



**WOMEN EMERGING**  
*Impact Report*  
**2025-26**

# FROM THE FOUNDER'S DESK



## JULIA MIDDLETON

This has been a year of impact and focus. It has set us up for 2026–27 to be about scale, scale and scale.

Our Explorers, Guides, Fellows, partners and sponsors have attested to the impact of our work.

Whether they are students in higher education across the world or peacebuilders across Africa, our Explorers have told us that the expedition is value for their time, builds their confidence in leading, and that they would recommend Women Emerging to every woman in their network. Our partners have told others about us, so now we have more partners than ever. We each need one another, given the scale of our ambitions and the challenge the world presents. More and more women are volunteering to become WE Guides, sharing their knowledge with Explorers and writing for the WE Hub. And the number of our sponsors has doubled, each one bringing new ideas and networks. This has been the impact none of us had dreamt of on that first expedition in 2022, when we discovered just how urgent it was to help women find their own approach to leadership, and the 4Es expedition methodology – which has been used on every expedition since it first emerged.

Over 2025–26 we have been deeply focused. Perfecting group expeditions. Developing into a strong team of colleagues. Doubling down on our work with students in higher education.

Testing our first city expedition in Brussels with an eye on cities across the world. Delighting in our expedition for young women changemakers across the world, knowing full well how many more need to be reached. Capturing our methodology and sharing it with women – through the Basecamp experience – wherever they are, and with our partners – through DIY expeditions, so that they can run expeditions themselves and inspire ever more women to lead. Moving beyond expeditions to pilot Accelerators, so that we can reach up to a thousand Explorers at a time. Building our network of women leading across the world, many of whom have then joined our community so they can both contribute to and gain insights from the WE Hub.

We now have a glorious base to scale from. As we expand our network, as we increase the number of universities we work with, as the number of women running expeditions in their cities expands, as we move from small numbers of changemakers on group expeditions to large numbers of ‘wavemakers’ on WE Accelerators, as more of our partners do it alone with DIY expeditions, with a little bit of help from us, and as we focus our group expeditions on key global communities of women who have the potential to shift the dial for many more women: philanthropists, social entrepreneurs and professional women. Now as the community grows so fast, we can launch an idea we have been noodling with ever since the start: WE Match – a very simple way for women to connect with each other, the world over.

Oh, what fun 2026 is going to be! Were we crazy in 2024 to say that we would one day inspire 500,000 women to say, ‘I’m in’? Maybe we weren’t! We believe that leading is about generating energy, we – all the women who are part of the WE movement – are bustling with energy.

# WOMEN EMERGING'S MISSION IS TO REFRAME LEADING SO THAT MORE WOMEN CHOOSE TO LEAD.



## Our Theory of Change

### **The problem: Not enough women are leading.**

As divides deepen, problems accelerate, technology advances and trust erodes, the world needs more women to lead, whether they are in villages or on the global stage. Their knowledge, expertise, judgement and insights are needed more than ever.

There is work being done across the world to produce systems change so that the odds of women emerging, leading and succeeding are not so heavily stacked against them.

But even when women do emerge, they are often put off by the 'status quo' approach to leadership, which has mostly been shaped by men. Some find themselves adopting it to make life simpler, even though it doesn't resonate with or work for them. Others are turning away from leading altogether.

### **Our solution: Free women to find their own approach to leading.**

We run WE Expeditions and WE Accelerators across different geographies, sectors and age groups, to provide the tools for women to discover their own approach to leading. Through our WE Hub, they can then share their learning with each other widely.

### **Our action: Reach 500,000 women across the world.**

From this base, we will build a global movement of women who will confidently lead – how they wish to lead – bringing their own essence and energy to their leading.

Connected to one another, they will amplify confidence, exchange insights, and accelerate each other's impact. And crucially show how leading can be done differently, because we believe that women's approach to leading might just be the right one for our times.

### **Our impact: A more diverse and effective global leadership landscape.**

More women will lead, with their own authentic approach. With this diversifying of the leadership base will come better decision-making, stronger performance and more inclusive economies. Women will be at the heart of tackling the complex challenges facing our societies. We measure our success by the number of women who form our strong global network and increasingly choose to lead as a result of engaging with us.

Over time, their collective influence will reframe leadership itself, shifting the narrative towards an approach that resonates with both men and women.

# IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Women Emerging surveyed current Explorers and Fellows 6 months and 12 months after their expedition. Results showed behaviour change is real and sustained over time, suggesting the lasting impact of Women Emerging's expeditions. Women Emerging's network nearly quadrupled in 2025-26. Momentum is building!



of women feel more confident in their approach to leading



say they choose to lead more as a result of their expedition



say their expedition was good value for their time



would recommend Women Emerging to their network



Number of women who joined an expedition



Guides who have shared their wisdom with Women Emerging



Blogs, clips, podcasts and workshops were produced for the WE network



Women in Women Emerging's global network





# IMPACT STORIES

## EXPLORER



**Emily Bernstein**

**Student at Vanderbilt University, USA  
Explorer on the Expedition for Students in Higher Education**

My expedition with Women Emerging has been a meaningful part of my undergraduate experience.

Participating in the expedition taught me ways I could apply these skills in my life as a student preparing to enter the world after graduation. We learned that there is no one correct way to lead, but rather leadership is highly individual, encouraging me to reflect on what leading meant to me. It was also incredibly inspiring to meet women from around the world with vastly different styles and practices of leading that were shaped by their own experiences and cultures, actively redefining leadership. Above all, the expedition encouraged me to think about how I show up as a leader and how I can lead in a way that is both authentic to me and effective.

## FELLOW



**Astha Bahuguna**

**Head of Fundraising, Ahvan Trust, India  
WE Fellow from the India expedition**

Before the expedition, I saw leadership mostly as a mix of competence, clarity, and being dependable for my team. “Leading” felt like something I had to constantly do. The expedition pushed me to look inward much more. I now see leadership as something grounded in Essence and awareness rather than performance. I’ve become more conscious of how my patterns, fears, and default reactions shape the experience of people around me. Instead of striving to lead perfectly, I’m learning to lead more honestly and from a place of alignment. It’s shifted the tone of leadership for me – from effortful to intentional.

## PARTNER



**Laurent Coulie**

**Co-founder and CEO,  
Belgium's 40 under 40.**

The expedition has been a powerful catalyst for personal growth anchored in the city. The diversity of the group represents Brussels and its cosmopolitan energy.

I have seen Explorers step into a journey of self-exploration, in connection with the place they live, work, and act. What is striking is how this inner transformation empowers people to act outward. Encounters with such a direct link between individual growth and positive impact on the city is rare to witness.

# KEY ACTIVITIES

## Group Expeditions



In 2025–26, Women Emerging convened group expeditions, bringing together **80 women from 59 countries across 6 continents and 32 industries and sectors**, navigating complex and often demanding leadership environments, including Higher Education, Peacebuilding, India and Brussels.

Each expedition gathered a carefully selected group of women. They reflected on their context of leading, tested new ways of approaching leadership, and discovered a new approach, alongside peers who understand the pressures they face.

The diversity of countries, sectors, and leadership contexts brought a wide range of leadership realities and lived experiences. Women left with greater clarity about how they lead, increased confidence to navigate the pressures of leadership, and a strong network.

## Expedition for Students in Higher Education



Women Emerging continues to expand its work in higher education with **18 higher education partners and two finished cohorts**.

These partnerships are extending the reach of Women Emerging into university campuses across the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Women Emerging's 4Es methodology continues to be impactful for these students who consistently report increased confidence and willingness to lead in their environments as a result of their expedition.

Thanks to the expedition and the 4Es, Explorers shed self-limiting beliefs like the expectation to be a 'good girl' and reframe the idea of 'imposter syndrome' as humility and self-awareness.

## Accelerators



Women Emerging is introducing a new way for large groups of women to engage with the Women Emerging methodology – the Women Emerging Leadership Accelerator. It is a six-week virtual exploration designed to help women discover their approach to leading. **Accelerators bring together 1,000 women at one time**, are a combination of self-paced learning and optional workshops, and allow women to:

- Acquire the language of leadership – one that deeply resonates with women – to carry with them into their future leadership.
- Recognise how much they are already leading in their daily lives and have the confidence and inspiration to lead more.
- Build the cultural intelligence to connect with peers and join a global network of women leading.
- Debunk limiting fears – such as imposter syndrome and the ‘good girl’ expectation – and earn a certificate recognising their growth.

## City Expeditions



Women Emerging launched its first city expedition in Brussels in May 2025, in partnership with Belgium’s 40 under 40 and TheMerode.

