

MAMA 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

WHW
women help women

mama
MAMA AND ME AGAINST MALARIA



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Foreword

MAMA Network is excited to share with you our Annual Report for the year 2021. MAMA champions its cause through collaboration with grassroots-level organizations that share our common objectives across Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2021, we supported peer learning and the exchange of expertise among our members through joint capacity-building training conferences. In addition, we facilitated research and disseminated accurate, evidence-based information through publications that equipped members with rights-based advocacy and solutions grounded in harm reduction. Overall, MAMA empowered women in its geographical reach through cohesive language free from coercion, stigma, and discrimination.

This year we welcomed more members joining the MAMA fold, bringing our number of members to 54 organizations across 22 African Countries. New members have received a thorough capacity strengthening upon their entry.

As the world embraced virtual convenings during a pandemic, we held our first virtual Regional conference representing all 54 member organizations. We also recruited a network of activist, feminist lawyers who will continue to create emergency response capacities and train local lawyers on risk mitigation arguments and advocacy strategies.

To ensure that the language designed by MAMA remains cohesive even at grass root levels, we continued to develop and translate materials and training manuals for internal use in MAMA countries' local languages. The manuals systemize how we collaborate with pharmacists, conduct community training, and launch new hotlines.

We hope you will see the depth and breadth of our work in the following pages. Thank you for your continued support.

