



Final Report for Together Women Rise March 2025

Organization Name OYE / Organization for Youth Empowerment

Project Title Girls Leading Change / Las Niñas Lideran el Cambio

Grant Amount \$40,000 USD over 2 years

Contact Person Amanda Hall
Director of Development
desarrollo@oyehonduras.org

Address

<u>USA</u>	<u>Honduras</u>
3351 18th St. NW	Eco-Pasaje Centenario, Local de 2 Plantas
Washington, DC 20010	3 Avenida Oeste entre 2 y 3 Calle Norte
	El Progreso, Yoro

Project Description

Our project, “Girls Leading Change”, was designed to equip adolescent girls and young women in Honduras with critical knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and tools to lead healthy, choice-filled lives and advocate for comprehensive sexuality education in their schools and communities. Our specific project objectives include:

- 15 adolescent girls persist in their education, completing the 2022 school year and enrolling in the 2023 school year.
- Organized groups of empowered girls and student leaders in six partner schools are actively engaged in promoting comprehensive sexuality education within their school communities by the end of the 2023 school year.
- Short youth-produced documentary that highlights advances and challenges to accessing comprehensive sexuality education and how it impacts the lives of girls and young women presented by March 2024.
- Local government allocates public funds to implement policy-related actions during the 2023 and 2024 school years, leading to a 20% increase in the number of 1st to 9th grade students—an estimated 7,300—in our community who have access to comprehensive sexuality education in their schools or communities.

Project Results

Education

Over two years, 15 adolescent girls and young women had the opportunity to continue their education thanks to scholarships funded by this project—100% of our original goal. By 2025, eight were still in high school—four of them in their final year—and seven had advanced to university. All of them successfully completed their respective academic years, with 87% maintaining grades above 80%. Additionally, 75% received complementary support services, including tutoring (especially in math), career guidance, and preparation for university entrance exams. Additionally, two of them received support from our team of psychologists in resolving family and school-related conflicts.

Testimonial: In Her Words

Yanelly, scholarship student and participant in *Girls Leading Change*

“I feel happy and grateful to OYE because their support allowed me to complete my studies. I also learned so much—about sexual education, self-love, and societal stereotypes. Thank you to every donor who makes it possible for so many young people to finish [high] school and gain new knowledge.”



Capacity-Building in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Leadership, and Advocacy

A total of 29 adolescent girls and young women were trained on topics of sexual and reproductive health and rights, leadership, and advocacy—exceeding our original goal by nearly 200%. Over two years, training covered the following topics: self-esteem, assertive communication, sexual and reproductive anatomy, birth control, sexually transmitted infections, sexual and reproductive rights, gender stereotypes, leadership and teamwork, advocacy, media interviewing, and self-defense. This training was developed through a collaborative effort between our program director, project leader, a team of youth facilitators, and a couple of external facilitators.

Keyrin—a third-year scholarship student, participant in the 2019 cohort of *Girls Leading Change*, and former president of the Municipal Child and Youth Participation Council—took the lead on this program. Under her leadership, the group improved their knowledge in SRHR, developed leadership and advocacy skills, designed and led leadership team trainings and risk prevention fairs and local schools, and organized and participated in events promoting comprehensive sexuality education and girls' and women's rights.



Testimonial: In Her Words

Keyrin, leader of *Girls Leading Change*

*“Through participating in this project, I have learned so much about comprehensive sexuality education. **I thought these topics were taboo and I shouldn’t talk about them, so participating in this project has shown me that these topics shouldn’t be taboo and we should be able to talk about them freely.**”* —as featured in an article published on *More to Her Story*)

“Today we’re participating in a march in the city of El Progreso to commemorate the International Day of the Girl. On this October 11, we’re taking to the streets to demand our rights—to show the authorities that we, as girls, adolescents, young women, and women, have potential and we have a voice.”

Leadership teams were successfully formed in five of the six partner schools, with 78 students participating—53% of them adolescent girls. In collaboration with girl leaders, four of the five leadership teams organized prevention fairs at their respective schools, engaging over 1,000 students from 1st to 9th grades. Although we had an agreement in place with all six schools, unforeseen challenges—like a severe heat wave and a dengue outbreak that led to





Advocacy for Broader Access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education

During the final months of 2023, the girls participated in a workshop on research techniques led by a current PhD student and founder of educate., a like-minded organization based out of Trinidad, Santa Bárbara in Honduras. The researcher supported the group in designing and conducting surveys and interviews with students, teachers, pregnant adolescents, community leaders, and others in health centers, schools, universities, and other spaces.

