

SheDecides.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summary

Introduction

Across the world, women, girls, and young people in all their diversity are routinely denied full access to the sexual and reproductive health services they need, and deprived of their fundamental right to make decisions over their own, bodies, lives and futures. These major challenges to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) have also been further complicated by the many dimensions of the COVID-19 crisis. The disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic particularly on women's economic empowerment and increased sexual and gender-based violence, makes the need to secure gender equality and equal access to health care services, ever more pressing and critical.

SheDecides Champions and partners stress that lockdowns, changing direction of political and financial resources and pressures on health systems have made it more challenging for many women and girls to access essential sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including contraception, and safe abortion care. This has resulted in increased unwanted pregnancies and at the same time reduced access to abortion care – even in countries where the procedure is safe and legal. A shadow pandemic of increased gender-based violence has also severely compromised women's and girls' health and wellbeing, particularly those from minority and/or disadvantaged groups to fully enjoy their human rights, including their sexual and reproductive rights.

SheDecides partners point out that attacks on the right to safe and legal abortion care are often spearheaded by well-organised lobby groups who can mobilise significant resources to beat back the rising tide advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights and bodily autonomy. Their most visible vanguard are the protesters who stand outside clinics, intimidating and harassing women and girls seeking essential healthcare services or by threatening or hindering abortion rights defenders to speak up, or to access democratic spaces. But these actors also operate behind the scenes, working strategically with politicians and decision makers to spread disinformation and force a chilling and regressive effect on women's and young people's rights in national policy, law and in global commitments.

Through the continued challenges of 2021, SheDecides implemented a new theory of change that focuses on addressing systemic challenges to SRHR

and bodily autonomy. We continue to deliver meaningful contributions by coordinating strategically with partners, jointly prioritising bold and ambitious SRHR goals at global and national levels and across regions. We are connecting intergenerational voices and creating shared platforms of power between advocates, activists, and powerholders. We aspire to make transformative change to advance SRHR and bodily autonomy, and are reflecting and learning throughout our implementation journey. This learning and reflection has motivated us to continuously ask critical questions such as: what are effective tactical strategies to advance transformative change when conservative opposition is increasingly well coordinated and vocal? How does the pandemic context challenge and influence our deployment of tactical strategies? It has been a “testing” year, both for the wider movement for sexual and reproductive health and rights and bodily autonomy, and for us at SheDecides.



We are delighted to share that, despite these challenges, significant achievements have been made!

Our collective action has pushed to secure accountability and political will for sexual and reproductive health and rights and bodily autonomy. We have supported young activists to Stand Up and Speak Out, and to be heard on equal terms. Together we are stronger – collectively championing access to safe and legal abortion, advancing global and national advocacy action, and building and driving a movement for change. SheDecides is in a strategic position, due to committed global and national leaders within SheDecides with access to positional power- to mobilise and solidify disconnected actors to advance our common agenda. We are a broad coalition of actors from different regions, professional backgrounds, ages, genders, and levels of influence - united in our shared vision and common goal. We have purposefully created opportunities for young people, including the 25x25 Generation of Change as well as our younger Champions, to speak with an authentic voice and demand action and accountability in international political spaces / global spaces of power.

Our ability to maintain cohesion and momentum within the movement in a context of strong political opposition that seeks to fragment us, dwindling financial resources and a pandemic that threatens to roll back progress on bodily autonomy and reproductive choice, has been one of our most hard won and significant achievements.

During this year SheDecides has:

- Stood together in key moments of **solidarity** for the right to abortion and

supported organising in Namibia, the Dominican Republic and Malawi to legalise abortion.

- Been bold to demand **action and accountability** for sexual and reproductive health and rights and bodily autonomy, and youth participation, in global spaces of power: moderating panels at CSW65, claiming space at the Generation Equality Forum, calling for action on CSE at the Global Education Summit, leading discussions at the UN Queer Youth Dialogues, and keeping the flame alive on ICPD25 commitments.
- Built tools and platforms to **organize and strategize** and launched new ways to support young feminist organising, got creative using art to spark bodily autonomy and SRHR conversations and got loud in campaign moments to start conversations and break taboos around sexual rights and freedom.
- **Raised our collective voice** against the cuts to UK aid for SRHR, to push for parties at COP26 to commit to solutions centring SRHR, and to recognize the double oppression of Palestinian women.

It has been quite the year, and we are excited to share more about what we have achieved together in this annual report.

Karin Nilsson

Lead, SheDecides Support Unit

STORIES OF CHANGE
SNAPSHOTS

Story of change snapshots

1 SheDecides accelerated joint political action on bodily autonomy and SRHR

Despite the Global Gag Rule being temporarily repealed, there is increasing opposition against abortion rights and a concerted backlash on women and girls' reproductive health and rights, as well as a significant rollback of funding and deprioritisation of SRHR - even by previously supportive governments. Accelerating SRHR and advancing bodily autonomy are critical for ensuring women, young people and people of diverse gender identities have agency and choice in their SRHR decision-making. Moreover, bodily autonomy and reproductive choice are imperative for those who are marginalised and confront multiple and intersecting forms of violence and discrimination to claim their rights, with increased barriers to accessing SRH services that impact their bodies, lives, and futures.



Powerful national, regional and global forces against SRHR invest time and resources in trying to divide and weaken SRHR and gender equality support and movements. SheDecides' coordinated and relentless response was a critical bulwark against these forces to neutralise their power and their spread of misinformation. SheDecides enabled strong joint political coordination and messaging, including the inherent and immediate connections between SRHR and gender justice, social justice, economic justice, and environmental justice. Our ability to be agile and responsive within a constantly shifting and complex landscape across sectors, while still working together towards our common goal, has enabled us to seize emergent opportunities and continue to position and reposition ourselves to achieve our goal to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls in all their diversity.

