



Girls
Gearing
Up

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



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Dear Friends,

Ten years ago, Chineme, Christina, and I launched Girls Gearing Up with a simple but urgent question: **what if today's teenage girls could become the global leaders the world needs?**

We were frustrated by how few women's voices reached decision-making tables, from classrooms and communities to companies and countries. Research and experience told us that mentoring and networks for adult women were not enough; in order to create lasting change, we needed start earlier. We needed to reach girls while they were still forming their sense of self and possibility.

By the end of our first Leadership Academy in 2015, with 21 participants and a volunteer team of four, our eyes, hearts, and data told us we were on the right track. Over the next ten years, we refined and tested our model until it became a proven evidence-based program designed to launch the next generation of female leaders. The journey brought moments of joy, challenge, and deep learning; years when funding came easily and years when it didn't, but through it all, we held on to something many people find rare these days: **HOPE**. Hope sparked by the brave girls who have joined our programs and reminded us, again and again, of what is possible.

In 2025, we celebrated a decade of that **hope in action**. Since our first cohort, we've reached more than 650 teens from over 40 countries on five continents through a mix of in-person and online programs. We've built a network of youth workers, educators, and coaches who support our GGU girls locally and globally, joined by companies, organizations, and foundations that believe in our mission.

The most meaningful testament to our work is the girls themselves. They've started social initiatives in their communities, taken on leadership roles at school, contributed to peacebuilding and climate action, and created peer-led programming through our GGU Youth Advisory Board. Our older alumni are now working in human rights, sustainability, healthcare, education, and countless other fields, using their platforms to lift others as they rise.

At the end of GGU's first decade, we see some progress toward gender equality on a global scale, even when structural change remains slow. In 2025, a year marked by conflict and climate crises, GGU witnessed girls from diverse backgrounds from Malawi, France, Germany, Lithuania, Ghana, Morocco, Palestine, Israel, and others, learning and leading together with empathy and courage.

Reflecting on our work over the past ten years, I realize it has given us more than hope. It has given us EVIDENCE and DETERMINATION.

Evidence that what we do makes a measurable difference, and **determination** to keep supporting teen girls as they build a world where leadership reflects our human diversity, and where justice, equality, peace, and sustainability become realities for all of us.

We're honored to have you alongside us as we embark on our next decade of hope, determination, and impact.

With gratitude.

Courtney

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A note from our Director



OUR MISSION

Girls Gearing Up is equipping the next generation of globally minded female leaders.

Empowering girls to lead: We are building an international coalition of girls prepared to drive change for themselves and their communities, whose collective actions will create a more equitable, sustainable, and peaceful world.



OUR WORK

Our Leadership Academies launch next-generation leaders, bringing together girls from diverse backgrounds for learning, growth, and skill-building in a supportive environment.

Our twelve-month 1:1 mentoring program supports rising changemakers by connecting girls with female role models who guide them in achieving their own individual goals and who connect girls to networks, resources, and internships.

Our online workshops and events foster global community and continued development by providing year-round opportunities to connect, learn, explore new topics, and receive support.



THE GGU EFFECT

OUR PROVEN CONCEPT ENCOMPASSES FOUR COMPONENTS

Our four-pillar framework isn't just aspirational - it works. Participants leave more confident, skilled, and motivated, ready to become the next generation of female changemakers.



Grow Confidence



Get Equipped



Be Inspired



Take Action

2025

A YEAR OF MOMENTUM

In 2025, Girls Gearing Up accelerated its growth through new partnerships, expanded programs, and deeper global engagement with girls and mentors.

We launched new partnership programs with incredible partners, enabling us to reach more girls, offer additional scholarships, and connect with a broader international network. These collaborations strengthened our ability to welcome girls from diverse backgrounds into our leadership programs.

Our Largest Leadership Academies yet: Our Leadership Academies in Berlin and India were bigger than ever, bringing together girls from around the world to build confidence, develop leadership skills, and connect across cultures as future changemakers.