MAMA Network

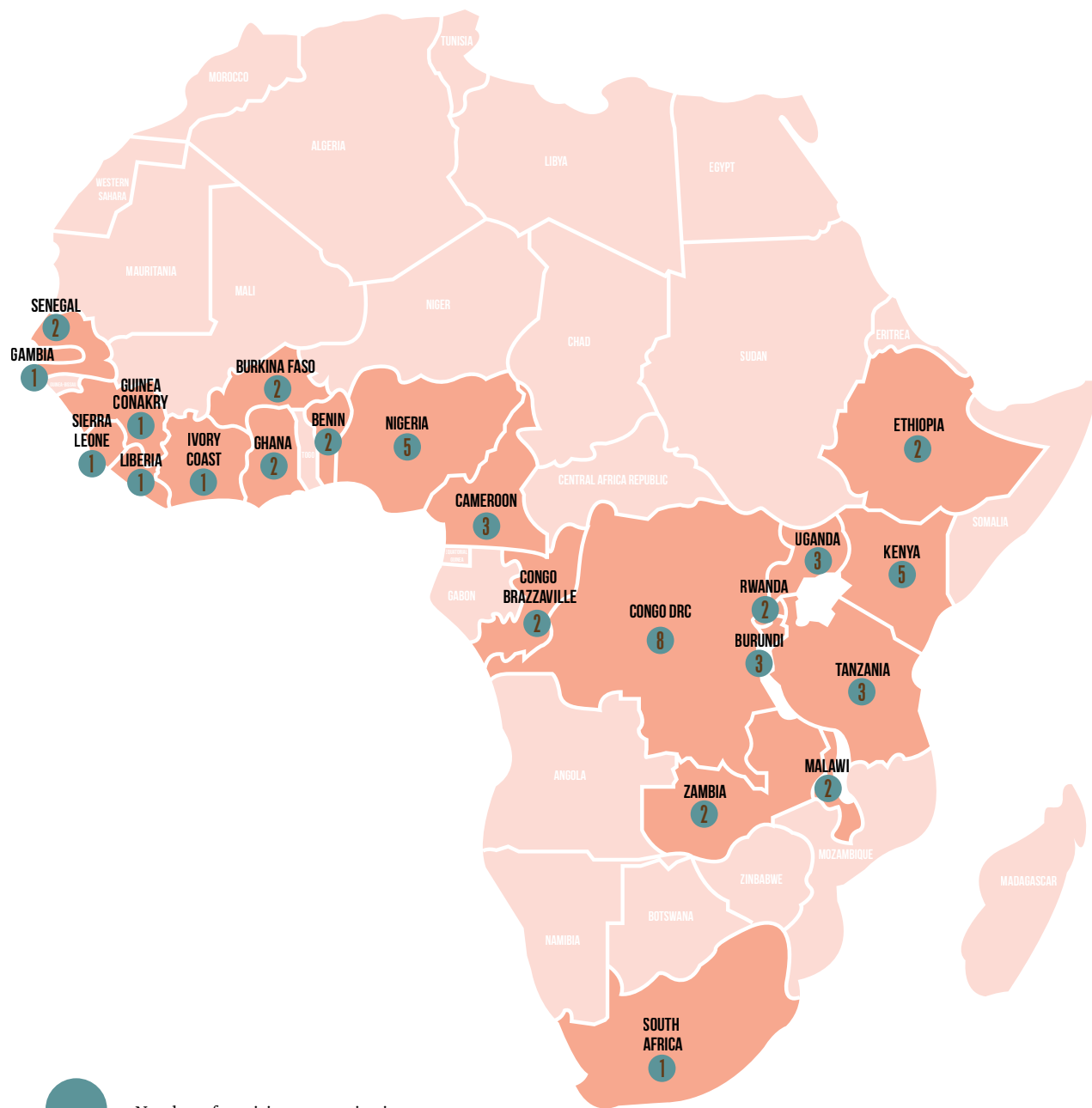
Introduction to the Network

Founded by the collaboration between three organizations: TICAH - Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health, GIWYN - Generation Initiative for Women and Youth Network, and Women Help Women, The Mama Network is a collaboration of grassroots activists, community organizations, and feminist groups based in Africa, mobilizing around medical abortion to dismantle abortion stigma, foster women's empowerment and advance women's autonomy by sharing accurate and updated information on safe medical abortion with pills regardless of restrictive abortion's laws in their countries.

Since its establishment, Mama Network has been on a mission to improve women's health and reduce maternal mortality and morbidity due to unsafe abortion. The network brings its members to collaborate through effective regional strategies that increase women's access to safe abortion across countries.

At the beginning of 2021, MAMA opened for candidates of organizations who wanted to join the network, prioritizing the recruitment of organizations based in countries not represented on the web yet. This resulted in the recruitment of seventeen new organizations from 10 countries in early May, expanding MAMA's membership to a current 54 organizations across 22 countries, surpassing the expected outcome we had previously envisioned.





Capacity-building of our member organizations


Throughout the whole year, capacity building opportunities were offered to MAMA Network's members such as:

- **Fundraising** – a series of 3 webinars were led by a Fundraise Expert, providing guidelines and hands-on exercises on how to fundraise, from putting together a grant proposal with clear objectives and outcomes, to creating a budget monitoring, evaluating, and writing the narrative and financial reports.
- A webinar on Remote **working and managing staff and volunteers**
- A webinar on **Social Media presence and engagement**
- A webinar on **Monitoring and Evaluation** – in partnership with IBIS Reproductive Health
- A Series of working groups on Development **of an Advocacy Strategy** – led by the expert working on MAMA's Regional Advocacy Strategy

In 2021, We also hosted a successful Regional Conference. Initially planned to be held as an in-person meeting and finally moved to an online basis to secure participants' safety as we navigate the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Despite being the third Conference organized by MAMA, this year's was our first fully online conference. The MAMA Coordination had to focus on methodologies to make it as inclusive, safe, and accessible as possible for the members as they joined us remotely.

MAMA's Regional Conference was divided into two moments:

- The Pre-conference for new MAMA Network members (17-18 June 2021)
- The Conference to all members (22-25 June 2021)



Leading the way, the MAMA Pre-Conference was aimed at welcoming the new members to the Network. They participated with us for the 2-day conference, going through a program focused on introducing them to the Network by sharing MAMA's core values, introducing them to the Coordination, and providing comprehensive training on the use of contraceptives, self-managed abortion, maternal health, and the legal situation of abortion in Africa. Although mainly focused on the new members, this conference was also open to members of MAMA who wanted to refresh their knowledge on these subjects.

On the following week, all MAMA members were invited to join a 4-days online Regional Conference, with opportunities for them to get updated on the different MAMA projects, meet other members, and share progress and challenges.

