



Trust for Indigenous  
Culture and Health



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

## About this Report

This annual report was written to help us to reflect on what happened at TICAH during 2021 and to share the highlights and some of the accomplishments of our efforts during this year with our partners, donors, friends and others who might be interested. We continue to be committed to finding ways to create conditions for health and wellness by acknowledging the ways in which our health is shaped by our cultures, our relationships, our rights, our values, and our knowledge. Asanteni.

## 2021 at a Glance



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## Message from the Executive Director

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**F**or TICAHealth, 2021 was a year of catching up, moving forward, taking on new challenges and thinking critically about the impacts we've made and that we want to make. It was also a year of new opportunities for ourselves and our communities. The world has come a long way since those first days in the pandemic, and yet we have more to work on and more we need to face head on as a result of the times. It has become abundantly clear to all of us at TICAHealth that the challenges our communities are facing (and that all of us are facing) are layered, interconnected, and systemic. Together with partners like you, we continue to fight and organise to overcome these challenges.

It is therefore befitting that we took some time and reflected on our work and visioned the future in our strategic planning process. During this year we thought of how our work addresses the current challenges and ways we can work more effectively as an organisation to address these.

We thank you for being part of this work. We hope the highlighted stories of our work and impact in this annual report speak to you and inspire you.

Stay safe, stay healthy, stay happy.

Thank you,  
**Jedidah Maina**  
*[jmaina@ticahealth.org](mailto:jmaina@ticahealth.org)*

## Thoughts from the Founding Director

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Another year around the sun and another year of ups and downs as the world started to slowly find its way out of the pandemic and into a new chapter. 2021 was a challenging year for the globe, as it was so clear everyone was ready to be together again, to work, to improve the world, to move beyond COVID-19 and yet the pandemic wasn't quite done with us. Unlike 2020, where the adjustment was how to stay safe, care for each other and try to move forward with social distance and lockdowns, the adjustment in 2021 was how to work in the space of the huge social changes and injustices that resulted from the pandemic while also continuing to respond to the emergence of dangerous variants and inequitable distribution of vaccines and treatments.

2021 was not the return to "normal" that everyone had hoped for, but instead the year opened our eyes to what can be the new normal coming out of these challenging times. The ups and downs of the year gave all of us the opportunity to toss off the idea of ever returning to the old normal, as if that was an equal, just, ideal world. Instead the year gave us all the chance to start rebuilding the world in a new way - one where the health and wellness of families and social responsibility is at the centre of work environments, social paradigms, policy, and global structures - where racial and gender justice is prioritised for what it contributes to the elevation and wellness of all communities and where planetary health is finally understood as critical to the future of our world and to the health of our families.

As we continue to move into this new space, this new way of being, we must take forward the lessons and illuminations that have come from the past two years and create an even better normal for everyone. Let's not forget that we are all connected and that "only when it is dark enough can you see the stars," (Martin Luther King Jr.). Let's not forget the stars; it's time that we move towards them.

With Heart,

**Mary Ann Burris**  
*Founding Director*

## Our Team

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*Back Row (L to R): Peter Otieno, Suzanne MT Wambua, Diana Moreka, Carol Ngala, Gordon Ochieng, Mickreen Adhiambo, Eric Many, Fanis Inganga, Gloria Anniva, Prisca Karachia*

*Front Row (L to R): Vitalice Ochieng, Liz Okumu, Martin, Odhiambo, Jeremiah Musyoka, Jedidah Maina, Gideon Chirchir, Mary Elias, Sheilah Warindi*

## About TICAH and How We Work

The Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health (TICAH) believes in holistic health and culture. We believe that culture shapes everything and that it is a marker of a healthy community. We believe we experience good health first in our body, spirit and mind then within our relationships, households and communities. Our definition of health also recognizes the links between health, values and culture, the role of art in communication and healing, access to quality health information & services and the power of herbs and nutrition in overall wellness.

### Our Programs and Methodologies



### ART FOR CONNECTION AND HEALING

#### *Art with Heart*

Working with artists to elevate marginalised voices and ideas, support healing and build communities.



#### Rika Residency: Exploring Mental and Emotional Wellness

The mental health of the world has deteriorated. It's become paramount to understand how to care for one's mental health, for artists and for the general community. In 2021, TICAH organised a week-long art residency in partnership with the GoDown Arts Centre, who hosted the group, and Mental360, a mental health education and support organisation.