Mega Mentoring: We hosted our first Mega Mentoring Event, welcoming 40 inspiring women who were paired with Academy participants for intergenerational exchange, guidance, and learning.

Leadership Workshops in Zambia: Thanks to funding from Zuversicht Schenken and in collaboration with Widows of Hope, we reached 100 underserved youth in Lusaka and Chingola with leadership and skills workshops.

Online Community: We expanded our online programs with initiatives such as Teen Venture Lab and AI4Good, alongside global reunions and virtual events that connect and support our growing community of young leaders.

Facilitator Training: Thanks to funding from the Deutsche Postcode Lotterie, we will pilot our facilitator training program in 2026, allowing us to train 20 facilitators around the world with our proven approach. We look forward to sharing the ripple effects of this new program!



GGU X ABURY

A NEW COLLABORATION

In 2025, Girls Gearing Up and the ABURY Foundation officially joined forces to launch the **ABURY Girls Gearing Up Academy**, a strategic partnership dedicated to expanding global leadership opportunities for young women.

After years of impactful collaboration - bringing aspiring changemakers from ABURY Foundation communities to the transformative Girls Gearing Up Summer Leadership Academies in Berlin - we are now combining our expertise, networks, and resources to reach even more girls worldwide. Together, we aim to scale this international leadership program and reach 50,000 future female leaders by 2030.

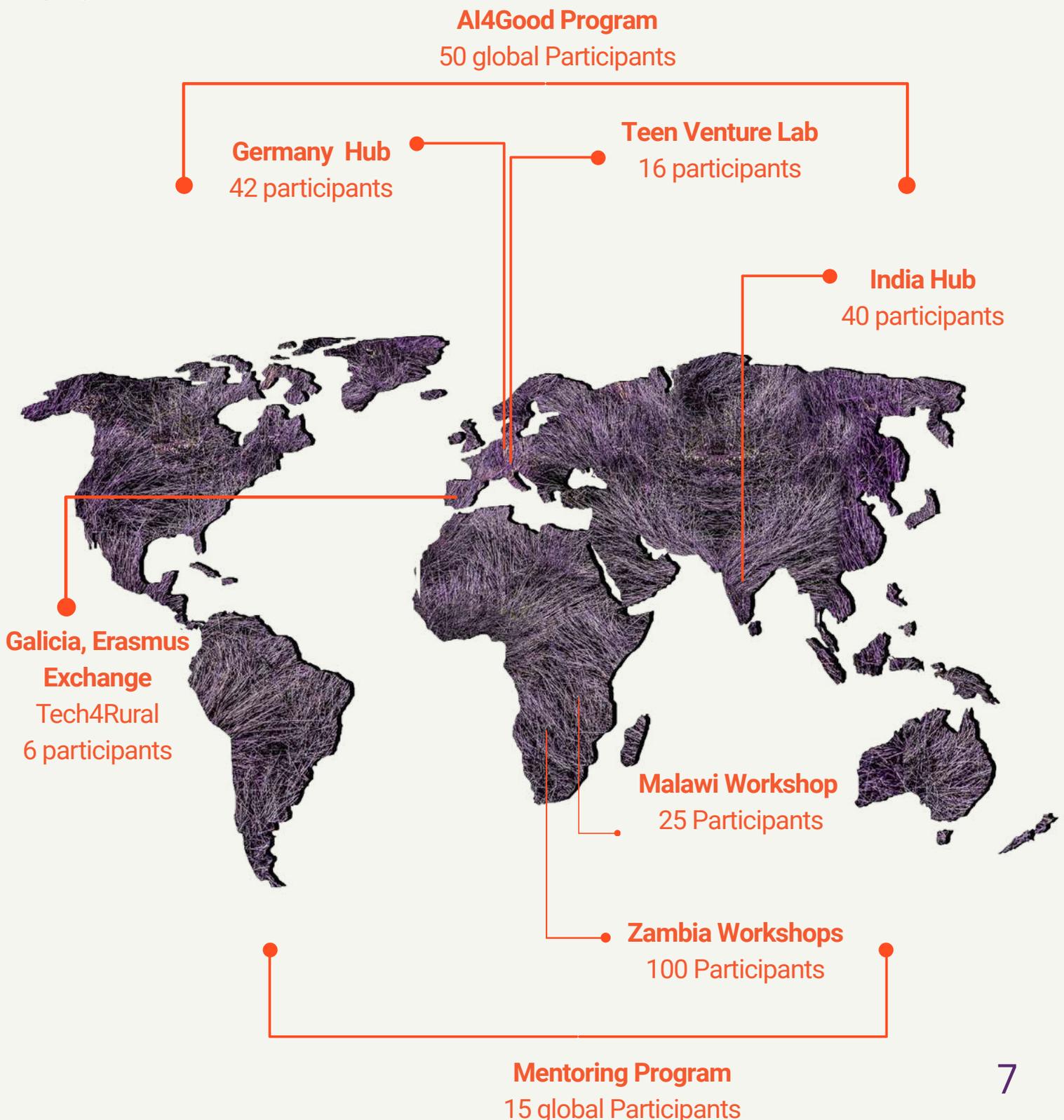
This partnership enables us to expand our global network, offer additional scholarships, and significantly increase our outreach. By strengthening access to leadership education and mentorship, we are equipping more girls with the skills, confidence, and community they need to become changemakers in their local and global communities.



