



**STRATEGY &
PROGRESS
REPORT**

2025



Dear Friends,

This report arrives at a moment of profound transition in global health. In these times of uncertainty and disruption, we can no longer rely on “business as usual.” Now, more than ever, we need leaders who can navigate complexity, build trust across divides, and chart new pathways for stronger, more resilient systems.

This is why leadership matters. Leadership is not about titles or positions — it is about how we act, collaborate, and adapt. It is the engine that drives change and fuels innovation. And it is why WomenLift Health is committed to ensuring that women — who make up the majority of the health workforce but remain underrepresented in senior decision-making roles — have the opportunity, support, and platform to lead.

Over the past five years, we have seen what’s possible when women lead: their impact multiplies. In the pages that follow, you will see not only our progress, but also the stories of women leaders who are transforming policies, strengthening institutions, and improving health outcomes for millions. Their courage, vision, and collaboration remind us that when we invest in leadership, we invest in lasting impact.

As the world resets the health agenda, we invite you to join us in lifting women leaders everywhere. Together, we can help ensure that health leadership reflects the diversity of the communities it serves — and that our systems are equipped for the future.



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amie Batson".

*Amie Batson
President, WomenLift Health*


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Executive Summary

Global health challenges are evolving rapidly, from the disruptive potential of artificial intelligence to the continued threats of pandemics to the reality of declining foreign aid. Meeting these challenges requires stronger, more diverse leadership at every level. **Yet while women make up over 70% of the health workforce, they hold fewer than 25% of senior leadership positions.** Closing this gap is about more than equity. It is about harnessing the full breadth of talent and perspective needed to build resilient health systems for the future.

WomenLift Health is proving that investing in women leaders transforms health systems. In just five years, we have equipped more than 4,400 women through our leadership development programs — including 3,500+ through workshops, 200+ through tailored institutional trainings, and 660 through our year-long Leadership Journey (420 alumnae, or Global Fellows, and 240 currently in the program). These Global Fellows — from 20 countries across Africa, Asia, and North America — are already driving measurable change: strengthening institutions, advancing policies, driving innovations, and improving health outcomes.

A photograph of two Black women smiling and posing outdoors. The woman on the left is wearing glasses and a colorful, patterned dress. The woman on the right is wearing a white top and has her hair styled in a bun. They are holding two signs: a purple one and a blue one.

I am a leader
with intention,
empathy & audacity

Women
Leading
Health



WOMENLIFT HEALTH IMPACT FOOTPRINT

Since our launch in 2019, WomenLift Health has:

Engaged

4,400+
women

through leadership development programs including workshops, tailored trainings, and Leadership Journeys

Grown to support

240 active
cohort
members

per year in a year-long Leadership Journey that combines skill building, mentorship, and applied Leadership Projects

Built a global community of Global Fellows (alumnae) now

420 women
strong spanning
20 countries

across Africa, Asia, and North America

Reached

260+
institutions

through our leadership development programs and women leaders

LEADERSHIP JOURNEY LONG-TERM IMPACT

Global Fellows report:

20% increase in

ability to influence

organizational decision-making from baseline to two years after Leadership Journey completion

\$1.4B total Global Fellows'

budgetary
authority

68% were promoted or accepted jobs with

more
responsibilities

within a year of completing their Leadership Journey

And their supervisors report:

51% increased

contributions

to their organization's priority health outcomes

84% have served as

mentors or
role models

82% said their organization would benefit from

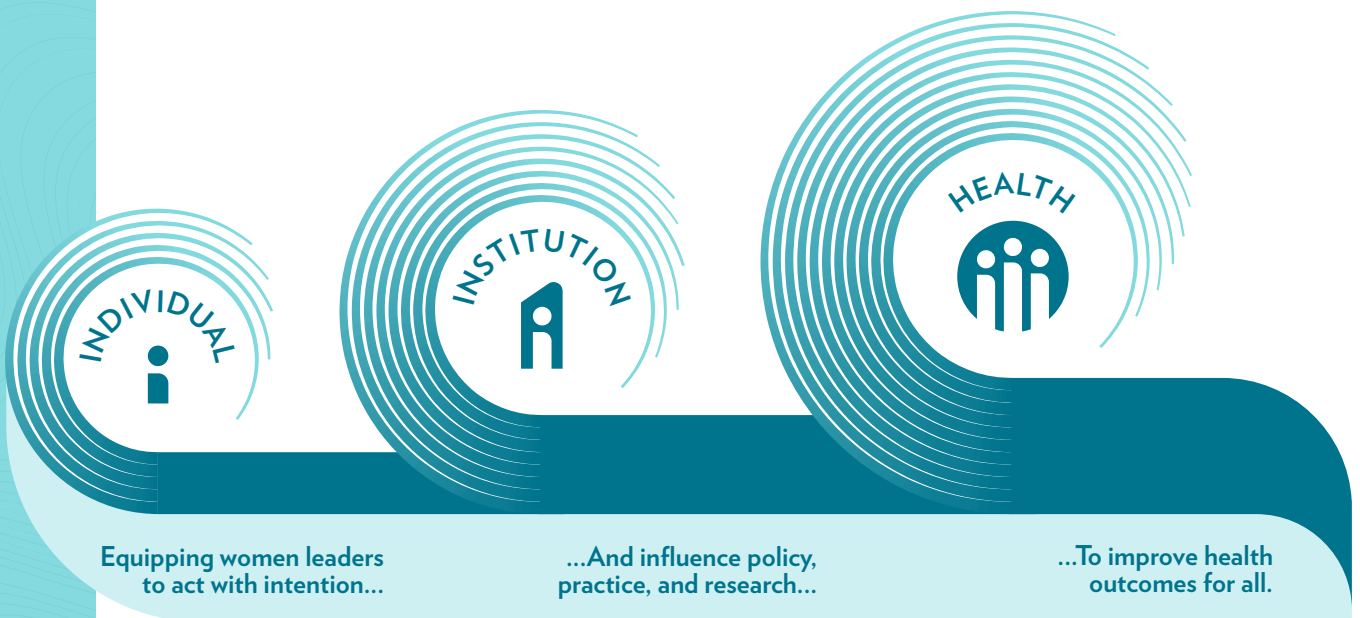
continued
engagement

with WomenLift Health



OUR PATHWAY TO IMPACT

WomenLift Health’s unique value lies in our ability to translate individual leadership growth into systemic health impact. Unlike standard leadership programs, we are deeply rooted in the global health ecosystem and design our offerings around the realities that mid- to senior-level women leaders face in ministries, hospitals, research institutions, NGOs, and more. We don’t just build skills — we provide a year-long journey that meets women where they are, combining local mentorship, coaching, applied Leadership Projects, and a powerful network of peers. This integrated, contextualized approach equips women not only to rise into senior roles but also to innovate and change the institutions and policies that shape health outcomes for millions.



Our Pathway to Impact is the multiplier effect, in which every woman we support influences dozens, hundreds, or even thousands more through her institution, policies, and mentorship of the next generation. Global Fellows leave with more than confidence — they leave with a community, tools to dismantle barriers, and a mandate to lead with purpose.

With this approach, WomenLift Health isn’t simply training women — we are helping reshape the leadership landscape of global health.



“

My experience in WomenLift has transformed my life.

It's a gift that I needed at exactly the right time in my career, and it has changed the way I think. It has changed the way I view research. The career trajectory of a woman scientist is tough. This Leadership Journey has helped me clarify ... why I want to fix or solve adverse birth outcomes, why I want every woman to [have] a healthy baby ... and I needed to know that, because it's what has fueled my resilience. It's given me greater clarity — and WomenLift has helped me get there.”

Dr. Hellen Barsosio

Assistant Principal Clinical Research Scientist,
Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI);
CJ Science Leadership Fellow, Gates Foundation;
East Africa Global Fellow 2022



Looking ahead to 2026–2030, WomenLift Health is poised to scale this impact: reaching 10,000+ women leaders globally through all our leadership offerings and 1,500+ through our Global Fellows leadership network. This is how we will continue reshaping the narrative so that women's leadership in health is not the exception, but the expectation. Importantly, this work is not about replacing current leaders, but about strengthening health leadership by ensuring it reflects the diversity of the workforce and the communities it serves.

