

KENYA CREATES

REPORT 2025





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I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

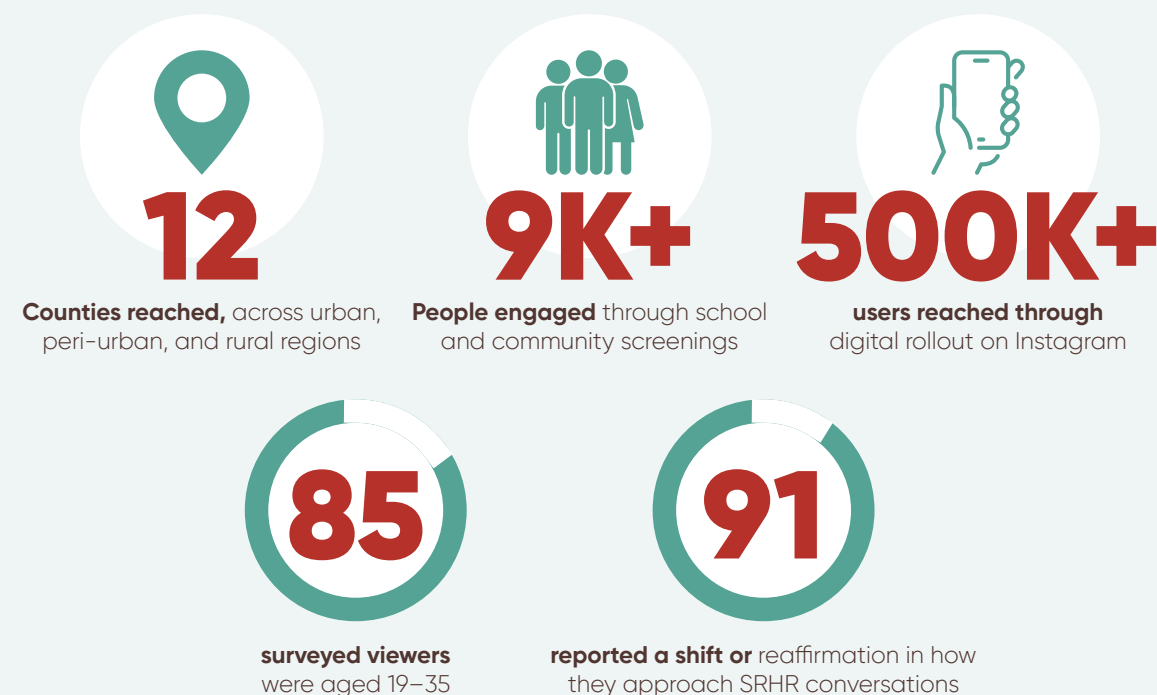
Kenya Creates is a youth-focused impact campaign designed to shift how young people in Kenya engage with Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Running from January 2025 to June 2025, the project brought together six Kenyan storytellers to produce films and digital content exploring themes of body image, sexuality, shame, consent, and identity. Supported by IRIS and the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), Docubox used storytelling in the program as a catalyst for reflection, conversation, and advocacy.

The campaign was grounded in the belief that behavioral change begins with recognition, not instruction. When audiences see their realities reflected in honest, locally rooted narratives, they begin to question, talk, and reimagine what is possible.

The strategy was anchored in **four** access points:

- 1 **Conversation** through moderated dialogue
- 2 **Reflection** through storytelling
- 3 **Connection** through trusted local actors
- 4 **Action** through co-created tools and advocacy spaces

Reach, Engagement & Impact



* All films are being licensed by [Tunga Africa](#) for educational purposes in Junior High Schools and Tertiary institutions for the next 2–5yrs.

Creators, facilitators, and educators reported **increased confidence in addressing sensitive topics through film and dialogue.**

Key Insights & Future Implications

- 1 **Narrative Power** Storytelling created new language for sensitive SRHR topics, making conversations possible in schools, homes, and online spaces.
- 2 **Creator Evolution** Filmmakers gained confidence in their role as cultural educators and advocates, showing potential for sustained impact through art.
- 3 **Audience Readiness** Even younger audiences responded with clarity and insight, revealing a need for early, age-appropriate SRHR education.
- 4 **Digital Opportunity** Online spaces emerged as sites of emotional bonding, identity affirmation, and creator recognition.
- 5 **Advocacy Momentum** The campaign opened new opportunities for partnerships, policy framing, and tool development, with demand for longer-term engagement and localized messaging.

“As the films continue to circulate, **Kenya Creates offers a replicable model for rights-based SRHR storytelling grounded in cultural nuance, youth leadership, and emotional resonance.**”

I INTRODUCTION

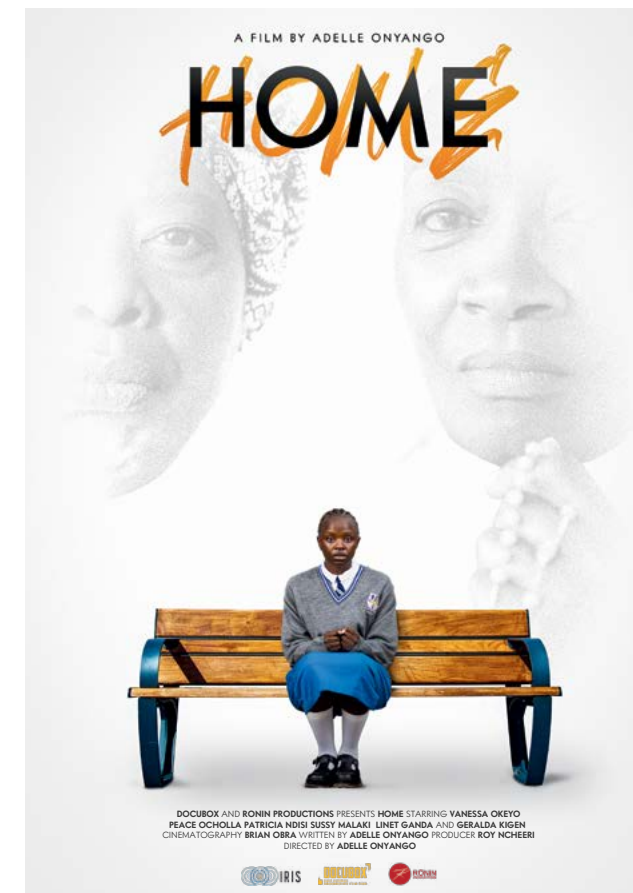
Kenya Creates emerged at a time when narratives around sexuality, adolescence, and body image were intersecting with rising digital influence, persistent social norms, and limited policy communication. Running from January 2025 to June 2025, the Kenya Creates impact campaign, curated by Docubox and supported by IRIS and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), sought to shift how young people engage with Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Kenya through storytelling.

The program began with six storytellers: **a poet, a comedian, a journalist, and three filmmakers.** They were invited into a writing room without a fixed thematic brief, guided instead by a single question: what does it mean to grow up with a body, in this place, at this time? Out of that process, four short films and two web series were developed with funding support. Each work explores adolescence, sexuality, self-worth, and identity. Though made for youth, the stories resonate across generations, creating room for parents, educators, and caregivers to enter the conversation.

The urgency of this work is grounded in overlapping realities. **Young Kenyans are surrounded by a fast-growing ecosystem of digital content that** includes influencers, memes, hookup apps, and informal sex education. These voices **offer a mix of empowerment, misinformation, moral judgment, and aspiration.** At the same

time, **national conversations around SRHR remain framed by religious, cultural, and biomedical language,** often leaving out the emotional and social contexts in which young people form their understanding of sex, consent, and self-worth. Formal sex education remains limited or inconsistent across the country.

Kenya Creates positioned storytelling as an intervention rooted in recognition rather than instruction. Stories open emotional entry points. They offer language, reflect silences, and spark self-inquiry. The campaign's Theory of Change was grounded in four shifts: reflection through storytelling, conversation through dialogue, connection through trusted intermediaries, and action through advocacy and tools. This approach recognized that engagement happens in layered spaces: homes, schools, churches, festivals, the media, and social media timelines.