We hosted 25 artists of many different practises (musicians, painters, sculptors, actors, poets, dancers, designers, filmmakers, illustrators, etc.) to come together for the week to talk about mental health – what it is, what it isn't, how Kenyan culture views it/interacts with it, stigma, language surrounding mental health, self care techniques, when to seek help, and different kinds of therapy and treatments available. The group also created individual and group artworks sharing their experiences in the mental health space and what they have learned from the discussions.

This residency was only the beginning of what TICAH hopes will become ongoing work within the mental health awareness and advocacy space. Since this workshop, we have been adapting the curriculum we developed for this residency with our body mapping art therapy workshop curriculum to create a set of activities and discussions to reach a broader community with awareness on mental health and for exploration of personal mental health journeys.

#### Reflections on Rika and Mental Health

*Jane Marburger is a Kenyan filmmaker that participated in the Rika Residency on mental health.*

I will confess, there were some points I felt out of place, but you know, I took this as an opportunity to be exposed to artists of a different kind and it was quite eye opening. It was interesting to see how we are in the same world per se, but we experience and produce art SO differently. I left that workshop slightly wiser. And more empathetic. At least I hope so. I love working with my hands (I craft as a hobby) and while I may not be a painter extraordinaire like some I interacted with, a renewed love for creativity was inspired.

I hope those who attended left feeling different from when they attended the first meeting... I think most importantly, I hope the conversation about mental health continues. I know there is much as it concerns mental wellness and the contributing factors to support it. I know many artists wish their finances would be ok so that they could be ok. Or [that there was more] acceptance in society without being branded as strange, peculiar or not important enough to be heard. Whatever it is, I hope everyone's journey takes them to a place of hope. We can all probably agree that life can be hard. Maybe what we need to talk about to a great extent is what we may have done, practically, and I will venture to say that is strategic and wise, that has gotten us through the seasons of life.