Our key achievements on SRHR and bodily autonomy are as follows:

- SheDecides **brought diverse Champions together to develop a bold, progressive message** to counter the rising barriers to accessing safe abortion, which was placed as a loud call to action on a mainstream media platform.
- SheDecides took a **bold, progressive stance as a collective**, and accelerated

action to counter restriction and regression in on policy and language.

- SheDecides created **spaces to coordinate and strategize** to ensure that our issues were on the agenda at critical global forums.
- SheDecides **mobilized** and convened a diverse range of stakeholders to come together to jointly strategize and advance the bodily autonomy and SRHR agenda.
- SheDecides **coordinated intergenerational voices** and created shared platforms of power between Champions and powerholders and youth activists before, during and after global events.
- SheDecides **developed tools** for feminists, activists, and advocates to support their efforts to organize in a coordinated and harmonized manner.
- SheDecides **invested resources** to address the needs of feminists, activists and advocates who are politically organizing and relentlessly advocating
- SheDecides **amplified the efforts of activists** working on politically risky and often neglected issues such as access to safe and legal abortion and CSE.

2 SheDecides demanded action and accountability for SRHR, bodily autonomy and youth participation in global spaces of power

Civil society organisations and activists are confronted with an increasingly narrow civic and democratic space within which to influence international policy, processes and decision making on reproductive choice. This narrowing of civil society space has been heightened during the pandemic and hindered opportunities to convene diverse stakeholders to set common advocacy goals and develop joint strategies to progress bodily autonomy and SRHR. The pandemic threatens to not only limit meaningful participation by individuals and civil society, but to roll back years of progress and hard-fought gains that have been achieved.



During the second year of the pandemic opportunities to convene to influence international policy spaces were further reduced as many convenings, such as the CSW65 and CPD54, were held virtually. In some cases, convenings were restricted to governmental delegations, thereby limiting opportunities to convene diverse SRHR leaders, civil society representatives and young leaders. The use of virtual processes during the Generation Equality Forum limited meaningful participation and excluded key groups, especially communities who are most affected by the issues being discussed. Lack of transparent communication and exchange of information left many important stakeholders feeling as though they did not have all the information needed to participate in these processes. Despite a move for increased youth participation over the past years, the pandemic context led to acute power imbalances, especially with youth advocates.

SheDecides proactively and purposefully demanded accountability from powerholders to accelerate action on bodily autonomy and created spaces for meaningful youth participation in strategic bodily autonomy and reproductive choice forums and conversations, including:

- Moderated [panels](#) at the Commission on the Status of Women 65;
- Claimed space for young people at the [Generation Equality Forum](#);
- [Called for action](#) on Comprehensive Sexuality Education at the [Global Education Summit](#);
- Led discussions at the [UN Queer Youth Dialogues](#);
- Contributed to the [Global Safe Abortion Dialogues](#);
- Kept the flame alive on [ICPD25 commitments](#).

3 SheDecides facilitated meaningful movement engagement and unified coalitions for transformative change for bodily autonomy and SRHR

To support activists and advocates in their organising, the SDSU facilitated collective training across the movement on political organising in challenging civic spaces. The SDSU developed a tool to share knowledge across the movement on organising communities, constituencies, and networks to strengthen civic participation in restrictive contexts: the [Organizing Playbook for a world where SheDecides](#).

This tool capitalises on systematised shared learnings from other ecosystems and builds upon decades of experience in political organising: the human rights, civil rights, democracy, and environmental movements. It is the first time that these tools and methods have been adapted and widely promoted among the sexual and reproductive health and rights and bodily autonomy movement. SheDecides invested resources to support feminist collectives and coalitions to accelerate transformative change for bodily autonomy and SRHR. SheDecides opened the [Spark Grants to allies of the broader movement \(beyond SheDecides activists\)](#) and ensured the grant making process addressed needs by coalitions working towards bold and ambitious goals to accelerate bodily autonomy and SRHR. During the pandemic, our focus has been supporting young feminist activists, advocates and organisers working on Gender Based Violence (GBV), Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE), Safe Abortion and Influencing international Advocacy Spaces, like the Generation Equality Forums (GEF).



While SheDecides is not a large-scale funder nor has the human resources, systems or capacity to be a funding mechanism, we do recognise the need for increased resources for global political advocacy for transformative change and meaningful engagement in particular for young people, and especially in the context of the pandemic. The [Youth Engagement Strategy](#) will continue to guide our work in this sense. Over the years we have consciously responded to the unmet need and demand for resources expressed by young feminist activists, organisers, and collectives by providing Spark Grants. In doing so, SheDecides invested energy and resources to ensure the grant making process was inclusive and participatory and not only involved but gave power to those most affected by the decisions. SheDecides invested in 15 youth led movements, who are boldly joining the SheDecides global movement from Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, and a global feminist youth network around UN international spaces. SheDecides connected with 1563 movements

in 113 countries through Spark Grant application process (requesting over US\$ 22M). The Spark Grants were instrumental in bolstering often under-resourced youth led national feminist movements. The grants were critical in addressing needs identified by the movements themselves and in creating a network of solidarity to stand up and speak up for her right to decide.

4 SheDecides used strategic communications to build political solidarity and change on bodily autonomy and SRHR

Building international solidarity to accelerate SRHR is critical for ensuring advocates do not feel isolated and alone in their activism. Creating and sustaining international solidarity for SRHR is also imperative for augmenting the exposure and reach of progressive SRHR narratives.



SheDecides leveraged strategic communications to build political solidarity and drive transformative change on access to safe and legal abortion services. SheDecides championed global political advocacy for access to safe and legal abortion for all. SheDecides is strategically positioned to advance activism and advocacy on SRHR topics, such as abortion and Comprehensive Sexuality Education, which are often politically contentious and risky for activists and collectives to openly advocate for in conservative contexts where there is significant religious, cultural and political opposition.