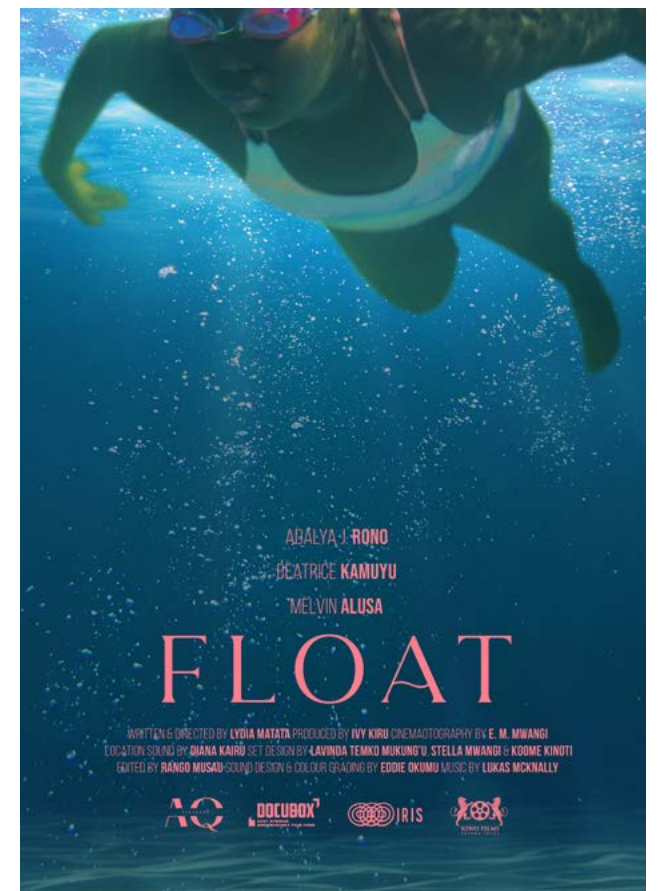
+ HOME
ADELLE ONYANGO



+ KNOW THY BODY, KNOW THYSELF
TY NGACHIRA



+ BELLA IS DYING, MAYBE NEXT WEEK
ABIGAIL ARUNGA, MKAIWAWI MWAKABA



+ FLOAT
LYDIA MATATA

To bring this strategy to life, the campaign unfolded in four core phases:

01 Film Maker Selection and Story Development

This foundational phase established the creative core of the Kenya Creates campaign. It began with the careful selection of six storytellers drawn from across Kenya's creative landscape. Through a combination of open call, network referrals, and targeted outreach, a diverse cohort was curated. The selected creatives entered a five-month development journey designed to surface personal narratives, reframe SRHR through lived experience, and shape stories that could speak across generations and cultural differences.

02 Community Outreach and Advocacy

Impact screenings formed the emotional backbone of the campaign. Over 9,000 participants across 12 counties engaged with the films in schools, community halls, and festivals. Each screening included facilitated discussions designed to model honest, culturally responsive dialogue. Feedback surfaced recurring themes: a hunger for language around body image, a deep discomfort with silence, and a growing willingness to challenge inherited norms. Brain Trust sessions convened SRHR experts, advocates, and educators to translate these insights into strategic advocacy thinking, policy relevance, and future collaboration.

“At its core, this report asks: when youth are offered local stories that affirm their bodies, challenge silence, and honor complexity, what kind of cultural, emotional, and civic change begins to take shape?”

04 Research and Partnership Building

This initial phase focused on relationship building, listening, and landscape analysis. Partnerships with NGOs, CBOs, and regional actors enabled the team to access communities where SRHR remains sensitive or stigmatized. Original outreach plans shifted to include new counties where stronger local networks emerged. This flexibility, informed by logistical feasibility and trust-based relationships, was critical in grounding the campaign's presence in each context.

03 Online and Broadcast Engagement

A targeted digital rollout extended the campaign's impact into the platforms where youth are already active. Instagram content reached over 500,000 users. Podcasts created space for filmmakers to reflect on shame, storytelling, and gendered experiences. Audience comments showed strong emotional resonance and pride in seeing Kenyan stories told in Kenyan voices. The Kenya Creates website now serves as an evolving resource hub, with future plans to house facilitation guides and SRHR toolkits.

This MEL report draws from baseline research, the campaign's Theory of Change, audience data, and implementation across these three phases. It examines what changed for audiences and creators, what conversations took root, what narratives began to shift, and what new opportunities emerged. The report also surfaces tensions, barriers, and questions that remain, including the role of framing in shaping responses, the challenge of scaling trust, and the need for safe, sustained platforms for dialogue.



THEORY OF CHANGE & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK	PHASE BY PHASE ANALYSIS	KEY FINDINGS & INSIGHTS
LEARNING QUESTIONS: WHAT DID WE LEARN?	EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS	

THEORY OF CHANGE & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Kenya Creates was anchored in the understanding that behavior change in the SRHR space does not begin with information alone. It begins with recognition. When individuals, especially young people, see themselves reflected in complex, culturally attuned stories, they begin to engage differently. They reflect, question, share, and in some cases, reimagine what is possible. This campaign positioned storytelling as a civic and emotional access point to shift perceptions, foster dialogue, and strengthen demand for accurate, inclusive, and affirming SRHR information and services.

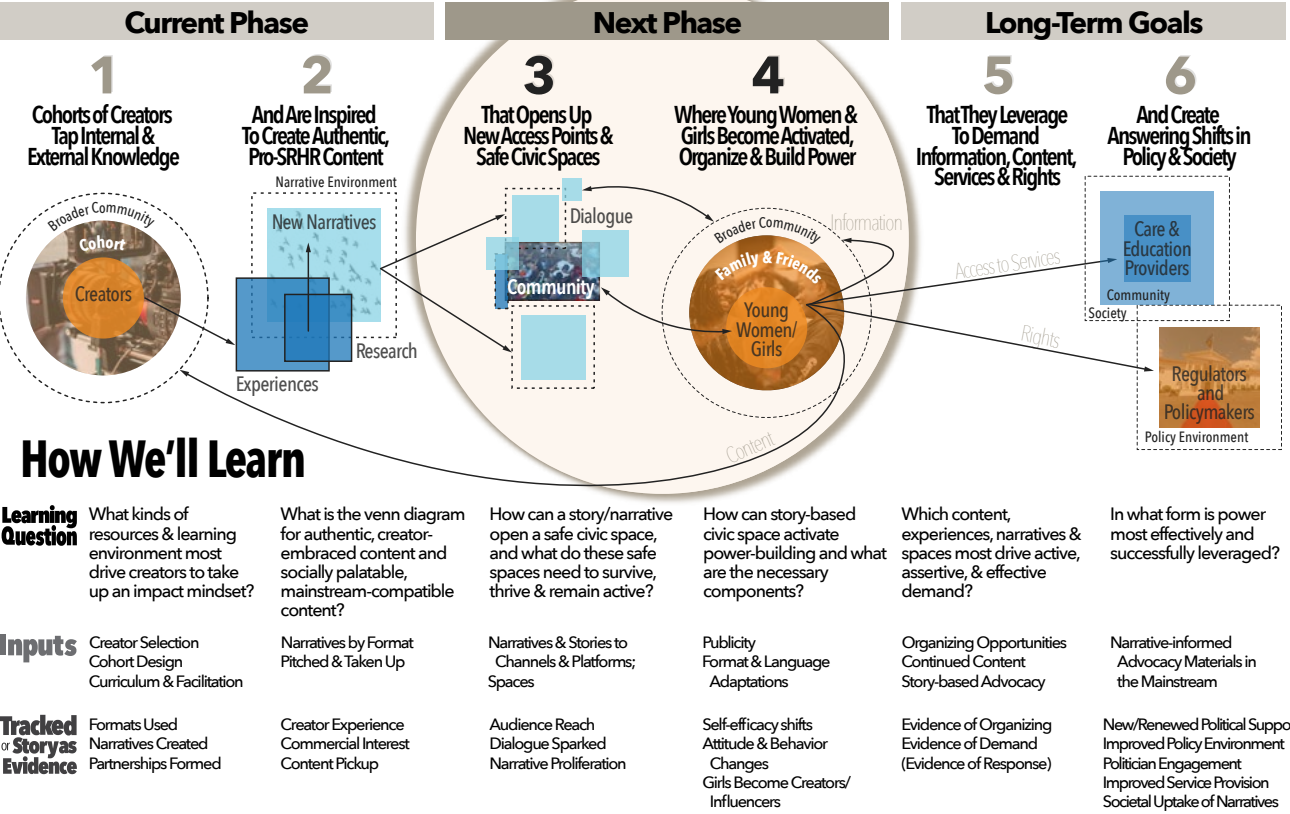
The theory of change acknowledged the diverse environments where these stories would land; homes, classrooms, festivals, and social media feeds. Each space carries different norms and framings, shaped by moral, cultural, medical, and legal traditions. In Kenya, these framings often overlap. Religious discourse prescribes chastity, cultural norms frame sex as taboo, and biomedical knowledge remains technical and distant from lived experience. SRHR rights are protected in policy but continue to face resistance when interpreted as foreign or disruptive to established values.

To respond to this, Kenya Creates built its strategy around four points of entry: reflection, conversation, connection, and action.

- 1 Reflection** was achieved through film; stories that speak without instructing, allowing audiences to feel and welcoming reactions.
- 2 Conversation** emerged through screenings and post-film discussions, where ideas could be tested in community.
- 3 Connection** was made possible through trusted intermediaries, community-based partners, SGRHJ actors, and journalists, who anchored the campaign in lived realities.
- 4 Action** was encouraged through collaborative advocacy spaces and the development of practical tools that could continue to support learning and dialogue beyond the campaign’s end.

Rather than prescribing a single narrative, the campaign embraced multiple entry points and forms of participation, where engagement was shaped by context, and by the ability of stories to meet people where they are.

IRIS | CIFF Theory of Change



PHASE BY PHASE ANALYSIS

PHASE 1

FILM MAKER SELECTION & STORY DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 2

RESEARCH & PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

PHASE 3

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ADVOCACY

- Impact Screenings
- Audience Survey Feedback
- Brain Trust Sessions
- Journalist Fellowship
- Regional Exposure

PHASE 4

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

- Social Media Engagement
- Podcast & Radio Reach
- Digital Space - Website

PHASE 1

FILM MAKER SELECTION & STORY DEVELOPMENT

The selection process was led by IRIS in partnership with Docubox and Executive Producer in Residence, Dr. Mehret Mandefro. From a pool of **34 applicants** sourced via platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Realness Institute, and Komons' Fellowship, **10 were interviewed and 6 selected.** Once convened, the cohort took part in **3 workshops over 5 months.** These sessions explored themes of self-worth, sexuality, shame, and identity through writing prompts, screenings, and peer critique. **Rather than beginning with a thematic brief, the creatives were encouraged to write from experience.**

This approach created stories that were emotionally grounded and contextually resonant. Each storyteller arrived at a complete short film script, and two developed web series concepts. The workshop format allowed time for feedback, revision, and reflection, contributing to the depth and originality of the final works. In production, creatives chose their own teams, building synergy and ownership. Four films moved into full production with support from Docubox, while the web series projects remain in development. This phase gave the campaign its emotional and artistic foundation, shaping how audiences would later enter conversations around SRHR.