OUR GLOBAL PRESENCE

Our global presence reflects more than geographic reach - it represents a growing coalition of girls connected by courage, opportunity, and leadership. Across continents, each program has brought together young women ready to learn, lead, and uplift one another. Every girl impacted becomes a catalyst for change in her community, inspiring another girl to step forward.

Together, they are creating a powerful ripple effect - a wave of emerging female leaders shaping the future.



IMPACT

288

PARTICIPANTS

600+

GIRLS IMPACTED

95%

of our participants believe that they have the **skills to be a good leader.**

91%

feel prepared to **stand up for their own values.**

87%

feel very prepared to work with people from **different cultures and backgrounds**

FROM IDEA TO IMPACT



How do teens become changemakers?

By putting what they've learned into action. In 2025, girls in our network had plenty of opportunities to put their skills into practice, turning leadership theory into real-world impact.

Sharing What They've Learned

In India and Malawi, our alumnae have been passing along their knowledge through workshops and presentations in local schools. This peer-to-peer approach creates a ripple effect: more young people gain access to leadership tools, while our teens strengthen their abilities in project planning, public speaking, facilitation, and inspiring others.

Fostering Future Entrepreneurs

From February to June, the Teen Venture Lab brought together 16 aspiring female founders for a 10-week entrepreneurial journey in collaboration with Ira Philip of Berlin Finance Crew. Participants developed and refined their own startup ideas, building skills in research, financial planning, teamwork, and pitching. The program culminated in a live pitch event where each team presented in front of a jury of accomplished female investors and entrepreneurs – turning ideas into confident, real-world ventures.

Building Pathways to Leadership

Thanks to generous support from the Günter-Deichsel-Stiftung, 15 girls from diverse backgrounds in Berlin and Brandenburg received scholarships to join our year-round program in 2025. This tailor-made year-round program includes participation in our Leadership Academy, 12 month 1:1 mentoring program, and bi-monthly future-focused in-person workshops designed to provide ongoing guidance and equip these teens for their personal and professional journeys.

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Our work is strengthened by powerful partnerships that open doors, create access, and bring leadership to life. In 2025, we were honored to be hosted at the offices of **Google, Microsoft, RTL, the Treehouse Berlin, and the wonderful Anceu CoLiving**, where inspiring leaders welcomed our girls, shared their professional journeys, and offered behind-the-scenes insights into their industries. These visits allowed participants to envision themselves in spaces of innovation, media, policy, and technology - expanding their understanding of what is possible for their own futures.

