



Women's  
Justice Initiative



**2024 Annual Report**

**Empower Women, Create Movements**

**From individual transformation to collective action**

***Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive human rights violations worldwide and Central America continues to face some of the highest rates of femicide and violence globally.***

## **Our Mission**

The Women's Justice Initiative (WJI) improves the lives of indigenous women and girls through education, access to legal services, and gender-based violence prevention.

# Letter from Our Leadership

Dear Friends,

The Women's Justice Initiative is building a just future by investing in the transformative power of women and girls. This past year, we witnessed how individual transformation can spark collective action—how women who gain knowledge of their rights, become leaders, advocates, and catalysts for change within their communities.

In 2024, our impact reached new heights. We provided 1,771 free legal services to women, supported 1,217 women and girls in strengthening their knowledge and skills to build greater agency through our rights education programs, and trained 503 community leaders and service providers to better respond to survivors of violence.

This was also a pivotal year in advancing our five-year strategic plan, ***A Just Future for Women: Investing in WJI's Legacy***. Through this ambitious vision, we are scaling our work to triple our impact by 2027. In 2024, we took bold steps towards our three strategic priorities:

**Replicating our programs** across the Maya Kaqchikel region of Guatemala to expand access to 25,000 women and girls in 150 communities.

**Scaling our legal empowerment methodology** through partnerships with community-based organizations across Central America, amplifying WJI's reach and impact.

**Strengthening our organizational capacity**, ensuring that the foundation we build today sustains our legacy for generations to come.

This year's report—Empower Women, Create Movements—is not just a guiding principle, but the reality we are building together. From individual transformation to collective action, we are witnessing the beginnings of lasting change.

The achievements highlighted here are possible because of the dedication of our staff, the resilience of women in rural communities, and the unwavering support of our partners. At a time when global funding for grassroots initiatives is increasingly limited, your commitment is more vital than ever, ensuring WJI can meet urgent needs today while building the movements that will shape tomorrow.

Your belief in our mission fuels this momentum, bringing us closer to a world where women and girls live free from violence and inequality. Together, we are transforming lives, strengthening communities, and creating a brighter future for generations to come.

With gratitude,



**Kate Flatley**

Executive Director



**Clara Ferraro**

Board President



# Local Solutions for a Global Challenge

## Our community driven, Legal Empowerment Methodology

Our comprehensive programming addresses gender inequality and violence through women's empowerment and community-driven solutions by combining rights-based education with free legal services. To date, more than 15,000 women have graduated from our programs, and we have directly impacted the lives of over 60,000 individuals. The following are some key outcomes and accomplishments.



### Preventing Child Marriage and Early Unions

Less than 3% of the adolescent girls aged 18 and under, who participated in our program, were married or in a union, compared to the national average of 30%.



### Strengthening Institutional Responses to Violence

35% of women who sought legal support at WJI were referred by public institutions trained by our team. Last year alone, we equipped 202 service providers with the tools and knowledge to better respond to gender-based violence—helping ensure survivors' safety, dignity, and access to justice.



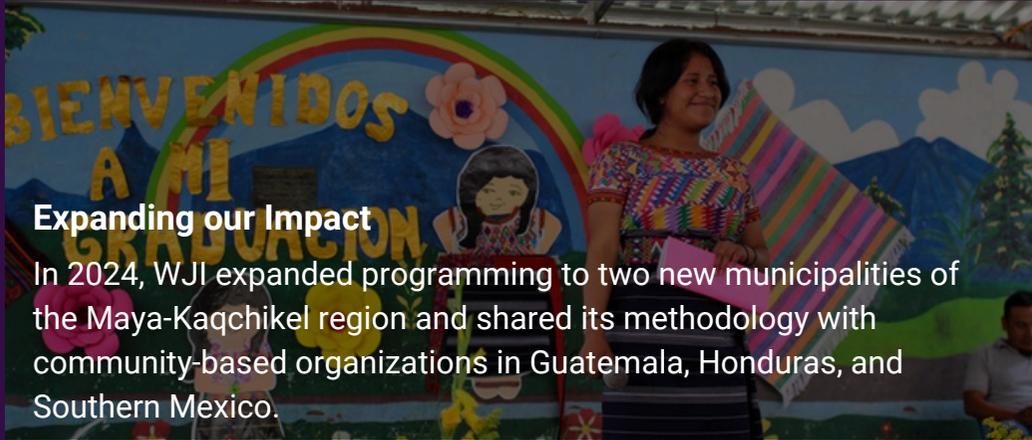
### Securing Economic Rights for Survivors of Violence

WJI's attorneys and paralegals secured nearly \$75,000 in compensation for women in cases of child support, alimony, damages related to gender-based violence, and other legal matters—ensuring justice and greater financial security for our clients.



### Increasing Access to Justice

WJI provided 1,771 legal services to women and girls seeking safety and justice. 86% identified as survivors of gender-based violence. Our team of attorneys and paralegals not only defended their rights in court but ensured that they secured the protection and resources they needed.



### **Expanding our Impact**

In 2024, WJI expanded programming to two new municipalities of the Maya-Kaqchikel region and shared its methodology with community-based organizations in Guatemala, Honduras, and Southern Mexico.