This expedition brought together 24 women who live or work in Brussels. City expeditions follow the same Women Emerging methodology used across all expeditions but also extend the expedition model by considering the city and its civic life as well.

In Brussels – one of the most diverse cities in the world, home to over 180 nationalities – the Expedition Leaders and Explorers set a goal to create more bridges between the different communities, starting with their own leading. This first city expedition is building a blueprint of how city expeditions can support leadership within cities around the world.



## DIY Expedition (Do-It-Yourself)

This year, Women Emerging launched the **Do-It-Yourself (DIY) expedition** model, which enabled organisations, networks of women and individuals to run their own expeditions using the Women Emerging methodology.

With this model, expeditions can be delivered independently while drawing on Women Emerging's tools, resources, and learning platform.

DIY expeditions can be run by a woman for her network of women, an organisation, city or sector. These are typically run for up to 24 women over five months. However, organisations or individuals delivering Women Emerging's DIY expedition can modify that to align with the numbers and timings of the group.

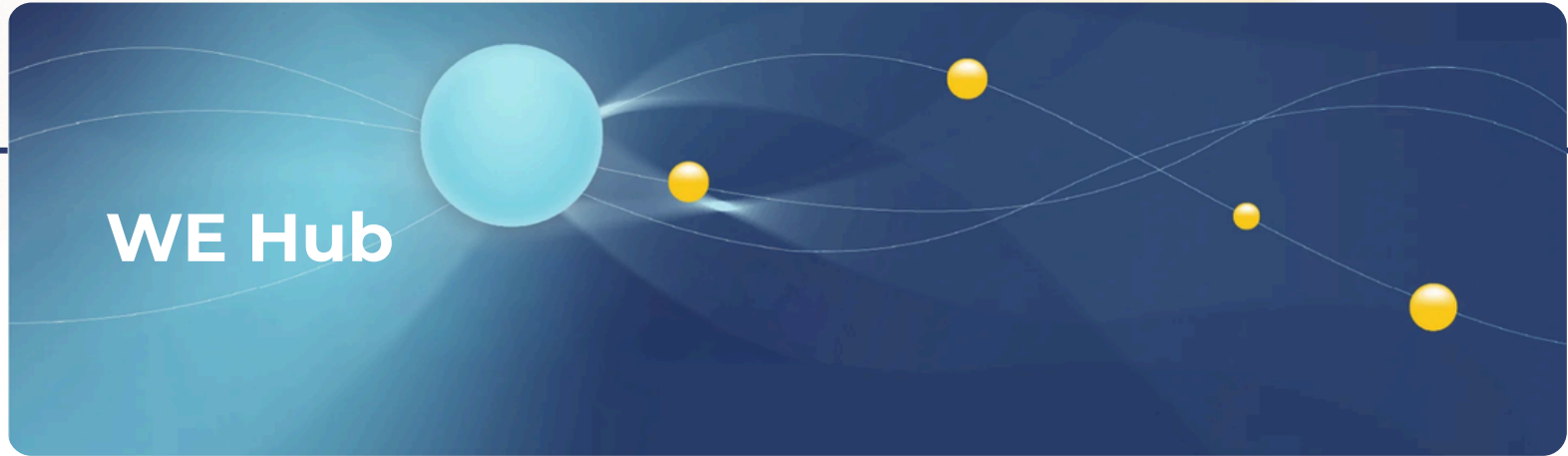


## Solo Expedition

Women Emerging offered the solo expedition, which is an online, self-paced and completely free expedition that individual women can take wherever they are. **749 women have been on the solo expedition.**

Increasingly, women told us that they would like to get an introduction to the 4Es methodology before they committed to a full expedition. And so, Women Emerging created Basecamp.

**Basecamp** is for individual women who would like to get introduced to the Women Emerging methodology of the 4Es. Basecamp is a starting point, from where women can choose to read the book '**If that's leading, I'm in**' or continue to engage with the WE Community and access the resources on leading on the WE Hub. Like the solo expedition, Basecamp is a virtual, self-paced exploration, and comes at no cost.