## Public Spaces and Art for Wellness

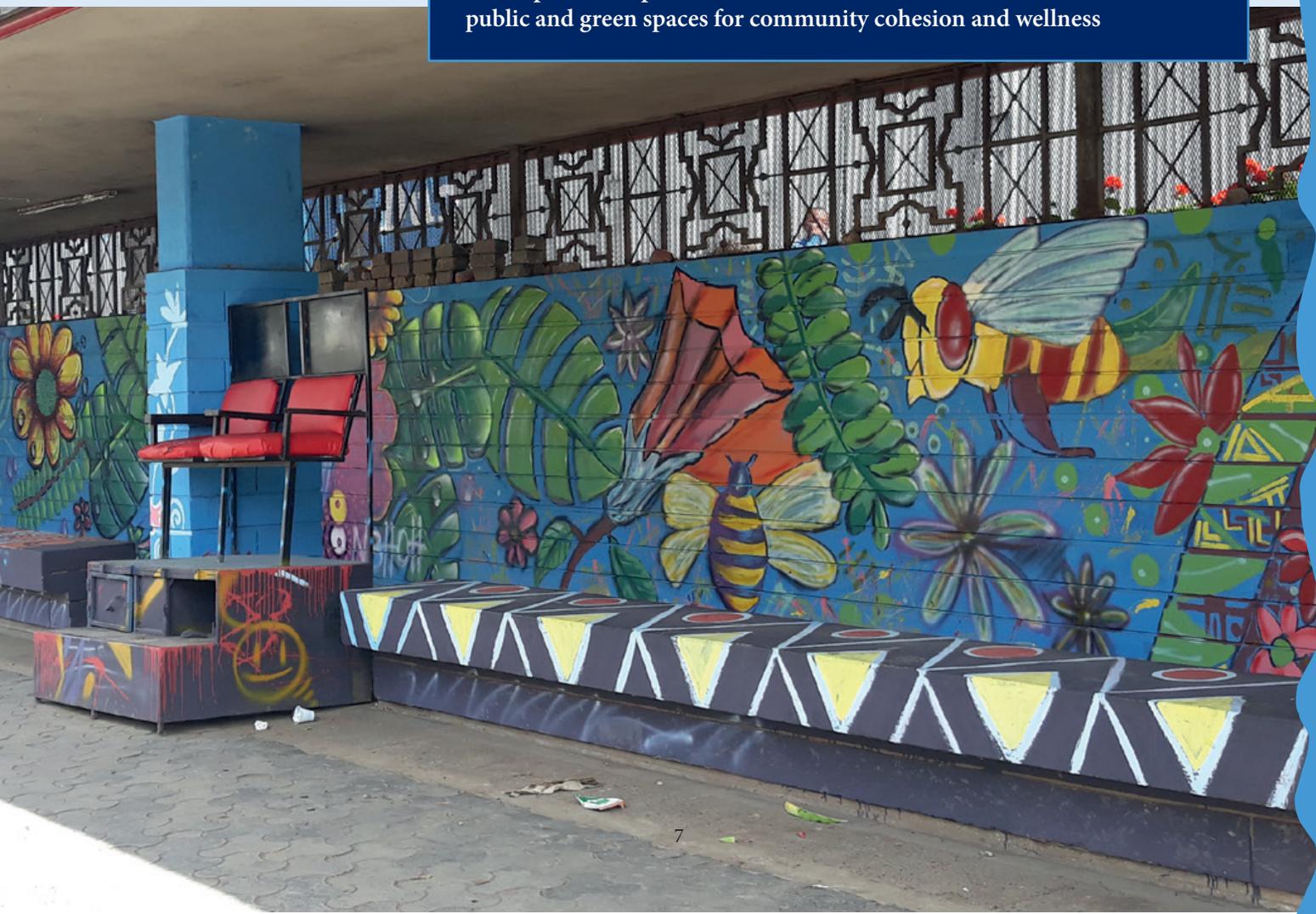
Public green spaces are critical to building community, maintaining connections to the Earth and mitigating the effects of climate change. TICAHA continued its work in activating public green spaces with culture and arts programs beyond the five spaces we co-created and maintain within the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) system. In 2021, we began to partner with the Safer Nairobi Initiative of the Nairobi City County, urban planners, UNHABITAT, Nairobi Gallery (of NMK) and others working on urban health and wellness. Through this partnership we were able to offer artists and other cultural practitioners opportunities to create and perform within the city centre, connecting their arts practises with Kenyans and others passing through the city. We helped to re-energise some of the few green spaces within the city centre and create over ten beautiful murals to inspire. Of the work, Jude

Capis, a street artist who joined the team said, “Nairobi has a lot of spaces that can be canvases for street art, but there is very little art in the streets. This is an opportunity for a lot of artists to create art pieces that will beautify the city. The best way to capture the attention of people is to involve them in Art.”

During Urban October, an annual, international event to discuss and showcase the challenges and opportunities created by the fast rate of change in our cities and towns, TICAHA celebrated with traditional music, public participatory art, and more within the city centre, within a public green space that had not been used to engage the public for a long time. John Gacheru, a security guard who passed by, admired the work, “I always come [to this area] to rest, and before it was painted it looked neglected but now it makes everyone happy.” Art and culture has the power to rejuvenate such spaces as well as the communities that use them.

### REACH AND IMPACT:

- **10+** murals created in Nairobi's city centre reaching thousands of people
- **138** artists of different disciplines shared their arts practise in Nairobi's city centre
- **Over 50** artists involved in art residencies involving intergenerational learning, mental health resilience, working digitally
- **5** new partnerships formed for the activation and use of art and culture in public and green spaces for community cohesion and wellness



# HIV MANAGEMENT, NUTRITION AND HERBS

## Healthy Households

Working with households to prevent illness and stay healthy by teaching practical, affordable and sustainable practices by focusing on food and herbal remedies.

### Nutrition for Early Childhood Development

Early childhood development (ECD) links children's physical, social, economic, and cognitive advancement with better care and education. Despite the fact that a focus on early childhood development can have a significant impact on future learning, socialisation, and health outcomes, many ECD centres in Nairobi informal settlements continue to face challenges providing adequate care and nutrition to the children they support. Teachers at ECD centres explained that the "schools serve unhealthy snacks such as porridge. We cooked the same meals, white porridge for break; cabbage and ugali for lunch every day because we thought cooking different types of meals is expensive. We didn't have a meal plan to guide us through the process."

