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*Women in Leadership Report*





# Women in Leadership Report

Stories from  
African Women

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**She wakes before the sun,** attends university classes and volunteers for Young Life in her free time. She rises above the confines of culture and chases a dream. She works to gain the right to be heard and knows her degree and voice can one day be used to empower the women around her.

**She walks beside a teenager,** speaks words of truth and life into the Young Life women in her community. She kneels beside teenagers when they fall and cheers them on as they once more find their stride.

**She carries the continent on her shoulders,** and endures the weight of the generational chain as she empowers one girl at a time to collectively break the rock of oppression.

*These are  
African  
women leaders.*



# Standing in Her Way



Celeste Baloi, Mozambique

**"In my family I grew up learning that a woman should be submissive in everything."**

**—Celeste Baloi**

While African women leaders are on the rise, the rock of systematic disenfranchisement of women needs to be broken. In general, the African woman is still facing cultural, familial and economic oppression in a patriarchal society.

## **She is trying to pursue her dreams while raising a family.**

**Celeste Baloi** area director, Mozambique

"In my family I grew up learning that a woman should be submissive in everything to men, first siblings, then father, uncles and if married, then the husband. Culturally the woman is the one who must accept everything that society or the family group submits to her, to marry, to take care of the house and children and to be always ready to serve."

## **She is battling the cultural expectations and assumptions of women.**

**Fireselam Assefa** regional director, Ethiopia

"Women are expected to take care of the house. The assumption about the woman's role is to be in charge of the house. Women are also viewed as too emotional, so they 'shouldn't' be in a leadership role."

**Zoe Nonde** logistics coordinator, Eswatini

"I think a female leader should have enough confidence in themselves to excel, because as females we normally have to prove ourselves twice as hard as compared to males before being accepted as leaders, and that type of confidence can only come if you walk that journey with the Lord."

**Dyan Larmey** African staff development director, divisional YoungLives coordinator

In some cases, women are still seen as inferior. However, God is using Young Life to break the cultural norms and transform these long standing views of women. For example, in the Maasai tribe, female circumcision is still an issue, "but we have seen how bringing Jesus Christ into those tribes

**"As one of the staff members of the core Malawi team, I sometimes feel that I don't have a big enough voice to be heard."**

**—Faith Tembo**

through relationships with the Young Life leader who is also a Maasai, the entire system can change because of the freedom of Christ."

## **She is battling her personal doubts.**

**Celeste Baloi** area director, Mozambique

"We live in an increasingly globalized world; being a woman and leader at the same time has come to be seen as something normal. But even then there are still very uncomfortable situations being a woman leader. Particularly the biggest challenge I face is in the personal sphere. Sometimes I lack confidence in using my authority with other leaders, so please pray that I can overcome this fear."

**Faith Tembo** logistics coordinator, Malawi

"As one of the staff members of the core Malawi team, I sometimes feel that I don't have a big enough voice to be heard and my suggestions about how to go about a certain task within logistics could be easily dismissed because I am a woman."

## **However, the African woman is courageous and resilient.**

The African women leaders of Young Life are already taking their own hammers and chipping away at this rock of oppression. They are disrupting the traditional model of what it means to be an African woman. They are agents of change.

The Lord is working on behalf of the African woman. He is with her and for her as she faces these daily challenges. He is not only working in and through women, but also through communities and families. In order for the women of Africa to rise up, it will take more than just a few voices to change the narrative.



Chimwemwe Siyabu and Faith Tembo, Malawi

# Breaking the Rock

WHAT DOES IT TAKE  
TO BREAK THE ROCK  
OF OPPRESSION?



Playing games at Young Life Camp in Nairobi, Kenya

**"Gender should never be a determining factor on whether or not someone can do something."**

*—Zoe Nonde*

## It takes one woman to empower another.

Change seems to come most often through one person extending a hand to another, which then repeats until it has rippled throughout a community. This is happening all over the continent of Africa: one woman speaks life into another, who encourages another, and so on. For Fireselam "Frey" Assefa, regional director in Ethiopia, it was her mother who gave her the strength to be a leader. Frey grew up watching her mother leading a community group comprised of many women. Frey recalls, "My mom used to encourage us to believe in women's leadership, and she was a wonderful example for me." Similar to Frey, Zoe Nonde from Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) also felt empowered by her mother. Zoe was raised by a single mother, and taught "gender should never be a determining factor on whether or not someone can do something. I was raised to think women are as powerful, gifted and brilliant as men are, and are natural caregivers." Zoe now serves as the logistics coordinator in Eswatini.