This report details our progress, impact, and vision for the future. Through continued partnership and investment, we will equip thousands more women leaders to step into senior decision-making roles — ensuring health systems worldwide are stronger, more equitable, and better prepared for the challenges ahead.



PATHWAY TO IMPACT: FROM INDIVIDUAL GROWTH TO SYSTEMS CHANGE

The stories of women leaders illustrate a powerful pattern: leadership investment in one woman can unlock change for entire communities, institutions, and countries.

In the US and Africa,

Ritu Kamal expanded Stanford's Global Faculty-in-Training program to include LMIC innovators, securing funding to launch East Africa Biodesign and training innovators in Rwanda and Kenya. Read the full story on page 35.

In Punjab,

Dr. Bhavneet Bharti led an initiative that increased newborn breastfeeding rates in her hospital from 60% to over 90% by establishing the region's first lactation management center and human milk bank — directly improving child health outcomes. Read the full story on page 11.

In New Delhi,

Dr. Aparna Sharma spearheaded and scaled a program on respectful maternity care in public hospitals that has trained hundreds of healthcare providers. Read the full story on page 34.

In South Sudan,

Dr. Idyoro Ojukwu developed national cervical cancer screening guidelines, advancing women's health policy, and piloted community outreach to improve early detection and access to care. Read the full story on page 12.

In Tanzania,

Dr. Basiliana Emidi launched women-led vector control groups and published research and policy briefs supporting community-driven strategies to improve public health. Read the full story on page 33.

In Pune, India,

Dr. Pooja Singh is designing and scaling an innovation for biodegradable sanitary pads that reduces waste while using plant-based inputs and creating livelihood opportunities for marginalized women. Read the full story on page 21.



Introduction

THE POWER OF WOMEN'S HEALTH LEADERSHIP

In today's interconnected world, health challenges increasingly intersect with climate change, economic instability, and social inequality. These complex problems demand leaders who can work across silos, engage diverse stakeholders, and develop innovative solutions rooted in both evidence and empathy.

Despite comprising 70% of the global health workforce, women hold just 25% of senior leadership positions and only 5% of top roles in global health organizations¹. This disparity isn't just an issue of fairness — it directly impacts which health issues receive attention, funding, and innovative solutions.

The 2024 World Economic Forum and McKinsey Health Institute report, "Closing the Women's Health Gap," revealed that women spend 25% more of their lives in poor health than men, creating a \$1 trillion economic opportunity cost annually². This gap persists in part because women are not at the tables where health priorities, research, policies, and resource allocations are determined.

When leadership includes diverse perspectives and styles, organizations make better decisions, develop more innovative solutions, and achieve stronger results^{3,4}. For health systems specifically, diverse leadership leads to more equitable care delivery, better patient outcomes, and more responsive policies and programs^{5,6}.

“

It is important to have people of different backgrounds in our teams; **they bring unique value to actions and impact.** If we have a unidimensional team, the chances of success are very limited. Diversity must be intentional — stated clearly, communicated widely, and embedded into everyday action.”

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti

Former Regional Director for Africa, World Health Organization;
WomenLift Health Global Advisory Board Member

1. World Health Organization. Closing the leadership gap: gender equity and leadership in the global health and care workforce. Policy action paper, June 2021.
2. World Economic Forum & McKinsey Health Institute. Closing the Women's Health Gap: A \$1 Trillion Opportunity to Improve Lives and Economies. January 2024.
3. McKinsey & Company. Diversity Matters Even More: The Case for Holistic Impact. 2023.
4. de Laat, Kim, Sarah Kaplan, and Lechin Lu. "Accelerating Progress towards Gender Equity in Health and Science." *The Lancet*, vol. 403, no. 10430, 2024, pp. 883–886.
5. Batson, Amie, Geeta Rao Gupta, and Michele Barry. "More Women Must Lead in Global Health: A Focus on Strategies to Empower Women Leaders and Advance Gender Equality." *Annals of Global Health*, vol. 87, no. 1, 2021, p. 67.
6. Gomez, L. E., and Patrick Bernet. "Diversity Improves Performance and Outcomes." *Journal of the National Medical Association*, vol. 111, no. 4, 2019, pp. 383–392.



THE WOMENLIFT HEALTH VISION

WomenLift Health was founded on a powerful premise: that investing in women’s leadership — a largely untapped and underleveraged resource — is a strategic lever for transforming health outcomes. Guided by this understanding, our mission is to expand the power and influence of women leaders in health to improve health outcomes for everyone, but especially women and girls.

We focus on mid- to senior-level women leaders because these women hold invaluable experience and expertise, and are uniquely positioned to shape the future of leadership and mentor the next generation. They also face the biggest barriers to advancing their careers. By broadening their network and equipping them with the skills and support to navigate their own path to leadership, we catalyze change that ripples throughout health systems and improves lives.



Our leaders receive contextually relevant tools and support as they navigate their own leadership pathway and take their seat at decision-making tables.

Equipping women leaders to act with intention...



Our leaders advance policies and practices that strengthen organizations and improve health outcomes.

...And influence policy, practice, and research...



Our leaders come together as Global Fellows, a connected brain trust across institutions, disciplines, sectors, and countries. They individually and collectively drive innovations and influence health priorities, systems, and outcomes.

...To improve health outcomes for all.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE IN ACTION

As a pediatrician and Director Principal at Dr. BR Ambedkar State Institute of Medical Sciences in Punjab, Dr. Bhavneet Bharti was concerned about the low breastfeeding rates she observed. **Despite managing 500 births monthly, only 60% of newborns were being breastfed.**

Through her WomenLift Health Leadership Project, which is an important component of the Leadership Journey program, Dr. Bharti created a network of “local champions” — young women and adolescent girls trained to counsel and support new mothers about breastfeeding’s lifesaving benefits in the hospital, and another group trained to do educational outreach in the community to extend breastfeeding support beyond hospital walls. She established Punjab’s first comprehensive lactation management center and human milk bank with donated breast milk, ensuring every baby had access.

The results were transformative: breastfeeding rates increased from 60% to over 90% of newborns.

Now, Dr. Bharti’s institution has achieved a landmark recognition by becoming the first state-run hospital in the country to be accredited as a ‘breastfeeding-friendly hospital.’ “This recognition ... is not just an institutional achievement but also a personal milestone in my WomenLift Health Leadership Journey,” Dr. Bharti shared.

Dr. Bharti credits leadership skills she gained through WomenLift Health for helping her navigate tough challenges and establish the public-private partnership that made the milk bank possible. She reflects that the Leadership Journey also helped her motivate and support her staff to translate her vision into action:

“Managing 800 hospital employees taught me to leverage influence effectively ... Going through the Leadership Journey enhanced my role in a way that I was able to build my team ... **This experience helped make me a better person as a leader.**”

Dr. Bhavneet Bharti’s Story

REVOLUTIONIZING
BREASTFEEDING
IN PUNJAB



Dr. Idyoro Ojukwu's Story

TRANSFORMING
CERVICAL
CANCER CARE IN
SOUTH SUDAN

In South Sudan, cervical cancer remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths among women, with no national screening program, oncology referral system, or functioning cancer treatment centre. For Dr. Idyoro Ojukwu, the country's first female gynaecological oncologist, this gap means women do not receive the care they need and are too often lost to cancer.

Through the Leadership Journey in 2023, Dr. Idyoro gained the tools, confidence, and network to push for national change, advocating for early screening, patient referral systems, and specialist training. While working with WHO, she developed national guidelines for cervical cancer screening and testing, which were submitted to the Ministry of Health for their review. Her Leadership Project piloted community outreach for early detection while engaging the Ministry of Health to establish structured screening programs.



Through the WomenLift Leadership Journey, I approached the Ministry of Health, Reproductive Health Department to ask them, why don't the policies for reproductive health in South Sudan incorporate women's reproductive tract cancers?

... If not for WomenLift Health, I don't think I would have come forward."