SheDecides supported calls to action in Namibia, the Dominican Republic and Malawi to legalise abortion. SheDecides brought much needed visibility to the efforts of activists, advocates and collectives in those countries, who are advocating for safe and legal abortion. SheDecides also amplified the voices of Democratic Republic of Congo politicians and other highly political stakeholders, demonstrating the wide reach of progressive stances. In doing so, the SDSU facilitated multi-country and multi-region connections with movements and activist to foster learning and knowledge exchange on influencing governments to push for safe and legal abortion.

LESSONS LEARNED

**A CALL TO ACTION
FOR 2022 AND BEYOND**

Lessons learned

In taking stock and reflecting on 2021, we identified four main strategies that have advanced transformative change on bodily autonomy and SRHR. These strategies are:

- 1 Accelerating joint political action**
- 2 Demanding advocacy action, accountability and youth participation in global spaces of power.**
- 3 Unifying and catalysing movements and coalitions; and**
- 4 Leveraging strategic communications to build political solidarity, amplifying new and bold voices to counter the opposition.**

Across these four strategies, we have learned the following.

1 We understand how transformative change happens through joint actions.

SheDecides is shepherding a diverse movement and simultaneously ensuring clarity on what the movement jointly stands for, even in challenging contexts characterised by political opposition, funding cuts and a pandemic that heightens the probability of increasing roll back of previous SRHR gains. Our power as a movement is our collective voice and joint messages. We believe we can accelerate and leverage this more, through well-planned and coordinated efforts for political action. We also see the value added of targeted campaigns with national and international Champion voices throughout the year, collaborating with strategic partners on joint actions to further amplify our impact—particularly on communications around global key political moments, events, and milestones.

2 There is a need to have clearer, strategically planned advocacy objectives and a coordinated influencing strategy on the challenges we are addressing as a political global movement.

As an example - although the GEF Buzz Group (a group of SheDecides Champions leading the movements' contribution in the Generation Equality Forums) generated strategic insight on the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) process, it was nonetheless difficult to identify entry points to influence the Action Coalitions to ensure longer term meaningful engagement for youth-led organizations and youth activists on bodily autonomy and SRHR.

3 To really put into practice meaningful youth-led engagement and participation takes time but is essential for ensuring young people have ownership of the process.

We are continuously learning how to provide effective support to Youth activists, respecting young people's agency, power, and leadership. The SheDecides Support Unit (SDSU) is supporting the Youth Accountability Panel (YAP) as they develop their roles and functions whilst also respecting the full autonomy of the YAP as they exist to also hold the SDSU to account for delivering against the Youth Engagement Strategy. SheDecides has learned that being inclusive and participatory is not a one-off strategy or tactic but a power-shifting ethos, which is central to SheDecides' values and way of working.

4 The SDSU has sustained dynamism and flexibility by keeping with the 'By the movement, For the movement' approach, and tailoring our offering to the needs and priorities of organisers and champions.

Being demand driven and offering bespoke support to all our partners was not an easy task as a global secretariat with limited technical and financial infrastructure and resources to strengthen capacities at the national level in countries. Further dialogue with other and better resourced key stakeholders and new solutions for these challenges at national level, is needed.

SheDecides is uniquely positioned to call for political leadership and high-level attention to SRHR issues that require bold and progressive action, such as access to safe and legal abortion and comprehensive sexuality education, which are often neglected and confront significant political opposition. SheDecides is most effective in its global support for national organising and campaigning, when we co-create messaging and materials to be shared internationally, with activists on-ground. Collectively co-creating enabled us to deliver a clear message of global solidarity or call to action, aimed at strengthening international support for access to safe and legal abortion. This work is often logistically complex, especially when working with national coalitions and consortiums that are navigating challenging political processes. Building direct relationships with communications focal points and identifying specific tactics throughout a campaign lifecycle helped structure our support to ensure it was impactful.

A call to action for 2022 and beyond

The SheDecides Movement unites in global solidarity for a positive change by sharing game-changing stories of progress and calls to action. We inspire or hold leaders to account for making their commitments a reality, and we point to what is working or missing – to ensure her right to decide.

Communication for social change

Narrative building and communications campaigning are critical for driving social norms and stronger political support for bodily autonomy and SRHR and for galvanising transformative change.

The SRHR opposition is well organised and well-funded. Their networks extend into mainstream media, where it is easy for them to solidify negative narratives and land their key messages, stigma and myths influence audiences to step away from supporting gender equality, human rights and SRHR. We need to push back the push-back, with clear, joint messages to reach new audiences.

Political leadership and strategic collective action

Political coordination, leadership and collective action are more than ever needed to ensure that progressive narratives coalesce and breakthrough in these spaces, aligned to key events and policy developments at the national, regional, and global levels, and linked to broader themes and conversations.

Intersectoral space for new voices

To truly advance bodily autonomy, SRHR and reproductive choice, it is critical to create a space that fosters deep diversity, intersectionality, cross-regional representation and crucial conversations between powerholders and young people. Creating such a space allows an opportunity for difficult conversations to happen and uncomfortable questions to be raised – which is essential for persuading, influencing, and holding to account resistant stakeholders to advance the progressive bodily autonomy and SRHR agenda.

Investment for convening, collaboration and learning

Meaningful participation and coordination require resources, whether to facilitate engagement at global advocacy processes or to strengthen connections between local, national, and global advocacy movements and processes. Investing in opportunities for collectives, networks, and coalitions to convene, collaborate and learn must be a strategic component of a political strategy to advance bodily autonomy, SRHR and reproductive choice.

To accelerate a process and outcome that is accountable, transparent, and collaborative, increased investment is needed to continue to create spaces that shift power and support young people's sexual and reproductive rights and meaningful engagement in intergenerational planning and decision-making processes that affect their bodily autonomy and rights.

STORIES OF CHANGE

Stories of Change

1 SheDecides accelerated joint political action on bodily autonomy and SRHR



THE CHALLENGE

SRHR has been side-lined in national policies and budgets. Conservative forces have gained ground.