We are deeply grateful to our sponsors and long-term partners – **The Andreas Gerl Stiftung, Berlin Brandenburg International School (BBIS) and the BBIS Foundation, the Günter-Deichsel Stiftung, ABURY Foundation, Quantum R, the Deutsche Postcode Lotterie, DKB, Zuversicht Schenken, Equal Experts India, Share, Design Hotels, Soroptimist International of Coesfeld, the Rotary Club of Maryville, TN, and the American Women’s Club of Berlin.** Their financial support, contributions, and belief in our mission make our programs possible.

Together, these partnerships form a strong ecosystem of support, ensuring that more girls have access to transformative leadership opportunities and a network that believes in their potential.

2025 sponsors



And of course, individual donors all over the world who have contributed to our online campaigns.

STORIES OF US



Christine, 2025 mentor

“My third year of mentorship took a dramatic turn in February when my mentee’s home in Gaza was bombed. Despite these devastating circumstances, Rima continued her studies and creative work with remarkable resilience, meeting with me whenever internet access allowed. Together, we seized an unexpected opportunity to pursue evacuation. Against all odds, and thanks to the generosity and support of many individuals and organizations, Rima was able to relocate to Paris in October. Meeting her there in November was an unforgettable highlight of the year.”

Noni, 2025 parent

“

My daughter was part of GGU this past summer, and I wanted to let you know how profoundly life-changing this experience has been for her - and us as a family. Beyond the leadership skills and confidence she gained,

GGU is shaping the kind of human being she is becoming. Today she is starting to find her own voice for peace, one she is learning to carry everywhere she goes. By empowering girls to find their voices, trust their agency, and lead with empathy, those ripples move through families, communities, and across borders.

They give parents like me something rare these days: genuine hope for a stronger, more compassionate world.

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OUR ALUMNI

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

Insight from our YAB Chair, Ghina

“This year was truly incredible and special. In 2025 we aimed for smaller projects and a direct impact on the current members of the community...It was fulfilling to know that by the end of the year we had gotten closer to our community, built genuine and long-lasting connections with them, and we collectively realized that we can learn a lot of valuable life lessons from each other as young women who are still trying to navigate life. Getting through each and every day with a support system that relates to you and validates your human experience in today’s world makes life beautiful, gentler, and brighter.”

Since 2021, the GGU Youth Advisory Board has been instrumental in steering the organization’s growth, organizing independent initiatives, and sustaining a strong, globally connected alumni network.



2025 Youth Advisory Board:

Chair: Ghina, Palestine

Secretary: Tamandani, Malawi

Events Officer: Sanika, India

Events Coordinator: Esther, Ghana

Social Media: Garima, India

Vice Chair: Annabelle, Germany

Events leader: Nour, Syria

Podcast Assistant: Liepa, Estonia

Podcast Manager: Marica, France

Media Coordinator: Akanksha, India

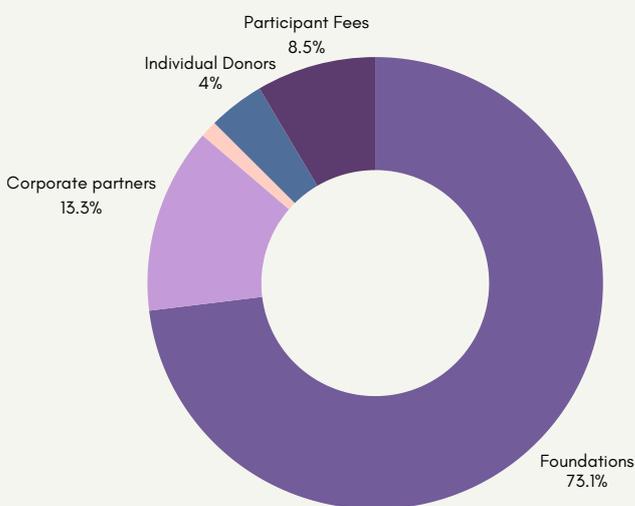
FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year: January 1 – December 31, 2025