Using these tools, the adolescent girls developed the "Impact Study on the (Non)Existence of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the Lives of Young People in El Progreso, Honduras," which consists of two products: a [video documentary](#) and a [written report](#).

This study was presented in our community in June 2024 as part of OYE's 19th anniversary celebration, an event attended by over 100 people, including two representatives from the municipal government who reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the implementation of the local policy.

Several actions were taken to encourage the local government to implement the Municipal Policy on Comprehensive Sexuality Education, most of them led by the adolescent girls themselves.



These included informational sessions, informal meetings and public events, including a forum and the aforementioned presentation of the impact study, which involved participation from various local government representatives. Despite repeated expressions of support, their actions remained disconnected from the policy’s intended objectives.

The final push came in September 2024 through a collaboration with the Municipal Office of Social Development, led by attorney Mercedes Quezada. They agreed to launch a pilot project in four schools. As part of the preparation, two workshops were held with students and teachers from the selected schools to review educational materials and develop strategies for implementation. Unfortunately, the initiative did not deliver the expected results, as the appropriate stakeholders were not convened and the agreed-upon actions were not upheld.



Day of the Girl (October 2024).

Although we were unable to achieve the intended impact through the policy's implementation, the adolescent-led risk prevention fairs reached more than 1,300 students from 1st to 9th grade, giving them access to essential tools and information on comprehensive sexuality education. In solidarity with broader community efforts, the group took part in key events focused on women’s health and rights, including a health fair on Honduran Women’s Day (January 2023) organized by local women’s organization and the #SomosIguales (We Are Equal) march led by a peer organization on the International

Project Beneficiaries

In the first year of the project, 24 adolescent girls—160% of the original goal—took part in training on sexual and reproductive health and rights, leadership, and advocacy. In the second year, 7 of them continued their involvement, and 5 new girls joined the program. Over the course of both years, the girls led abridged trainings for student teams at partner schools and organized leadership and pregnancy prevention fairs, reaching more than ten times the original target number of students.

# of Girls and Women Directly Impacted	Goal	# Reached	% Achieved	# of Boys and Men Directly Impacted
Girl Leaders	15	29	193%	—
Student Advocates for CSE in Partner Schools	70	41	59%	37

Girl Leaders' Family Members*	40	3	8%	
Students and Community Members at Annual Forum and Documentary Presentation	35	67	191%	25
Students at School-Based CSE Promotional Events	50	440**	880%	633**
TOTAL	210	580	276%	695

* Family engagement was limited and primarily focused on supporting students with academic challenges; however, their family members have been appropriately included in our count of indirect beneficiaries.

** Estimated based on school enrollment and event photos; formal attendance records were not kept.

Challenges

Conflicting Schedules for Participants

Scheduling sessions for the 40-hour training for adolescent girls proved to be a challenge due to conflicting class schedules, extracurricular and family activities. It was an even greater challenge to schedule the abridged student leader training due to differing expectations and limitations at each partner school. Despite challenges, we completed the training with adolescent girls—exceeding participation goals—and the abridged training with student leaders at five out of six partner schools.

Girls' Participation in Student Leadership Teams

In 2023, girls' participation in student leadership teams was noticeably lower than that of boys, particularly in sessions held outside regular school hours. This gap was largely due to families being less willing to allow girls to engage in extracurricular activities away from home. However, in 2024, girls' participation not only increased but surpassed that of their male peers, as significantly more girls joined the program at our fifth partner school. In the end, 53% of student leaders were adolescent girls.

When it came to participation in school fairs, although the student population is nearly evenly split between girls and boys, attendance was higher among boys, especially at one of the schools. A likely factor was that a soccer event, usually limited to boys' teams, was also scheduled for that day.

Lack of Genuine Commitment from Local Authorities

Although municipal authorities renewed interest in advancing the Municipal Public Policy on Comprehensive Sexuality Education after the presentation of the study and documentary, and steps were taken to launch a pilot project, it became clear once more that their commitment was not genuine. Agreements regarding the vision of the activity were not respected, for example, by inviting

individuals and schools that had not been included in the plan and presenting the initiative to them in a completely different way.

Organizational or Project Changes

There were no major organizational or project changes compared to what was outlined in the approved proposal. The most notable development was the expansion of our team with the addition of a second psychologist, allowing us to offer more personalized support to our community of scholarship students, including the 15 supported through this project. Additionally, in 2024, we received funding from the Argosy Foundation to support teen pregnancy prevention efforts in the nearby town of Tela, in collaboration with the organization Hands to Honduras. While we had hoped to involve girl leaders from *Girls Leading Change* in this initiative, we were ultimately unable to align the two efforts.