Her impact has led to a seat on South Sudan's national cancer task force, where she brings both clinical expertise and policy insight. With long-term goals to scale early detection and improve access to care, she is shaping the future of cancer prevention in her country. "My leadership is no longer just about what I do in the operating room," she says. "It's also about how I speak, how I show up in policy spaces, and how I bring others along."

These stories illustrate how women leaders can translate their expertise, passion, and newly strengthened leadership skills into institutional and systemic changes that directly improve health outcomes.



Learning From Our Journey (2019–2025)

WomenLift Health delivers a portfolio of leadership development programs to meet the needs of partners across the health sector. We support women leaders with potential to rise to senior roles, engage male allies, partner with institutions, and tailor offerings for priority health domains. Each program shares a common purpose: to unlock women's leadership as a strategic lever for stronger health systems and better health outcomes.



Progress Highlights



THE LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

At the heart of our work is the Leadership Journey, a year-long experience that goes far beyond traditional training. Women receive guidance from local coaches and mentors while participating in a carefully designed and contextualized curriculum that builds critical skills such as strategic influence, emotional intelligence, and adaptive leadership.

What makes this program unique is its emphasis on applied learning. Each woman undertakes a Leadership Project that tackles pressing challenges within her own institution or community — ensuring that new skills immediately translate into action and lead to measurable outcomes.

This program is delivered through regional hubs and partners in East Africa, India, Nigeria, North America, and Southern Africa, ensuring that leadership development is locally grounded and globally connected. The contextual approach creates long-term leadership pipelines of women equipped to lead strategically, collaboratively, and courageously, especially in today's environment of rapid transformation.

Our model enables women to learn from each other and amplify their impact across the health ecosystem. We build:



Regional cohorts bringing together diverse women leaders from across health institutions and disciplines



Thematic cohorts targeting priority health areas such as family planning, midwifery, or maternal and newborn health



Institutional cohorts designed for organizations seeking to strengthen their own women leaders



Our Pathway to Impact

Unlike traditional executive programs that pull women away from their work, the WomenLift Health model integrates leadership development into women's professional lives over a full year. Women leaders learn, practice, and apply new skills in real time, while influencing institutional decisions, mentoring colleagues, and advancing policies. This embedded, sustained approach ensures that leadership growth doesn't stop at the individual level but ripples outward to transform institutions and health systems.



LEADERSHIP JOURNEY BY THE NUMBERS

Growth in WomenLift Health Network

240

women currently in active cohorts across all regions

420

women completed the program and are now part of the Global Fellows network

Growth in Diversity

We strive to maintain participant diversity in our programs tailored to the region.

We have participants from:

20 countries

Angola
Botswana
Canada
Eswatini

Ethiopia
India
Kenya
Lesotho

Malawi
Mozambique
Namibia
Nigeria

Rwanda
South Africa
South Sudan
Tanzania

Uganda
United States
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Diverse Organizations

Government ministries
Academia
International organizations
Private sector
Philanthropies and foundations

Diverse Roles

Clinicians
Professors
Innovators
Researchers
Managers
Government officials
Funders



LEADERSHIP JOURNEY VOICES

“

Through this Journey, I learned that **change often starts with a single voice, daring to propose a different path,** and I am grateful for the opportunity to be that voice within my organization.”

Dr. Achieng' Aling'

Healthcare Programs Director,
The African Leadership University;
East Africa Global Fellow 2022

“

Without a doubt, the Journey has changed me as a leader. It was extremely helpful as I presented myself as a candidate in the highly competitive selection process for Directors in the World Bank.”

Trina Haque

Regional Director for Human
Development for Western &
Central Africa, The World Bank;
North America Global Fellow 2022



TAILORED TRAININGS WITH INSTITUTIONS

WomenLift Health partners directly with institutions to design tailored leadership development programs that meet their unique priorities and strengthen their organizational capacity. These programs not only build the leadership skills of high-performing women professionals, but also foster male allyship and support efforts to create inclusive, resilient institutional cultures. By equipping women to step into critical roles with clarity, authority, and confidence, these trainings drive measurable impact for both organizations and the health systems they serve.

A

Our Pathway to Impact

Our institutional trainings create a cohort of transformative women leaders within a single organization, ensuring that participants support one another while advancing shared goals. This collective approach is designed to strengthen policies and practices, embed inclusive leadership in the organization's culture and systems, and accelerate progress on institutional goals. The result is not just empowered women leaders, but strengthened organizations capable of delivering stronger, more equitable health outcomes.

TAILORED TRAININGS BY THE NUMBERS

Approximately

200+

participants trained to date



TAILORED TRAININGS IN ACTION: PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION IN THE AFRICAN REGION

In October 2024, WomenLift Health and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO) convened a three-day Women in Global Health Leadership Program in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, bringing together more than 30 women leaders from across the region. Opening remarks from WHO AFRO Regional Director Dr. Matshidiso Moeti and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding underscored the importance of advancing women's leadership within health systems.

The program combined targeted training, mentorship, and collaborative sessions covering core leadership content tailored to WHO AFRO's priorities, with activities designed to create a cohort of resilient, empowered women leaders fully equipped to tackle the complex challenges in global health. The participants described the curriculum as deeply relevant to the challenges they face, from overcoming self-doubt and imposter syndrome to creating space for women with disabilities in leadership roles. They left with enhanced leadership skills and concrete strategies to influence policy, strengthen networks, and advocate for more inclusive workplace practices. Beyond individual capacity-building, the program fostered solidarity among women leaders, creating an ongoing support network.

“Women leaders must be visible where we are underrepresented, and speak on behalf of those who are not yet in the room,” said Dr. Laimi Ashipala, Non-Communicable Diseases Programme Officer at WHO, who participated in the workshop. **“I want the path to be wider for those who come after me — fewer barriers, more bridges.”** The workshop complemented WHO's ongoing efforts to create inclusive leadership pathways through initiatives launched under Dr. Moeti's leadership, such as the Africa Women Health Champions program.

Promoting women's leadership in health is not only a matter of fairness but also crucial for improving health outcomes in Africa. Women leaders bring invaluable perspectives and experiences to the global health landscape. Through this partnership, we are shaping the future of health in Africa **by empowering women to lead with confidence, vision, and purpose.**

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti
Former WHO Regional Director for Africa



WORKSHOPS

WomenLift Health delivers focused, high-impact workshops on issues critical to women's leadership in health, such as navigating workplace politics, conflict dynamics, and overcoming imposter syndrome. Each workshop is contextually adapted by region and can be tailored for institutions or delivered at global or regional conferences. Participants engage in structured peer exchange, scenario-based problem solving, and facilitated learning sessions that embed inclusive leadership behaviors. The result: women leave with practical tools, stronger networks, and enhanced confidence to advance their leadership.



Our Pathway to Impact

Our workshops democratize access to leadership development, contributing to a wider movement for inclusive leadership in health. By delivering regionally relevant, immediately applicable content, workshops act as both entry points for new leaders to gain skills and booster doses for our Global Fellows community to reinforce the competencies they've learned.

WORKSHOPS BY THE NUMBERS

3,500+

participants reached in the last five years



WORKSHOPS VOICES

Participants shared how WomenLift Health workshops resonated with them, how they planned to apply their learning in the future, and the value gained from interacting with others in the session.

“

Understanding the four components of political skills

was great. Also, the document on self-assessment is so valuable. I am going to settle down and use that tool over and over again.”

| Nigeria PowerUp
| Workshop participant

“

I gained valuable insights into conflict resolution,

learning how to address and resolve conflicts constructively, promote collaboration, and maintain team cohesion.”

| East Africa Regional
| Session participant

Testimonials from the WomenLift Health Global Conference 2024 workshop participants:

“

Immersing myself in the conference atmosphere, surrounded by passionate individuals and innovative ideas, **sparked inspiration and motivation** within me. I left the conference feeling energized and empowered to tackle challenges, pursue opportunities, and drive positive change in both my professional and personal life.”

| Conference participant

“

I loved the “Role of emotional intelligence (EI) in leadership” session and the conflict management sessions. I got to discover my hot buttons, understand the path of conflict, and **now I know how to manage conflicts better** by making sure I give constructive responses that minimize or de-escalate the conflict.”

| Conference participant



THE WOMENLIFT HEALTH GLOBAL FELLOWS NETWORK

The Global Fellows network is a powerful community of women who have completed the Leadership Journey. The network is a cornerstone of WomenLift Health's Pathway to Impact, serving as a critical link between individual, institutional, and systemic change. This growing, connected brain trust of women remains actively engaged in elevating both their own and other women's leadership and impact through ongoing learning, speaking opportunities, mentorship, and collaborative action. Now 420 strong and on track to reach 1,000 by 2027, the Global Fellows Network is reshaping who leads and how they lead, advancing systemic leadership transformation across global health.

