts threaten to shatter dreams and divert the trajectory of countless young lives.

ZanaAfrica stands resolute in addressing these challenges and supporting the empowerment of girls. Through a meticulous blend of evidence-based research and design principles that center girls at the heart of solutions, we’ve created transformative, locally driven interventions that confront the challenges facing girls and dismantle inequality on a significant scale.

Our primary intervention, combining rights-based reproductive health education with the provision of sanitary pads, has proven effects for individuals and communities. Since 2007, we have touched the lives of 250,000 adolescents. And as we look to the horizon of the next three years (2024–2026) we aim to reach at least 200,000 more through the national expansion of our programs.

We are poised to effect macro-level change through partnerships with the Kenyan government. Simultaneously, through collaborations with community groups, we’ll offer local and immediate support to tens of thousands, while also harnessing the power of AI and mobile technology to provide real-time reproductive health support and referrals.

Although the road ahead may be difficult, we are steadfast in our belief that change for girls is possible and imminent. The impact of ZanaAfrica’s work is undeniable. It is evident in our data, in the eyes of the girls we reach, and in the hope radiating from the teachers and mentors we train.

We aspire to create a more gender-equal world by changing the systems and norms that perpetuate inequality, starting in Kenya. With Africa’s rapidly expanding youth population, there has never been a more urgent time to expand our proven, replicable model across the continent and beyond.

We invite you to join us on this transformative journey. Your support is not merely an investment in a cause; it is an investment in the future of countless girls, the architects of a more equitable world.

Alison Nakamura Netter
Executive Director

Melinda Wolfe
Board Chair
LISTENING TO AND LEARNING FROM GIRLS
Unlocking Potential Since 2007

Through our girl-led, community-driven solutions, we have impacted the lives of over 250,000 adolescents through our program that provides a powerful intervention of reproductive health and life skills education coupled with sanitary pads, to help girls flourish and foster a more gender-equal world.

TRANSFORMING LIVES & CHANGING NORMS
Proven Solution, Poised for Growth

With a solid foundation of success, we’re poised to expand our reach. A Gates-funded study from 2017 to 2019 tested the efficacy of our intervention among 3,500 girls and unequivocally demonstrated our program’s effectiveness. Our model enhances girls’ reproductive health knowledge, boosts their confidence and resilience, and causes shifts to more equitable gender norms. We are now leveraging this quantitative validation for program expansion. ZanaAfrica’s commitment to gender equity extends access to our rights-based reproductive health education to both genders, equipping them at puberty to make informed life choices now and for the future.

CHARTING OUR COURSE AHEAD
Our Strategic Plan 2024–2026

As we embark on our journey for the next three years (2024–2026), ZanaAfrica is committed to expanding our interventions across Kenya, while laying the groundwork for international replication. In 2023, we underwent an in-depth strategic planning process to prepare for the next phase of ZanaAfrica’s journey. As a result, we will prioritize four core priorities while building the necessary infrastructure and securing resources to sustain our programs and drive measurable impact.

Mission
ZanaAfrica equips adolescent girls in Kenya with the tools they need to safely navigate puberty and unlock their potential.

Vision
ZanaAfrica envisions a world where girls across Kenya are safe, healthy, and in the driver seat of their own lives.

Our Impact Journey

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Honoring Girls’ Voices at Puberty

Girls’ voices and choices shape our program design and inspire our solutions—because they deserve the information they seek, in the most accessible form.
Our Why

In Kenya, as in many other parts of the world, puberty marks a time when girls’ worlds and opportunities begin to shrink while boys’ worlds and options expand. Gender inequity begins to deepen.

The onset of puberty is the most effective time to engage.
66% of teen girls lack access to sanitary pads and health education due to cost and social taboos.

40% of teen girls ages 15 to 17 are pregnant.

25% of girls drop out of school by the time they reach puberty.

**Pandemic Effects on Women and Girls Worldwide**

COVID-19 has exacerbated these issues. In Kenya, the pandemic led to a surge in sexual and gender-based violence, teen pregnancy, child marriage, and persistent trauma. Cases of transactional sex for essential items like sanitary pads are increasing.
Walking with Girls Through Adolescence

ZanaAfrica helps to empower young girls on their journey, providing comprehensive support beyond addressing the material aspect of period poverty. Our three-pronged design ensures girls access sanitary pads and essential knowledge to navigate this critical phase of growth and development successfully.

