



2025

ANNUAL REPORT



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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Annual Report presents Nyale Institute's work and impact for the period January- December 2025. The report highlights key litigation, programmatic interventions, partnerships, and institutional developments that advanced sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Malawi. It is intended for partners, donors, policymakers, civil society, and the general public.



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION
ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AG	Attorney General
CRR	Centre for Reproductive Rights
GEA	Gender Equality Act
LAB	Legal Aid Bureau
LIRA	Litigating Reproductive Justice in Africa
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

OUR IDENTITY

WHO WE ARE

Nyale Institute is a locally registered not-for-profit organization (NFPO) founded in 2013 with the purpose of promoting sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Malawi. Within the scope of SRHR, Nyale Institute also promotes gender and social equality. The mission of the Nyale Institute is to support government and other stakeholders to advance sexual and reproductive health rights and Justice. Additionally, the organization envisions an informed and empowered society where people fully and equitably enjoy sexual and reproductive rights and freedoms.



VISION



An informed and empowered society where people fully and equitably enjoy sexual and reproductive rights and freedoms.

MISSION



Nyale Institute advances sexual and reproductive justice through enhancing collaboration with the government and other relevant stakeholders.

VALUES



- Autonomy
- Equality and Equity
- Inclusivity and Diversity
- Human Rights and Justice
- Education and Empowerment

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON



On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my honor to present the Nyale Institute 2025 Annual Report. This report highlights our institutional performance and reaffirms our steadfast commitment to advancing sexual and reproductive justice, strengthening governance, and empowering communities throughout Malawi.

The year 2025 was one of notable achievements and persistent challenges. In a complex socio-economic environment, Nyale Institute continued to champion evidence-based programming, innovative advocacy, and strategic collaborations that uphold the rights and dignity of underserved and vulnerable populations. Our initiatives in strategic litigation, policy advocacy, and community empowerment have collectively enhanced access to justice, elevated community voices, and promoted equitable health and legal outcomes.

In particular, we are proud of our contributions to strengthening the legal and policy frameworks for sexual and reproductive health rights, including our engagement in landmark High Court cases, the dissemination of advocacy resources, and national campaigns that center on survivors of sexual violence and young people in decision-making processes. These efforts reflect our unwavering commitment to inclusivity, human rights, education, and justice.

The Board has continued to exercise diligent governance oversight, ensuring that the Institute's work remains transparent, compliant, and aligned with our strategic mission. We are grateful for the professionalism, resilience, and dedication of the Management and staff, whose passion and expertise have been critical to translating our strategic vision into measurable impact.

We extend sincere appreciation to our development partners, government stakeholders, community leaders, and the many individuals whose trust and collaboration have been essential to our work. Your support sustains our efforts and strengthens our ability to effect lasting change.

Looking ahead, the Board is committed to enhancing governance systems, promoting innovation, and supporting the Institute’s long-term strategic goals. We are confident that Nyale Institute is well-positioned to scale its impact and contribute meaningfully to Malawi’s national development priorities and the realization of equitable rights for all.

On behalf of the Board, I thank all those who have journeyed with us in 2025. Together, we remain dedicated to building a just, informed, and empowered society.



DAVIE KAVINYA
BOARD CHAIRPERSON

“

Nyale Institute is well-positioned to scale its impact and contribute meaningfully to Malawi’s national development priorities and the realization of equitable rights for all

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The year 2025 marked a transformative period for Nyale Institute for Sexual and Reproductive Health Governance (Nyale Institute) as it deepened its impact on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Malawi. Through a combination of strategic litigation, targeted programming, and multi-sectoral advocacy, Nyale Institute helped shape both legal interpretation and community understanding of SRHR including access to safe abortion. The landmark judgment in *AC (a minor) v Ministry of Health and Others* not only affirmed minors' automatic right to access safe abortion after sexual violence but also repositioned the Gender Equality Act (GEA) as the central legal instrument for reproductive rights in Malawi.

Alongside this legal breakthrough, Nyale Institute continued to support survivors and communities through other litigation interventions, policy engagement, and capacity-building activities. Youth leaders, community gatekeepers, civil society organisations, and media institutions were equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to promote SRHR, challenge stigma, and demand accountability from duty bearers.