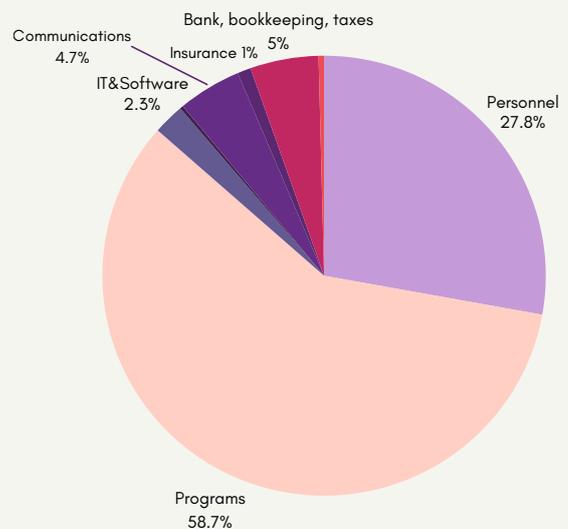
Thanks to the dedication of our mostly volunteer and freelance team, 2025 was our most impactful year yet. We reached a record number of girls, both online and in person, through leadership and mentoring programs that pave the way for resilience, skills, and opportunity.

We achieved this growth while keeping administrative and overhead costs to a minimum. In August 2025, we secured a free coworking space for nonprofits in Berlin, allowing us to continue operating without expenses for office space, printing, phone, or internet. **Every euro saved goes directly toward empowering girls and expanding our program offering.**

Total Income: €129,254



Total Expenses - €100,867

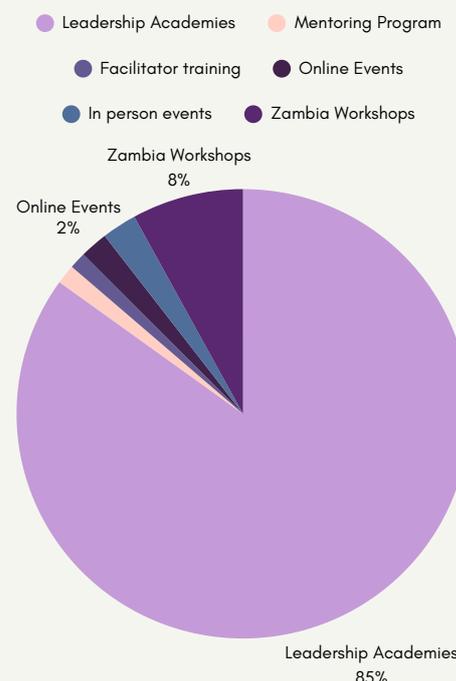


Part of our 2025 income was designated for programs in 2026, helping us begin the new year with plans and resources already in place.

The generosity of long-standing and new partners made our progress in 2025 possible. For the past five years, the **Andreas Gerl Stiftung** has played a crucial role in sustaining our work through consistent support - a partnership that has been vital to our growth and impact. Alongside the **Günter-Deichsel Stiftung**, whose funding launched our year-round program in 2025, these collaborations have strengthened our long-term sustainability and expanded our reach to more girls, especially from underserved backgrounds. Looking ahead, we aim to deepen these valued partnerships and seek new foundation partners to sustain our momentum and impact.

A key driver for growth in 2025 was a full-time staff position, funded largely by **QuantumR**, which strengthened both our strategic capacity and program delivery. This role has allowed us to build and nurture partnerships, expand our network, and enhance our ability to secure funding for future initiatives. Investing in team capacity continues to be one of the most effective ways to multiply our impact and ensure sustained growth.

Program Expenses



JOIN OUR MOVEMENT

Together, we can do so much more.



SUPPORT our mission by making a donation and helping us expand our programs.

APPLY to join our Academy and be part of next year's cohort.

BECOME A MENTOR and guide the next generation of learners and leaders.

PARTNER with us to create new opportunities and broaden our impact.



**Girls
Gearing
Up**



**JOIN OUR MOVEMENT TO
EQUIP THE NEXT GENERATION OF
GLOBALLY-MINDED FEMALE LEADERS**

www.girlsgearingup.org