### **Integration of Psychological Services**

WJI hired a trauma-informed psychologist to join our team, strengthening our ability to provide comprehensive support to the women and girls we serve. Integrating mental health services is an essential step in supporting the well-being of GBV survivors.



### **WJI at the UN's 68th Annual Commission on the Status of Women**

Andrea Tock, Director of Impact and Learning, represented WJI, speaking on the panel "Feminist Grassroots Justice: Building Power Shaping Change," hosted by the Ford Foundation.



### **Adolescent Girls Program Curriculum**

Our team adapted our Adolescent Girls Program curriculum, integrating comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education. Guided by participant feedback from an internal evaluation, the updates ensure the curriculum reflects the girls' needs and priorities.



### **WJI in Washington, D.C**

WJI's Legal Director, Viviana Patal, participated in a panel hosted by Vital Voices at their Washington, DC headquarters, where she spoke on the intersection of gender-based violence and migration in Central America.



### **Promoting Team Well-being**

WJI introduced free psychological services for team members and launched quarterly self-care and team-building activities to continue fostering a healthy, supportive work environment.

# 2024 Impact Statistics

**3,263**

individuals  
participated in WJI's  
programs

**272**

adolescent girls and their  
mothers gained knowledge  
and skills to prevent child  
marriage and gender-  
based violence

**907**

women graduated  
from the Women's  
Rights Education  
Program

**799**

women received free  
legal services

**38**

women enrolled in  
the two-year training  
to become  
Community  
Advocates

**503**

police officers, service  
providers, and  
community actors were  
trained in adequate  
responses to violence

Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Replicate

# Healing through Community and Learning

When María Angélica joined the Women's Rights Education Program, it was with hesitation and nearly by chance. Her mother and sisters encouraged her to attend the first workshop with them. At 24, she was raising her daughter as a single mother, she felt overwhelmed by the weight of the responsibility and often disconnected from her community. But something shifted the moment she began the program. "For a second, I forgot my worries," she says.

She wasn't just learning new skills; she was rediscovering herself.



## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Replicate

For three months, María Angélica attended weekly workshops led by WJI educators. She learned about women's rights, including family and economic law, she practiced decision-making, and learned about prioritizing one's emotional well-being.

"I started smiling again," she said. "The session on self-esteem impacted me deeply. I used to think I didn't matter. But little by little, I began to value myself again."

She especially remembers a workshop where all the women hugged each other. "There was peace in that moment. I felt connected, not alone."

## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Replicate

During the program, María Angélica opened up about her situation. She had previously received a small child support payment, but it was no longer enough to cover her daughter's needs and she didn't know where to turn. Through the Women's Rights Education Program, she was connected with WJI's Legal Services team of Maya-Kaqchikel lawyers and paralegals who could understand her experience.

Together, they prepared her case. WJI's team helped her navigate paperwork and accompanied her in court. The process was long and at times overwhelming, but WJI encouraged her to stay strong, reminding her she was not alone. Ultimately she obtained a court-ordered increase in child support.

**"It wasn't just about me," she said. "It was about my daughter too."**



## **Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Replicate**

WJI's comprehensive approach means meeting women and girls where they are, geographically, culturally, and emotionally. By offering services in the local language, and ensuring clients and participants are supported by Maya-Kaqchikel women, WJI creates a space of trust and belonging for women who have long been neglected by the justice system.



## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Replicate

WJI's ongoing presence in her community means that María Angélica continues to stay in touch with the women and facilitators from the program. She's strengthened her self-esteem, and discovered a community that lifts her up.

"Through these programs, I filled an emptiness I had. I don't feel stuck anymore. I feel strong." With a newfound confidence, she began painting, and gifted WJI's team with a drawing of a girl holding a heart in her hand. **"It's not perfect, but it's special."**

María Angélica's journey is an important reminder: When women are given the tools to heal and grow, they can transform their lives.



Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Scale

# Building Collective Power: Scaling through Organizational Partnership

In Guatemala City's Zone 3, the community-based organization Creamos has long supported communities facing generational traumas and systemic inequality.

While eradicating gender-based violence (GBV) is central to their mission, Creamos found that many women were coming forward, not only to share their personal experiences of violence, but in need of legal support. Recognizing an opportunity to strengthen their response, Creamos turned to WJI to build their team's legal knowledge and practices related to GBV.