TICAH has trained ten ECD centres, impacting the health of approximately 400 children. Together we discussed meal planning and budgeting, child development stages and how it affects the well-being of children, and how different foods and herbs can be used in the prevention and management of common childhood illnesses. TICAH has seen children eating healthier meals within the centres and have seen how they are more alert and active. We've also invited parents and other caregivers to learn more about nutrition and how it affects their children so that they can take this important information to their homes as well. Mr. Orlando, a teacher at a partner ECD centre said, "I learned to use traditional food and right now my children are healthy. I also learned how to budget, [how to plant and use a] kitchen pharmacy and to make some cough syrup which has really helped."





#### REACH

- 220 women and men learned how to use food as medicine
- 705 Children with the SHINE and school calendar programs
- 400 children in ECD centres

#### IMPACT

- 60% of families making healthier meals
- 68% of families are using herbs to prevent and treat common illnesses
- 94% of families reported reduced cases of illness
- 86% of the children reported having helpful information about their rights

### SHINE Program Spotlight: Bobo's Story

In Nairobi informal settlements, families face difficult situations including the lack of sanitation, clean water, public spaces, and adequate housing in congested areas with high rates of disease and violence. The situation has deteriorated further as a result of the pandemic. Children living through this face not only health challenges but mental health and wellness challenges.

Bobo lives in Majeno, a Nairobi informal settlement that the SHINE (Support, Heal, Interact, Nurture, and Equip) program works in. At ten years old, Bobo has had to act as the head of his household, caring for his younger siblings and working to provide for them. Unfortunately, Bobo's parents are rarely home so there isn't a regular, trusted adult to care for the children. Many times Bobo is forced to wake early to fetch water for his family or find scrap metal to sell in order to buy food. On top of this, Bobo gets sick often and has to take

himself to the local clinic for treatment. The result of this life is that Bobo is perpetually stressed, anxious and in and out of school.

While a neighbor watches his siblings, Bobo participates in the SHINE program (Support, Heal, Interact, Nurture and Equip Program), which is designed to help children cope with life's daily challenges and the stress they feel and to provide them with skills to help them manage the stress and challenges. The program includes participatory discussions on values, listening to our bodies, meditation, art for expression and healing, connecting with friends through fun activities and shared meals. Bobo shared that he uses the breathing techniques he learned at SHINE to give himself a moment at home where he can relax and recenter. "I've learnt and realised the value of having friends and playing with other children. I am always happy when I am playing with my friends. They normally share with me colors and together we paint pictures of how we are feeling."

## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURE

### Medicine Wheel

The role of indigenous knowledge and culture in holistic health and solving community challenges.

#### The Power of Indigenous Women Organising

In the village of Enkasit in Kajiado county, Sarah Makui, like so many women in her area, has been affected by the surge of land sales and subsequent land loss. Sarah's mum had to leave her marital home when her uncle sold the land, even though her father had left her mum the land before he died. Sarah's mum was left homeless. A similar scenario occurred in Ildamat when Eunice Nkaiyoo found out that her husband had sold a piece of their family land without her consent, and was lucky enough to stop him from selling another piece. These are some of the challenges that the Maasai community in Kajiado face. The loss of ancestral land and its economic and cultural impacts are enormous. Most women have little say on issues of land use, management and sale and yet these same women bear the greatest burden. When land is sold and families are left homeless, most men abandon their families and leave the women as sole caretakers of their families.



“My husband was duped and sold all our land. What hurt the most is that he did not even invest or use the money for the benefit of the family. He squandered it and ran away, leaving me to raise our children alone, with no shelter and no means. I'm now living as a squatter in what was our land, so I went back to ask the buyer to allow me to put up a small house for my children. Life has not been easy.” - Brenda Pushati- Ikaputiei, a participant in the community discussion.

Through the Maasai traditional practice of women organising known as Olamal, nine women leaders from Kajiado communities mobilised 180 women, 20 traditional and administrative chiefs and 18 youth. They have pushed the community to have discussions about sustainable land use, land sale and women's inclusion in land decision-making at the family, community and county level. Women leaders then organised another meeting with the Kajiado Land County Executive Committee and the National Land Commission. As a result of this initiative, stronger indigenous women's advocacy movements are emerging, articulating women's issues at the community and county level. Other than land issues, the Olamal continue to mobilise the community to address issues of inter-tribal conflict and peace building, access to menstrual hygiene and products for girls, and support for indigenous women living with HIV.