GLOBAL FELLOWS IN ACTION

Dr. Pooja Singh is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Biotechnology at Symbiosis International University in Pune, India. Across India, two persistent waste problems collide: water bodies are suffocated by fast-spreading water hyacinth (an invasive aquatic weed that is often skimmed and dumped, releasing carbon as it degrades), and millions of non-biodegradable sanitary napkins are discarded every year. Conventional pads are composed largely of plastic, which does not degrade, pollutes soil and water, and poses health risks for women and communities. **Pooja was determined to tackle both crises, reimagining waste as a resource.** "When the opportunity came along to draft a project [as part of the Women Leadership in STEM program⁷], I said, why not do something which could have a larger impact? ... And that is where the seed of this project began."

7. Women Leadership in STEM (WLS) is a joint program by the Biotechnology Industrial Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), an enterprise under the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, Grand Challenges India, and WomenLift Health.

Dr. Pooja Singh's Story

**TURNING
AN INVASIVE
WEED INTO AN
INNOVATIVE
SOLUTION AT THE
INTERSECTION OF
WOMEN'S HEALTH
AND CLIMATE
CHANGE**



Under Pooja's leadership, she gathered a team of women colleagues to develop a proof of concept for a biodegradable sanitary napkin made from water hyacinth fibers. The innovation lies in using the plant to create multiple absorbent and biodegradable layers — replacing plastic entirely. At the same time, Pooja envisioned a social impact model: working with women's self-help groups to process the weed into fibers and assemble the napkins, turning an invasive species into a source of livelihood for marginalized women.

Her proposal won \$25,000 in seed funding from the Elsevier Foundation. Although still at the prototype stage, her long-term plan is to run workshops across India that build women's skills and income, and to bring fully biodegradable sanitary pads to the market. She is already in touch with an organization that trains rural women to convert water hyacinth into eco-friendly products, and as Pooja notes, "they are ready to collaborate."

Pooja's leadership and confidence have grown alongside her innovation:

“

I used to think that I am not a leader... I'm a good researcher, but I'm not a leader. But [through the Journey] **I realized that I do have my own leadership qualities.** Networking and collaboration were... two of the biggest takeaways... I'm much more open to collaborations now, reaching out to people, talking to them, getting them on board on different aspects of my work.”

By transforming waste into value, Pooja is leveraging her leadership and innovation to **simultaneously improve women's health, protect the environment, and create economic opportunity.**



“

I feel I'm part of a bigger movement where **each woman is lifting the other to show up better.**

And that means I can also pay it forward for other women. It has helped me affirm my purpose because I've always known that my responsibility is to help other women ... And being part of this program has really enabled me to come out with a much sharper tool to be able to do the work of changing our communities more effectively.”

Dr. Sylvia Vito

Africa Head, EVA Pharma;
East Africa Global Fellow 2023

“

Because of the WomenLift Health journey, there's this realization that there is strength in togetherness. There is strength in support, there is strength in vulnerability, there is strength in emotion. And I think that's been my favorite takeaway from all of this — **it's not just about me fighting for something, it's about fighting together.**”

Shachi Adyanthaya

Senior Manager, Child and
Health Development, Children's
Investment Fund Foundation;
India Global Fellow 2022



How We Continuously Learn and Improve

At its core, WomenLift Health is a learning organization. Our commitment to continuous improvement ensures our programs stay responsive to women's evolving needs and the changing global health landscape.

We use a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework to measure both immediate outcomes and long-term impact. Each year, a third-party evaluator rigorously assesses our effectiveness, highlighting what works and flagging areas for adaptation. Real-time feedback on the training sessions, facilitators, coaches, and mentors enables immediate course corrections. Longitudinal data confirms the enduring value of our programs and validates our Pathway to Impact, while guiding refinements that make our model stronger year after year.



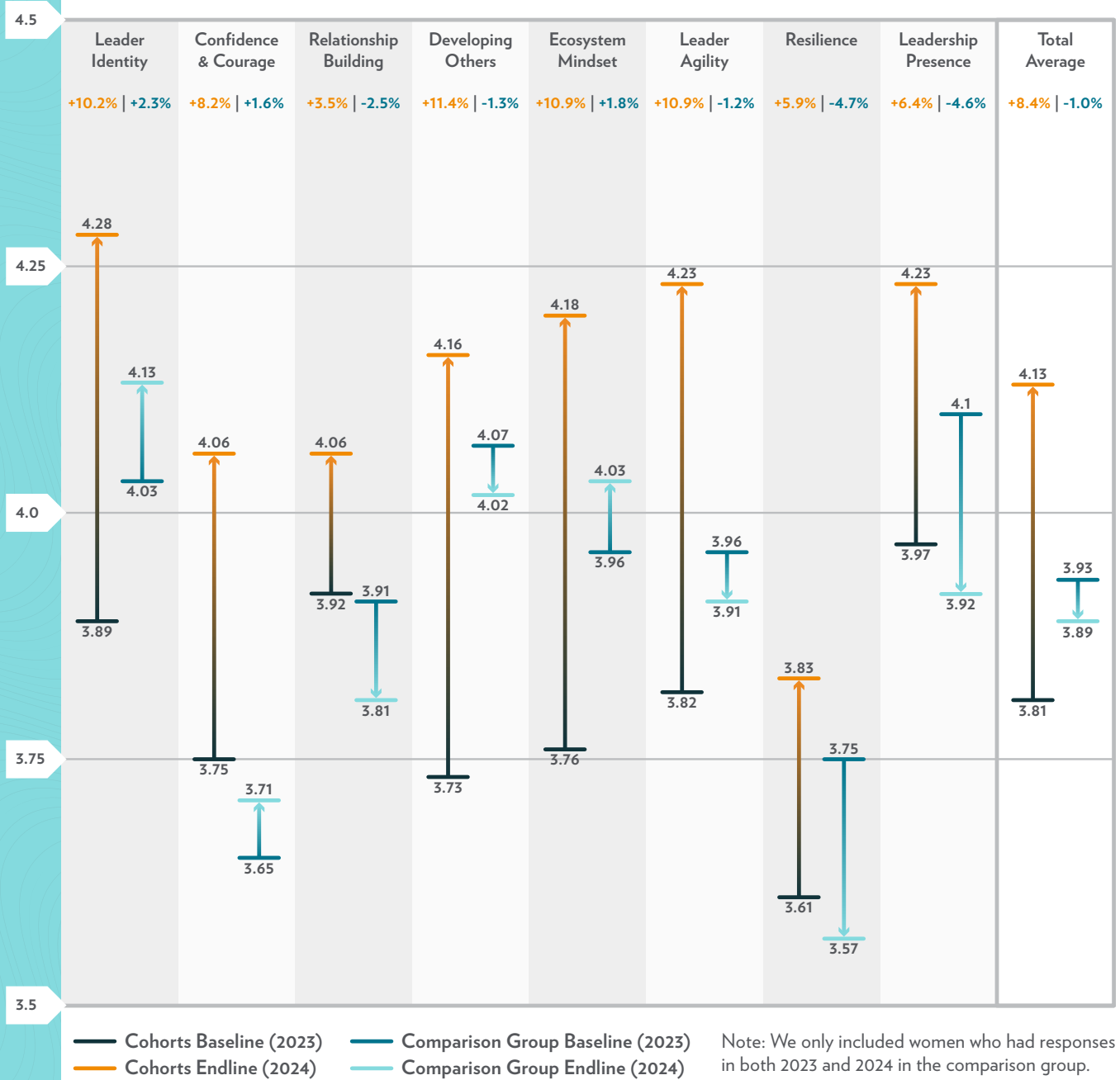
The following pages highlight key areas where we measure, assess, learn, and improve our Leadership Journey program.