While SRHR funding has been in decline since 2017, with a significant drop in 2019, the side-lining of SRHR in national policies and budgets has accelerated during the pandemic. The UK government cut its overseas development assistance (ODA) from 0.7% to 0.5% with budget cuts that disproportionately impacted sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes, leading to circa 80% cuts to UNFPA Supplies funding.

While global attention has focused on the pandemic, patriarchal forces continue to gain momentum, countering movements for sexual and reproductive freedom for women, girls, and those with diverse gender identities. Increasing pressure from well-coordinated and well-funded conservative, regressive forces at national, regional, and global level have prompted a rollback in rights-based narratives on cornerstone issues such as abortion and comprehensive sexuality education.

There has been a rollback on sexual and reproductive freedoms and a deprioritisation of critical SRHR issues. Even bolder political action on SRHR and bodily autonomy has been and will continue to be required.

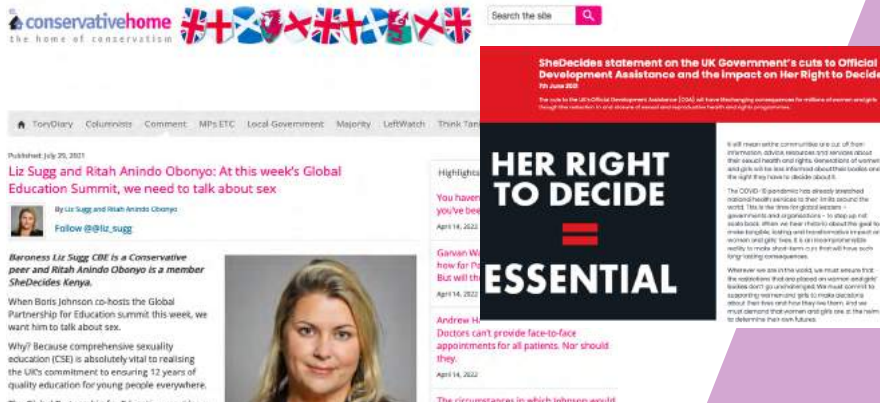
SRHR has been relegated to a silo and delinked from broader challenges. This includes the relationship between SRHR and broader challenges such as climate change, social and economic injustices, lack of democracy, freedom of speech and civic space, colonial legacies of marginalisation and exploitation and discrimination against minority groups.

This confluence of factors and forces has necessitated even bolder political action on SRHR and bodily autonomy. With structural discrimination and violence gaining an increasingly strong foothold, the work of SheDecides has been even more critical in 2021 and will be of increasing importance in the next 5 years to stem the rollback and accelerate progress.

OUR ACTION AND ACHIEVEMENT

SheDecides developed and deployed strategies to counter regressive narratives.

SheDecides encouraged the UK government to maintain a bold political and financial commitment by ensuring funding to **Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)**. We brought together an ex-SheDecides Champion and continued outspoken UK advocate for SRHR, Baroness Liz Sugg, with SheDecides Kenya activist Ritah Anindo Obonyo to create additional pressure on the UK government post-ODA cuts. At the Global Education Summit, co-hosted by Kenya and the UK, we wrote and placed an opinion editorial on Conservative Home—a leading conservative news platform in the UK—calling for the UK to recognise CSE as a core component of quality education and to commit to funding it as part of its summit pledge.

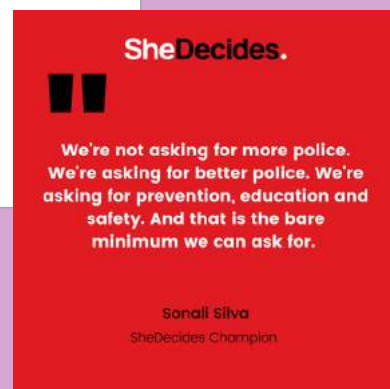
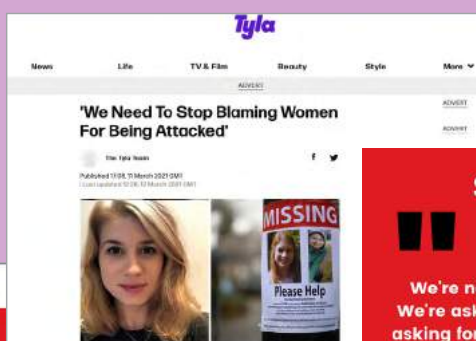


We harnessed our movement's collective voice to develop joint positions and progressive messaging on key SRHR and bodily autonomy issues that were under attack.

SheDecides has leveraged its political platform and networks to build collective power to counter regressive narratives and drive political change. The UK Government's announcement of a reversal on its Overseas Development Assistance commitment provided a key moment to amplify SheDecides political messaging. Working in coordination with the UK SRHR Network and with key Champions, SheDecides joined with other voices calling on the government to reverse its decision. We added weight to this movement through our social media messaging, development of a social media toolkit for the movement, and a written statement sent proactively to UK politics and development media to raise their awareness of the critical need for government investment in bodily autonomy and SRHR.

SheDecides countered regressive narratives on abortion by purposefully developing content to elevate and amplify key narratives, highlighting issues, voices, and calls to action to keep

SRHR in focus. **We joined with our movement partners** to boldly state our demands for the lifting of legal barriers and protecting abortion as an essential healthcare service. We raised our voices to power holders and ensured continued and sustained visibility of the importance of bodily autonomy. SheDecides supported Sweden's commitment to the removal of all legal barriers to abortion. Sweden's commitment to ending all barriers to safe abortion led to an all-Champion opinion editorial focused on the urgent need to end all barriers to safe abortion. With the support of the SDSU, the article was drafted, approved, and signed as an Open Letter by 29 SheDecides Champions and profiled in The Guardian (UK).