PHASE 2

RESEARCH & PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

A strategic Research and Partnership Building phase was undertaken to ensure the campaign was locally grounded, culturally responsive, and strategically positioned for maximum reach. **The campaign prioritized forming partnerships with NGOs, CBOs,**

educators, and influencers to facilitate access to communities, especially in rural and underserved areas. Originally, six hotspot counties were selected for outreach. Narok, Samburu, Meru, Siaya, Kilifi, and Nairobi; based on relevance to SRHR priorities and potential for audience engagement.

During implementation, the campaign successfully reached three of the originally prioritized counties, Meru, Kilifi, and Nairobi, while expanding into six additional counties: Kitale, Nakuru, Marsabit, Moyale, Mombasa, and Kwale. This strategic pivot was informed by the availability of strong local contacts, improved audience access through schools and festivals (such as the Kenya National Drama & Film Festival and Science & Engineering Fair), and greater logistical feasibility. While some of the original counties posed financial and coordination challenges, the newly engaged counties remained within the broader hotspot list and offered cost-effective, high-impact opportunities for outreach, particularly in school education settings. Throughout this phase, the campaign built meaningful collaborations with partners such as [Tunga Afrika](#), [Health and Planet Empowerment Network](#), [CIFA Kenya](#), [Dorcas Organization](#), [ALX Africa](#), [CTRL Z Tribe](#), and others.

Although stakeholder interviews were initially planned, they were not conducted due to time constraints, with campaign mapping instead informed by desk research and analysis of existing SRHR data. This limitation highlights that future campaigns would benefit from longer lead times to conduct thorough regional consultations and co-design strategies with local actors. Understanding which partnerships prove most effective, and why, will be critical for scaling future SRHR campaigns in diverse Kenyan contexts.

PHASE 3

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ADVOCACY

IMPACT SCREENINGS

The community and institutional screenings conducted under the Kenya Creates campaign formed the emotional and strategic backbone of the project's outreach work. With an initial goal of reaching **1,000 individuals** through school and community-based impact screenings across **6 counties**, the campaign reached over **9,000** people through events spanning **12 counties**, including both planned and additional regions. These screenings were designed to act as curated interventions that sparked dialogue, reflection, and action on issues related to sexual and reproductive health, body image, and open communication.

Each screening was organized to create a culturally relevant, emotionally safe space for different audience groups: adolescents, youth out of school, parents, teachers, and university students. The aim was to offer insight through storytelling by modelling conversations that remain largely absent in homes, classrooms, and communities.

Pre-Screening – Unseen Nairobi JANUARY 28, 2025

The pre-screening event was a smallscale, invite-only gathering that brought together **36 individuals**, many of whom were members of the production teams, advisory partners, and early campaign supporters. This initial session allowed the team to observe audience reactions in an intimate space, refine facilitation strategies, and collect early impressions of the films' emotional and thematic resonance. The discussions that followed focused largely on the films' ability to surface personal memory, cultural silences, and the awkwardness around intergenerational communication.

Several guests remarked on how *“relatable”* the films were, particularly Know Thy Body, which drew laughter and discomfort in equal measure. This early feedback reinforced the campaign's strategy of using humor, character vulnerability, and visual storytelling to make difficult SRHR topics more accessible. The setting also allowed facilitators to test their approach to moderating post-screening conversations, which would prove essential in later, larger events.

Kenya Creates Premiere – Shalom House Gardens, Nairobi FEBRUARY 21, 2025

The official launch event brought together over **250 guests** from civil society, education, government, creative sectors, and SRHR fields. Hosted at Shalom House in Nairobi, the event featured live performances by Mufasa the Poet and Amara Tari, as well as conversations with filmmakers. This event served as the formal premiere that would position Kenya Creates as both an artistic and advocacy initiative.

Audience reactions were varied and deeply personal. One viewer shared that Know Thy Body reminded them “how I discovered sexuality,” while another spoke about how Float and Home *“really hit home for me as a dark-skinned woman who's had her fair share of ‘choice words’ about my body.”* The event sparked robust discussion about how the films resonated with current societal taboos and generational fears. **As one attendee wrote, “We MUST watch these films because they give a voice to the voiceless... they're mirrors for us to finally see ourselves clearly.”**

Kitale Film Week – Kitale, Trans-Nzoia County FEBRUARY 2–9, 2025

At Kitale Film Week, the Kenya Creates campaign reached **3,890 students** from

both primary and secondary schools across the region. Hosted in collaboration with Docubox, Tunga Afrika, and local educators, the screenings focused on the films Float and Home. Each screening was followed by moderated discussions led by facilitators trained to engage adolescents in sensitive, reflective conversation.

Audience engagement was animated and deeply thoughtful. Students from Bwaka Boys and St. Joseph's Girls School shared openly about self-worth and gender expectations. The themes of shame, affirmation, and the power of one's voice resonated strongly. In one session, a student commented, *“Udhaifu wako usikufanye ukanyamaze,”* reflecting how silence around body and identity was often internalized as weakness. **Teachers who participated reported that students continued to reference scenes from the films days after the screening, indicating a longer-term emotional imprint.** These reflections affirmed that film-based interventions could bridge the emotional gap between formal SRHR content and young people's lived experiences.

Kenya Science & Engineering Fair – Embu County APRIL 6–11, 2025

At the Kenya Science and Engineering Fair in Embu, over **1,200 students** from across the country viewed the Kenya Creates films. The audience was largely composed of academic achievers, members of science clubs, and leadership circles. While this demographic is often perceived as data-driven or emotionally guarded, the screenings revealed surprising openness.

Students voiced a hunger for authenticity. Several learners gravitated toward Know Thy Body, finding its use of humor and honesty refreshing. One young man later shared, *“I could relate to the funny scenarios. I think most boys have*

experienced such when transitioning to adulthood.” Others reflected on how the current science curriculum rarely addresses emotional wellbeing or gender identity, creating a gap the films helped fill.

Kenya National Drama & Film Festival – Nakuru APRIL 10–12, 2025

At the KNDFF nationals, **669 students and teachers** from across Kenya viewed the Kenya Creates films as part of the larger drama and storytelling showcase. This audience featured students already engaged in storytelling, performance, and public speaking. Their interaction with the films reflected both an appreciation for narrative form and a deep identification with the films' themes.

Many students connected strongly with Float, which resonated with their own experiences of performative confidence and private insecurity. Home provoked several comments about silence at home and the unspoken nature of shame. The youth gravitated toward scenes where characters struggled to express themselves, mirroring their own frustration in doing so with adults. One teacher, after watching Float, confessed she had enforced grooming policies without understanding the emotional cost to her students.

The post-screening discussions showed the depth of disconnection that exists between adults and adolescents around SRHR. Students raised critical questions about whose job it is to teach them about their bodies, and when that conversation should begin. One girl said she related most to Adhis because *“no one told me I was enough.”* **Teachers reflected that the films provided an essential resource not just for students but also for training staff to handle sensitive topics with compassion and realism.**



Unseen Cinema Public Screenings – Nairobi
APRIL 7 – 13, 2025

The Unseen Cinema Run unfolded as a week-long urban engagement that invited Nairobi audiences into an intentionally intimate space for reflection, storytelling, and shared cultural experience. With a cumulative attendance of **147 participants** across **6 evenings**, each screening brought together a mix of filmmakers, students, SRHR actors, and curious citizens. Viewers engaged deeply with the films, responding in real time through laughter, spoken-word reactions, and written notes. The audience leaned into Bella's panic in *Bella Is Dying* with knowing humor, *"Maybe next week,"* one participant wrote, echoing the film's final lines. Others found poetry in the emotional arc of the stories, noting lines like *"Your body is not a graveyard for people to bury their pain,"* and *"Love lives here. It is born with every breath."* What emerged over the course of the week was an appreciation for the stories and a collective affirmation of the power of Kenyan voices to speak into silence, especially around shame, sex, and self-image.

The consistent presence of film lovers and cultural commentators reinforced the anthology's value as an educational tool and a creative benchmark. *"I'm loving how we are evolving in the creative, storytelling, and edutainment industry,"* one attendee reflected. *"Absolutely love everything I watched and proudly Kenyan while celebrating Kenyan creators. Keep creating."* **These screenings showed that SRHR storytelling in public cinema spaces can thrive when the storytelling is sharp, the humor is grounded, and the message is delivered in a language audiences already live in.**

Northern & Eastern Kenya Screenings
MAY 2025

The May screenings in Meru, Isiolo, Marsabit, and Moyale marked a powerful moment

of outreach into regions where access to SRHR content is typically constrained. Working with local partners; CIFA Kenya, Dorcas Organization, Isiolo Theatric, Meru Youth Service, and Tunga Afrika, the campaign conducted a blend of school and community screenings that **reached a total of 1,898 participants**. Students from schools such as Nkuene.