For others, it is the women in their community who encourage them as leaders. Millicent (team leader) from Kenya says, "I feel empowered because Young Life is a family. I feel most empowered when we are surrounded by the lady leaders." The Young Life family seeks to make every voice feel heard and valued. This is the message spoken into Chimwemwe by the African women around her, who strengthened her by saying, "Chim, you are worth the blood of Jesus." Chimwemwe Siyabu is the executive administrator for Steve Larmey.

Tabisa Ariba, an area director in Uganda, hopes to be deliberate in empowering women by raising up women in places of authority and identifying their strengths, building a leadership tree and organizing events that bring women together, like having spiritual partners, YoungLives camps and conferences.

**"Women leadership is and has been so influential here in Kenya. I have seen women leadership take an inclining path in most neighborhoods."**

*—Sam Gitau*



Women at Young Life Camp in Mombasa, Kenya

## It takes a community, a village and the active partnership of men.

**Millicent Njambo** *volunteer leader, Kenya*

"The community sees me as a role model to these girls, and when the community views me positively, it is a way of raising up women."

**Julio Banyiju** *logistics coordinator, DRC*

"I believe women have been deprived of key leadership opportunities. However, a lot has changed now; many women are taking up key leadership roles and they're doing better than what people expected from them; more men have been encouraging them. I do believe in the capacities of women in leadership!"

**Sam Gitau** *logistics coordinator, Kenya*

"Women leadership is and has been so influential here in Kenya. I have seen women leadership take an inclining path in most neighborhoods and has impacted the number of girls reached. For instance, in my neighborhood I have a slightly higher number of women leaders than men, and this also reflects in our club in the ratio of girls to boys. I trust and hope that women leadership will continue to grow stronger and impact more girls."

**Zoe Nonde** *logistics coordinator, Eswatini*

"Eswatini is at a point where culture views women as inferior yet the country as whole is embracing gender equality. With the elections this year, the King called for more women to be elected as part of the country leaders and a lot of campaigns by government have been put in to ensure this. We are moving away from roles being classified according to one's gender but rather according to one's abilities."

**Dyan Larmey** *African staff development director, divisional YoungLives coordinator*

"Opportunity is the key; women need opportunity."





**"The challenge for me, is not at being a leader itself, but the challenge is to lead."**

*—Lina Massique*



Women at leader training in Tanzania

### **It takes courage.**

**Lina Massique** area director, Mozambique

"The challenge for me, is not at being a leader itself, but the challenge is to lead. Because you have to earn the right to be heard not only from the girls you lead, but also from their families and from the other co-leaders that are men."

**Chim Siyabu** executive administrator, Tanzania

"My role is my reminder to remember what is true. What is true about me is what God says about me. As female leaders let's all stand up because there are young people, young ladies behind us watching whatever step we are doing and how we are taking our steps, they are wanting to stand in our position, so not only for ourselves, but we have a generation behind us."

**Young Life has provided opportunity to break some of the strongholds that confine women to predictable places in society.**

**Mphatso Stiles** metro director, Malawi

"I am a mother and a metro director. I am in awe because there I am standing in front of 200 campers welcoming them to camp and telling them what we are all about, and my baby is crying on my back. Never would you expect to see a woman leading in ministry with a baby on her back. You would expect her to be in the kitchen or something."