Nyale Institute has also expanded the media and communications aspect, to disseminate the AC (a minor) Judgment through community radio programming. Nyale Institute is currently in the process of opening a hotline to enable the community to ask questions or seek information directly from staff about SRHR. Further, Nyale Institute is supporting the publication of a journal by Students Law Society of University of Malawi to publish a special edition their journal which focuses on the Gender Equality Act.

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Nyale Institute

2025 NYALE SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Outcome 1: Enhanced access to legal and safe abortion by survivors of sexual violence by litigating an expansive interpretation of the Gender Equality Act and relevant laws.

- ✔ 8 Cases litigated (4 by CRR and 3 by LIRA)



Outcome 2: Reduction of sexual offences among adolescents.

- ✔ 8 Cases litigated (4 by CRR and 3 by LIRA)



Outcome 3: Improvement in knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights among stakeholders.

- ✔ 89 Hotline Calls received
- ✔ 30 youth leaders and 35 CSO representatives were trained on using the GEA for advocacy and support strategic litigation
- ✔ Dissemination of an Issues Paper on Understanding Legal Abortion, strengthened government appreciation of legal obligations under the GEA.



Outcome 4: Improved awareness on the status of the SRHR in Malawi.

- ✔ Conducted 19 Radio Interviews (National Radios:3, Community Radio Stations:16)
- ✔ 1 Televised Interview (National TV)
- ✔ 5 Radio Jingles produced and aired in different radio stations



DETAILED ACHIEVEMENTS

1. GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA (GAC) THROUGH THE CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS (CRR) – CHANGING LIVES, CHANGING LAW PROJECT

Global Affairs Canada (GAC), through the Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR), supported the implementation of the Changing Lives, Changing Law Project. The project aimed to improve the quality and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in Malawi, in alignment with the Gender Equality Act (GEA) and the 2024 National Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy. The project was implemented within Senior Chief Chikumbu’s jurisdiction in Mulanje District. It focused on enhancing SRHR knowledge, strengthening advocacy capacity, and promoting community support for access to safe and legal abortion.

Key Achievements

- Translation of Nyale Institute’s SRHR Advocacy Manual into the vernacular to improve accessibility, particularly for young people. The Nyale Institute had previously developed the SRHR Advocacy Manual under another project; however, the manual was originally produced in English. Under the GAC–CRR project, Nyale Institute adopted and translated the manual into the vernacular to enhance its usability and accessibility, especially for young people.
- Development of an Issues Paper in collaboration with seven key ministries and two stakeholders: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Gender; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Information; Ministry of Youth; Ministry of Finance, the Office of the President and Cabinet, and the Malawi Human Rights Commission. The Issues Paper explored gaps in SRHR at the ministerial level and proposed actionable recommendations.
- Designation of Senior Chief Chikumbu as Nyale Institute’s SRHR Ambassador to champion access to safe and legal abortion among fellow traditional leaders and community members.
- Strong engagement with government stakeholders, including various ministries, the Reproductive Health Directorate, and the District Health Management Team (DHMT) at Mulanje District Health Office (DHO).
- Consistent community support throughout the implementation period, demonstrated by the active involvement of community leaders, AGYW, youth, and the broader community.

Partners: Global Affairs Canada, Center for Reproductive Rights

Target Group: Adolescent Girls & Young Women

Location: Mulanje (Senior Chief Chikumbu)

Policy Alignment: GEA & 2024 SRHR Policy

DETAILED ACHIEVEMENTS

2. AMPLIFY CHANGE PROJECT – REPOSITIONING THE GENDER EQUALITY ACT (2024–2025)

Nyale Institute first received funding from Amplify Change in 2024. The project's overarching objective is to reposition the Gender Equality Act (GEA) as a foundational legal instrument for advancing SRHR advocacy in Malawi.

In the short term, the project has contributed to shifting public and stakeholder attention toward the GEA as a practical and actionable framework for promoting access to safe and legal abortion. This approach complements, rather than relies solely upon, ongoing efforts to reform the Penal Code through the Termination of Pregnancy (ToP) Bill.