Girls High School, Thigaa Secondary, Sacred Heart of Jesus Minor Seminary, and Moyale Boys High School engaged actively with the films. Facilitated post-screening dialogues revealed the films' ability to unlock deeply personal experiences. In Isiolo, a student said quietly, *"Mimi sijawahi ona filamu ya mtu akiongea ukweli kuhusu mwili wake namna hii."* In Marsabit, some boys initially resisted the emotional openness in *Float*, while girls responded with layered stories of hiding their emotions and withdrawing from adults. **Teachers in Meru noted that the films had stirred more questions than time allowed, prompting requests for follow-up resources.**

Across all four counties, the screenings revealed that silence around SRHR topics often stems not from disinterest, but from fear of shame, judgment, and social disapproval. In Moyale, one boy captured the collective sentiment by saying, *"Hii sio filamu tu. Ni ukweli wetu."* The lack of consistent, trusted platforms had made it difficult for youth to express or even formulate their questions. These screenings changed that dynamic, if only briefly, by creating spaces where identity, consent, and self-worth could be named and explored. The cultural specificity of each county emerged in subtle ways: in Isiolo, questions circled around who had the right to speak; in Meru, students demanded more time and space. These differences underscored the importance of not treating SRHR messaging as one-size-fits-all, but instead responding to local realities with locally anchored tools.

Coast Screenings
JUNE 20–23, 2025

In partnership with Health and Planet Empowerment Network, the campaign conducted a series of school and community screenings across Kilifi, Mombasa, and Kwale counties. Over four days, **1,299 participants** were reached across venues including Kididima, Mtwapa Elite Academy, Soan Academy, Bongwe Primary, and Lorenza Vocational Training

“These screenings showed that SRHR storytelling in public cinema spaces can thrive when the storytelling is sharp, the humor is grounded, and the message is delivered in a language audiences already live in.”

Centre in Ukunda. The sessions engaged adolescents (11–17), out-of-school youth (18–24), teachers, and parents in powerful, often emotional dialogue. At Mtwapa Elite Academy, Home resonated deeply, with one girl saying, *"Nilimwona Adhis kama mimi – kila siku nikijiuliza kama natosha."* At Soan Academy, a girl shared her story of teenage pregnancy and parental rejection: *"Nilipata mimba, mama yangu hakutaka kuniona tena."*

Among adults, the sessions prompted reckoning. At Bongwe Primary, one parent confessed, *"I've never talked to my daughter about her body,"* while another urged for early SRHR education: *"Mtoto afundishwe sehemu zake akiwa mdogo... aelewe zinaitwaje, na hazigusiwi na mtu yeyote."* **Facilitators observed that discomfort often melted into urgency once discussions began.** At Lorenza Vocational Centre in Ukunda, a group of rescued girls responded with chants, reflections, and thoughtful debate on how to speak to peers about SRHR. *"Usijidharau. Mtie moyo*

mwenzako," one girl said during closing reflections. These screenings revealed how storytelling can become a healing infrastructure. They affirmed that the lack of safe, consistent platforms is a barrier, but when offered, those platforms are quickly claimed, used, and demanded again.

Vuka Film Festival Screening – University of Nairobi
JUNE 13, 2025

At the University of Nairobi's Vuka Film Festival, 85 university students between the ages of **18 and 25 attended** a Kenya Creates screening session aligned with the festival's theme, *"Voices Unheard."* The screening featured all four anthology films and was followed by an open discussion moderated by two of the filmmakers: Abigail Arunga (*Bella Is Dying*) and Eric Mwangi (*Float*). The Q&A brought layered reflections. Several students shared how the stories mirrored their upbringing, particularly the silences around sexuality and parental discomfort. One woman said, *"Home and Float reminded me that beauty varies, and so does power. No one really told us that."* **Many audience members found relief in seeing characters on screen vocalize things they themselves had long buried.**

The screening reaffirmed that even among older audiences, silence around SRHR topics persists. Students remarked on the gap between their private struggles and public personas, and how the films carved out a rare moment to reconcile the two. One participant reflected, *"We've all lived some version of Bella's fear. Trying to figure it out without ever asking questions."* The university setting allowed for frank conversations, with young men opening up about pressures to perform masculinity, and young women pushing back against body shaming norms still common in urban campuses. The session ended with students suggesting that these screenings be made part of regular student life programming.

Kidfarmaco Screening JULY 2025

Held at Kidfarmaco Primary School, this screening reached **400 upper-primary students**, a demographic often left out of SRHR conversations. The films Float and Know Thy Body were carefully selected and scaffolded to be ageappropriate, offering a gentle but clear entry into themes of puberty, shame, and confidence. The young audience reacted with both laughter and quiet recognition. One boy whispered to a friend, *"Hiyo ndio mimi kila asubuhi, kujifi cha kwa sweater,"* during a scene about covering up during body changes. Despite their age, students quickly related the films' messages to real-life teasing, early physical development, and questions they often felt too shy to ask in class.

Facilitators noted that the laughter served not to deflect but to process, giving younger students permission to feel awkward while still engaging. Teachers appreciated the tone and format, expressing a desire for more content that addresses body confidence and emotional resilience at this stage of development. They requested teacher-friendly facilitation guides and lesson plans that could adapt the films into ongoing life skills programming. This screening illustrated the importance of early intervention: by offering language and visual storytelling early, the campaign planted ideas and tools that may shape how these learners respond to adolescence before the shame has time to root deeply.

ALX Screenings JULY 18, 2025

During ALX Africa's *"Kenyan Night"* at the Nation Centre Hub in Nairobi, **90 attendees** from creative and tech backgrounds gathered for a screening of all four Kenya Creates films. The response was lively, emotionally engaged, and deeply affirming. Many spoke to the importance of seeing Kenyan stories told in Kenyan voices. One audience member said, *"Bella is Dying*

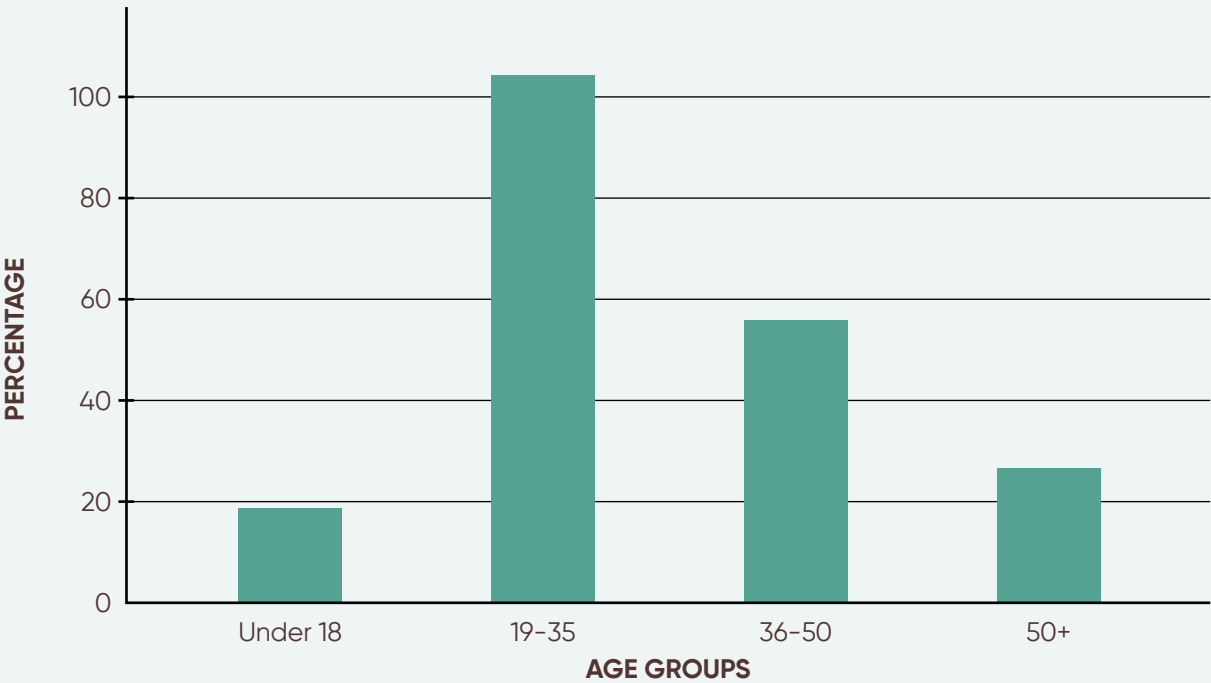
is all of us. Like, we all thought we would die after kissing a boy." Another wrote, *"Know Thy Body reminded me how uncomfortable my parents were with serious conversations. I had to figure this out polepole."* Others leaned into celebration: *"Love lives here... it's born with every breath."*

The films struck a balance between humor and vulnerability, allowing participants to locate themselves in the stories. Reflections on Float prompted dialogue around shared responsibility in learning and teaching. The feedback showed that participants were interested in the discussion topics. Several asked how they could host similar events in their networks, schools, or workplaces. One attendee noted, *"These films give a voice to the voiceless, and to people like me, to understand we're not alone."* Others called for broader access, translations, and screenings for teenagers and their parents. The session underscored that storytelling, when local and honest, carries the power to ripple far beyond the room.