IMPROVED LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Women leaders report substantial, measurable gains in leadership capacity. In 2023–24, average competency scores increased by 8.4% compared to a 1% decline among peers outside the program [Figure 1].

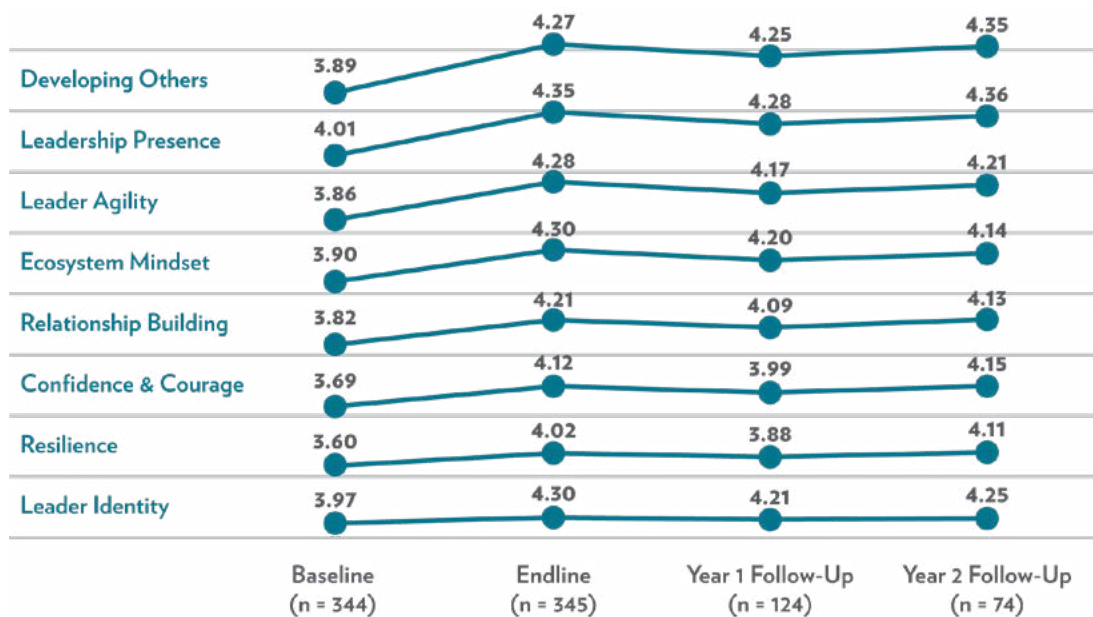
Figure 1. Change in average scores for various leadership competency indicators from baseline to endline for 2023-24 cohorts and the comparison group.



ENDURING GAINS, SUSTAINED WITH SUPPORT

Growth doesn't stop at the end of the Leadership Journey. Global Fellows continue to strengthen competencies over subsequent years [Figure 2]. Refresher training, booster sessions, and peer connections help to sustain and amplify progress.

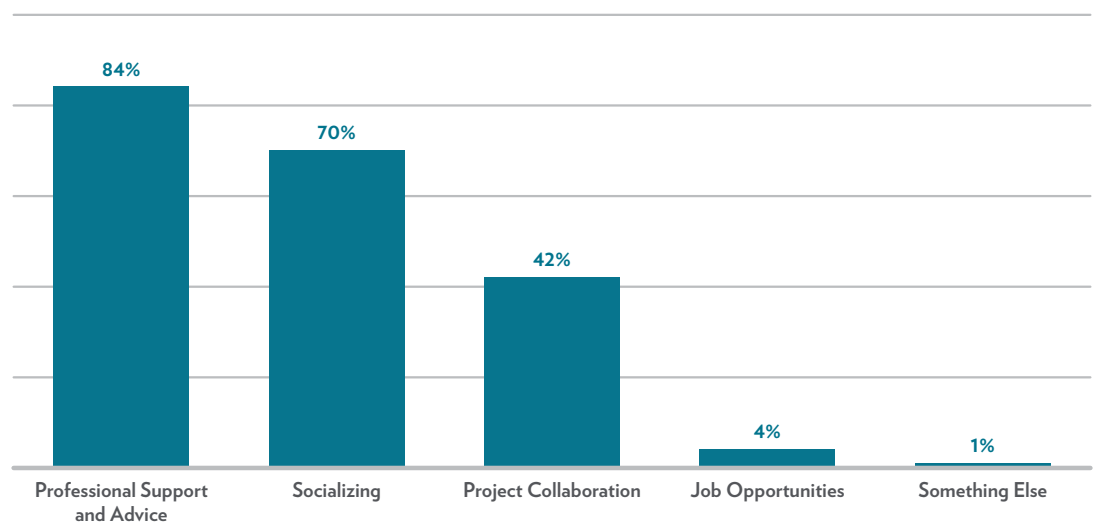
Figure 2. Self-reported leadership competency changes from baseline to year two follow-up for all Global Fellows in all regions and cohorts.



A LASTING LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY

Over 90% of Fellows remain connected with their cohorts post-program — sharing expertise, mentoring, and collaborating on projects [Figure 3]. This enduring network accelerates leadership development and multiplies institutional impact.

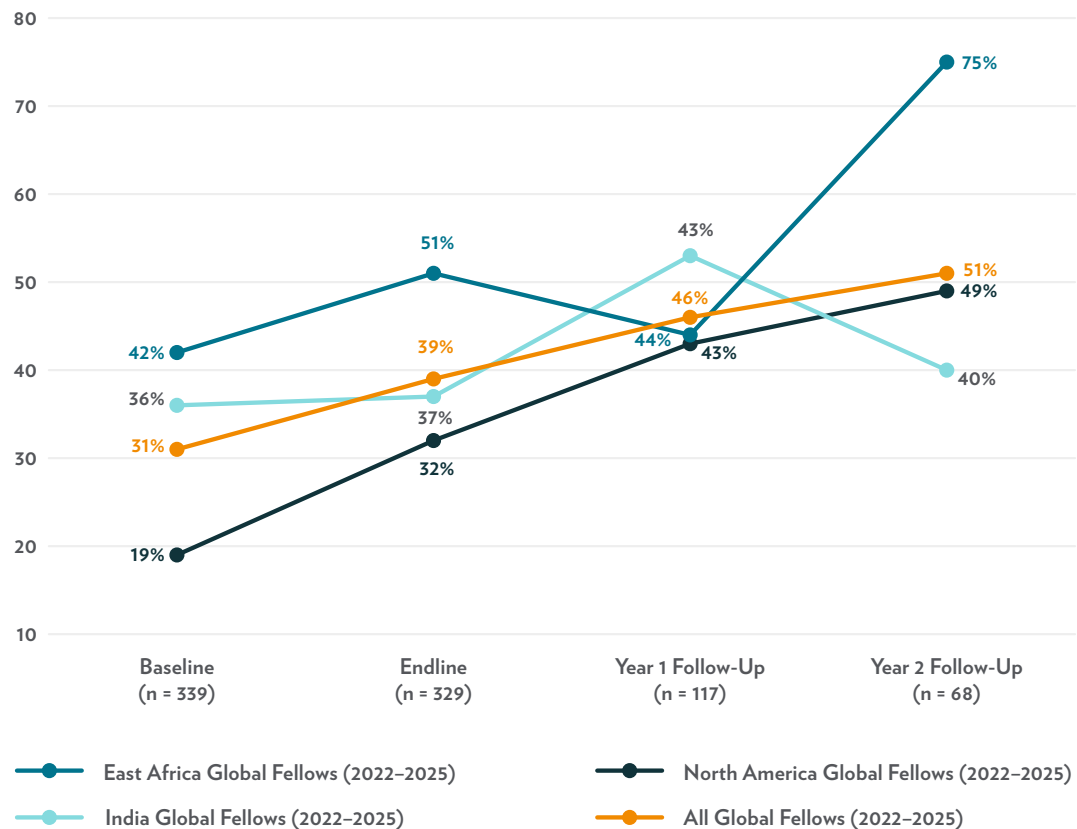
Figure 3. Global Fellows from the 2024–2025 cohorts' interactions and connections with other cohort members by interaction type (n = 132).