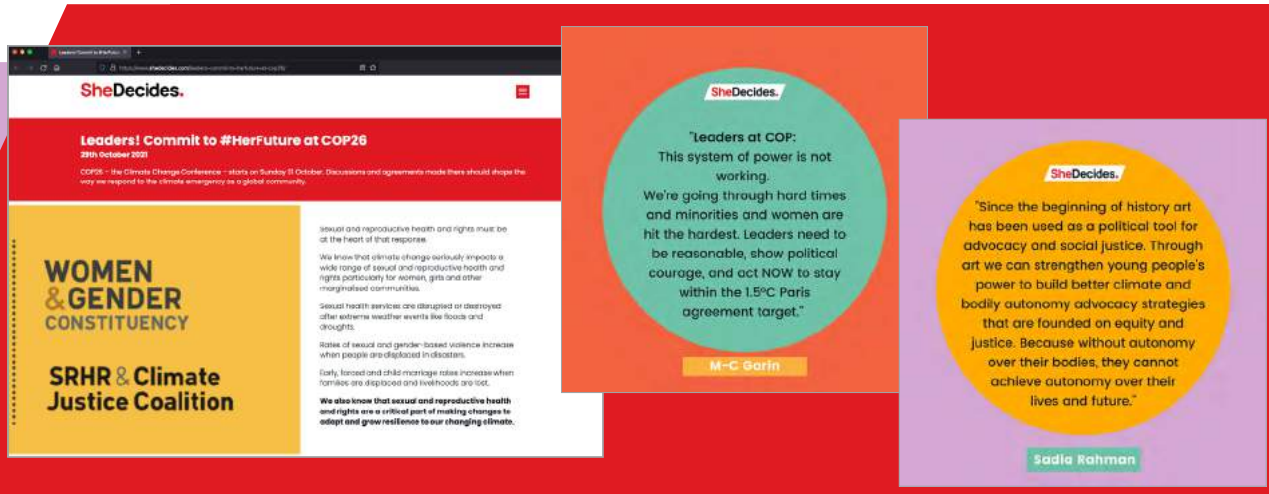


SheDecides amplified key narratives, highlighting issues, voices, and calls to action to keep SRHR in focus.

SheDecides quashed victim-blaming narratives. SheDecides countered dangerous victim-blaming narratives that emerged in response to the horrific murders of young women in the UK. We amplified youth activist voices to challenge harmful victim-blaming narratives and stand up to demand our rights.

SheDecides shone a light on the importance of addressing the gendered impacts of the climate crisis and pushed for parties at COP26 to commit to solutions centring SRHR. As a member of the SRHR and Climate Justice Coalition and with the Women and Gender Constituency, SheDecides amplified the five core recommendations for parties at COP26 Glasgow to demonstrate commitment to SRHR. Through social media engagement, we spotlighted the intersection of climate justice and bodily autonomy and profiled action being taken by young activists and SheDecides Champions.

SheDecides affirmed the need for intersectional action. SheDecides young leaders and Champions through an Open Letter from Palestine to the World recognised and highlighted the double oppression of Palestinian women: living under an occupation governed by patriarchal powers that deny their fundamental rights..



2 SheDecides demanded action and accountability for bodily autonomy and youth participation in global spaces of power



THE CHALLENGE

SheDecides amplified key narratives, highlighting issues, voices, and calls to action to keep SRHR in focus.

Civil society organisations and activists are confronted with an increasingly narrow space from which they can influence international policy processes and decision making on reproductive autonomy. This narrowing of civil society space has been heightened during the pandemic and hindered opportunities to convene diverse stakeholders to set common advocacy goals, develop joint strategies to uphold bodily autonomy and hold commitment makers to account. The pandemic threatens to not only hinder meaningful participation by individuals, civil society, particularly youth and minority groups, but to roll back years of progress on bodily autonomy.

OUR ACTION AND ACHIEVEMENT

SheDecides strategised to ensure the Generation Equality was inclusive and meaningfully engaged youth activists and civil society leaders.

SheDecides has created and deployed several innovative mechanisms, such as targeted Buzz Groups and the 25x25 Young Leaders cohort, to accelerate global political advocacy on bodily autonomy and reproductive choice. Over the past year, these mechanisms proved to be both effective and critical for advancing the bodily autonomy agenda and ensuring girls and women have the right to make choices about their bodies without fear, violence, or coercion.



SheDecides created spaces to coordinate and strategize for global political advocacy for bodily autonomy and reproductive choice.

SheDecides strategized to ensure the Generation Equality was inclusive and meaningfully engaged youth activists and civil society leaders. SheDecides formulated a GEF BuzzGroup to catalyse movement engagement and information sharing, as well as an opportunity to feed into the Action Coalition Blueprints at GEF. The Buzzgroup composed of Governments, youth activists, civil society leaders and donors provided a multi-stakeholder platform for perspective sharing relating to the Generation Equality Forums. Our Buzz Group was a concrete mechanism to advance strategic global political advocacy on bodily autonomy. The Buzz Group offered a unique space for coordination and provided a platform for younger bodily autonomy activists a safe space to connect with political leaders and strategise collectively for joint action. The Buzz Group has enabled SheDecides to advance a participatory ethos and ensure that young people are an integral part of high-level political strategizing and coordination efforts that affect them.

SheDecides advanced meaningful youth engagement by creating shared platforms of power.

The group developed strategies for highlighting bodily autonomy issues on the agenda at the sidelines of the Generation Equality Forum process, through the creation of the SheDecides virtual gallery, collaborating with artists to reach a wider audience and emphasise the importance of politically prioritising bodily autonomy issues. The Buzz group leveraged its access to the formal process as Action Coalition leads to open-up space within the Generation Equality Forum in Paris in line with the movements' prioritisation of youth voices and the amplification of the 25x25 Generation of Equality vision for a #NewNormal.



The lack of linkages to ICPD+25 and the Nairobi Summit commitments within the Generation Equality Forum were highlighted as a concern – particularly as attention on post Nairobi Summit commitment follow-up meant that **important conversations on accountability were not taking place**. Together with SheDecides Institutional



Champion, IPPF we collaborated on an event coinciding with the launch of the 2021 High-level commission report, to draw attention to ICPD25 follow-up and to galvanise continued action to ensure global commitment makers prioritise implementation.