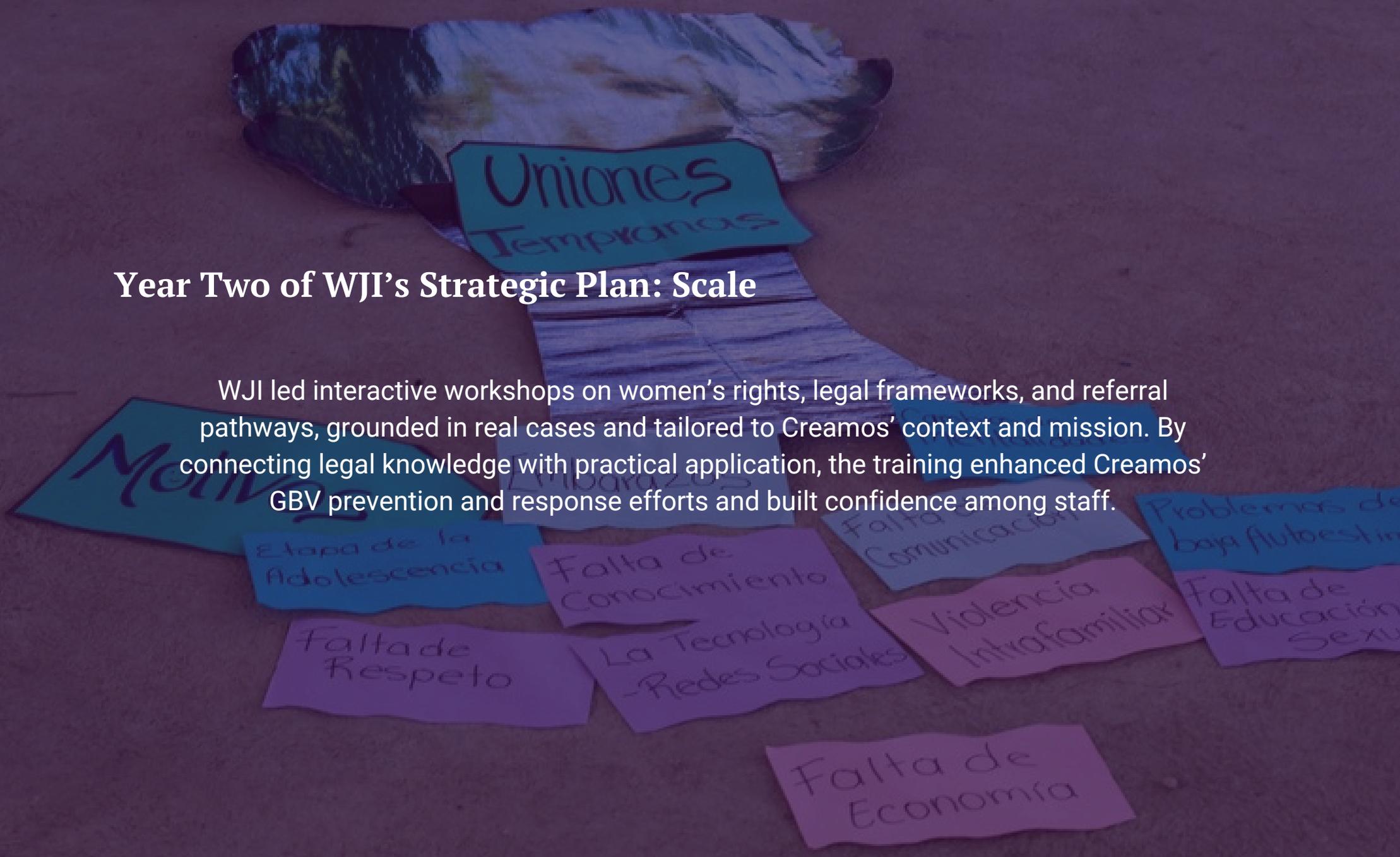


## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Scale

This partnership illustrates how WJI is scaling sustainably by equipping organizations with adaptable, rights-based frameworks that extend its impact beyond its programs. Together, WJI and Creamos co-developed a plan to incorporate WJI's proven legal empowerment methodology into Creamos' programming, strengthening the organization's capacity to respond to GBV.

## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Scale

WJI led interactive workshops on women's rights, legal frameworks, and referral pathways, grounded in real cases and tailored to Creamos' context and mission. By connecting legal knowledge with practical application, the training enhanced Creamos' GBV prevention and response efforts and built confidence among staff.