Within its extensive agenda, the Conference had:

- Members-led panel discussion on Legal Framework, Advocacy, Self-Managed Abortion
- Discussions on strategies to increase access to Self-managed Abortion and on Hotlines and how to work with Pharmacists
- Training on stress management for abortion advocates/providers
- Training session on Monitoring and Evaluation with our partners from IBIS Reproductive Health

Besides those, other key topics were also discussed, including the barriers and strategies to increase organizations' access to commodities and the challenges and perspectives of the growing number of youth-led organizations within the Network.

We were happy to acknowledge the leadership of the network's members throughout the conference, showing their connection to the Network's beliefs and their ownership of the strategies we implement together.

Partnership with Ibis Reproductive Health

With the partnership with ibis, MAMA members were provided with the following support:

- Podio training: We provided one on one training and support for 19 MAMA organizations interested in using Podio.

Monitoring and evaluation support: We held two M&E Webinars in July (as part of MAMA regional meeting) and one in November with ongrantees. Ibis and MAMA developed an M&E workbook and examples. We also supported organizations in the development of M&E plans while also providing one on one support as needed to the organization on monitoring and evaluation

Ibis and MAMA conducted research and produced the following:

- Presented findings on covid impact study to MAMA members
- Codesigned and launched study on medication abortion experiences among callers to TICA's Aunty Jane hotline
- Supported MAMA organizations on submission to inroads grants



Financial support to the members

In 2020, MAMA, aware that the COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges to safe abortion access, including overwhelmed medical systems, travel restrictions, stay at home orders, and economic hardship, embarked on a study involving 31 member organizations across the African region to understand and document the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organizations and their work. The data from this study found that many organizations' budgets were not prepared to handle the changes that COVID-19 forced them to make, activities had to be adapted to meet physical distancing and gathering limitations, and decreased abortion pill access challenged organizations' abilities to meet their intended programmatic goals

In response to the findings on the impact of Covid 19 on MAMA member organizations and beneficiaries, MAMA provided financial support to 37 member organizations to ensure access to the internet and engagement in online capacity strengthening webinars and training. Additionally, the financial

support ensured women could access abortion pills during the Covid 19 period where the commodity was scarce.

In 2021, we launched the call for applications on grants to support MAMA organizations on the implementation of MAMA strategic interventions at the community level. We received an overwhelming number of applications and funded 13 successful applicants. We received proposals ranging from decentralizing abortion responses, advocacy, running hotlines, and community training. For the first time, MAMA has conducted a participatory ongranting process, inviting Mama members who stand out for their presence and engagement in the network to be part of the ongranting committee. The committee reviewed the applications, scored the sheets, and voted for 13 successful applications.

It was notable that this year's proposals represented a shift from 2020, with more projects focused on community training activities, and no longer on hotlines services.

"Personally being on the ongranting committee was a very great honour. It was a detailed, methodical, and transparent process for me. A very useful learning curve for me" - Moses Nanang from MABIA Ghana

Pharmacists and hotlines support

2021 was an atypical year again as the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact the activities of the MAMA Network. Still, MAMA Network hotlines continued their work providing information about safe abortion.

Through the hotline mentorship program, the network mentored six organizations to strengthen their work with pharmacists to improve access to SMA pills. The mentoring sessions were led by MAMA members currently collaborating with pharmacists and covered topics on Mapping friendly pharmacists, training pharmacists, Security of organizations, client & pharmacists, and Data collection & reporting tools.

Besides that, a gathering with members running hotlines happened where best practices were discussed. During this gathering, members shared their experience with marketing and M&E strategies and discussed counseling practices and the sustainability of the hotlines.

Also, during the online Regional Meeting in June, there was a session about Hotlines & Pharmacists where three MAMA members were invited (TICAH, SOSFEC, and CESOCODE) to share

their experiences working with pharmacists (SOSFEC and CESOCODE) or hotlines (TICAH). During the talk, members were invited to share some of their strategies and challenges of their work and think together how hotlines and pharmacies can and should cooperate to increase access to safe abortion in the communities.