SheDecides' Buzz Group and 25x25 Young Leaders were critical in advancing the bodily autonomy agenda and ensuring girls and women have the right to make choices about their bodies without fear, violence, or coercion.

SheDecides created spaces to coordinate and strategies for global political advocacy and accountability for bodily autonomy and reproductive choice. The Paris Generation Equality Forum (GEF) Meeting, in May 2021, provided a safe space to pose critical questions in France with Action Coalition leaders present in the room, which enabled our Champions to better assess entry points to influence the Generation Equality Forum process ahead of the Paris Forum and to strengthen regional linkages between SheDecides Champions.

SheDecides purposefully opened spaces for youth participation. SheDecides strategically brought together diverse voices during strategic opportunities. For example, SheDecides created a safe space for Champions to discuss challenges with the Generation Equality Forum process with the French Government, ahead of the Paris Forum. The access to powerful stakeholders also created an entry point for young people, namely the 25x25s Generation for Equality to speak with an authentic voice and to share their recommendation at the official SheDecides event – the only youth-led session on Bodily Autonomy at the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) Paris Forum.

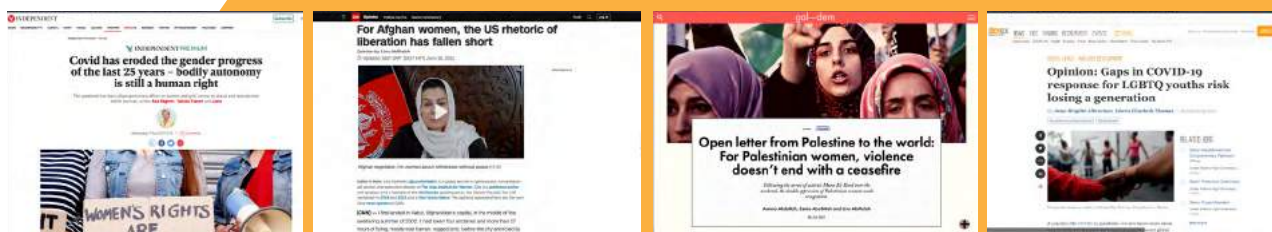
SheDecides demanded accountability by creating and opening spaces for meaningful engagement.

SheDecides demanded accountability by creating and opening spaces for meaningful engagement. With the ICPD+25 Anniversary event SheDecides supported the 25x25 Generation of Change to develop recommendations for the Nairobi Summit High-level commissioners, focussed on strengthening accountability. Of particular importance is SheDecides role in proactively opening opportunities for young people to connect with their respective Governments to influence national-level follow-up and implementation of global commitments.

SheDecides facilitated intergenerational coordination and knowledge sharing by ensuring Generation Equality Forum activities were guided by the 25x25 vision. The 25x25 Vision launch and the ongoing Buzz Group convenings ensured that young people’s demands were taken forward by Action Coalition leaders ahead of the GEF and that the 25x25s recommendations were amplified by those holding positional power within the movement thereby reaching a broader audience.

Through our coalitions with youth activists and movements, we amplified youth voices and centred their narratives and calls for action in spaces of power.

Through our coalitions with youth activists and movements, we centred and amplified youth voices in spaces of power. With Plan International’s CEO and 25x25 young leader from Mexico, we drafted and placed an opinion editorial on development sector platform Devex that called for young queer people’s voices to be meaningfully included in Covid-19 response planning. With Champion Lina AbiRafeh and two 25x25 young leaders from Palestine, we drafted and placed an opinion editorial on a youth-focused media platform focussing on Palestinian women’s rights in the aftermath of the latest Israeli bombardment of Gaza. Lina AbiRafeh drafted a personal reflection piece on the impact of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan on Afghan women’s rights, which we placed on CNN.com.



We highlighted the need for intergenerational collaboration ahead of the Mexico Generation Equality Forum. In the leadup to the Mexico City Generation Equality Forum, we partnered 25x25 young leaders from Brazil and Australia with UN Women’s deputy director to co-author an opinion editorial on the need to protect SRHR as fundamental human rights in the wake of Covid-19.

3 SheDecides facilitated meaningful movement engagement, unifying and catalysing coalitions for transformative change for bodily autonomy



THE CHALLENGE

Civil society space is shrinking and conservative forces from all sectors of society are very well funded and very well organized. Activist and advocates organizing constituencies, networks and coalitions are disconnected, unsupported and defunded.

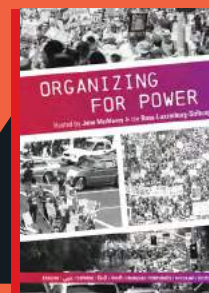
SheDecides addressed two challenges related to meaningful intersectional and intergenerational movement building and engagement. **First, in the context of restrictive civic space and increasingly funded and organised opposition, there is a shortage of political support and financial resources¹ for the political organising of progressive feminist young activists and advocates.** Supporting the SRHR and bodily autonomy movement to be better organised and better resourced is paramount.

Second, despite its commitment to strong intergenerational partnerships, **SheDecides has a transient youth constituency. The movement faces challenges** to scale up the implementation of our 2019 Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) **due to the overall covid-restrictions, limited fundings, lack of human resources and administrative capacity.**

OUR ACTION AND ACHIEVEMENT

SheDecides created safe spaces to foster knowledge sharing across the SRHR and bodily autonomy movement.

To support activists and advocates in their political organising in constricted civil society spaces, the SDSU facilitated collective training across the movement on organising in challenging civic spaces. From April to June, 107 activists and advocates from 27 countries in Asia, Africa, Arab Region, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe participated in the Organising 4 Power course designed by the Rosa Luxembourg Institute. SheDecides' in-



¹ Only 1% of all gender-focused aid (governments) reaches women's organisations, networks and coalitions, which means, 99% of gender-related international aid fails to reach those whose lives it aims and claims to transform. <https://www.prospera-inwf.org/#!/-feminist-funds-for-feminist-futures-2-2-2/>

Participant testimonies:

"The training was thought-provoking. It was a unique experience for all the SheDecides Nepal organisers. There were examples and steps which focussed on putting our beneficiaries at the centre of movement building through use of semantics as well as the six steps conversations."