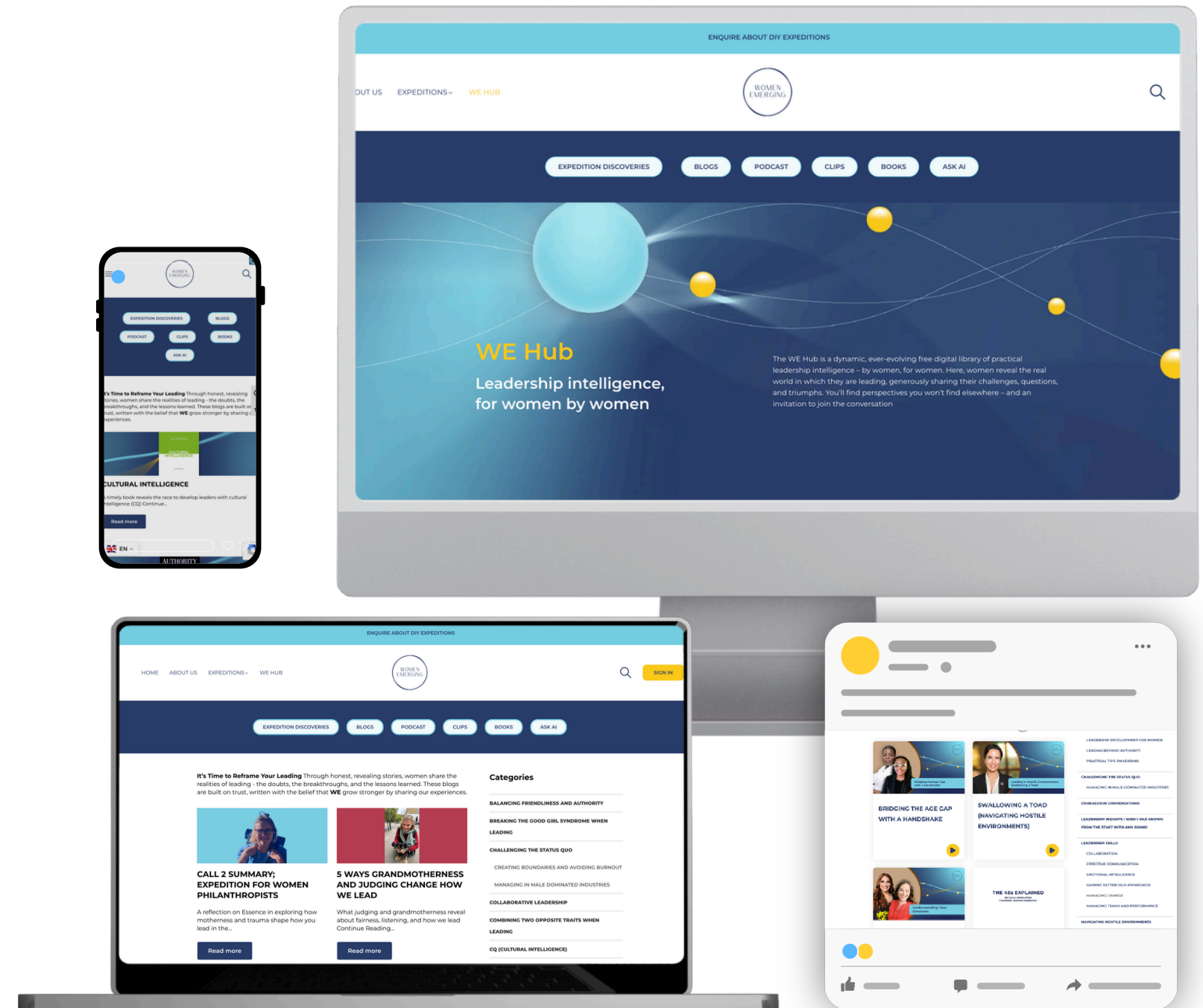


# WE Hub

During the year, Women Emerging's free digital library of leadership intelligence grew with new reflections, insights and practical tips being shared by the women in the WE Community. Women have written about challenging the 'status quo', reframing vulnerability and perfectionism, imposter syndrome, leading beyond authority, jettisoning the 'good girl' and much more.

In order to capture the learning from the expeditions, we launched Expedition Discoveries on the WE Hub. This is a dedicated section to host learnings from each expedition for women in that community, region or sector to discover their approach to leading.