The fight is not yet over but when women come together through Olamal in this community, everyone takes notice and solutions are usually found. TICAHA will continue to support these traditional ways of organising for women to bring about social development and gender justice.

#### East African Policies on Traditional Medicine

From the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic, TICAHA has been hosting conversations on how traditional medicine plays a key role in boosting immunity and building resilience as communities cope with the rapid spread of the virus. We engaged herbalists from different Kenyan communities to share tips on preventing and treating illnesses with plant medicine. We also engaged UNESCO during a webinar that brought together stakeholders from across Africa as well as the WHO and AU to discuss the traditional medicine sector. One of the recommendations was to have clarity on how countries are creating enabling structures and systems for traditional medicine to thrive.

TICAHA and UNESCO teamed up to research and understand the policies and laws that regulate the traditional medicine

## REACH

- **76** participants gained deeper knowledge of herbal remedies
- **15-20** participants at weekly plant talks at TICAH's plant medicine garden
- **23** elders shared the values passed on during male rite of passage ceremonies and how these values have evolved or not over time and the role they play in modern society
- **17** herbalists shared the challenges they face within the medical and governance fields contributing to the report on a conducive herbal medicine environment in East Africa
- **1,862** people watched the online concert of 28 traditional musicians
- **82** people, including indigenous women leaders and local leaders, from 10 ethnic communities participated in conversations about the rights and inclusion of women in community building and governance



sector in four East African countries, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania. During the review, the Ministries of Health and Culture in all the countries agreed that there is need to build sustainable systems to promote the recognition and use of traditional medicine while also ensuring safety to consumers and protection of intellectual property. Even though Tanzania, which is the most advanced of the four countries in terms of legal frameworks and regulation, they recognise there is still more to do to boost traditional medicine in public health facilities to ensure more safe choices for healthcare. In this respect, there is much the East African region can learn from South Africa and Ghana.

Professor Hamisi Malebo, the Secretary General of the Tanzania National Commission for UNESCO and the Chairman of the

Traditional and Alternative Health Practice Council in Tanzania shared this about the research and findings, “We need to cultivate interaction between traditional health practitioners and modern medics as key stakeholders in the medical sector. Both are providing health services to the same population. There is a need to have them controlled by the same regulator and use the same guidelines to make sure the health of the people is protected by the same health policy and report to the same authority.” With the research phase completed in 2021, TICAH plans to host a conference to craft a clear path towards the just and equitable regulation and promotion of the sector.

## SEXUAL, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

### *Our Bodies, Our Choices*

Encouraging more honest, healthy and informed approaches to sexual life for all ages where rights and choices are respected.



#### Young Advocates: A Force to be Reckoned With

I sit down, sipping my well deserved coffee and start my relaxed evening catching up on the dailies. One story catches my eye, “Empower minors with legal and sex education before punishing them over sexual offenses.” The article pushes the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education to ensure free access to information on sex and sexuality amongst adolescents. It is written by Alvin Mwangi, a young advocate known to me, who was part of TICA’s Advocacy in Practice (AiP) training and mentorship program.

The AiP program works on the margins of the policy-making space, for young advocates and civil society actors. TICA’s AiP training was modelled and informed by the AiP Practice Toolkit developed by IWHC with a specific focus on national and county level advocacy.

When TICA sent out a call for applications for the AiP program, Alvin was late to apply but called to find out if he could still be given a chance. His passion earned him a slot and that is where his advocacy footprints grew. During the training, Alvin and 29 other young people sharpened their advocacy skills to develop both personal and group advocacy strategies to push for access to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and safe abortion in Kenya. “My favorite sessions during the training were the ten steps for advocacy, policy advocacy and budget advocacy,” shared Alvin during one of the AiP review meetings. “I can say that my major success, since the AiP training, was being part of the youth team that developed the Nairobi Adolescent and Youth SRHR Framework that is drawn from the ASRH Policy 2015 that guides on the direction for the next 3 years. I also conducted digital and social media advocacy campaigns and developed op-eds for the dailies on several

issues such as CSE, Safe Abortion, YFS and other issues.” The young advocates have written more than 200 articles for mainstream media on SRHR issues, run over 50 social media campaigns to sensitise the public and push for implementation of policies and have appeared in five TV interviews to speak about comprehensive sexuality education. They are a force to be reckoned with.