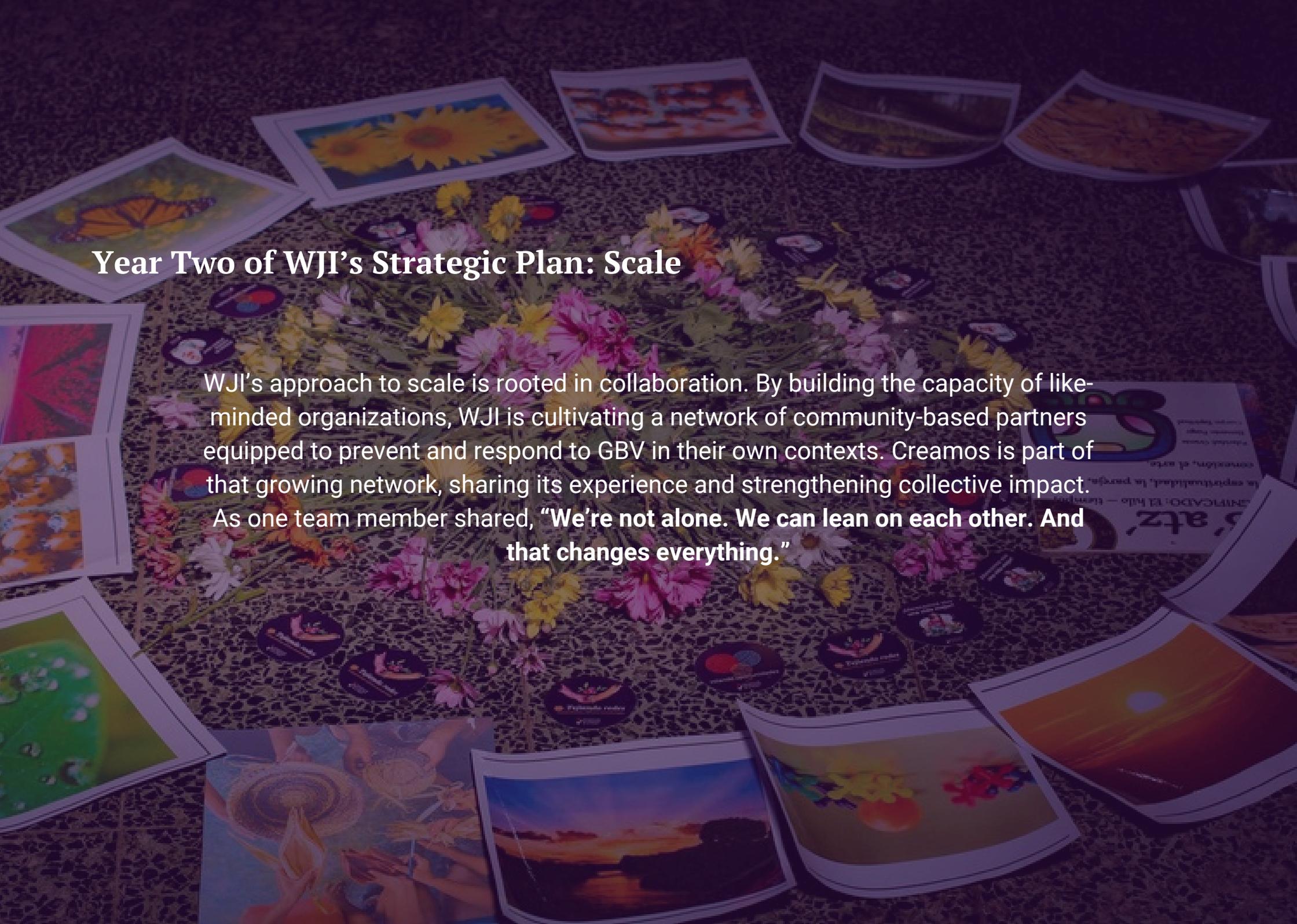


## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Scale

Today, Creamos integrates GBV discussions into monthly staff meetings, has established internal referral protocols, and applies a shared GBV framework across its programs. Staff who were once uncertain now understand that legal support is a key component of their support for survivors.

“Through WJI's support, we strengthened our knowledge on women's, children's, and labor rights, as well as referral and reporting pathways. This has given us greater confidence to guide and support the women we work with every day.”

Melissa Payés



## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Scale

WJI's approach to scale is rooted in collaboration. By building the capacity of like-minded organizations, WJI is cultivating a network of community-based partners equipped to prevent and respond to GBV in their own contexts. Creamos is part of that growing network, sharing its experience and strengthening collective impact.

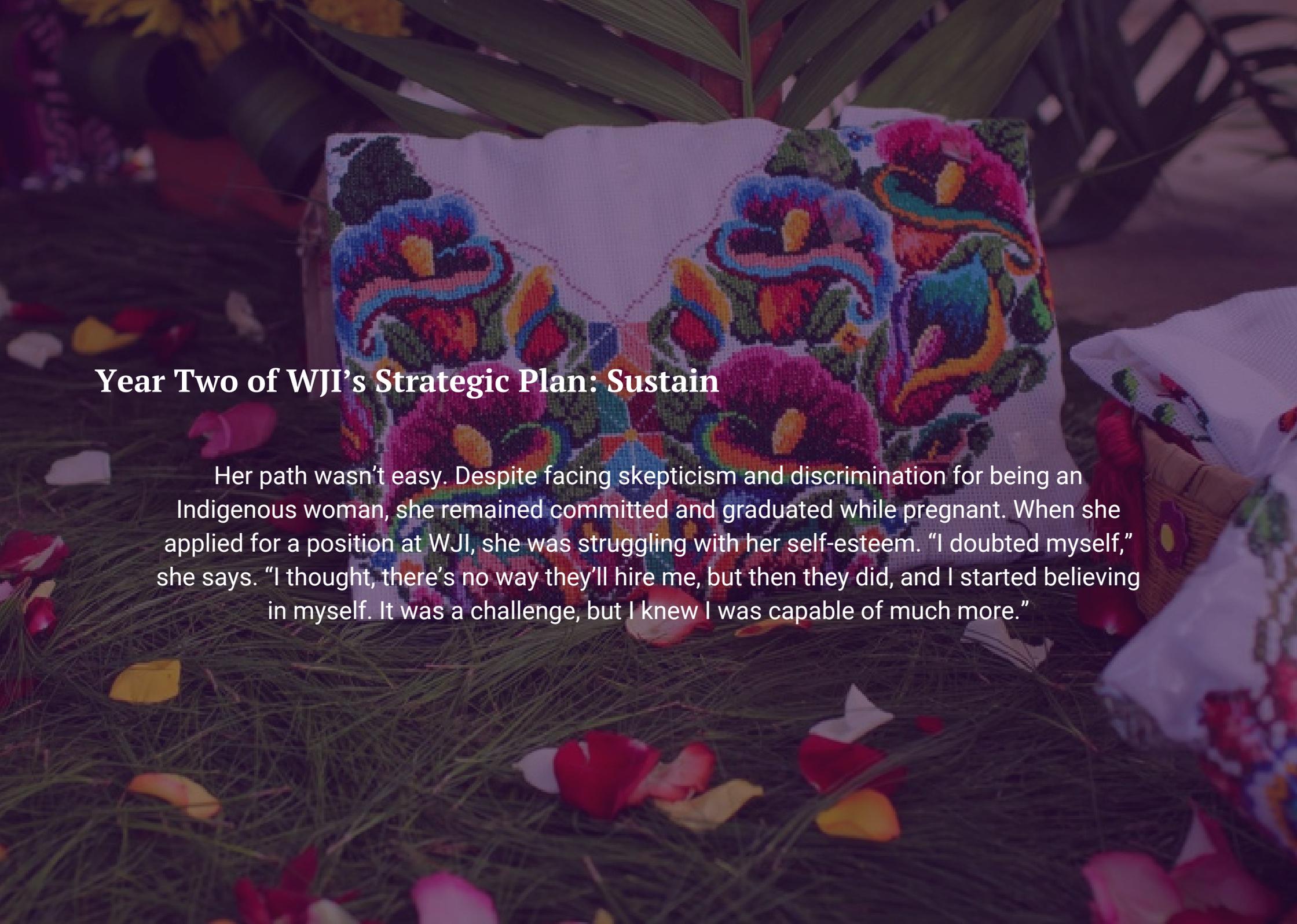
As one team member shared, **"We're not alone. We can lean on each other. And that changes everything."**