“*Know Thy Body reminded me how uncomfortable my parents were with serious conversations. I had to figure this out polepole."*



AUDIENCE SURVEY FEEDBACK



AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS BY AGE GROUP

From the responses provided, the majority of viewers were between the ages of 19–35. This group made up approximately 85% of the total respondents.

This skew toward young adults highlights the films’ relevance to audiences actively navigating body image, identity, and early parenting; people positioned both as learners and as potential mentors. Respondents within this range often identified themselves as “parent,” “guardian,” “child,” “filmmaker,” “learner,” or “auntie,” reflecting overlapping personal and professional lenses.

Did the Films Highlight Body Positivity, Sexuality Education & Communication?

100% of respondents said the films successfully addressed issues of body image, sexuality education, and communication. Responses emphasized that the films brought visibility to rarely

discussed experiences and created emotional clarity. One viewer said, “They all did, in very clever ways and via different genres.”

Viewers appreciated the variety of tones across the films: humor, poetry, realism, and confrontation. One respondent noted, “Each film had relatable struggles,” while another emphasized, “Know Thy Body had a humorous way of tackling body positivity and identity.”

Others connected the films directly to lived experience. A viewer reflecting on Home shared, “It resonates with how we grew up.” Another emphasized that “Not all information is good information,” especially when children are left to figure things out alone. For many, this thematic coverage was overdue. As one person wrote, “These are conversations we need to keep having, everywhere.”

For younger audiences, the films offered clarity and language. One child said simply: “It shows clearly the effects of not having these conversations, like early pregnancy.”

Did the Films Shift Perspectives on Talking to Children?

91% of respondents said the films changed or reaffirmed their commitment to discussing body image and sexuality with children. For some, the shift was deeply personal. One parent shared, “My son was called ‘short baba’ yesterday. He failed to score a goal. I went for a walk and let him cry, then came back and we talked about ignoring people’s opinions.”

Several parents said they had never previously considered starting such conversations early. One said: “Sex education should start at home,” while another offered, “It’s not right to let the young struggle with issues we grew up struggling with.” Some noted they were already on this journey but felt affirmed and reenergized. A viewer said, “I’m already doing this. I believe there’s no shame in being open and honest with kids about the changes they’ll go through.”

Others emphasized how the films provided new tools; a vocabulary to begin conversations that had previously felt impossible. One said, “The films have strengthened my perspective. If you can communicate anything clearly, and to the right people, you won’t fail to find help.”

Who Needs to Watch These Films – and Why?

Across the board, respondents offered clear suggestions on who these films should reach.

Teenagers were seen as the most urgent audience, with many saying early intervention could prevent longterm harm. One respondent shared: “Kids become aware of their bodies and each other’s much earlier than we acknowledge. By around 12, they’re already navigating these conversations, often without proper guidance.”

Parents were named almost as frequently. Respondents argued that real change must start at home. “It’s better to learn from a trusted friend or family than from untrustworthy sources.” Another added: “Parents need to be trained before they can guide youth.”

Teachers and community leaders were called on to bridge the communication gap. Several responses were expansive, calling on “everyone in society,” “all age groups,” and “anyone who ever talks to or raises a child.” One viewer stated: “Everyone should watch these films, to see what we’re not doing, and to do better.”



BRAIN TRUST SESSIONS

Over the course of the campaign, three Brain Trust sessions were convened to support long-term advocacy thinking and stakeholder alignment. These carefully structured gatherings brought together SRHR experts, youth advocates, and civil society actors from five organisations to exchange insights, challenge silos, and deepen cross-sector collaboration. In line with the campaign’s theory of change, the Brain Trusts were designed to empower stakeholders to push for longterm SRHR policy shifts and new, favorable introductions through positional authority and by anchoring advocacy in shared language, experience, and evidence.

The sessions created a rare, trust-based space where challenges were named candidly and solutions were co-authored; offering insight and a working blueprint for strategic SRHR collaboration going forward.

THEMATIC INSIGHTS FROM BRAIN TRUST ATTENDEES

Grounding SRHR Policy in Community Realities (38%)

Participants overwhelmingly found that the Braintrust helped bridge the gap between policy-level frameworks and the lived experiences of communities. Through honest conversations and diverse representation, they came to appreciate that SRHR cannot be treated as a universal model. Cultural nuance, language sensitivity, and localized messaging are critical. The sessions offered clarity on how certain terms or strategies, while effective in donor or urban contexts, fall flat or backfire in rural or conservative settings. This reinforced the Braintrust’s goal to equip advocates with people-centred, adaptable approaches. Participants are now more aware of the disconnects between top-down policy and bottom-up realities, and feel better positioned to

reframe their work with intentionality and impact.

SRHR is not a one-size-fits-all... sitting with everyone from the different spaces they work and live in opened my perspective on the blind spots I had.

The sessions clarified the gaps in collaboration and the need for tailored approaches to diverse cultural contexts.

Some policies that benefit men in one region may not work, and often do not, for women or girls in another.

Strengthening Knowledge Sharing & Cross-Sector Collaboration (34%)

A major theme that emerged across the feedback was frustration with knowledge being siloed or gatekept both within and across organizations. Participants valued the Braintrust for intentionally dismantling this trend, enabling open dialogue, co-learning, and clarity around shared challenges. Many noted that the sessions encouraged collective thinking and generated practical ideas for how to formalize collaboration beyond the meetings, including co-created toolkits, shared dissemination strategies, and mutual support networks. This directly aligns with the Braintrust’s purpose of catalyzing stakeholderdriven action frameworks and reducing fragmentation in SRHR advocacy. There is now a clear appetite for structured, ongoing collaboration across the network.

Organizational gatekeeping of knowledge products and siloed dissemination.

Let’s set up partnership agreements for Braintrust members and chart meaningful shortterm goals.

The Braintrust sessions addressed key barriers to the success of narrative-based advocacy, and helpful solutions were discussed.

Building Sustainable and Inclusive Advocacy Models (28%)

Participants highlighted the need to embed sustainability into both the process and the people behind advocacy. Participants pointed to several pain points that impede lasting change, including emotional burnout among advocates, culturally irrelevant messaging, and inconsistent support for youth and parent engagement. The Braintrust was credited with creating space to explore these systemic issues honestly and identify actionable solutions: from localized messaging and community co-creation, to leveraging film and tech for wider access, and prioritizing wellness in the workplace. These reflections support the Braintrust’s long-term vision of sustainable SRHR advocacy that is scalable, inclusive, and grounded in care for advocates and communities alike.

The mental and emotional toll on advocates working in challenging and sensitive contexts.

We must integrate wellness, coalition-building, and strategic messaging into our next phase.

Create culturally tailored advocacy messaging that resonates with different community norms and reduces backlash.



JOURNALIST FELLOWSHIP

As part of the broader strategy to promote rightsbased SRHR discourse, the Journalist Fellowship initiative, led by Docubox in partnership with Journalists for Human Rights (JHR), supported 15 regional journalists to develop and publish indepth SRHR features. The programme aligned with the theory of change, which emphasizes that structured interventions like storytelling and media engagement can challenge stigma, promote body positivity, and influence policy.

Each fellow participated in training workshops, field mentorship, and peer learning sessions, followed by supported publication across platforms such as Nation, StorySpotlight, TalkAfrica, and community radio. Topics ranged from male infertility, faith and contraception, reproductive justice for girls in confinement, to disability and SRHR policy gaps. This diverse output reflects an improved journalistic skill, coupled with a shift in how SRHR stories are framed; with nuance, inclusion, and accountability.

INSIGHTS FROM THE FELLOWSHIP

Stronger Journalistic Framing and Technical Growth (27%)

The fellowship led to a clear increase in confidence, structure, and SRHR literacy among participating journalists. Mentors reported sharper interview strategies, ethical storytelling, and stronger framing for target audiences. Fellows also highlighted how mentorship helped refine angles, sourcing, and policy grounding.

One fellow, whose piece on girls' reproductive autonomy was published by Nation Media ([read here](#)), described her transformation from simply reporting stories to crafting investigations that push for systemic reform.

Mentorship helped me shape my story focus and narrative discipline.

I've gained clarity in structure and a deeper understanding of SRHR.

The one-on-one sessions worked best. They pushed me to go deeper.

Stories as Catalysts for Awareness, Dialogue, and Policy Impact (23%)

The fellowship produced stories informed and inspired community conversations, while triggering institutional responses. One journalist's feature prompted a UN Women visit to a safe house mentioned in her story, while another sparked community dialogues on early marriage and contraception after airing on Radio Salaam.

Stories on male involvement in maternal health ([read here](#)) and men's infertility experiences ([read here](#)) led to social media engagement, feedback from policymakers, and even inclusion in health outreach activities.

A safe house in my story was later visited by UN Women.

My article was used in health forums to start conversations with couples.

Men said the story helped them rethink how they support their partners.

Greater Inclusion of Underrepresented SRHR Topics (22%)

Journalists explored angles often missing in mainstream coverage; from male infertility and safe abortion, to disability-inclusive reproductive health policy and reproductive coercion. These stories widened the narrative lens and at the same time repositioned SRHR as a justice issue, not just a health concern.

A fellow's story on intersex rights and policy neglect was praised by SRHR professionals for its research depth and bold contribution to inclusion narratives ([read here](#)). Another article on contraceptive myths in Mathare addressed faith-based stigma and lack of access in underresourced communities ([link](#)).