As I sip my coffee and turn to the next page, I feel grateful and proud, and I marvel at how so much power and influence can come from our young people when we give them tools to amplify and voice their thoughts and views for change. - Liz Okumu, Program Manager, Adolescent and Youth SRHR

### Partnership Expansion to Support Aunty Jane Callers

Riziki is a 22 year old from Eldoret who had just found out she was pregnant when she called the Aunty Jane Hotline (AJH) afraid and yet clear that she was not ready to be pregnant. She shared with the AJH counsellor that she was not in a good state of mind to keep the pregnancy. Riziki wanted to understand what the law states about safe abortion and what her options were. The Aunty Jane counsellor presented Riziki with all facts and safe and legal options available to her. Riziki asked to be referred to a facility and hoped that she would be in good hands with the medical practitioner and as per the law.

To get Riziki the most accessible facility, the counsellor checked the AJH database of service providers in her area and gave

her several options. Through their conversation, Riziki had reservations about each of the clinics: the cost at one was too high, she had heard that another was judgmental, and she had a relative at the last one. Thankfully, the AJH database has over 200 facilities across the country, so Riziki was able to find a facility near her town where she could exercise her choice in a respectful, confidential and comfortable setting.

The AJH team continues to seek strategic partnerships with friendly facilities across Kenya through community trainings and networking. With a partnership with Marie Stopes Kenya, AJH added another 155 clinics to their database, making reliable and safe information and access to services available to callers from all parts of the country. Sometimes access is more than just the location and cost, but also about a sense of comfort and confidence, given the sensitive nature of sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Our providers are passionate about SRHR and ensuring women get the services they need. Madam Fancy, one of our service providers shared that, “My heart breaks when women walk into my facility helpless with reproductive health complications, including post abortion complications. These are mostly fueled by the fear to seek safe services because of the legal situation and the stigma that comes with accessing reproductive health services. Hearing from clients that they are healthy and grateful makes another day of service worth the while.”

#### REACH

- **330** students reached in and out of the school
- **850** students reached with the school university program
- **271** Adolescents and young girls reached with community dialogue programs in western kenya
- **2,140** Reached with information on SRHR through a hotline
- **8** Organisations trained to start new hotlines across Africa
- **760** girls reached during the girls summit that focused on supporting adolescent girls to understand and take charge of their SRHR needs.
- **80** stakeholders represented during the girls summit.

#### IMPACT

- **91%** reported an increase in agency to make SRHR choices
- **56.6%** increased in confidence on negotiating condom use
- **82.32%** increase in satisfaction with the services received at the facilities through Aunty Jane Hotline referrals
- **92.4%** of callers who were counselled at the hotline were satisfied with the type of information received.

## 2021 Financial and Administration Report

2021 continued to be a complex time for TICAHA programs and operations with the ups and downs of the pandemic. We learned a lot from the complexities and challenges and worked on improving many of our internal structures and systems. After building our communications systems in 2020 we revamped and relaunched the TICAHA website in early 2021 with much excitement. If you haven't seen it, have a look at [ticahealth.org](http://ticahealth.org).

We continued to offer counselling for our staff, as we continue to recognise that the mental health of each of us is connected to the health and wellness of the organisation and our ability to support our communities. Also, we were finally able to get

the whole team together, in person, during the year to build our communication and relationships with one another.

Finally, we took a lesson from the Medicine Shield Garden at the National Museum - where many people had visited asking for seedlings of medicinal plants. With the little land we have at the TICAHA office, we planted medicinal plants and nutritious vegetables. We sold some to cover the costs of the garden project and gave others away to community members in need. We continue to grow: artemisia, lemongrass, ajuga remota, lavender, rosemary, chives, thyme, curry, lemon verbena, citronella, spinach, kale, onions, coriander and amaranth.