During the year, we also developed a survey to assess the current needs of the hotlines and are creating a work plan that responds to the results and that includes both webinars for all hotlines and one-on-one sessions. Also, look at ways for hotlines from close regions to support each other.

More to the end of the year, we had a webinar to launch the Hotlines Toolkit more to the end of the year. We have also developed another toolkit, the Pharmacists toolkit. Both these documents are internal documents that are only shared with members and not available on the MAMA Network web page.

MAMA Network is also currently leading an on-granting process, to be finalized in 2022, where we will launch new hotlines in countries where this strategy has not yet been implemented.

Legal support Network

To reach the goal of expanded abortion access, MAMA uses a range of strategies that engage in direct action to provide access to abortion through innovative models and simultaneously work to change the norms and discourse around self-managed abortion. However, the potential criminalization of activism in this space impedes scaling up.

Increased legal resources are needed to protect this activism and expand MAMA's work. So this year we launched a project to create a network of activist, feminist lawyers in Africa who will provide legal advice to our members, build legal emergency response capacity, and train local lawyers on fundamental human rights to transform the landscape of SMA in Africa.

We have trained ten lawyers from Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, and South Africa. Instead of the physical meetings (on hold due to COVID19 restrictions), we have designed 1) an interactive training program with 10 Units that include professors and practitioners (both international and African) and 2) a Global South Dialogue with lawyers from Latin American region to increase synergies across the regions and allow for cross-fertilization of strategies and ideas.

We will continue to work in this strategy changing discourse and minimizing risks for our members to continue innovating and pushing boundaries.

Resources developed

Partnering with IBIS Reproductive Health, we have presented MAMA's Research findings at conferences related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. For example, in November 2020, we did two presentations at the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO):

1. Documenting Activism and Advocacy around Self-Managed Medication Abortion across Africa. Yves-Yvette Young, Ibis Reproductive Health. Collaborators: Margot Cohen, Lucía Berro Pizzarossa, Jedidah Maina, Diana Moreka.
2. Increasing Access to Safe Abortion in Kenya: Experiences with Self-Managed Abortion with Assistance from a Safe Abortion Hotline. Yves-Yvette Young, Ibis Reproductive Health. Collaborators: Margot Cohen, Lucía Berro Pizzarossa, Jedidah Maina, Diana Moreka.

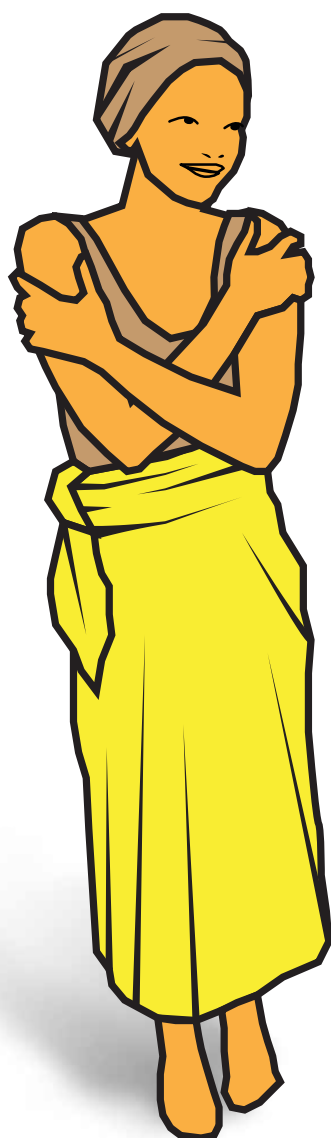
Later, on March 2021, we also give a virtual presentation during the 65th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), as part of the side-event "Studying Accompaniment model Feasibility and Effectiveness: Key results from the SAFE Study." represented by one of our co-coordinators, GIWYN with the collaboration of Ibis Reproductive Health.

We also developed various dissemination materials based on research conducted in previous years. Among other pieces, we finalized the media mapping of abortion in West Africa, available in both English and French, and a report on the impact of COVID-19 on our member organizations, intended for donors, based on the findings of our research on this matter. We wrote blogposts for easier dissemination of academic products and are working on two academic pieces with interviews conducted with hotline users.