Key Achievements

- Development of the SRHR Advocacy Manual, which has become a core resource for youth, civil society organizations (CSOs), and media practitioners.
- Capacity-building trainings for youth and CSOs on the Gender Equality Act and the Advocacy Manual.
- Media orientation sessions that improved the accuracy and sensitivity of reporting on abortion-related cases, particularly the AC matter.
- Facilitation of a nationally televised dialogue featuring a legal expert, religious leader, AGYW representative, and community leader, fostering balanced and constructive public discourse on sensitive SRHR issues.

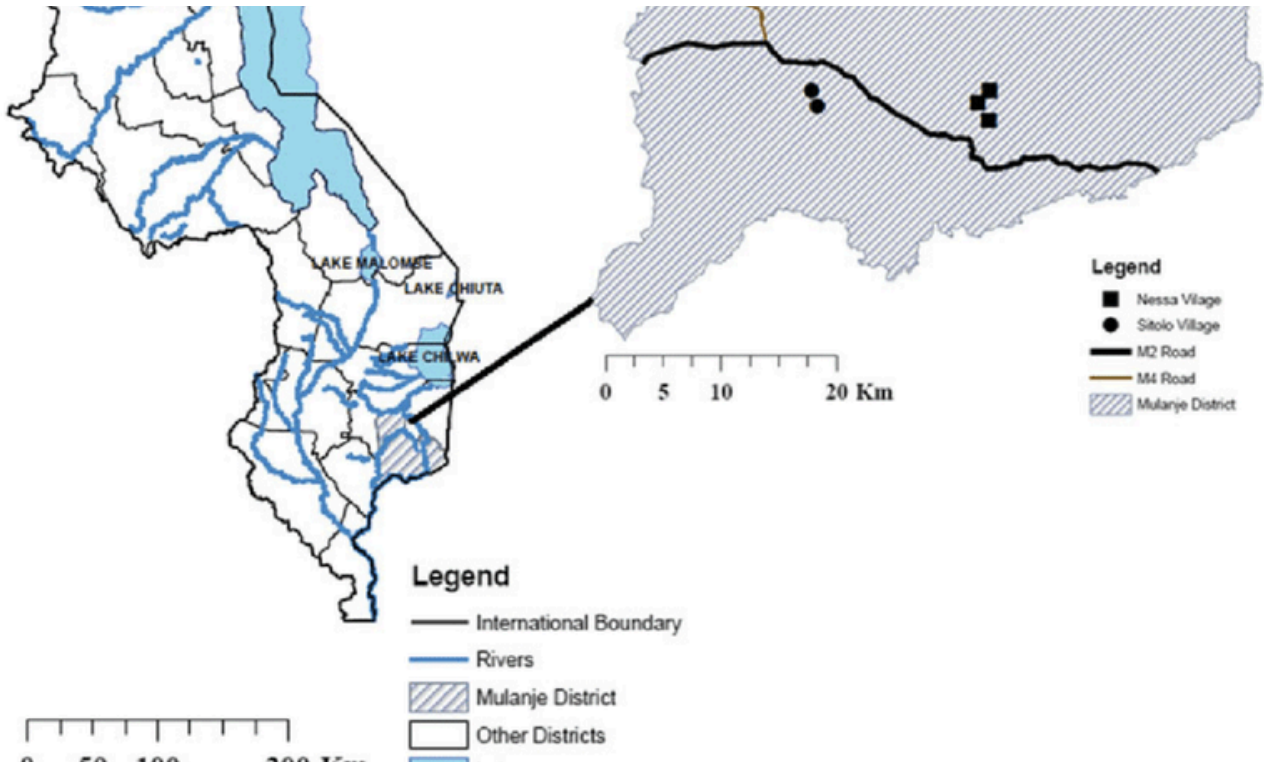
The project has been extended for an additional two years and will continue implementation in Senior Chief Chikumbu's area in Mulanje District. Through this extension, Nyale Institute will review and update the Advocacy Manual and relaunch the "Mwana wa Mnzako Ngwako Yemwe" campaign. The campaign aims to raise awareness of legal rights under the Gender Equality Act through Nyale Institute's Reproductive Justice Ambassador, Senior Chief Chikumbu.