### TICAHA 2021 Overview

#### Revenue

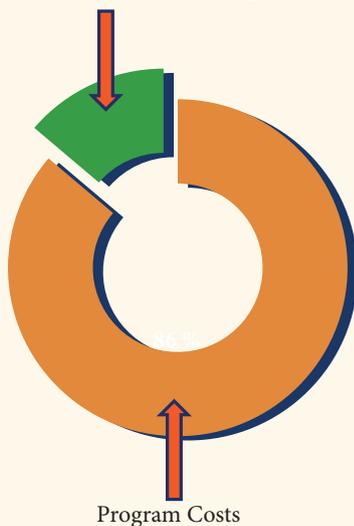
1,498,266.32

#### Expenses

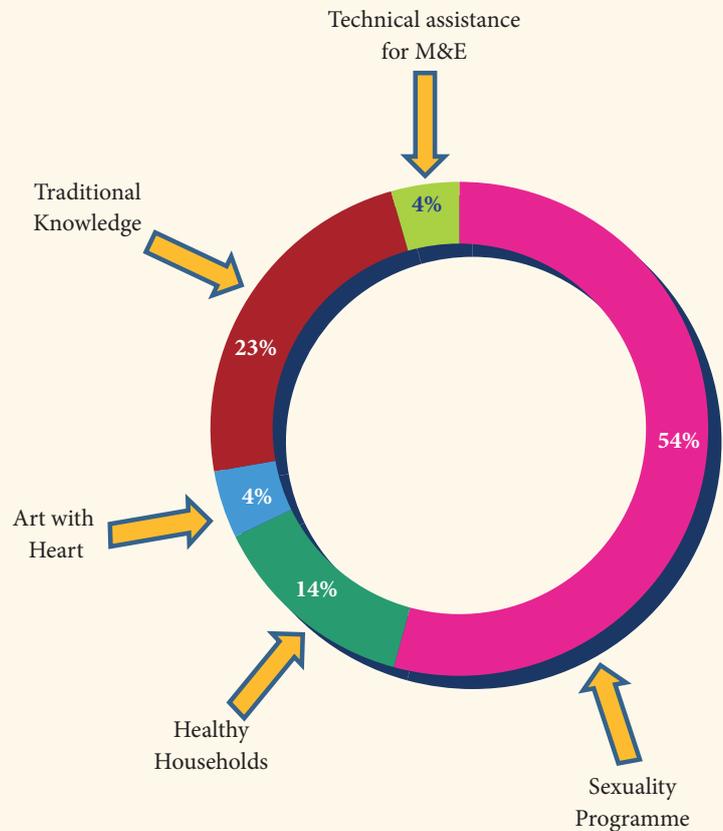
1,007,227.64

### TICAHA Expenses

Management & Fundraising



### The Percentage Breakdown By Program



In June 2021, the TICAH staff started the journey of developing its new strategic plan for 2022-2026. For this strategic plan, we decided to take our time to go deeper with our critical reflections on TICAH's impact, our unique framework, our communities, our strengths and weaknesses, and the future we'd like to see in light of the changing and challenging world around us.

We reviewed our history, goals and impacts over the past several years. We asked ourselves tough questions about our processes and our impact. We reflected on the changing world and the injustices we are seeing. We discussed all these things and more with our partners and stakeholders in the sectors that we work. We defined key words and found focus and priorities for our work moving forward. Through long hours and deep conversations, we ended 2021 with a map for the next five years of TICAH.

We are excited to share our vision and direction and to launch the new strategic plan. We thank Fabio Saini for guiding us through the process and holding a mirror up to us. We are also so grateful to the TICAH Board of Trustees and all the stakeholders that participated in our strategic planning process and who gave us their honest and helpful feedback and thoughts. Together we are making TICAH stronger and the work we do more effective and transformative. Stay tuned for the launch in early 2022!



## To Learn More and Get Involved

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To learn more about TICAHealth and our upcoming work, please contact us at [listening@ticahealth.org](mailto:listening@ticahealth.org). We value listening and partnerships and would love to hear from you on your ideas and thoughts for improving the health and culture of Kenya and beyond.

Our address is PO Box 667-00502, 136E Windy Ridge, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya.  
Ph 254 (0) 710272175

Our work wouldn't be possible without all of you. Thank you for being part of our community and for continuing to prioritise culture and health. Please consider making a donation today. Asanteni sana.

Our website is [www.ticahealth.org](http://www.ticahealth.org).



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DreamKona.Ke  
YourAuntyJane



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TICAH  
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