A woman with dark hair and glasses is sitting at a desk in an office. She is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored floral patterned shirt. Her hands are resting on the desk in front of her. In the background, there is a wooden shelving unit with various items on it, including a pink flower. The overall lighting is soft and slightly dim.

Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Sustain

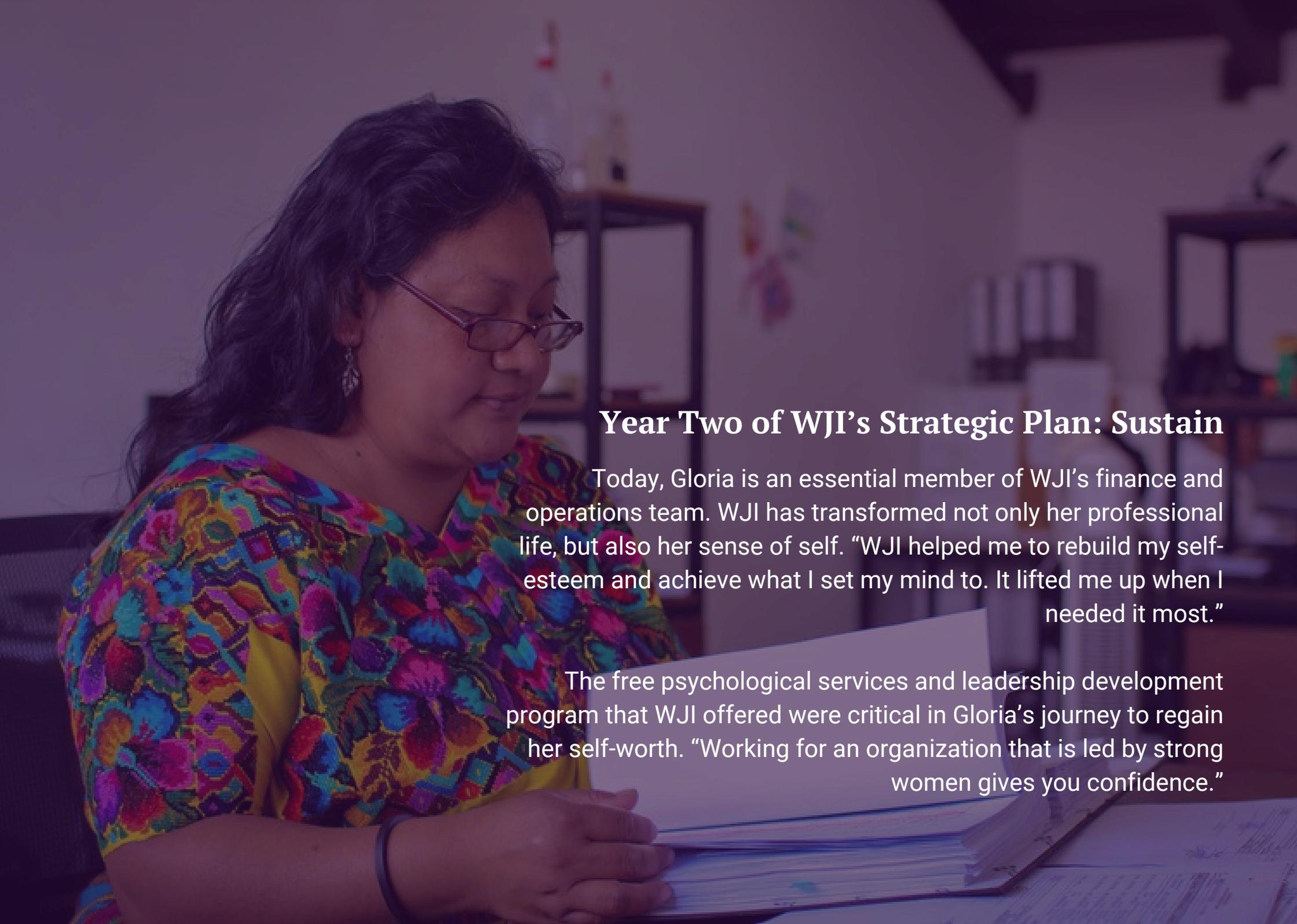
## Gloria: Powering Change from Within

Gloria Xulu has never shied away from a challenge. When she chose to study Public Accounting and Auditing in university, it was with a clear purpose: to prove that