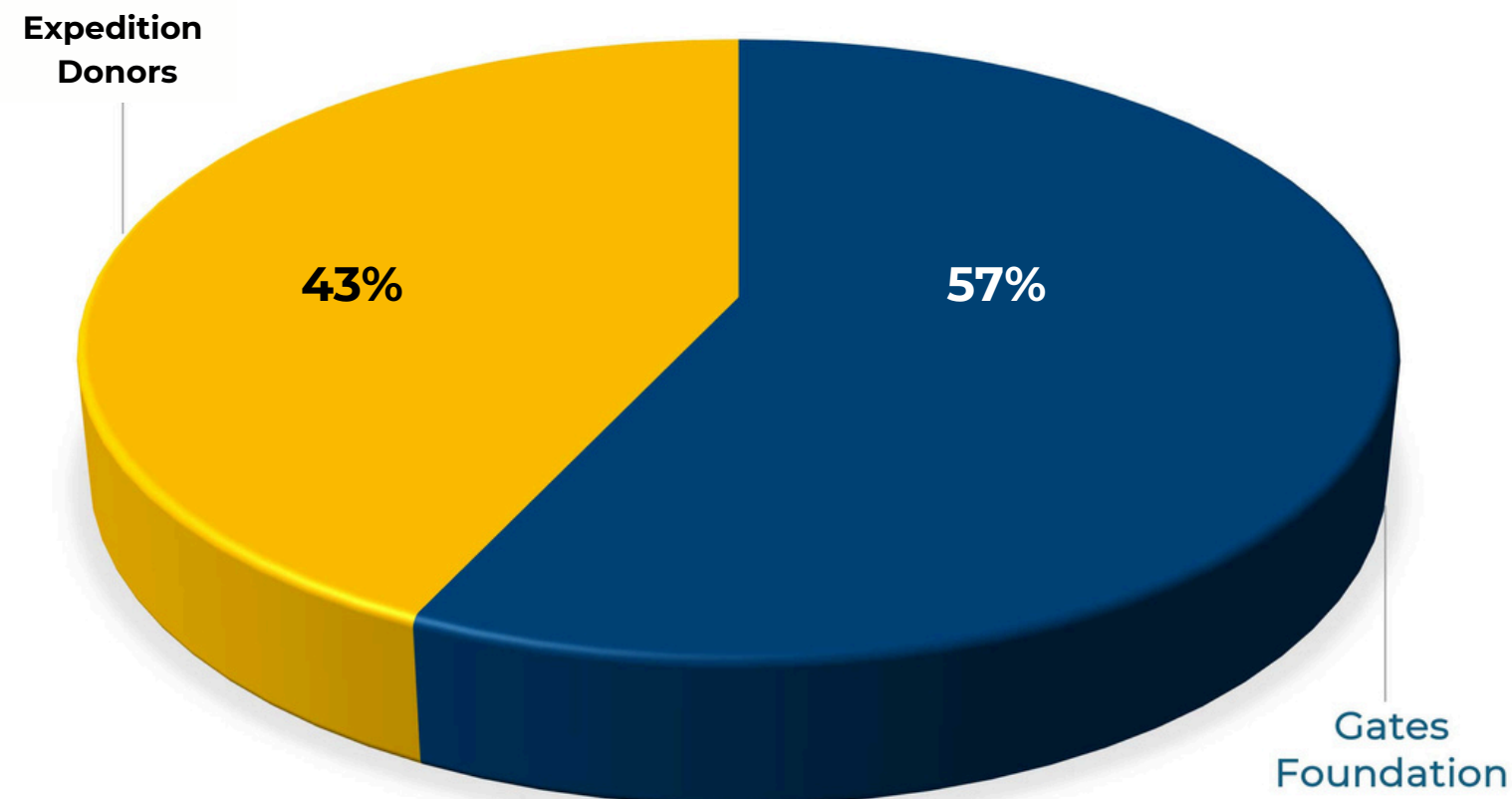
In 2025–26, over 1,519 women received the WE Hub newsletter every week, 85.3% of WE Hub subscribers tell us that they find the WE Hub value for their time and over **21,000 people visited the WE Hub** to read content on leadership.