**SANITARY PADS**

**Ensuring Dignity and Health**

We provide girls with sanitary pads and underpants, alleviating period poverty. These essentials enable them to manage menstrual health with dignity. A carefully curated label on our pad packaging connects girls to the Nia HealthLink, a chatbot and hotline that provides sexual and reproductive health education and referrals for free and in real time.

**HEALTH & RIGHTS EDUCATION**

**Supporting Informed Choices**

Alongside sanitary pads, we deliver a 25-part curriculum called Nia Yetu, which offers comprehensive reproductive health and rights education. Teachers and mentors conduct school sessions, addressing crucial topics like puberty, gender, and teen pregnancy. We also educate boys to ensure equity in creating a more gender-equal world.

**SOCIAL & BEHAVIOR CHANGE CONTENT DEVELOPMENT**

**Enhancing Well-Being**

We create and distribute social and behavior change communication content (SBCC) for participants in our programs, offering valuable information and educational support. Our Nia Teen magazine serves as an engaging sharable textbook series to supplement our curriculum. Our latest addition, Nia at Home, provides guidance on a range of topics like COVID-19, mental health, and trauma.
A letter from Rita

My name is Rita. I am at Korosho Primary School in Kilifi. The purpose of this letter is to thank everyone in Zana’s programs. First, they have taught us so many things. We now know how to understand our feelings. We now know what a good touch is and a bad touch. Before this program, when boys in our class touched us, we didn’t know whether it was good or bad.

Some years ago, before the health clubs, we used some cotton for our menstruation. But nowadays, they bring us pads, which make us happy, and we have no fear.

Zana and the Nia Program have helped me to know my rights. I have the right to an education. I should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. The other rights I have been taught are confidence and confidentiality.

If I tell a medical person or a teacher something I don’t want anyone else to know, they should respect my privacy. However, if I have been abused, adults may have a duty to inform others who can protect me.

Thank you for this opportunity, ZanaAfrica. You have made me proud as a queen. I now know how to have confidence. I will not forget this project until the ocean becomes a desert.

“Thank you for this opportunity ZanaAfrica, you have made me proud as a queen. I now know how to have confidence.”
Groundbreaking Proof of Concept

When a girl goes through our program over an 18-month period—from baseline to finish line—she will achieve:

- **Enhanced reproductive health knowledge**
- **Boosted confidence and resilience**
- **Improved menstrual management**
- **Shift toward equitable gender norms**

From 2017 to 2019, the Gates Foundation funded a randomized control trial research study testing our intervention on 3,500 girls across 140 schools.
Ecosystem of Support

Formalized Government Partnership:
In partnership with the Kenyan government, we are scaling our solution in public schools by co-creating a comprehensive teacher training program with the aim to reach an additional 200,000+ youth by 2025.

Key Collaborators:
Our critical allies include the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), Zeraki Learning, and the Beacon Teachers Network, leading Kenyan education partners who support our design for systemic change.

Training, Research, and Program Delivery:
We are working with KICD to co-create and develop a research and training framework to support effective and sustainable delivery of our program across the nation.

Real-Time Digital Support

Nia HealthLink

Building on Success:
The Nia HealthLink provides reproductive health answers to important questions and connects people to digital and in-person healthcare. It comprises a chatbot and a hotline that provides answers to health and rights questions, for free and in real time.

Leveraging the power of AI, the HealthLink delivers and demonstrates measurable health outcomes. Users can message +254 111 721 642 on WhatsApp to chat or call the hotline to speak with an operator: 0800 721 642.

Kuza Nia

Expanding Through Community Groups:
The Kuza Nia Program delivers our proven solution to adolescents through community groups.

Extensive Training:
We support nearly 100 organizations in person and online, to deliver health and life skills education to adolescents through a trauma-informed lens.

Impact Through Partnerships:
We have served tens of thousands of girls with sanitary pads, comics, and health education. Our local work with community leaders and program participants serves as a valuable learning lab for broader macro-level government initiatives.