she could succeed in fields traditionally dominated by men, and rarely held by Indigenous women. "I wanted to show that I could do it too."



## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Sustain

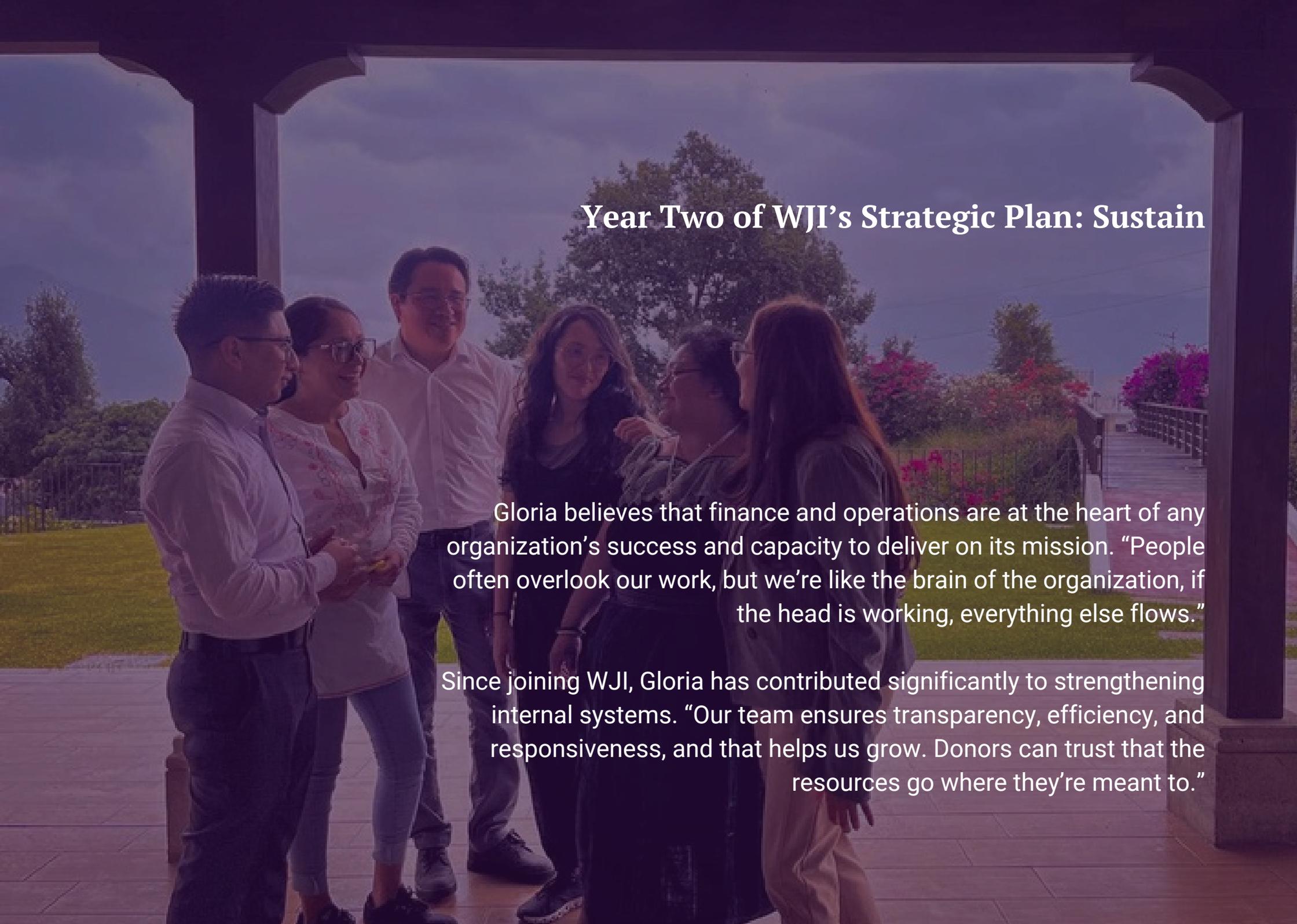
Her path wasn't easy. Despite facing skepticism and discrimination for being an Indigenous woman, she remained committed and graduated while pregnant. When she applied for a position at WJI, she was struggling with her self-esteem. "I doubted myself," she says. "I thought, there's no way they'll hire me, but then they did, and I started believing in myself. It was a challenge, but I knew I was capable of much more."