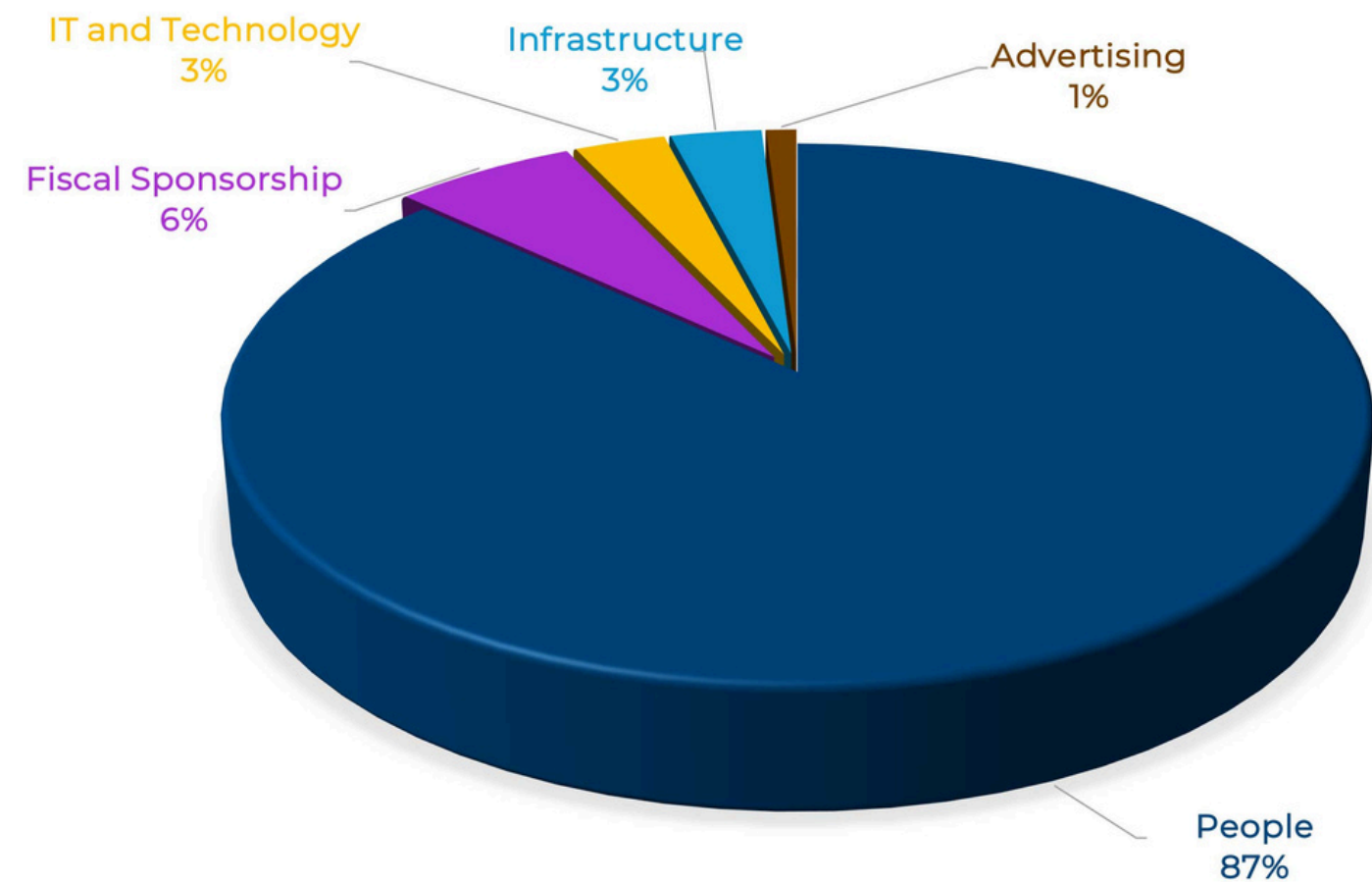
# FUNDING RAISED

We are thankful for the generous funding and sponsorship from our partners to deliver expeditions and take this movement forward. The expenditure pie chart gives a breakdown of the areas where the funding was utilised. We ended the year with a cumulative reserve of \$115,579, which we intend to increase over the coming year to ensure the sustainability of Women Emerging.

## Income \$497,236



## Expenditure: \$399,499



# OUR PARTNERS

We are grateful to our partners who supported us during the year, including:



Partnering with Women Emerging on the leadership expedition for 24 young changemakers in YOUTHTOPIA's Circle of Youth was a deeply meaningful experience. This expedition created space for honest reflection, cross-cultural learning, and a reimagining of leadership that centers on empathy, courage, and collaboration. What stood out most was the power of creating a space where vulnerability was met with strength and leadership was redefined on our own terms. We're proud to have walked this path together with Women Emerging.

— **Melati Wijzen and Lily Lim, Youthtopia**

If you would like to continue engaging with Women Emerging, we invite you to be part of our global community of women leading at [www.womenemerging.org](http://www.womenemerging.org) and follow our work on our social media channels.  