The Uwezo Initiative

Macro-Level Work

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ZANA AFRICA’S
Extensive Reach Across Kenya

250,000 REACHED SINCE 2007
Across 86 community organizations and 24 counties

With a goal to reach
200,000+ ADOLESCENTS IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS
Power of AGENCY

IT STARTS WITH AN ADOLESCENT INTERVENTION

Through our approach of rights-based reproductive health education and sanitary pads, girls are proven to gain knowledge, confidence, and agency.
AND GROWS TO A MODEL FOR SCALE
Collaborative partnership with government, teachers, and community groups catalyzes broad impact on the local and macro scale.

LEADING TO SYSTEMIC CHANGE
Girls’ agency is activated and their rights are upheld. More equitable norms are adopted. Change can be seen and measured both qualitatively and quantitatively on a national scale.

SHIFTING TO A FUTURE OF Gender EQUITY
Breaking the cycle of POVERTY & INEQUITY

Elina, 13

Meet Elina, a lively 13-year-old girl from rural Kenya. She lives with her mother and father, and is the eldest of four siblings. Elina takes her role as the big sister seriously. She loves school, especially science and mathematics, and dreams of becoming a doctor to contribute to her community.

However, like many girls her age, Elina faces challenges in accessing basic education and healthcare facilities. Yet she remains hopeful and determined, embodying the resilient spirit of young girls in her community.

HER CHOICE

Through the Nia Program, Elina gains essential reproductive health knowledge, empowering her to make informed decisions about her own body and rights.

This composite persona represents 3,500 girls across 140 schools who tested ZanaAfrica’s intervention. Data is collected from the Gates-funded randomized control trial study, 2017-2019.
“I see my future with new eyes. It is a bright future.”

HER VOICE
Elina’s confidence and resilience have improved, sparking a desire for more gender equality in her own home.

HER FUTURE
Elina understands her worth, seeks further education, works toward becoming a doctor, and envisions a future with more equitable gender norms.
ZanaAfrica is dedicated to advancing gender equity and has set ambitious goals for the coming years. We work to dismantle the systemic obstacles that young Kenyan girls face daily and to empower them to become contributing members of their communities.

Your involvement with ZanaAfrica goes beyond providing financial aid. It signifies joining an alliance to shape a society where a girl’s aspirations are not limited by her gender. Your engagement is crucial to foster the potential leaders of the future, as the growth of girls is integral to our collective progress.

We invite you to be part of this vital journey.
ZanaAfrica

3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
Moving Forward

On the transformative journey from 2024 to 2026, ZanaAfrica will pioneer a path that fortifies our mission to support adolescents and foster a more gender-equal world.

Four priorities will guide our actions and amplify our impact:

**PRIORITY 1**

**Adapt and Scale Proven Intervention**

Expand the reach of our Nia Program, delivering rights-based health and life skills education, along with sanitary pads, through schools and community groups. Local work will inform macro work with the government.

**PRIORITY 2**

**Harness the Power of Digital Technology to Change Lives**

Implement Nia HealthLink through Nia pads and comics, enhancing access to reproductive health information and services. Engage at least 3,000 users monthly for broad and significant impact.

**PRIORITY 3**

**Raise Our Voices and Deepen Alliances for Gender Equity**

Leverage research and assert our role as thought leaders. Focus on showcasing our proven, measurable, scalable programs to a global audience.

**PRIORITY 4**

**Reinforce Organizational Excellence**

Maintain organizational excellence through meticulous planning and trust-based collaboration. Bolster financial investments, embrace diverse leadership, and bridge cultural barriers, establishing a robust framework for sustained growth and impact.
Expanding Our Reach and Nurturing Futures

Key Strategies

Local-level work: Engage communities to deliver our solutions locally
- Continue to train local leaders to deliver our proven program through a trauma-informed lens.
- Support 30,000 adolescents annually with menstrual products, underpants, and health comics.
- Leverage local work for immediate impact while serving as a learning lab to inform our macro-level programming with government.

Macro-level work: Engage government partners to co-create systems change at scale
- Continue partnership with Kenyan government to integrate our program in schools, focusing on rights-based education and delivery.
- Develop, test, and lead in-person and virtual trainings that will address individual and collective biases to strengthen program delivery.
- Implement our program nationwide, leveraging government partnership to reach 200,000+ adolescents.