Planned interventions include sustained engagement with policymakers, traditional authorities, AGYW, and youth to promote SRHR, including access to safe and legal abortion.

The project shifted public and stakeholder attention toward the GEA as an actionable tool for advancing access to safe and legal abortion, rather than relying exclusively on Penal Code reform through the Termination of Pregnancy Bill (ToP Bill).

DETAILED ACHIEVEMENTS

3. NEW AMPLIFY CHANGE PROJECT (2025 TO 2027)



The new Amplify Change project continued to consolidate Mulanje as a focal point for GEA-based advocacy. The project began with inception meetings and a Values Clarification and Attitude Transformation workshop for district health officials. Nyale Institute plans to update the youth advocacy toolkit and re-launch the “Mwana wa Mnzako Ngwako Yemwe” campaign to raise awareness of legal rights under the GEA through a traditional leader who is the Girls’ Reproductive Justice Ambassador.

The program will include engagement with policymakers and traditional authorities to reinforce the message that SRHR is a legal entitlement and not merely a policy aspiration.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The project shifted public and stakeholder attention toward the GEA as an actionable tool for advancing access to safe and legal abortion, rather than relying exclusively on Penal Code reform through the Termination of Pregnancy Bill (ToP Bill).

DETAILED ACHIEVEMENTS

4. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS



Nyale Institute also received funding from Marie Stopes International (MSI), through Banja La Mtsogolo (BLM) to implement a project entitled 'Advocating for Sexual and Reproductive Rights Including Access to Safe Abortion under the Gender Equality Act' from January 2025 to December 2025.

The project aimed at enhancing SRHR advocacy on electronic media around the AC (a minor) case, and to support the publication of the publication of a special edition of the University of Malawi Students Law Journal focused on the Gender Equality Act and its potential to advance sexual and reproductive rights, including access to safe abortion. Through this funding, Nyale Institute produced radio jingles and programs during the pre-trial period to sensitise the public about the case.

The Nyale Institute has also received funding from RAES to implement radio programs from November 2025 to August 2026, with an emphasis on community radios, to disseminate the judgment so that more people are aware of the AC (a minor) judgment.

Apart from these, Nyale Institute has started a hotline to connect with people who need help or information directly, because we realised people need continuous support beyond the radio program. Apart from that, Nyale Institute will also appreciate some issues that perhaps are not discussed in radio programs, but people can privately raise through the hotline, and down the track, Nyale Institute can respond to these issues in radio programming.

Partners: Marie Stopes International (MSI), Banja La Mtsogolo (BLM), RAES
Location: Nation wide

Target Group: Adolescent Girls & Young Women
Policy Alignment: GEA & 2024 SRHR Policy

STORIES OF CHANGE: LITIGATION AND IMPACT

The Nyale Institute's impact in 2025 is best illustrated through some individual cases where the law directly protected life, dignity, and rights. The stories below are presented as concise but detailed narratives, focusing on context, intervention, and change.

9.1 AC (a minor): Transforming Access to Safe Abortion

The Nyale Institute's impact in 2025 is best illustrated through some individual cases where the law directly protected life, dignity, and rights. The stories below are presented as concise but detailed narratives, focusing on context, intervention, and change.

In 2025, Nyale Institute supported a 13-year-old girl who became pregnant after sexual violence and was denied access to lawful abortion services at a One Stop Centre. Health providers treated abortion as discretionary, exposing the survivor to further trauma and health risks.

Nyale Institute, working with partner counsel, filed a statutory enforcement case grounded in the Gender Equality Act. In October 2025, the High Court delivered a landmark judgment affirming that child survivors of sexual violence have an automatic legal right to access safe abortion services.

Change achieved

The judgment clarified state and provider obligations nationwide, shifting abortion access for child survivors from discretion to enforceable duty.