### **But mostly, it takes Jesus.**

This courage isn't birthed alone; this courage comes from God who calls women His image bearers. A God who empowers women by giving them the tools and gifts to retell the story of the African woman. A God who wants women to experience liberation as they raise up more women leaders. This is not a belief that "women are better or need to rise up farther than men; we truly believe in pamoja pamoja (together together), where women and men together are on this call and journey for every kid to know Jesus Christ in Africa and the Middle East." (Dyan Larmey, podcast)



Fireselam Assefa, Ethiopia

**"Leadership is not about being on the top. It's about going down and serving others to help them to be successful."**

*—Fireselam Assefa*

Most importantly it takes **Jesus' promises to change the outcome to be free to lead for the African woman**, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Mark 11:22-24

**Fireselam Assefa** regional director, Ethiopia

"Leadership is not about being on the top. It's about going down and serving others to help them to be successful. Being in a leadership role - it's not for your own benefit, not for yourself, it's to help others to grow."

### **Slowly we are seeing this rock chip away...**

Young Life Africa/Middle East is committed to helping break the rock for women leaders, by promoting women to positions of senior leadership, mentoring and training women as volunteer leaders, offering young women Developing Global Leaders scholarships and encouraging girls to attend camp and discipleship groups. These opportunities help erode organizational, economic, cultural and familial strongholds as women grow in confidence, leadership ability and faith. As a result, women leaders can impact the lives of teenagers in the cultures they live in and love. Young Life continues to innovate (e.g. Ethiopian girls day camps, Women's Leadership Accelerator) in order to provide women and girls opportunities to lead through experiencing more freedom and more Jesus.





Dyan Larmey

*"A picture I have  
of the African  
woman... is that  
she's carrying  
the continent on  
her shoulders."*

*—Dyan Larmey*

## We want to engage

all staff and leadership—men and women—across Africa and the Middle East with tools and vision to reach more young women and to help them exercise the call and gifts God puts in their lives. This engagement will be part of every training and leadership gathering across the division. Newt Crenshaw, Young Life president, says, "If we don't intentionally include people who are different than us, we will unintentionally exclude them." Steve Larmey, senior vice president of Young Life Africa/Middle East, agrees. "We've set a divisional Forward goal of increasing the involvement of women at every level (staff, Developing Global Leader students and girls to camp) from 30% to 46% by 2022." Engaging, including and involving women leaders is critical to breaking down barriers and building up new believers in Africa and the Middle East.

## The Women's Leadership Initiative

empowers and develops thousands of women leaders for Christ across Young Life Africa and the Middle East so Young Life can minister to a growing number of young women. This includes staff women at every level of leadership. The initiative began in 2010 by African staff development director, Dyan Larmey, wife of senior vice president Steve Larmey. She brings over 25 years of Young Life staff experience, 16 of those in Africa. Her roles include African staff development director, divisional YoungLives director and co-lead Women Leadership Network International.



Levina Ruta, Tanzania and Madeleine Furaha, DRC at Rika training



# Our Impact



**80**  
women on staff

**27,000**  
girls to camp

**13,000**  
girls made  
a commitment  
to Jesus at camp

**25,000**  
girls attending  
Campaigners  
each week



One on ones at Young Life camp

## YoungLives

The mission of YoungLives is sharing Jesus with young mothers. We do this through a well-trained group of Young Life leaders who are specially trained to mentor teen moms. YoungLives officially launched February 2017. Currently we have three main hubs of ministry in Africa; Liberia, Kenya and Zimbabwe, but it is quickly growing in other countries. The number of YoungLives ministries grew from 10 to 14 in FY 2018. Our Forward goals include having 50 intentional YoungLives ministries by 2022. YoungLives ministry in Africa prioritizes small group relational ministry. These leaders are trained in contact work, one on ones, small and large groups, and camp activities with the understanding of complex relationships. This ministry not only affects teen moms, but also impacts generations because it directly affects the child involved.

## A YoungLives Story

At the YoungLives weekend camp (Teen Moms Outreach Camp in Liberia) with 100 teens and 108 babies, Naomie was among 54 moms including 8 Muslim moms who stood up and said "YES" to follow Jesus. The messages at camp showed her it is Jesus who had kept her and the baby alive when everyone abandoned her.