Key Outcomes

- Synergistic relationship between local-level initiatives and government-level policymaking.
- Measurable improvements in adolescents’ reproductive health knowledge, confidence, and resilience along with shifts to more equitable social norms among girls and boys.
- Replicable model for rights-based education to support Africa’s rapidly growing youth population.

Adapt and Scale Proven Intervention

Objective by 2026: Expand Nia Program’s impact to 200,000+ adolescents.
Harness the Power of Digital Technology to Change Lives

Objective by 2026: Execute full capacity of the Nia HealthLink and measure effectiveness.

Key Strategies

**Nia HealthLink Implementation**
- Continue to deliver sexual and reproductive health and rights information through the Nia HealthLink on Nia pads, comics, and social marketing campaigns, to further support autonomy in health decisions.
- Ensure engaging user experience and efficient access to health partners and referrals.
- Measure effectiveness through focus groups and online feedback forms.

**Nia HealthLink Optimization**
- Broaden health topics through user-centered design, ensuring that program delivery meets the needs of users.
- Explore and develop funding streams to support sustainability and growth.

Key Outcomes
- Measurable success in digital/AI program support, reaching 3,000 users monthly with critical health and rights education.
- An efficient program funded by strong partnerships for program foundation and sustainability.
- A replicable digital solution for rights-based education for Africa’s rapidly growing youth population.
Raise Our Voices and Deepen Alliances for Gender Equity

Objective by 2026: Strengthen ZanaAfrica’s thought leadership on a global scale.

Key Strategies

**Strategic Communications & Advocacy**

- Showcase our solution to address the challenges facing girls to influence program and policy development.
- Participate in key convenings and secure endorsements from major global coalitions; establish ZanaAfrica as an expert resource for discussing adolescent-focused, rights-based education and gender equity.

**Movement Building**

- Help launch and grow the Menstrual Health (MH) Alliance, a coalition of practitioners who partner regularly in Kenya to ensure that MH is a political, programmatic, and funding priority at the national and county levels.
- Join and contribute to other movements and coalitions supporting women’s health and rights, family planning, and skills building for the future.
- Articulate stances on critical issues: Afro-centric leadership, climate action, child protection and safety, youth activism and LGBTQI rights.

**Key Outcomes**

- Gain global recognition as a trusted thought leader influencing global programs and policies.
- Expand opportunities for brand awareness and funding to support the sustainability of our efforts.
Reinforce Organizational Excellence

Objective by 2026: A robust operational framework to support sustainability and impact.

Key Strategies

• Build our financial capacity by diversifying and growing revenue channels, with an aim to raise at minimum $5M+ from 2024 to 2026.
• Grow our middle-management team in Kenya and the United States to manage programs and support development efforts.
• Expand governance structures to strengthen cross-cultural leadership, diversity, and organizational excellence across entities.

Key Outcomes

• A financially robust and strategically prepared organization.
• A cross-cultural leadership structure that’s diverse, dynamic, and ready for future challenges.
• A team culture that’s cohesive and aligned with ZanaAfrica’s long-term vision of gender equity.
• Diverse, well-coordinated, and harmonized boards across Kenya and the United States.
Cultivating Powerful Impact, Lasting Change

As we embark on our journey ahead, we remain committed to the fact that community-driven solutions are the key to unlocking sustainable change.

We are committed to supporting adolescents with rights-based sexual and reproductive health and life skills education: a core, proven solution for gender equity.

We have learned deeply from our experiences and continue to evolve, iterate, and co-create our programs based on community feedback.

We are so grateful for our incredible partners who have supported our journey and growth.

Over the next three years our goal is raise $5,000,000+ to carry out our mission.

We are eager to embark on our next phase of work and know that together, we can nurture the potential of Kenya’s youth and achieve gender equity for the future. Join our movement for real, lasting change and make this shared vision a reality.
We would like to thank the following thought partners and advisors who provided guidance and support during our strategic planning process:

- Our incredible team of staff, consultants, interns
- Our Board of Directors
- Preeta Nayak, The Bridgespan Group
- Lisa Corcoran, For Impact
- Abby M alan, Abby M alan Coaching

Lastly and most importantly, we thank and acknowledge the adolescents across Kenya who drive our efforts every day. They are our guiding light and inspiration for a better tomorrow. Asanteni Sana!