A woman with long dark hair and glasses is seated at a desk, looking down at a document she is holding. She is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored patterned blouse. The background shows a blurred office environment with shelves and a window. The entire image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay.

## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Sustain

Today, Gloria is an essential member of WJI's finance and operations team. WJI has transformed not only her professional life, but also her sense of self. "WJI helped me to rebuild my self-esteem and achieve what I set my mind to. It lifted me up when I needed it most."

The free psychological services and leadership development program that WJI offered were critical in Gloria's journey to regain her self-worth. "Working for an organization that is led by strong women gives you confidence."



## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Sustain

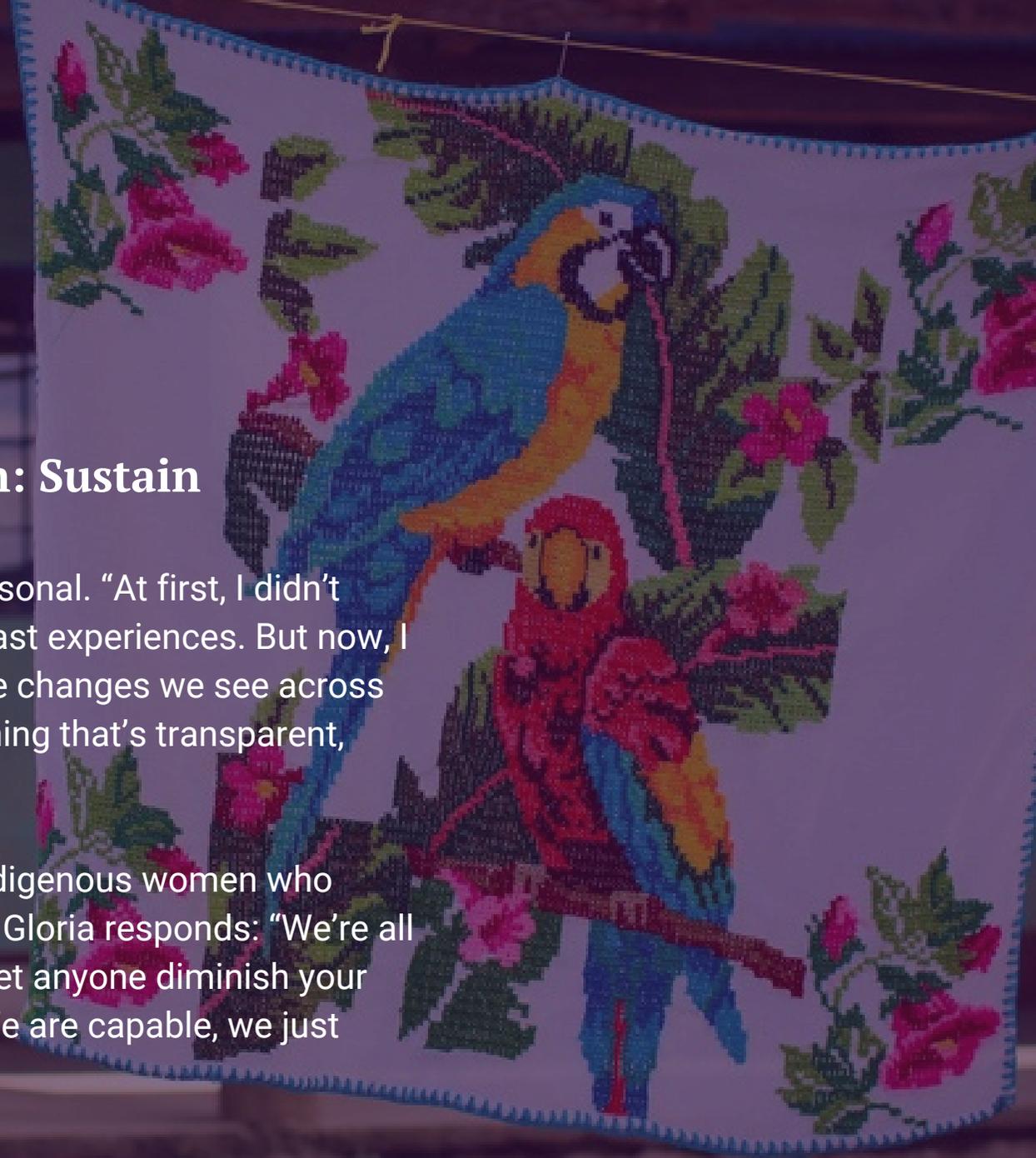
Gloria believes that finance and operations are at the heart of any organization's success and capacity to deliver on its mission. "People often overlook our work, but we're like the brain of the organization, if the head is working, everything else flows."

Since joining WJI, Gloria has contributed significantly to strengthening internal systems. "Our team ensures transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness, and that helps us grow. Donors can trust that the resources go where they're meant to."

## Year Two of WJI's Strategic Plan: Sustain

For Gloria, the journey with WJI is deeply personal. "At first, I didn't know if I belonged. I was holding on to my past experiences. But now, I feel part of it, I am WJI. I've helped create the changes we see across our offices. I've been part of building something that's transparent, trustworthy, and growing."

Representation, she says, is key. To other Indigenous women who don't yet see themselves in leadership roles, Gloria responds: "We're all capable of achieving what we dream. Don't let anyone diminish your worth. If you dream big, you can get there. We are capable, we just need the opportunity to prove it."