"The course content will ably be applicable to our organising aspiration, especially given the circumstances of the rule of law in my country, Nigeria, as organising is currently affected by the outcome of the recent #endsars campaign. The training was terrific."

"One word: powerful! ... As bodily autonomy is a very polemic subject in Brazil it was very interesting to learn how to hold individuals accountable and how to centre the conversation on the person we want on board. That will be useful both to engage civil society and decision makers."

country partners participated in the training with bespoke support offered by the SDSU to ensure the training was customised to their needs, advocacy and organizing aspirations.

SheDecides built tools and platforms to organise and strategise and launched new ways to support young feminist organising.

SheDecides developed a comprehensive tool to share knowledge across the SRHR and bodily autonomy movement on organising communities, constituencies, and networks to strengthen civic participation on SRHR in restrictive contexts: the Organizing Playbook for a world where SheDecides. This tool capitalises on systematised shared learnings from other ecosystems and builds upon decades of experience in political organising: the human rights, civil rights, democracy, and environmental movements. It is the first time that these tools and methods have been adapted and widely promoted among the sexual and reproductive health and rights and bodily autonomy movement. To ensure regional political



adequacy we worked with the Kennedy School at Harvard joining their Leadership, Organizing and Action global network and the Leading Change Network (LCN), and embedded SRHR adaptations in the works of sister movement's tools such as CREA's Movement Primer.

SheDecides connected 50 SheDecides leaders from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab Region, and Eastern Europe with the 'Orientation to Organizing' -in partnership with the LCN- a practical working session of organizing for sexual and reproductive health and rights around Haiyaa's "Health Over Stigma" campaign organized and led by women in India to dismantle the stigma that unmarried women face when accessing sexual and reproductive health services in the country.

Spark Grants supported under resourced youth led feminist movements and addressed needs identified by their constituencies.

SheDecides invested resources into feminist youth collectives and coalitions to accelerate transformative change for bodily autonomy via Spark Grants. SheDecides opened the [Spark Grants](#) to the [bodily autonomy ecosystem](#) (beyond SheDecides activists) and ensured the grant-making process addressed needs by the collective and coalitions working towards bold and ambitious goals to accelerate bodily autonomy. The Spark Grants were designed and conceptualised in dialogue with thought partners who generously shared their feminist grant-making practices, such as The Global Resilience Fund at Purposeful; The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID); the Safe Abortion Action Fund (SAAF) and the Leading Change Network (LCN).

We expanded the opportunity beyond SheDecides activists to sister movement networks such as Prospera, the Safe Abortion Action Fund (SAAF), The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA), Arrow, ShareNet, Restless Development, Sonke Gender Justice, Femnet, FRIDA Young Feminist Fund, and IPPF's Regional Offices. As a result, **we increased our reach from 30 applications a year to 1,563 applications from 113 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab Region, and Eastern Europe.**



SheDecides deployed inclusive and participatory strategies to offer resources to young advocates and activists in the movement with final decision on grants being made by young movement leaders supported by the SDSU.

SheDecides invested energy and resources to ensure the grant-making process was **inclusive and participatory** and not only involved but gave power to those most affected by the decisions. SheDecides purposefully engaged youth leaders in the decision-making process around Spark Grants to create a new youth-led structure which would provide thought-leadership on meaningful and inclusive youth participation within the movement. Final political decision on movements joining SheDecides and receiving financial and political support was made by young SheDecides leaders with the support of the SDSU. Such efforts were also essential for advancing the implementation of the 2018 Youth Engagement Strategy.

SheDecides invested in 15 youth led movements, all of whom are boldly joining the SheDecides global movement from Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, and a global feminist youth network around UN international spaces. The Spark Grants were instrumental in bolstering often under-resourced youth led feminist movements. The grants were furthermore critical in addressing needs identified by the movements themselves and in creating a global political network of solidarity.

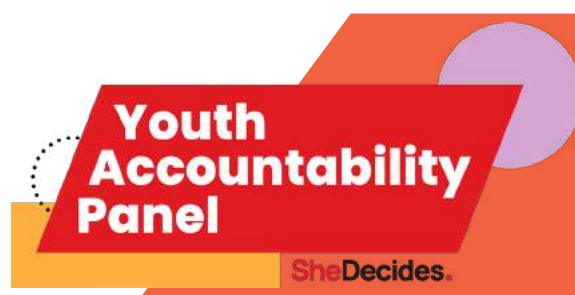
SheDecides is unequally positioned to leverage coalitions of politically organised young activists and advocates through the powerful SheDecides network. SheDecides identified and is brokering connections through global meetups to liaise grantees with each other to foster feminist network building. SheDecides aspires to open spaces of power to progressive civil society activists and advocates.

We supported 25 young people from all continents to launch their vision for a #NewNormal, guiding cross movement demands in the Generation Equality Forums.

We supported the creation, organising and political deliberation of a coalition of 25 young people from all continents to launch them vision for a #NewNormal, guiding cross movement demands in the Generation Equality Forums. Using art to spark conversations on bodily autonomy: the SheDecides Beijing+25 Buzzgroup recommended the SDSU host a digital art gallery, a creative and disruptive space, free and accessible to the public, connecting



art and activism to ignite conversations and action around bodily autonomy, ahead of the Paris Generation Equality Forum (GEF). The art gallery was an important – and different – way to strategically communicate and engage new audiences and was featured within the cultural programme of the Generation Equality Forum. It was a strategic and political savvy move, becoming the top viewed page on SheDecides.com in the period 7 May – 30 June, with 2,250 page views from 75 countries and an average time spent of 2.5 minutes (>1 minute over the average visit time on SheDecides.com).