RISING INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE

Global Fellows are helping to reshape institutions. Reports of high influence grew from 31% at baseline to 51% two years after the program [Figure 4]. This shows how this leadership investment extends beyond individual growth to systems change within organizations.

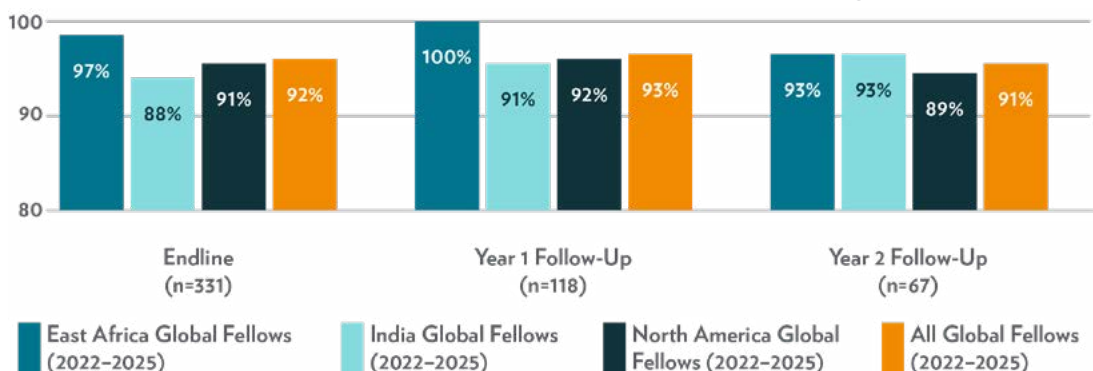
Figure 4. Proportion of all Global Fellows who report a high degree of influence at their institution from baseline to year two follow-up, by region.



THE PATHWAY TO IMPACT IN ACTION

Fellows share what they learn. More than 90% of Global Fellows continue applying and disseminating skills one to two years later, and nearly three-quarters of the latest cohort built the capacity of others through their Leadership Projects [Figure 5]. Each Fellow becomes a catalyst for wider institutional transformation.

Figure 5. Proportion of all Global Fellows who report using or sharing learnings from the Leadership Journey, from endline to year two follow-up, by region.



EXTERNAL VALIDATION

Supervisors agree. In 2025, 72% observed Fellows consistently practicing new competencies, and 74% reported that Fellows positively influenced their teams, departments, or organization [Figures 6-7].

Figure 6. Supervisor's observation of Global Fellows' leadership competency use (n = 50).

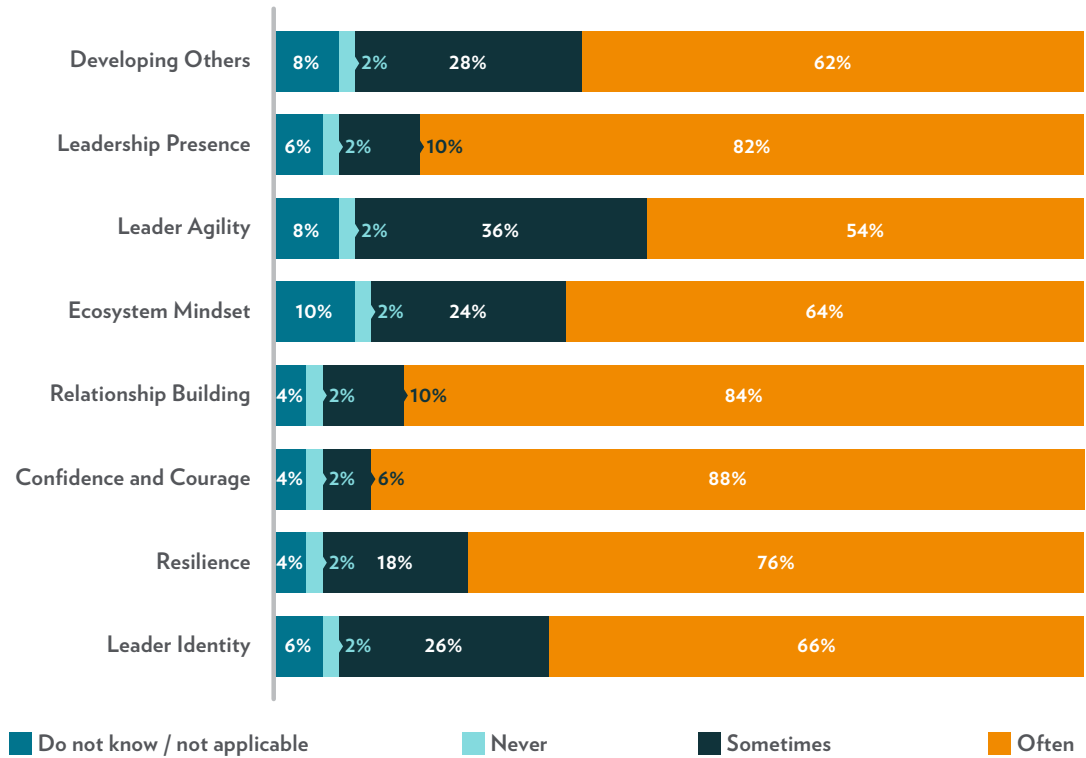
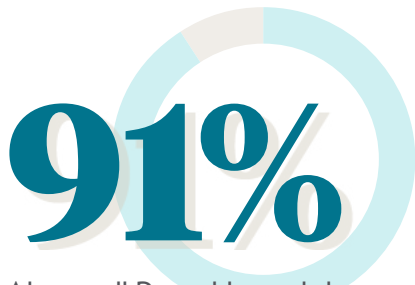


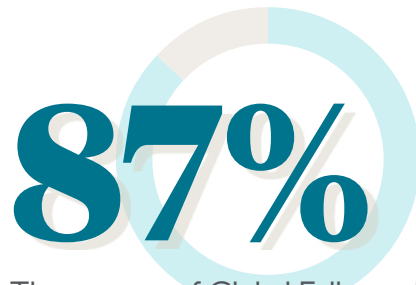
Figure 7. Supervisors' agreement with statements on the influence of Global Fellows at their organization (n = 50).



Between February 1 of 2024 and January 31 of 2025, WomenLift Health delivered 21 workshops and trainings across the East Africa, Nigeria, North America, and Southern Africa hubs [Figure 8].

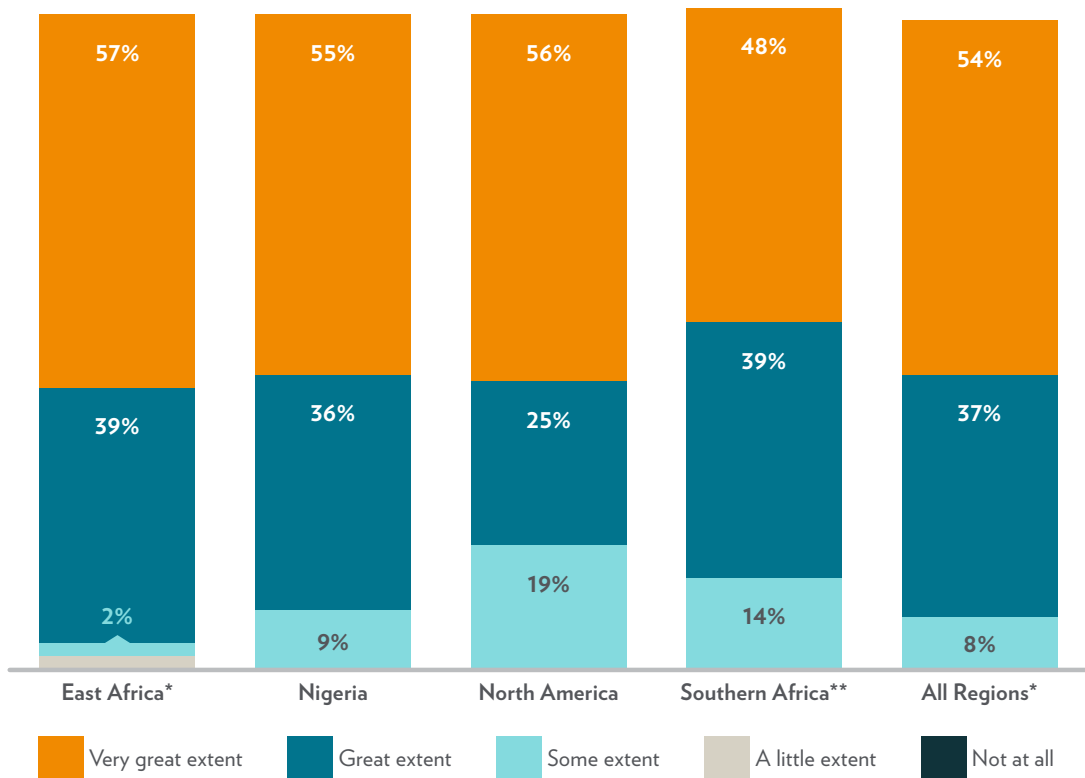


Almost all PowerUp workshop participants felt the facilitation helped them connect the learning to their own situation.