# Our Impact to Date

**61,386**

direct beneficiaries

**210,411**

indirect beneficiaries

**3,162**

community leaders,  
police, and government  
officials trained

**7,374**

legal cases related to  
economic rights or  
violence against women

**152**

Community Advocates have  
graduated and become  
resources in GBV prevention  
and response in their  
communities

**6,479**

women have gained the  
knowledge to exercise their  
rights through the Women's  
Rights Education Program

**1,591**

graduates from the  
Adolescent Girls  
Program

**2,356**

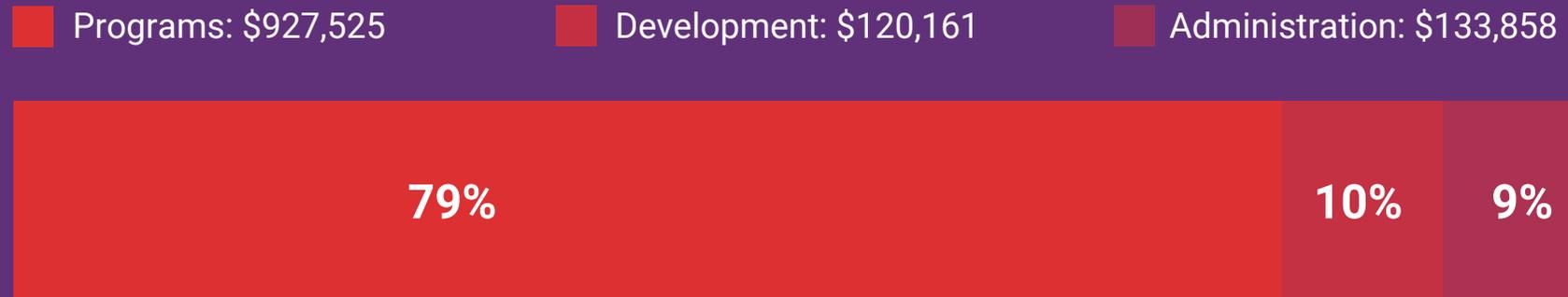
parents and community  
leaders gained skills to  
prevent child marriage

**729**

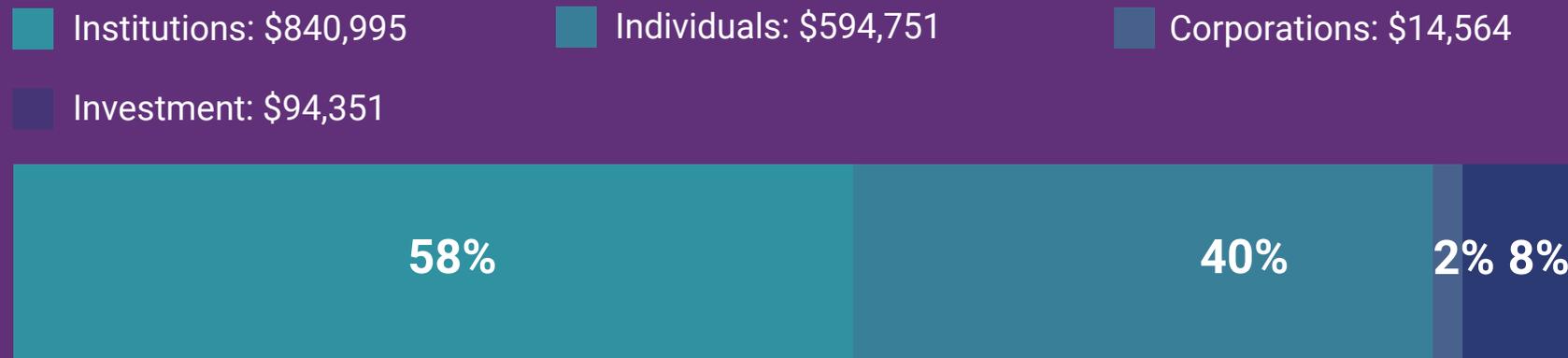
individuals from 69  
organizations learned about our  
methodology and implement it  
in their communities

# Financials

## Expenses - \$1,181,545



## Revenue - \$1,544,661



**2024 Ending Net Assets: \$2,291,068**

## Join us!

Across rural Guatemala and Central America, countless women continue to face barriers of isolation, discrimination, and limited access to justice. With the withdrawal of critical foreign investment, millions of women and girls are at risk. WJI is meeting the moment and continuing our fight for justice and equality.

**Even in times of uncertainty, one thing is clear: our work is transformative.**

This year's achievements were only possible because of the investment of our partners, allies, and donors. With your continued partnership, we can expand to new communities, train more community advocates, and provide free legal and psychological services to women and girls in need.

We invite you to join us. When we empower women, we create movements that will change the world.

**Thank you for believing in us.**



## Photographer Credits

Paola Almengor  
Mary Catherine Driese



Women's  
Justice Initiative

Follow us:



**GUATEMALA (Office)**  
3ra. Avenida 1-46, Zona 1,  
Patzún, Guatemala

**USA (Mailing Address)**  
PO Box 21540 New York,  
NY 10087-1540