The Youth Accountability Panel is a youth-led accountability structure which prioritises young people in the movement

We launched the Youth Accountability Panel on International Youth Day. The Youth Accountability Panel is a truly youth-led accountability structure which will ensure that young people are prioritised in the movement. The YAP is a mechanism for ensuring SheDecides can continue to evolve to become an ally to the wider youth movement fighting for bodily autonomy and justice. The SheDecides Youth Accountability Panel ensures youth-led accountability across the SheDecides movement.

We created **campaign moments that brought in new audiences to diversify and strengthen the movement** (SheDecides Day 2021 campaign saw approximately 700 new manifesto signups; between 30 and 90% increase in following on social media platforms; sharing of campaign content by key partners and allies).



4 SheDecides used strategic communications to build political solidarity and change on bodily autonomy



THE CHALLENGE

SRHR gains and accomplishments are often not publicly lauded nor publicised. **Building international solidarity to accelerate SRHR is critical for ensuring advocates do not feel isolated and alone in their activism.** It is also imperative for augmenting the exposure and reach of progressive SRHR narratives.

OUR ACTION AND ACHIEVEMENT

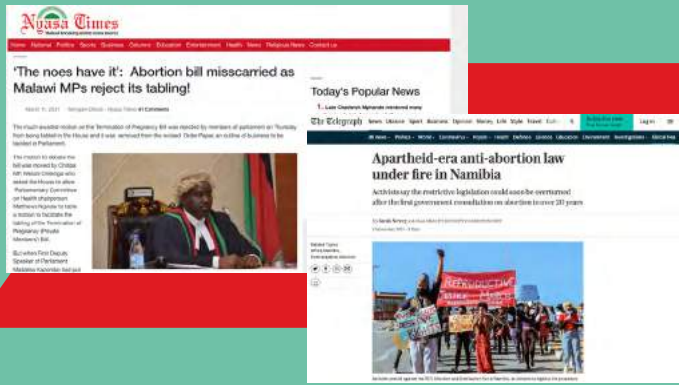
SheDecides is uniquely positioned to call attention to SRHR issues, such as access to safe and legal abortion, which often neglected and confront significant political opposition

SheDecides is uniquely positioned to call attention to SRHR issues, such as access to safe and legal abortion, which often neglected and confront significant political opposition. SheDecides amplified the voices of activists, as well as politicians and highly political stakeholders, demonstrating the wide reach of progressive stances.

SheDecides brought much needed visibility to the efforts of activists, advocates and collectives in Namibia, Malawi and the Dominican Republic who are advocating for safe and legal abortion

SheDecides brought much needed visibility to the efforts of activists, advocates and collectives in Namibia, Malawi and the Dominican Republic who are advocating for safe and legal abortion. SheDecides amplified these efforts by bringing international media attention to them. In doing so, SheDecides demonstrated how the efforts of local, southern-led activism can change laws, strengthen health systems, and make abortion safe, dignified, and available for all.

SheDecides amplified voices of activists pushing for change by ensuring voices and progressive developments, including calls to end **Namibia's** anti-abortion law, the termination of pregnancy bill in **Malawi**, and the attempt to end the total ban on abortion in the **Dominican Republic**, appeared on social media and in important news outlets. In supporting these voices SheDecides leveraged the Champions' network to understand and amplify developments in Namibia and support for Namibian counterparts.



SheDecides consciously brokered connections amongst and between activists in Namibia, and amongst activists and SD Champions – Bience Gawanas, Sylvia Hamata – and Ndiilokelwa Nthengwe, co-founder of the Voices for Choices and Rights Coalition – all of whom are building networks to expand the reach of the campaign to end the anti-abortion law. The SDSU facilitated multi-country and multi-region connections with movements and activist to foster learning and knowledge exchange on influencing governments to push for safe and legal abortion. In Namibia, SheDecides worked with activists around the parliamentary consultation and public hearings on reviewing the Apartheid-era Abortion and Sterilization Act—the first time the Act had been debated in 20 years. SheDecides coordinated with Voices for Choices and Rights Coalition organisers to amplify planned communications campaign messages on social media, to raise awareness of these milestone proceedings and increase international solidarity for pro-choice organisers. SheDecides secured international media interest in the campaign to review the Act, leading to an informative feature in The Telegraph (UK) laying out the case for reviewing and replacing the “outdated” Act.



To support the organising of activists in the Dominican Republic, SheDecides created a focus series about the Tres Causales campaign on social media channels. The series amplified the pro-choice campaign messages in Spanish and English and informed global audiences about the parliamentary vote, spotlighting and promoting key Tres Causales activist channels to follow. There was scant global media coverage of the parliamentary vote; SheDecides

co-produced a media backgrounder on proceedings, and secured media interest from the Guardian (UK) who interviewed SheDecides activists in-country with the view to following the next stage of the campaign to re-table the Bill for debate.

We used targeted media content and coverage, to keep SRHR in focus, leveraging synergies with other key issues that are more visible in political discourse, such as global health and climate change.

In Malawi, SheDecides supported young activists organising with SheDecides Malawi and the Coalition on the Prevention of Unsafe Abortion (COPUA) around the tabling of the Termination of Pregnancy Bill in parliament. SheDecides used social media channels to spotlight proceedings for a global audience and increase awareness and understanding, and to amplify activist messages and demands to build solidarity. SheDecides augmented activist media relationship building with regional and international media outlets including pan-African reporters following Malawian Parliamentary proceedings and health reporters for global media outlets leading to positive, progressive language in media coverage.

Through creative social media strategies, SheDecides elevated the voices of young activists and delivered counter-narratives focused on her right to decide. In campaign moments, we created social media content in the form of playing cards designed to prompt conversations about bodily autonomy issues, tackle myths and deliver rights-based messaging.



SheDecides.

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