Lessons Learned

Girls Leading Change is a program we're committed to sustaining into the future. Each time we open applications for a new cohort, the level of interest from girls is high—and following the training, we see meaningful growth in their leadership, both in the short and long term.

Testimonial: In Her Words

Angie, participant in *Girls Leading Change* and rising leader of youth-led audiovisual communications program and digital media platform *Somos OYE*

"My name is Angie, and I've been part of OYE since 2021, when I was still in high school. I started as a scholarship recipient—full of expectations and curiosity—without realizing just how much this experience would impact my life.

*Since then, **OYE has not only supported me financially, but also helped me develop key skills like communication, leadership, and teamwork, which have been essential to my personal and professional growth.***

Today, as I pursue a degree in Public Accounting and Finance, I can clearly see how everything I've learned at OYE has prepared me to take on new challenges with confidence and enthusiasm. I'm incredibly excited to take on the role of coordinator for the [audiovisual communications] program, as it's an opportunity to continue learning and contributing to the program.

***OYE hasn't just helped me grow—it's inspired me to believe in myself and face every challenge with determination.** I'm deeply grateful for everything I've learned and excited for all that lies ahead in this new chapter."*



Another key takeaway is that we need government officials who are trained in public policy and sexual and reproductive rights in order to make real progress in advancing comprehensive sexuality education. Without this foundation, advocacy efforts—whether at the local or national level—will continue to face significant, if not insurmountable, challenges.

And finally, based on our experience working with authorities over the years, the strategic focus of *Girls Leading Change* should center on two key areas to maximize impact: developing effective advocacy tools—including the use of social media—and continuing to bring comprehensive sexuality education directly into schools.

Project-Driven Organizational Changes

This project reaffirmed our commitment to youth- and girl-led programming and is sparking continued reflection on how we can move towards truly youth-centered approaches—intentionally creating spaces where young people not only participate and implement, but lead and shape the work. To this end, young people have relaunched Somos OYE, a youth-led digital media page on Facebook to connect young people with opportunities, information, and stories that drive positive change.

Unexpected Results

In addition to the short documentary, the group produced a written report to further elaborate on their findings. Antonia McGrath, the researcher who guided and accompanied the research process, reached out to several national and international media outlets to share the study and spotlight the work of the adolescent girls involved in the project. *More to Her Story*—a digital platform dedicated to amplifying opportunities for women and girls around the world—offered to [feature an article](#) on their efforts, which was published in August 2024.



Feature 8/21/24

The Fight For Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Honduras

Honduras has the second-highest teenage pregnancy rate in Latin America. These young women are now working to educate others about the consequences.

[Read More](#)

Strategy Shifts

In earlier phases of the project, advocacy efforts involved reaching out directly to municipal government officials. In this phase, the approach shifted to inviting them to events organized by the adolescent girls. However, both strategies led to the same outcome. Looking ahead, we will not prioritize direct engagement with government authorities unless individuals with the necessary training and a demonstrated commitment to the issue are identified. Instead, our efforts will focus on deepening partnerships with committed schools to deliver comprehensive sexuality education directly, and harnessing social media as a tool to connect with young people, share critical information, and advocate for their rights, including but not limited to the right to comprehensive sexuality education.



Total Project Reach and Impact

The project directly reached an estimated **1,275 people**—more than three times our original goal of 385. This included adolescent girl leaders, students who participated in sexual and reproductive health and leadership training, students who attended prevention fairs, and attendees at public events.

The indirect reach extended to over **4,300 people**—less than 40% of our original goal. This included the remaining student population at six partner schools (1,400), family members of the girl and student leaders (400), and individuals reached through key social media posts (2,500). The primary reasons this goal was not met were lower-than- anticipated student enrollment at partner schools and the local government's failure to follow through on the implementation of the public policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

With regards to girls' education, we closely monitored students' enrollment and academic progress. At the end of the first year, we assessed their academic performance, level of participation, and any changes in their socioeconomic circumstances to determine their continued eligibility for the scholarship. As noted above, all students successfully completed both academic years, with 87% meeting academic performance benchmarks and 75% receiving complementary support services.

In terms of building girls' capacity in sexual and reproductive health and rights, leadership, and advocacy, we did not conduct a formal survey to measure changes in knowledge or attitudes. However, given the depth and duration of the training, we believe that 100% (29) of the girls who completed the full program expanded their knowledge in meaningful ways. Among them, 55% (16) participating girls further reinforced their learning through involvement in peer education and/or advocacy efforts. Below are testimonials from girl leaders who completed the training, highlighting the topics and experiences that resonated with them most.