**YoungLives ministries saw a 40% increase and YoungLives teen moms ministry rose from 10 to 14 in FY18!**



## YoungLives Stats

**10**



**419**

campers at 6  
YoungLives camps



**134**

commitments to  
Jesus at those camps



**14**

YoungLives ministries with 714  
girls attending club and 301 at  
Campaigners each week





Jackie Kwamy, Tanzania

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”  
—2 Timothy 1:7

## Women’s Leadership Accelerator

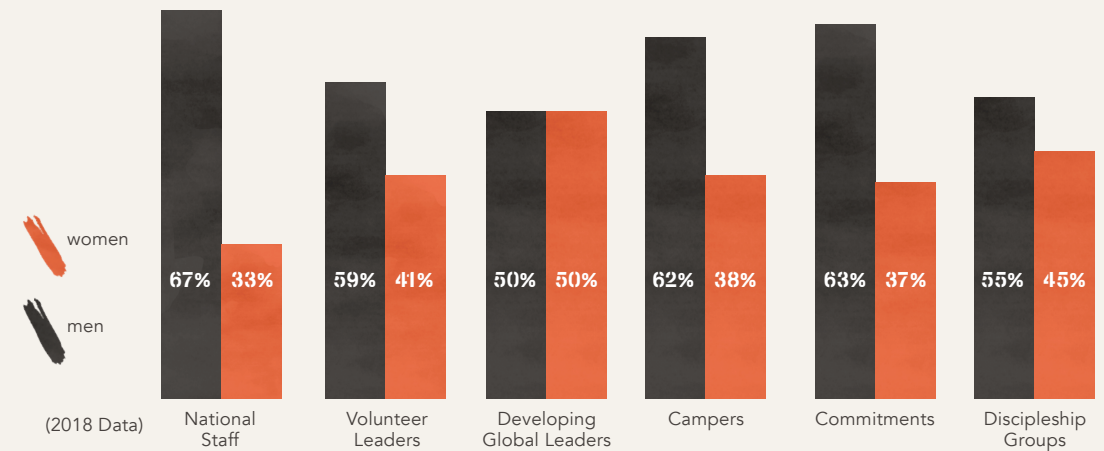
Please join us in praying for a special cohort of nine senior women that have key leadership positions within Young Life Africa. They met for the first training of the Women’s Leadership Accelerator in September 2018. The cohort will meet regularly throughout 2019 to grow in servant leadership together. This inaugural Women’s Leadership Accelerator is a collaboration between Young Life Africa Women’s Leadership Initiative and the Young Life Training Department.

Through a curriculum developed by the Young Life Training Department, this cohort of high potential, senior women will learn to lead from their strengths, grow in executive leadership skills and develop their spiritual lives. Using tools and case studies, the women will assess their skills, gifts and ministry situations and determine strengths and growth areas. In addition, they will expand their understanding of operations and communications in order to mentor their country teams in these areas. The overall goals are to reach more lost kids for Jesus and prepare women leaders for high level staff positions within the division.

The Women’s Accelerator program supports Young Life’s FORWARD plan which includes the pillar, *Together: Building and equipping teams that reflect the worldwide body of Christ*. Equally it addresses *Growth: Impacting all kids- those within reach and those out of sight*, as women leaders consider how to reach young adult women and teenage girls not able to participate in activities outside of their homes due to cultural restrictions. This takes *Innovation*, another key pillar, *Creating new ways today to reach kids tomorrow*, because recruiting, training, deploying and retaining African women in ministry takes deliberate ingenuity. *Deeper in Christ: seeking the Lord first and helping kids grow in their faith*, the fourth pillar of FORWARD, is infused in all that we do as women in leadership.

## Young Life Africa/Middle East Women’s Leadership

We’ve made a focused effort to engage and empower women and girls in leadership and ministry within Young Life Africa/Middle East. There is more work to do but much to celebrate as the percentages of women and girls involved at every level continues to rise.