The majority of Global Fellows who participated in post-Leadership Journey events reported that event learning objectives were achieved to a great or very great extent.

Figure 8: PowerUp workshop participant responses on how the facilitation helped them connect the learning to their own situation (n = 281).



*Bar charts with 1% or less participants reporting 'a little extent' or 'not at all'

**Bar charts with more than 100% due to rounding

The evaluation data shows that WomenLift Health not only equips women leaders with lasting competencies but also builds resilient networks and supports institutional change. These insights are shaping our 2026-2030 strategy: scale what works, increase gains in women's growth throughout their lifetime journeys, and innovate to meet emerging leadership challenges and needs.



Strategic Priorities

WHERE WE ARE GOING NEXT (2026–2030)

Building on a strong foundation and proven results, WomenLift Health has set five strategic priorities to guide our work over the next five years. These priorities will expand our reach, deepen our impact, and accelerate progress toward a future where diverse leadership drives strong health systems and better outcomes for all.

1

EXPAND AND ELEVATE WOMEN'S HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Scale our leadership programs to serve 10,000 women by 2030 through the Leadership Journey, institutional trainings, and workshops.

Success Looks Like:

- New thematic programs addressing health priorities like climate-health resilience and midwifery leadership
- Flexible program formats tailored to diverse partners and women leaders
- Clear evidence of improved leadership effectiveness, institutional influence, and health outcomes

2

IGNITE A GLOBAL NETWORK OF LEADERS FOR CHANGE

Strengthen and activate our Global Fellows community as a powerful force for collective impact.

Success Looks Like:

- Cross-regional and cross-sector collaboration for health solutions
- Structured early-in-career and fellow-to-fellow mentorship and ongoing leadership development
- Fellow-led initiatives advancing equitable health outcomes, especially for underserved populations



3

SHIFT THE NARRATIVE ON HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Amplify women leaders' voices and impact.

Success Looks Like:

- Greater visibility in global forums, publications, and decision-making bodies
- Compelling storytelling that links inclusive leadership to health outcomes
- Partnerships with institutions committed to championing this new narrative

4

SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE FROM WITHIN

Partner with organizations to build pipelines of transformative leaders.

Success Looks Like:

- Customized leadership development programs addressing institutional priorities
- Increased women in senior roles at partner institutions
- Organizational champions for an inclusive leadership culture

5

LEARN, EVOLVE, AND SUSTAIN

Remain adaptive and evidence-driven while building long-term sustainability.

Success Looks Like:

- Continued contributions to the global evidence base on leadership
- Diversified and sustainable funding streams
- Innovative approaches to partner needs
- Strategic partnerships that amplify impact and reach

Together, these priorities will position WomenLift Health to achieve transformative impact at scale, catalyzing a future where diverse leadership drives better health outcomes for all.



Why Invest in WomenLift Health?

Global health faces relentless disruption — shrinking funding, workforce crises, climate shocks, and rapid technological change. At the same time, the women’s health gap continues to widen.

How do we continually adapt to these cascading challenges while also exploring new innovations, improving health equity, and delivering better health outcomes? Leadership isn’t an add-on — it’s the engine for a stronger and more resilient health sector. The world needs leaders who are strategic, emotionally intelligent, and capable of navigating complexity and disruption. When donors and partners intentionally invest in leadership, they are making every other investment smarter and more sustainable.

WomenLift Health supports women leaders to develop and practice precisely the capabilities required for our changing times. Investment in women’s leadership through WomenLift Health creates exponential value in which individual transformation enables women leaders to elevate their leadership and power, resulting in institutional change and better health outcomes over time.

PATHWAY TO IMPACT IN ACTION

Stories like those of Dr. Basiliana Emidi in Tanzania, Dr. K. Aparna Sharma in India, and Ritu Kamal in East Africa and the U.S. show how one woman’s leadership can ripple outward — changing policies, transforming institutions, and improving health outcomes for thousands.



Dr. Basiliana Emidi's Story

HARNESSING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP TO FIGHT MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES IN TANZANIA



Dr. Basiliana Emidi has worked to advance public health research and vector control in Tanzania for the past two decades. As Principal Research Officer in Medical Entomology at the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), she saw first-hand how **the lack of skilled vector control personnel left communities vulnerable to mosquito-borne diseases.**

Through the WomenLift Health Leadership Journey, Dr. Emidi found the tools and strategic skills to **launch a project empowering women in Mwanza, Tanzania to lead vector control activities using a training-of-trainers model.** The project's success led to strong community buy-in, formation of "women in vector control" groups, and a policy brief recommending formal support for women's participation in mosquito control at the community level.



The Journey helped me **adapt my leadership style** to different audiences and engage stakeholders effectively."

Her work caught the attention of national and international partners, earning her invitations to present at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, join the Africa Integrated Vector Management Expert Advisory Group, and tutor MSc students in malaria studies. She went on to author a research paper titled "Establishing and Sustaining Women-Led Vector Control Groups: Community Perspectives from Misungwi and Ilemela Districts, Mwanza, Tanzania," which was published in *The Journal of Basic and Applied Zoology*.

Since completing the Leadership Journey, Dr. Emidi has joined the NIMR Mwanza Center Management Board, served on the national Resource Mobilization Policy committee, and been appointed Centre Manager of NIMR Dodoma. She continues to advocate for gender equality in leadership and is preparing Phase II of her project, aiming to expand women-led vector control programs across rural Tanzania.