STORIES OF CHANGE: LITIGATION AND IMPACT

9.2 Mwanza Case: When the Law Saves a Life

Nyale Institute intervened in the case of a 13-year-old girl in Mwanza District who became pregnant after repeated sexual abuse. In addition to denial of services, the survivor faced a harmful customary practice requiring families to pay a fine for pregnancies outside marriage.

Through rapid engagement with district medical authorities and traditional leaders, Nyale ensured the survivor accessed a lawful termination at Mwanza District Hospital and prevented the imposition of the customary fine.

Change achieved

Immediate access to life-saving care and protection from secondary victimisation, while challenging harmful customary practices.

9.3 Mulanje Case: The Cost of Denied Choice

A young nursing student aged 23 in Mulanje sought care after being diagnosed with a pregnancy and a large uterine cyst. At a public hospital, she was denied comprehensive counselling and advised to continue with the pregnancy despite potential health risks. Nyale Institute provided rapid response support, including legal guidance and referral to appropriate services. While litigation was not pursued due to personal circumstances, the case revealed systemic gaps in informed consent and reproductive autonomy.

Change achieved

Strengthened evidence and learning to inform future systemic litigation and provider accountability efforts.

STORIES OF CHANGE: LITIGATION AND IMPACT

9.4 A young woman Case: Accountability for Maternal Deaths

The Nyale Institute continued to support litigation arising from the death of a young woman following a negligent caesarean section and inadequate post-partum care. The case seeks to establish obstetric violence and disrespectful maternal care as violations of women's rights under the Gender Equality Act.

By strengthening legal arguments and supporting partner counsel, Nyale positioned the case as a vehicle for redefining state accountability for maternal health outcomes.

Change achieved

Advanced national legal discourse on maternal health rights and systemic accountability.

9.5 Republic v BTaulo: Protecting Adolescent Rights

The Nyale Institute challenged the prosecution of a young person under Section 138 of the Penal Code for consensual adolescent sexual activity. The case raises constitutional questions on criminalization, consent, and adolescent development.

Although procedural barriers delayed progress, the case remains central to efforts to align criminal law with constitutional protections and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Change achieved

Sustained legal pressure toward rights-consistent reform and protection of adolescents from harmful criminalization

Organizational Learning And Strategic Insights

Several key lessons emerged from the year's litigation and programmatic work. First, the GEA has clearly become the central legal pillar for SRHR in Malawi. Following the AC (a minor) judgment, Nyale's litigation and advocacy efforts now converge on enforcing the GEA rather than proving its relevance. Nyale's litigation strategy must now pivot from establishing rights to ensuring their implementation, particularly by addressing persistent administrative and systemic barriers within the health sector.

Second, community-level engagement remains crucial. Traditional leaders, youth champions, and local committees continue to play a decisive role in shifting stigma and fostering trust in SRHR services. While Nyale Institute is implementing community reach one part of Mulanje, the media outreach through community and national radios is important to breakdown stigma around access to safe abortion so that communities can support women's rights-centred law reforms

Recommendations For 2026

Nyale Institute should capitalise on the landmark case to continue growing its portfolio, to attract resources to ensure that the gains made are not lost or that momentum is not lost. The Nyale Institute has already been invited to meetings, for instance, by the health donor group and other development partners to explain the importance of the case.

The Nyale Institute should mobilise resources to grow its program and to have long-term and impactful projects. Nyale Institute should grow from working in one part of Mulanje to running a consistent and coordinated national campaign in the whole of Mulanje and use media to reach all parts of the country so that people can appreciate the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights as part of national development.



Nyale Institute

Conclusion

2025 was a defining year for Nyale Institute. The organisation secured a landmark legal victory, broadened national understanding of SRHR obligations, and strengthened community and institutional capacity to advance reproductive justice. Through its integrated approach combining litigation, advocacy, capacity building, and partnership, the Institute has positioned itself as a leading voice in shaping SRHR rights and obligations in Malawi. Nyale enters 2026 with renewed momentum and a clear commitment to ensuring that every girl, woman, and community can realise their reproductive autonomy with dignity, safety, and full legal protection.



Our partners

CENTER *for*
REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS



RAES

ahaki
Afya na Haki
Harnessing Africa's Potential



FOR EQUALITY