I now see SRHR as intersectional – it includes gender justice, disability, and power.

This fellowship helped me think critically about whose voices are missing.

I finally understood how period poverty and disability intersect with access.

Fellowship Design Enabled Meaningful Learning and Collaboration (16%)

Journalists credited their growth to the layered design of the fellowship: collective training, 1:1 mentorship, story pitching workshops, and access to the Africa Media Festival. Peer learning sessions offered exposure to diverse storytelling techniques, while publication support ensured stories reached real audiences.

Many said these experiences sparked new ideas, deepened motivation, and made them feel part of a wider SRHR movement. Mentors noted that having clear story development milestones also helped sustain focus.

The media festival showed me that stories can create networks, not just views.

The story workshops helped me humanize complex SRHR ideas.

Mentorship and pitching made me sharper – I now plan my stories better.

Challenges in Access and Stigma Call for Sustained Support (12%)

Despite success, many fellows reported difficulty securing interviews, especially when covering sensitive issues like infertility, abortion, or LGBTQ+ rights. Some struggled to build trust with sources or faced editorial hesitation due to the taboo nature of SRHR topics. These challenges affirm the need for continued financial support, legal literacy, and community trust-building.

Mentors emphasized the value of research assistants, data support, and institutional linkages, especially when stories intersect with policy debates or parliamentary processes.

Getting men to talk about infertility was hard. I needed a male colleague to step in.

Some community members only opened up after long-term trust-building.

Accessing reliable data and government voices was a big barrier.

REGIONAL EXPOSURE

CONFERENCES

Regional exposure was a key pillar in advancing the community outreach and advocacy objective, ensuring that the impact of the Kenya Creates films extended beyond local screenings and into broader policy and advocacy ecosystems. According to the theory of change, showcasing these films at conferences, summits, and festivals would create safe spaces for dialogue, broaden regional understanding of SRHRJ issues, and position storytelling as a legitimate advocacy tool. This was exemplified at the 8th Reproductive Health Network of Kenya (RHNK) Pan-African Adolescent & Youth Scientific Conference held in Mombasa, where Docubox hosted a masterclass and silent screening featuring all four Kenya Creates films. The session drew participation from advocates, health practitioners, and young changemakers from across Africa. The screening of *Bella Is Dying* in particular ignited reflective discussions on parent-child communication around sex education, reinforcing the effectiveness of storytelling in challenging silence and stigma.

Participation in such spaces cross-pollination of ideas and best practices across regions. During the RHNK event, in addition to engaging with the films, participants engaged with the process of film-based advocacy too, gaining practical insights on how to use media to influence community norms and policy conversations. Many organizations expressing interest in replicating the Docubox model in their own contexts. Hosting screenings in non-traditional settings like conference side events also demonstrated the scalability of the approach, offering a low-cost yet impactful way to insert pro-SRHR narratives into policy-adjacent spaces, where decision-makers and influencers are already gathered.

FILM FESTIVALS

Beyond conferences, the films gained visibility through regional and international film festivals, further expanding their reach. *Float* was selected at both the Ateker Film Festival in Turkana, Kenya and the FAME Short Film Festival in Cape Town, South Africa – amplifying underrepresented SRHRJ narratives within both rural and continental spaces. All four films were also screened at the Vuka Film Festival in Nairobi, placing them within a curated showcase of socially conscious cinema. These selections introduced the content to new, diverse audiences, signalling growing recognition of SRHRJ as a valid cinematic genre. They serve as early indicators that storytelling-led advocacy can achieve both cultural relevance and professional acclaim, advancing the case for long-term investment in media-based SRHR strategies.

FESTIVALS FEATURES

FILM	FESTIVAL	ACCOLADE
Float	Ateker Film Festival, Turkana, Kenya	Official Selection
Float	Kinolub International Film Festival for Children and Youth	Official Selection
Float	Zanzibar Internation Film Festival	Official Selection
Float	Fame Shorts Film Festival	Official Selection
Home	International Images Film Festival for Women 2025	Official Selection
Bella Is Dying, Maybe Next Week	The NGO International Film and Knowledge Forum: Parallel Event in collaboration with Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York (USA)	Special Screening
Bella Is Dying, Maybe Next Week	Ngalabi Shorts Film Festival	Official Selection
Know Thy Body Know Thyself	Ngalabi Film Festival	Official Selection
Know Thy Body Know Thyself	Bantu Film Festival	Official Selection
Kenya Creates (All Films)	Vuka Film Festival, Nairobi – Kenya	Official Selection



PHASE 4:

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

In collaboration with filmmakers and SRHRJ allies, Docubox launched a targeted digital activation during the Unseen Cinema Run and premiere window. Across just Instagram alone, the campaign reached over 500,000 users. The digital campaign was rooted in the belief that storytelling lives beyond the theatre, and when amplified online, can become a dynamic tool for reshaping public discourse.

The online rollout complemented the film's screening phase by introducing SRHRJ themes into public digital spaces in ways that were both personal and collective. Posts were curated to not only highlight the films and creatives but to stir interaction, pride, and self-reflection. The content strategy included behind-the-scenes features, premiere highlights, filmmaker spotlights, and user engagement prompts that encouraged viewers to tag friends, reflect on their relationship with Kenyan cinema, or share how they relate to the themes. The response was immediate and emotional: users praised the bravery of the films, expressed gratitude for representation, and positioned the work as necessary, timely, and affirming.

1 Community Bonding and Shared Cultural Pride (45% of Audience Comments)

The digital space emerged as a site of emotional communion. Users frequently tagged friends, siblings, or mentors, naming them as the people they most wanted to experience the films with. This expression of shared pride became a celebration of both storytelling and kinship, with cultural identity at the centre. There was also a marked reverence for the act of

seeing Kenyan stories by Kenyan creators; highlighting a broader hunger for local narratives that reflect real lives and values.

This will be the best moment for us to just press pause and enjoy the Kenya Creates premiere.

It would be surreal to sit among Kenyan movie enthusiasts.

I'd love to attend because it's always thrilling to see fellow Kenyans loving our homemade craft.

Really want to surprise my mate who taught me how Kenyan movies are going levels.

2 Celebration of Representation and Empowering Narratives (35% of audience comments)

The campaign tapped into a wave of appreciation for content that dared to challenge silences around sex, gender, and reproductive health. Words like liberating, powerful, and important repeatedly surfaced. Many noted that the films handled taboo topics responsibly and with depth. A number of users specifically linked this content to gaps in sex education, expressing a sense of relief and gratitude for stories that spoke to their own lived realities.

Sex education is key in breaking taboos and empowering young people to make informed choices.

These films tackle important issues like sexual and reproductive health, and I think it's crucial to support Kenyan filmmakers telling our stories.

This film is moving and powerful. I say DONT MISS IT.

3 Public Recognition and Emotional Resonance

with Creators (20% of audience comments) Viewers directed a flood of public praise toward the filmmakers, particularly first-time directors and young women creatives. These messages went beyond applause and reflected emotional investment in the people behind the work, celebrating them as cultural changemakers and community representatives. The online space allowed the public to connect directly with the creatives, and in doing so, reinforced the value of local storytelling as an act of visibility and validation.

Congratulations. Just WOW—you did it!

Super proud of you darling!

This actress and your directorial debut

These responses suggest that film's afterlife wasn't only about narrative but about ownership, community care, and creator recognition. That public-facing recognition can influence the confidence and sustainability of creators, and by extension, the SRHRJ storytelling space.

PODCAST & RADIO REACH

The podcast component of the Kenya Creates campaign was designed as an accessible and intimate platform to engage young people around Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Although the initial strategy included both podcasts and vernacular radio, the team ultimately leaned into podcasting (and YouTube-based storytelling) as the primary delivery mechanism. This pivot was informed by two key realities: first, in-house production allowed for greater control, authenticity, and speed; and second, radio airtime came with prohibitive costs and informal "kickback" expectations, making it unsustainable within budget constraints.

Aligned with the project's Theory of Change, this shift enabled the campaign to reach targeted youth audiences through platforms they already consume, and frame SRHR content using personal stories, humor, and cultural nuance.

1 Reframing Shame: From Stigma to Self-Acceptance – 40%

Across interviews and live conversations, participants consistently revisited their first encounters with body shame, misinformation, and fear-based SRHR messaging. Through storytelling and humor, they deconstructed these harmful narratives and reimagined their bodies as sites of power and agency. The podcast format provided a safe, non-judgmental space for introspection and vulnerability, enabling audiences to reflect on their own experiences while hearing others voice familiar struggles. This illustrates how early experiences with shame and policing of bodies create long-term barriers to SRHR engagement. However, reframing through lived experience and humor helps rebuild trust in personal narratives and bodily autonomy.

I want young African girls to watch Home and drown out the voices telling them they're not okay as they are. – Adelle

You were dumb. Try not to be dumb now. Poa? – Abigail, on forgiving her younger self.