Women’s Accelerator training in Tanzania



# In Her Words

MEET SOME OF THE  
MANY WOMEN IN  
NEED OF SPONSORSHIP



Hannah Ayalew

## Hannah Ayalew, Ethiopia

Around the Ethiopian staff, Hannah is soft-spoken and seemingly shy; however, once she is around her Capernaum kids, she lights up. A few years back, Hannah started developing a passion for kids with special needs, who are at times cast aside or treated as inferior in Ethiopia. She began focusing on kids with disabilities in her ministry, teaching herself sign language to be able to interact with the deaf. Though she has a quieter personality than many of the other Ethiopian staff women, she is wielding her strengths to reach out to the forgotten and unheard voices of kids with disabilities.



Ethel Dixon Andrews

## Ethel Dixon Andrews, Liberia

Ethel is expanding YoungLives ministry in her area. She currently serves as an area director and oversees a club that draws about 100 teen moms. Ethel is planning ahead for the coming years and has many dreams in the works: creating a ratio of one mentor per two teen moms, moving back to exclusive YoungLives clubs since integrated clubs aren't serving the moms as hoped. They are recruiting additional childcare volunteers, training mentors and volunteers to specialize with teen moms, and creating a camp for pregnant teenagers. Ethel has already trained 10 mentors and is making strides to connect with and encourage teen moms in Liberia.



Lina Massique

## Lina Massique, Mozambique

Lina is lovingly called "Mana" by the girls she leads, which means "Older Sister." For Lina, leadership means "to live for the next generation, which means to live today impacting people that will impact people in the next generation." Her greatest challenge is earning the right to be heard, not only by her Young Life girls, but also by her male coworkers.

Lina was a DGL student who graduated as a medical doctor. She hopes to combine her love for Young Life and medicine by connecting Young Life doctors with other doctors in Mozambique, and continuing to lead Young Life while also practicing medicine.



Zoe Nonde

## Zoe Nonde, Eswatini, formerly Swaziland

Zoe is new to staff and serves as the logistics coordinator for Eswatini, as well as leading three clubs in her area: an all-girls club, a Campaigners group, and a WyldLife club.

The logistics coordinator position is one of the three legs in the three-legged stool concept. The three-legged stool includes; field staff, logistics coordinator and bookkeeper which together create a cohesive infrastructure for field ministry.

Zoe's talent as a singer has been a point of connection for many girls. Many have been able to relate with and look up to her because of this gift. Moving forward, Zoe is using her creativity to develop a blog for Young Life Eswatini updates and spiritually-uplifting reads that can pour into the younger generation. She is reaching out to individuals to help start an arts ministry, and in many ways using her influence in the community to further the Young Life ministry.



Women's leadership training in Tanzania



# Partner with Her

HOW CAN YOU  
PARTNER WITH THESE  
COURAGEOUS WOMEN?



Women at YoungLives camp in Kenya

*"He split the rocks in  
the wilderness and  
gave them water as  
abundant as the seas;  
he brought streams  
out of a rocky crag  
and made water flow  
down like rivers."  
Psalm 78:15-16*

## How to partner.

If you'd like to partner with these leaders who are faithfully building up other young women, consider being a staff sponsor.

**Staff sponsorships** provide sustainable resources to cover all of our in-country operating costs. They include a \$12,000 annual commitment for three years. Through these sponsorships, you link arms with these leaders and enable them to carry out the hope and change they long to see in their communities.

## Thank you!

We thank these women leaders for empowering young girls in their communities and paving the way for generations to come. There is so much potential for women leaders in Young Life Africa to overcome these obstacles and split the rocks of oppression with the Lord's strength and power. As His followers, we are commissioned to stand in the gaps and partner with these women as they pioneer ahead. Join the movement and help women leaders raise up communities of young girls across Africa. Be part of transforming a continent. Partner with us and impact lives for eternity.



## Get Involved!

To learn more about partnership and deeper involvement with Young Life Africa please see our website under the "Get Involved" section.

[HTTPS://AFRICA.YOONGLIFE.ORG](https://africa.younglife.org)

Contact Dyan Larmey to learn more about the Women's Leadership Initiative at

[DYAN@YLAFRICA.COM](mailto:DYAN@YLAFRICA.COM)

Contact Alyssa Alderman about opportunities for sponsorship at

[ALYSSA@YLAFRICA.COM](mailto:ALYSSA@YLAFRICA.COM)