Advocacy

In 2021, MAMA also focused on developing its first Regional Advocacy Strategy, through the help of a consultant and with the direct support of MAMA's Advocacy Workgroup, several meetings and consultations were held with the whole membership to define this common agenda. The process has taken around six months and have recently finished with a strong strategy to be shared by all members.

Following this, the members will go through a thorough capacity strengthening on the subject, followed by a call for proposals on funded activities to implement MAMA's Regional Advocacy Strategy throughout different countries in Africa.



What we look forward to launching in 2022

Mama University

With the help of its Capacity Strengthening workgroup, MAMA has been working on developing its own E-learning platform where members can easily access self-paced courses on relevant themes, such as Reproductive Justice, Hotline support, Self-Managed abortion, Human Rights, and Advocacy. The platform is easy to use and contains many materials and training opportunities. We are excited to launch this platform in early 2022 officially!

Mama Sophia app

The MAMA Sophia app will be launched in the first months of 2022. This will be a free, private, secure mobile phone application filled with sexual and reproductive health information and resources. This app will be available in English for download through the Apple and Google Play stores anywhere in the world and can be used without access to the internet.

The Mama Sophia app is dedicated to providing accurate and reliable support so that users can make informed decisions as experts on their sexual and reproductive health. People who download the app can use this tool to:

- Track their period cycle and log their symptoms
- Calculate the length of a pregnancy
- Learn more about contraception
- Find which contraceptive methods are best for them
- Speak with the Mama Sophia chatbot
- Get the facts on national abortion laws
- Explore safe abortion options
- Connect with hotlines for free help and counseling

All of this app activity will be confidential — no one will access the data unless they know the user's Mama Sophia app password. When the Mama Sophia app launches, it will include some country-specific information and give people the option to connect to the Aunty Jane and Ms. Rosy Hotlines. The MAMA Network plans to first test the app with users in Kenya and Nigeria, to expand to cover more of our member countries in Africa.

Strategic Planning

Proudly acknowledging MAMA's significant expansion throughout the years, the coordination team has prioritized developing the Network's Theory of Change and Strategic Plan, including priority-setting and a fundraising strategy for the next five years of the network.

In June 2021, the expert consultant Miriam Yeung was onboarded to guide and support us. Miriam has vast experience leading organizations and supporting organizational development efforts. We designed together with a collaborative 1-year process and set up a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of various MAMA members. We selected the members to have language representation and length of involvement with the network to have diversity and representation of different areas and levels of engagement. In October, we had our first kick-off meeting where the Strategic Committee decided on the key questions we want to answer in this process and the stakeholders that are important to be considered.

Holistic Security

Aware of the increasing risks activists face and the challenges of working mainly online due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, MAMA Network is planning for a comprehensive Holistic Security training for its members in the first semester of 2022. The training will be led by experts from the African continent and will cover digital, physical, and psychosocial security.

Hotlines

For next year, we hope to launch new hotlines in countries where this strategy is needed and has not yet been developed. We will train and support these new hotlines to achieve their purposes and continue to put information and power on people's hands.

As for the mentoring program, we will reorganize the mentors and schedule regular mentoring sessions to support existing hotlines.

We will also schedule webinars around subjects relevant to our hotlines, such as sustainability plans, marketing, and how to collect donations.

We will also develop a resource with sustainability tips for the hotlines.

Dreams for 2022 and beyond

We have been working to develop our Strategic Plan for the next five years and to strengthen our theory of change. We are excited to be dreaming of our future and working together to achieve our goals.

MAMA believes that self-managed abortion is a transformative practice that disrupts the legitimacy of restrictive abortion laws, contributing to their change, while at the same time providing a realistic and practical solution to an actual and urgent need. We believe we have a transformational tool in our hands. MAMA trusts in community activism because it makes safe abortion access affordable and available; free of coercion, stigma and discrimination; unbiased; youth-friendly; without bureaucracy; and not influenced by traditional, cultural and religious beliefs that deny women basic human rights. And through our work together, we can make safe and supported abortions a reality for all!

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