Your life is not eventful at all. And that's okay. Boring people are the bread to the margarine." – Ty

You're told things when you're younger and if you hear them long enough, they become your truth. – Adelle

I didn't feel insecure in my body until someone taught me to. – Abigail

2 Localization and Cultural Relevance in SRHR Education – 35%

A strong undercurrent across all conversations was the dissonance between traditional SRHR programming and the lived experiences of Kenyan youth. Participants expressed a collective frustration with how SRHR is often communicated; via fear-based tactics, moral panic, or in inaccessible, donor-driven language. Instead, **they called for culturally grounded, Afrocentric communication approaches that mirror how previous generations once learned: through family, storytelling, and ritual.** By creating stories in their own voices and languages, the artists built a bridge between modern youth culture and culturally rooted approaches, without moralizing or fear.

We already knew how to do these things. We had words. We had systems.
– Abigail

The problem is, reproductive health is always framed like it's not for everyone – it's for 'the bad girls'. – Ty

The face of SRHR is rarely a guy, so we've framed it like it's only a girl problem. – Ty

We're starting in chapter 12 about diseases, when we skipped chapters 1 to 3 – about knowing your body.
– Adelle

3 Creativity as Healing, Education, and Advocacy – 25%

A unifying theme across all three filmmakers' reflections was the transformative power of creative expression as both a communication tool, a healing practice, and an advocacy strategy. For each of them, turning lived experience into film or comedy was an act of both personal catharsis and social engagement.

Through poetry, humor, and visual storytelling, they unlocked conversations that traditional education models often shy away from.

Adelle described poetry as her lifelong tool for survival. A way to make sense of experiences that nearly broke her. Ty spoke about his role as a comedic narrator as a way of inviting boys and men into the SRHR conversation. Abigail reflected on the difficulty (and reward) of directing, of holding a creative vision that could communicate vulnerability, rage, confusion, and joy all in one narrative arc. For all of them, art became a medium through which shame was deconstructed, knowledge was shared, and empathy was built.

I started writing poetry to make sense of things that nearly broke me. – Adelle

I didn't know technical terms, but I knew what I wanted. I told the crew: do something you've always wanted to try.
– Ty

Film forces you to hold a vision. I thought, I'm not a creative, until I directed. – Abigail

We were told not to do this, but I did it... and I'm thriving. – Adelle

The arts build empathy, invite reflection, and spark difficult conversations without alienating audiences. – Live panel reflection

“ You're told things when you're younger and if you hear them long enough, they become your truth. – Adelle

DIGITAL SPACE – WEBSITE

As part of the Kenya Creates campaign's longterm vision for sustainability and impact beyond physical screenings, a dedicated [website](#) was developed to serve as a central hub. It hosts key information about the films and filmmakers, provides a space for audiences or partners to request community screenings, and is designed to house future resources, including facilitation guides and toolkits. The platform seeks to support continued engagement by ensuring that SRHR narratives and discussions can live on digitally, reaching broader audiences in ways that physical events alone cannot.

A Comprehensive SRHR Toolkit was planned as one of the flagship deliverables to be hosted on this site. Its aim is to equip both adults and young people with accessible, culturally relevant tools to foster informed conversations on body positivity, sexual health, and rights. Proposed components include: guidance on body image, sexuality education basics, conversation starters, support networks, and feedback mechanisms. However, while the structure and intention for the toolkit are in place, the content itself is still in development.

This pause in development followed critical feedback from Brain Trust participants, who recommended investing additional time to ensure the toolkit truly adds value to the Kenyan SRHRJ landscape rather than duplicating existing resources. This aligns with one of the campaign's objectives around the demand for supplemental tools. It also reinforces the idea that digital platforms like the Kenya Creates website can be living archives, responsive to audience needs and iterative in nature, supporting the afterlives of the films outside festival runs, and enabling more sustained, meaningful SRHR engagement over time.



KEY FINDINGS & INSIGHTS

AUDIENCE RESONANCE:

WHAT STORIES LANDED, WITH WHOM, AND WHY?

NARRATIVE SHIFTS:

HOW DID PERCEPTIONS EVOLVE AND WHAT NEW STORIES BEGAN TO TAKE ROOT?

ADVOCACY POTENTIAL:

WHAT PRACTICES AND PLATFORMS OFFER THE MOST PROMISE FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS?

AUDIENCE RESONANCE: WHAT STORIES LANDED, WITH WHOM, AND WHY?

EMOTIONAL STORYTELLING CONNECTED ACROSS DEMOGRAPHICS

Audiences responded most strongly to stories that reflected their emotional lives. Films such as Float, Bella is Dying, and Home resonated with adolescent girls, university students, and teachers. The storytelling offered recognition, and the audience reactions confirmed a deep need for content that explores identity, shame, silence, and resilience. **Many viewers responded with statements like “That’s me,” indicating that the stories provided language and visibility for feelings they had rarely voiced.**

YOUTH WERE EAGER AND READY FOR DEEPER ENGAGEMENT

School-based screenings revealed a strong appetite for honest conversations among young people. Students engaged actively, asked thoughtful questions, and demonstrated emotional maturity. **Their reflections showed a readiness to think critically about body image, gender roles, and consent, especially when guided by peer-relevant storytelling.**

HUMOR INVITED OPENNESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Audiences often laughed during scenes that addressed sensitive themes. Rather than disengaging, they used laughter to process the content. **Facilitators observed that comedy created a safe emotional entry point, especially with Know Thy Body, which handled awkward transitions with honesty and lightness.**

DIFFERENT SETTINGS SHAPED HOW STORIES WERE RECEIVED

In urban events such as the ALX screening and Vuka Film Festival, participants connected the films to broader cultural and social commentary. In rural areas such as Isiolo and Meru, audiences expressed personal experiences in ways that were more grounded in everyday life. While the tone varied across regions, both groups demonstrated strong emotional resonance and a willingness to reflect.

NARRATIVE SHIFTS: HOW DID PERCEPTIONS EVOLVE AND WHAT NEW STORIES BEGAN TO TAKE ROOT?

CURIOSITY REPLACED MISINFORMATION

Viewers arrived with a mix of cultural narratives, some rooted in shame and fear. After the screenings, many expressed that the films helped clarify misconceptions. Several young people reported that the characters gave voice to questions they had never asked aloud. **The content sparked a move from internalized silence to open inquiry, especially around puberty, consent, and personal agency.**

RIGHTS-BASED MESSAGING FELT ACCESSIBLE THROUGH LIVED LANGUAGE

Formal language around rights often feels removed from everyday life. The films translated these concepts into relatable stories that emphasized dignity, voice, and self-worth. **Audience responses to quotes like “Your body is not a graveyard” and “Love lives here” showed that storytelling can introduce rightsbased ideas in ways that feel grounded in personal truth.**

GENDER ROLES CAME UNDER ACTIVE QUESTIONING

Audiences, particularly young men, responded to Float with initial hesitation, followed by reflection. The story's emotional tone created a space where boys and men could explore vulnerability **without judgment. Girls and young women connected with stories of rejection and insecurity, and many described a sense of relief in seeing these experiences named with care.**

CREATORS STEPPED INTO NEW ROLES AS PUBLIC ADVOCATES

The filmmakers described their creative process as transformative. Through the campaign, they began to see themselves as storytellers and advocates and moved from personal memory into public purpose. **Their reflections showed increased clarity, confidence, and commitment to using their art as a vehicle for change.**

ADVOCACY POTENTIAL: WHAT PRACTICES AND PLATFORMS OFFER THE MOST PROMISE FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS?

SAFE SPACES SHAPED THE DEPTH OF ENGAGEMENT

Facilitated screenings created spaces where participants felt seen, heard, and supported. These moments of dialogue allowed for complexity, discomfort, and personal storytelling. Safe space emerged as a core requirement for successful SRHR conversations. It functioned as infrastructure rather than atmosphere.

FILM SCREENINGS CREATED DEMAND AND SET A FOUNDATION FOR SCALE

Requests for more screenings came from students, parents, and educators across counties. **These requests demonstrated the potential of storytelling as an ongoing**

engagement tool. Participants wanted the content adapted, translated, and embedded in more community and educational spaces.

AUDIENCES AND PARTNERS ARE ALREADY GENERATING IDEAS FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Organic recommendations emerged across the campaign. These included facilitator guides, translation of the films into local languages, SRHR curriculum supplements, and youth-led screenings. Stakeholders also called for more structured training for teachers, journalists, and parents. The campaign has sparked a community that is already imagining its next phase.

SCHOOLS PROVIDED REACH AND INFLUENCE, BUT REQUIRED CAREFUL STRATEGY

School settings offered unmatched access to large audiences. At the same time, engagement required careful planning, sensitive facilitation, and alignment with school culture. Teachers appreciated the content and requested more structured resources to continue the conversations beyond the screening.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENED THE WORK OF ADVOCATES AND CREATIVES

Brain Trust sessions and the Journalist Fellowship showed that advocates thrive in environments that foster exchange, reflection, and shared ownership. These forums helped reduce silos, improved collaboration, and addressed challenges around burnout and fragmentation. Participants walked away with a stronger sense of alignment and community purpose.



LEARNING QUESTIONS: WHAT DID WE LEARN?