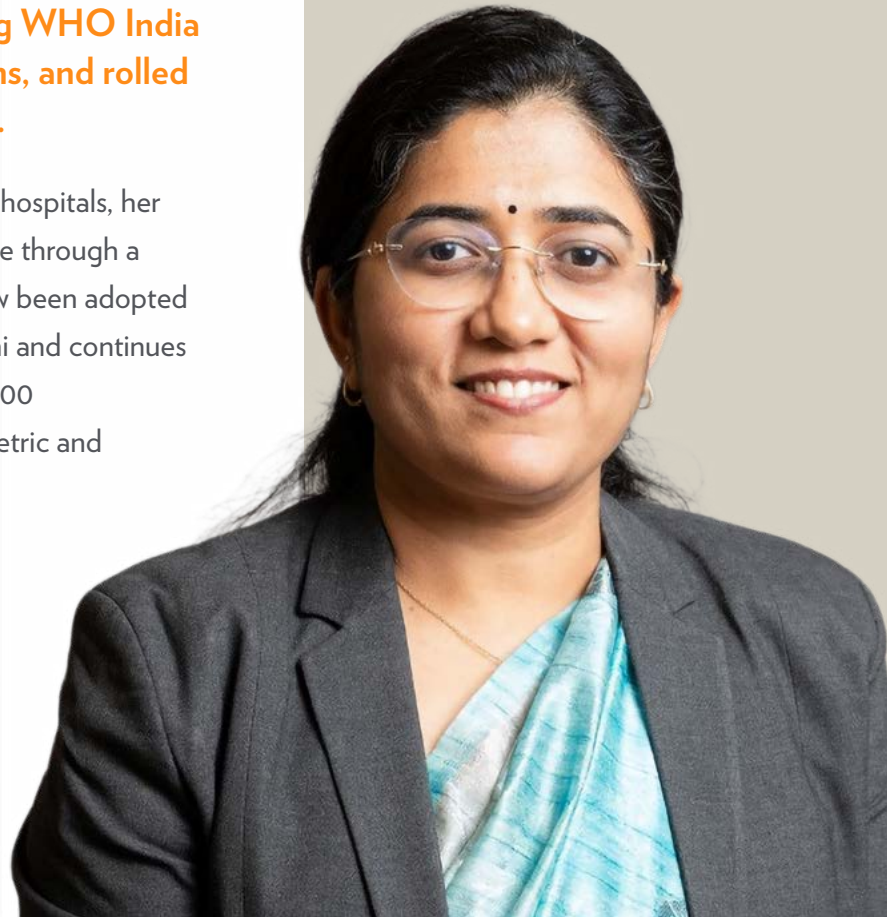
Dr. K. Aparna Sharma's Story

TRANSFORMING
MATERNITY CARE
IN INDIA

As a leading fetal intervention specialist and professor at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi, Dr. Sharma had witnessed a troubling pattern throughout her career: **women being mistreated during childbirth. Verbal abuse, physical neglect, and decisions made without consent were common** — traumatizing mothers and adversely impacting their health-seeking behaviors.

Through WomenLift Health's Leadership Journey, Dr. Sharma developed the confidence and strategic approach to address this systemic issue. **She created comprehensive training materials on respectful maternity care, built a coalition of partners including WHO India and professional medical associations, and rolled out training workshops across Delhi.**

Starting with healthcare providers from nine hospitals, her initiative has expanded to workshops citywide through a hub-and-spoke model. Her program has now been adopted by the Directorate of Family Welfare in Delhi and continues to scale, with a national workshop reaching 200 participants through the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India.



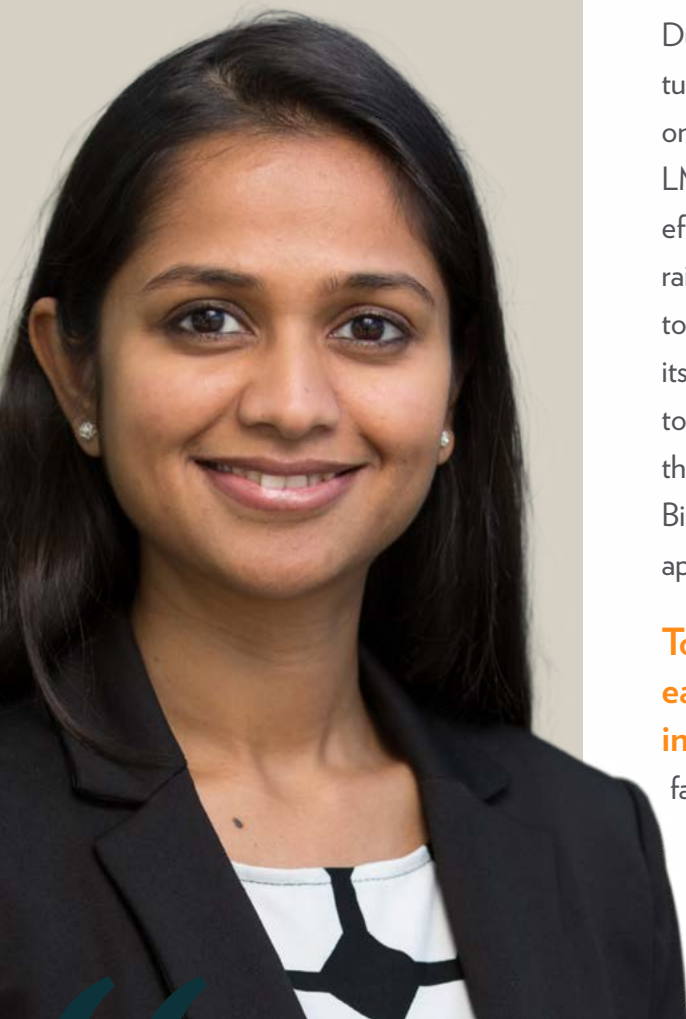
“

As a leader, I'm now more committed to developing others in my sphere of influence,” Dr. Sharma reflects. “I hope to provide a better environment to my junior colleagues and make them feel **empowered not only as women, but also as professionals.**”



Ritu Kamal's Story

EXPANDING ACCESS
FOR WOMEN AND
LMIC INNOVATORS



Ritu Kamal is the Director for Portfolio Strategy at Illumina and the Director for Global Programs at Stanford University's Byers Center for Biodesign. Through her work, she saw a clear gap: Stanford's Global Faculty-in-Training (GFIT) program, a six-month intensive training experience on health technology innovation, **had little representation from women and faculty based in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in Africa and South Asia.** Without access, many promising innovators lacked the mentorship and resources to advance solutions that are tailored for their own communities.

During her Leadership Journey with WomenLift Health, Ritu turned this challenge into her Leadership Project, with a focus on increasing the representation of women and faculty from LMIC regions in the GFIT program. She led the fundraising efforts for a new program called East Africa Biodesign and raised a multimillion-dollar grant from the Gates Foundation to support activities in Rwanda, Kenya, and at Stanford. Since its launch, the grant has supported seven East African faculty to participate in the GFIT program at Stanford. The training of these faculty was the first step to establishing a new East Africa Biodesign program, which now trains local innovators to develop appropriate, accessible, and sustainable health innovations.

Today, the program operates two fellowships for early-career innovators, one in Rwanda and one in Kenya. Not only was Ritu able to expand GFIT access to faculty from LMICs, but she also created a completely new Africa-based program to train and mentor East African innovators to develop healthcare solutions for their local priorities. As Ritu states,

Putting together the Leadership Project helped me crystallize an idea I had been thinking about for a long time. The project gave me a structure and KPIs to keep me accountable. Overall, the Leadership Journey gave me the 'permission' to **think of myself as a leader in global health** and to build programs that I believe will drive better R&D (i.e., develop technologies appropriate for LMICs), and hence better healthcare outcomes for LMIC patients."

Conclusion

LOOKING AHEAD AND A CALL TO ACTION

The leadership gap in global health represents both a challenge and an opportunity. At a time when health systems face unprecedented change — from global health defunding to climate impacts, workforce shortages to technological disruption — the need for diverse, transformative leadership has never been greater.

WomenLift Health has developed a proven model for cultivating this leadership. Our approach does far more than advance individual women's careers — it catalyzes institutional change, shapes health priorities, and ultimately improves health outcomes for all.

As we look to 2026–2030, we invite partners and funders to join us in scaling this impact. Together, we can build a future where health leadership reflects the diversity of the populations it serves and understands and meets their health needs.

“

The WomenLift Health Leadership Journey has been a transformative experience

both professionally and personally. It gave me practical tools and the confidence to step up and engage impactfully, not just as a woman leader, but as a change agent. My Leadership Project has helped me become more innovative, authentic, and solution-oriented. It instilled in me a deep appreciation for collaboration in strengthening maternal and neonatal outcomes — an area I care deeply about.”

Betty Warriari

Associate Director, Maternal Newborn and Child Health, Clinton Health Access Initiative; East Africa Global Fellow 2024

“

That's what WomenLift Health is going to do in the next 5 to 10 to 20 years:

creating a set of female leaders globally who are going to take up spaces that people have never imagined, who are going to create positive change and ensure that health is improved for women worldwide.”

Dr. Evonemo Esievoadje

Family Medicine Resident Doctor; North America Global Fellow 2023



The time to close the gap in health leadership is now. The challenges are urgent, the model is proven, and the opportunity for impact has never been greater. Join us in investing in transformative women's leadership to improve health outcomes for all.



The logo for WomenLift Health is centered on a solid teal background. It features the text "WomenLift" in a white, sans-serif font, with a stylized teal figure of a person jumping or running integrated into the letter "W". Below "WomenLift" is the word "Health" in a larger, white, serif font.

WomenLift
Health