- *“These past few weeks have been a really positive experience because I’ve gotten to meet new friends I get along with. One of the topics that really stuck with me was contraceptive methods,*

especially since I had to do a school assignment on the topic—and thanks to what I learned, I did well on my presentation.” —Alicia

- *“The training topic I liked the most was teamwork and leadership. That’s the one that helped me connect with the other girls, so we could learn together, get along, and have the kind of communication that allows us to express ourselves well at [local] schools.” —Loani*
- *“[My experience in Girls Leading Change] was very educational, especially because we were equipped with knowledge we can now share with others to help overcome ignorance. One of my favorite topics was political advocacy, because it helped us understand how we can take action to create change when we see something that feels unjust.” —Ximena*

Upon completing the training of student leaders at our partner schools, we conducted a survey with a target group of 40 students—representing over 50% of participants—to assess the impact of their involvement. The results revealed several key insights. Sixty-five percent of students reported having little to no prior knowledge about condoms and other contraceptive methods before the workshops; most now recognize these as essential tools for preventing pregnancy. For 39% of the respondents, it was their first time creating a life plan, while 59% added new goals to their existing plans. Additionally, 78% shared that they learned valuable techniques to strengthen their self-esteem.

Given the brief format of the school-based prevention fairs, we measure success through student and teacher engagement, as well as testimonials like the following:

- *“I thought the activity we had was really good. I saw a lot of interest from my classmates [on the student leadership team], since they taught us things we didn’t know, and they were genuinely interested in the topic of teen pregnancy and its consequences.” —Any, student at a partner school*
- *“This activity was excellent. We’ve truly seen how the students have grown. Both students and teachers found it to be a great experience because it helps reinforce what they already know while also introducing new concepts. It teaches them how to understand their emotions, how to work on their self-esteem—and we know all of that plays a role in preventing teen pregnancies.” —Haidy Medrano, first grade teacher at a partner schools*

We have photographic documentation, attendance records, or both for all major activities. Additionally, the project leader submitted monthly activity reports.

Project Future

OYE is dedicated to ensuring that participating girls can complete their high school or university education, offering continued scholarship support provided they maintain enrollment, meet academic performance standards, and demonstrate ongoing financial need. Participating girls will also have the opportunity—based on their availability and interest—to support the facilitation of workshops on

sexual and reproductive health for our core youth community, including scholarship students and peers who participate in our annual leadership and capacity-building program and youth-led creative arts and sports programs.

We are actively seeking additional funding to train the next cohort of *Girls Leading Change* and continue our advocacy efforts. To date, we have submitted an expression of interest to the Girls Opportunity Alliance at the Obama Foundation and are hopeful about renewing our partnership with the Argosy Foundation.

Informe Financiero

Budget Line	Budgeted Expenses	Actual Expenses	% Over or Under Budget
Direct Project Expenses			
Personnel Expenses			
Salary, General Projects Coordinator	\$5,670	\$6,197	+9%
Salary, Youth Programs Coordinator	\$4,620	\$4,687	+1%
Salary, Counselor/Psychologist	\$1,710	\$1,738	+2%
Benefits	\$1,500	\$1,508	+1%
Non-Personnel Expenses			
Youth Leader Stipend	\$4,200	\$4,054	-3%
Scholarships for Adolescent Girls	\$11,250	\$11,327	+1%
SRHR, Leadership and Advocacy Training	\$7,000	\$6,295	-10%
Advocacy Efforts	\$1,050	\$1,468	+40%
Monitoring and Evaluation	\$1,000	\$690	-31%
Indirect Project Expenses			
General Administrative and Operating Expenses	\$2,000	\$2,036	+2%
Total Project Expenses	\$40,000	\$40,000	0%

Nearly all budget lines were executed within 10% of projected amounts. Surplus funds from monitoring and evaluation activities were reallocated to strengthen advocacy efforts.

Broader Impact of Partnership with Together Women Rise

Funding from Together Women Rise allowed us to continue *Girls Leading Change*—a powerful, girl-centered initiative that has empowered more than 65 adolescent girls over the years to stay in school, strengthen their leadership skills, and increase access to comprehensive sexuality education through peer education and advocacy. While Together Women Rise has not directly led to new funding sources, the partnership has significantly enhanced our credibility and visibility, and underscored our commitment to girls' empowerment within the broader context of youth development. As a result, we are now better positioned to pursue future funding and strategic collaborations focused on advancing girls' empowerment.