1. WHAT CHANGED FOR CREATORS & AUDIENCES?

2. WHAT ENABLED DEEPER ENGAGEMENT?

3. HOW DID SRHR NARRATIVES CLASH OR CONNECT?

4. WHAT ROLE DOES THE DIGITAL PLAY?

5. WHAT EMERGED ORGANICALLY?

1 WHAT CHANGED FOR CREATORS AND AUDIENCES?

A core hypothesis in the Kenya Creates theory of change was that culturally resonant stories spark reflection and dialogue before behavior shifts. For both filmmakers and audiences, the project confirmed that change begins with recognition of one's body, of systemic misinformation, and of silenced emotions. Across podcast episodes, panels, and postscreening dialogues, filmmakers reported a deep personal transformation. Adelle noted that poetry had always been her survival tool, but the project *"helped me put a public language to what I'd only ever whispered."* Abigail spoke about finally seeing herself not only as a director but as a voice-shaper: *"We were told not to do this, but I did it... and I'm thriving."* Ty reframed his comedic voice as a bridge between masculine norms and emotional honesty.

Audiences, too, mirrored this transformation. In post-screening reflections and digital comments, many said they had *"never seen anyone talk about the body like that"* or had *"finally seen their story told with truth and humor."* The films served as a catalyst, often validating unspoken questions and normalizing emotional vulnerability, especially for adolescents and young adults navigating shame and silence. For example, one viewer at Kitale Film Week noted: *"Udhaifu wako usikufanye ukanyamaze,"* affirming that shame can be named and resisted.

In school contexts, age emerged as a significant factor. Junior Secondary School (JSS) students aged 12–14 were more open in mixed-gender discussions, while older students engaged more deeply in gender-specific settings. These patterns suggest that psychological safety and perceived vulnerability shift with age.

2 WHAT ENABLED DEEPER ENGAGEMENT?

Trust was the strongest enabler. Screenings anchored in pre-existing relationships, whether with local NGOs, teachers, or youth mentors, consistently produced the most meaningful dialogue. In Isiolo and Marsabit, where longstanding relationships existed through partners like Dorcas Organization and CIFA Kenya, conversations extended beyond the screen into open dialogue on gender, body image, and selfworth.

The presence of trusted facilitators also helped navigate sensitive terrain in conservative regions. In Coastal counties, cultural expectations around gender roles shaped participation. Mixed-gender screenings often saw limited female engagement, whereas gender-specific formats opened up space for more honest conversation.

Context-sensitive facilitation and peer-led discussion methods were key in keeping engagement authentic. In Ukunda, a group of rescued girls spontaneously created a selfworth chant after watching Home, pointing to how trust and relevance can spark unprompted activism.

3 HOW DID SRHR NARRATIVES CLASH OR CONNECT?

Audience responses revealed how dominant framings; moral, medical, cultural, and rightsbased framings, shaped interpretation. In more conservative regions, vulnerability from boys (e.g., in Float) clashed with entrenched masculinity norms. In Mombasa and Isiolo, questions about who has the right to speak about SRHR underscored the role of cultural gatekeeping in shaping public discourse.

In creative hubs like ALX Africa and Vuka Film Festival, rights-based and human-centered framings found greater resonance. Audiences embraced the films as critical correctives to institutional silence. Engagement patterns also highlighted critical gaps in representation. In particular, male students struggled to connect with some films. The absence of a male lead in most of the school-screened content reinforced the idea that SRHR is a *"girls' issue."* This perception shifted during the screening of *Bella Is Dying*, where boys expressed strong identification with its depiction of strained parental relationships.

However, across all regions, the medical framing was repeatedly described as emotionally flat and disconnected. As Adelle shared, *"We're starting in chapter 12 about diseases, when we skipped chapters 1 to 3, about knowing your body."*

This insight was echoed in school settings, where the mere mention of *"sex"* in film descriptions blocked screenings in some institutions. The discomfort pointed to deep-rooted stigma, but also a need for better framing and educator engagement.

4 WHAT ROLE DOES THE DIGITAL PLAY?

Digital platforms significantly amplified reach and deepened reflection. Instagram alone reached over 500,000 users, with feedback centering on representation, visibility, and shared emotional truth. Comments named the films as tools for change, asking how to host screenings, access resources, or connect with the filmmakers.

Podcasts allowed for even deeper reflection. They created space to talk through shame, reimagine gender roles, and explore Afrocentric knowledge systems. Unlike traditional media, which

is often bound by gatekeeping and sponsorship limits, the podcast episodes enabled unrestricted conversation that centered experience and agency.

Digital also opened channels for emotional continuity, with users referencing lines, moments, or characters days and weeks after release. For many, these platforms served as both community and curriculum.

5 WHAT EMERGED ORGANICALLY?

Some of the most resonant advocacy recommendations did not come from policy papers but from classrooms, digital comment threads, and festival Q&As. One parent admitted during a Kilifi screening, *"I've never talked to my daughter about her body."* A student in Marsabit asked, *"Who's supposed to teach us this if not our schools or homes?"* These reflections point to a powerful insight: advocacy cannot just exist in boardrooms. It must be grounded in daily life, shaped by people's questions, needs, and emotional contexts.

The Brain Trust sessions reinforced this, surfacing key themes around sustainability, emotional wellbeing for advocates, and cross-sector collaboration. Participants urged for wellness models, adaptable messaging, and culturally embedded approaches to SRHR advocacy, not just legal wins. The Journalist Fellowship echoed these calls, showing how local stories, when backed by mentorship and publication support, can influence both community awareness and policy attention.



EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR CREATORS
FOR FUNDERS
FOR POLICY MAKERS
FOR NGOS & CBOS
FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNERS

FOR CREATORS

INVEST IN STORY-DRIVEN ADVOCACY

Creators are uniquely positioned to make SRHR conversations accessible through character, humor, and emotion. Continued investment in storytelling, particularly from lived experience, can dismantle stigma in ways traditional messaging cannot.

PRIORITIZE LOCAL LANGUAGES & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Audiences responded most deeply when they felt seen. Creators should explore vernacular storytelling and region-specific framing to ensure resonance across diverse Kenyan contexts.

STRENGTHEN PEER-LED EDUCATION THROUGH ART

Facilitated screenings, post-film dialogues, and podcast storytelling revealed the power of peer-led knowledge sharing. Creators can expand their role as cultural educators by building tools that turn their art into community engagement resources.

BALANCE GENDER REPRESENTATION

Films with strong female leads offered powerful narratives, but also left male viewers feeling unseen. Future projects should include male-centered perspectives to support boys' emotional literacy and self-recognition, to dismantle the thinking that SRHRJ issues are 'girls' issues'.

FOR FUNDERS

BACK PROCESS-ORIENTED CREATIVE WORK

Artistic campaigns need time to build trust, especially when working with sensitive themes like SRHR. Funders should support longer timelines that allow for reflection, iteration, and ethical collaboration.

SUPPORT HYBRID PLATFORMS & AFTERLIVES

Invest in both in-person and digital strategies to extend the reach and lifespan of SRHR storytelling. Podcasts, toolkits, and school screening guides help anchor impact beyond one-off events.

EMBED MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS FOR CREATIVES

Campaigns that deal with personal trauma, body shame, and cultural silence take an emotional toll. Funders can support long-term sustainability by embedding care structures and emotional support into their grant design.

FOR POLICYMAKERS

USE CREATIVE EVIDENCE FOR POLICY FRAMING

Campaigns like Kenya Creates offer rich, peoplecentered evidence on how SRHR issues are lived, not just legislated. Policymakers should include creative outputs in consultations, reviews, and advocacy processes.

CHAMPION EARLY, RIGHTS-BASED SRHR EDUCATION

The campaign demonstrated that even primaryaged students are navigating body image and shame. There is a clear need for structured, ageappropriate SRHR content starting earlier in the education system.

INTEGRATE SRHR INTO NATIONAL CREATIVE STRATEGIES

Recognize storytelling as a strategic lever within public health and youth policy. This includes funding local films, embedding SRHR into national creative platforms, and working with creators to localize communication strategies.

FOR NGOS & CBOS

CO-CREATE WITH ARTISTS
FOR DEEPER ENGAGEMENT

Rather than treating creative work as an add-on, organizations should embed artists from the beginning, in campaign design, community facilitation, and tool development, to root SRHR work in emotion and experience.

LOCALIZE SRHR MESSAGING
BASED ON FRAMING REALITIES

The campaigns surfaced how medical, moral, and cultural framings affect how messages land. NGOs and CBOs can increase effectiveness by tailoring language and approach to each community's dominant framing.

BUILD SAFE, ONGOING
PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE

Short-term screenings opened floodgates of emotion and curiosity. Organizations should invest in creating consistent, low-barrier spaces for example in schools, churches, and youth centers, where these conversations can continue safely and constructively.

FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNERS

DESIGN WITH EMOTIONAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN MIND

Build formats that support vulnerability, especially among adolescents. Gender-specific screenings for older students encouraged more openness, while younger students engaged well in mixed-gender settings. Use age-appropriate, gender-sensitive formats to ensure participants feel safe to share and reflect.

BUILD REPRESENTATION
INTENTIONALLY, ESPECIALLY FOR BOYS

Boys engaged less when they didn't see themselves reflected in the narratives. Films with strong female leads were powerful, but often reinforced the idea that SRHR is a "girls' issue." Integrate male-led stories that explore body image, self-worth, and relational dynamics to broaden relevance and emotional access.

PLAN FOR SCALE, DEPTH,
AND SUSTAINABILITY

Short timelines limited the ability to build stakeholder relationships, develop educational tools, and follow up on emerging demand. Longer campaigns allow for thoughtful rollout and more consistent community presence. Adopt a 12-month implementation timeline to support deeper planning, iterative engagement, and long-term resource development.



 KENYA
CREATES

 DOCUBOX

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