



WOMEN'S VOICES FOR THE EARTH | 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

STRONG ROOTS, RISING CHANGE



DEAR WVE COMMUNITY,

We are brimming with appreciation for your activism and commitment to environmental health and justice for all.

Our community fuels our mission at WVE and enables us to continue our work toward a world where environmental health, justice, and safety are non-negotiable.

Together, we have achieved significant milestones. Our team is raising the bar for ingredient transparency and influencing major industry shifts in favor of safer products. We are deepening our local organizing roots to serve as a scalable model for change, and we continue to be an important voice on critical legislative reforms that prioritize communities most impacted by toxic chemical exposure.



Because of our collective power, the WVE community is celebrating true progress:

- **A Milestone for Safer Beauty:** The fight against harmful chemicals linked with long-term respiratory effects and certain cancers has seen a major win with the FDA's proposed ban on formaldehyde in chemical hair straighteners, a victory resulting from over a decade of policy advocacy by WVE and our allies.
- **Transformative Industry Shift:** We are proud of a pivotal change happening in the intimate care product industry. An impressive 73% of the products we called out in our 2013 Hall of Shame fact sheet have been reformulated, and 77% of the intimate wipe products from our 2016 Wipes fact sheet have removed the toxic chemicals we identified.
- **Empowering Education:** Our inaugural in-person event in Denver in honor of Vaginal Health Week was an eye-opener and a success! Attendees engaged in label-reading, discussed the hidden dangers in period care products, and brainstormed ways to break menstrual stigma.
- **Legislative Leaps Forward:** The Robin Danielson Menstrual Product and Intimate Care Product Safety Act of 2023, endorsed by WVE, was reintroduced and promises to shine a light on the health impacts of menstrual and intimate care products.

- **Salon Safety Spotlight:** Our EXPOSED report on salon product ingredients and worker health was presented at the American Public Health Association annual meeting, underscoring our commitment to advocate for the health and safety of salon professionals.
- **Youth Leading the Way:** Incredible young minds in our fellowship program are pioneering culturally relevant educational tools, through art and narrative, that resonate in communities historically overlooked in environmental health spaces.

Please, take a moment to celebrate the extraordinary strides we made in 2023! Thank you for nourishing this movement and being a vital part of the WVE ecosystem. We look forward to the next phase of our collective story, a story where a healthier, toxic-free world for everyone isn't just possible; it's within our grasp.

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amber Garcia'.

Amber Garcia
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Acevedo'.

Nicole Acevedo
BOARD CHAIR

MISSION

Women's Voices for the Earth (WVE) drives action towards a toxic-free future rooted in gender justice alongside those historically and presently ignored by the environmental health movement by leveraging an intersectional solidarity approach based on our expertise in research, advocacy, and organizing.

VALUES

WVE's organizational values guide our work and include care and stewardship of our planet, gender justice, anti-oppression, harm prevention, and cultural humility.

IMPACT: OUTCOMES & NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

The FDA has finally proposed a ban on formaldehyde in chemical hair straighteners. This move addresses a toxic health risk that disproportionately impacts Black women and salon workers. WVE and partners have been working on the issue of formaldehyde in hair straightening products for over a decade, when health alerts were first issued over Brazilian Blowout products. Eliminating its use would protect hundreds of thousands of users of these products, as well as the salon workers they frequent, from the risks of adverse health impacts such as long-term respiratory effects and certain cancers.



We presented our report *Exposed: Ingredients in Salon Products & Salon Worker Health and Safety* at the American Public Health Association annual meeting. Developed in collaboration with the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative and Black Women for Wellness, the report spotlights how **new ingredient disclosure requirements for professional salon products are providing improved and vital information about chemical exposure**, including exposure to reproductive toxins.



We are making a pivotal change in the intimate care product industry. Of the 15 products we highlighted in our 2013 Hall of Shame fact sheet, 73% had been reformulated by 2023 to remove the toxic chemicals we noted. Likewise, 77% of the intimate wipe products from our 2016 Wipes fact sheet have also been revamped to remove harmful chemicals.

WVE participated in the Denver Pride parade together with the Women's Carpenters Union 555 and Colorado Jobs with Justice to share our pride and celebrate our LGBTQ2S+ community. At the parade, we handed out toxic-free lubricant and engaged with folks about WVE's work.



As we launch our organizing work in Denver, in the fall **we broke new ground with our first in-person Vaginal Health Week event *Beyond the Label***. Participants read the labels of various menstrual and intimate care products and learned about the potential health implications of various ingredients.

In collaboration with researchers from George Mason School of Public Health and Columbia University, WVE's Director of Science and Research, Alexandra Scranton, **co-authored a paper titled "Chemicals in Menstrual Products: A Systemic Review."** Our first-ever peer-reviewed published article is an important addition to scientific research highlighting the concerns about chemicals in menstrual products and their potential impact on our health.

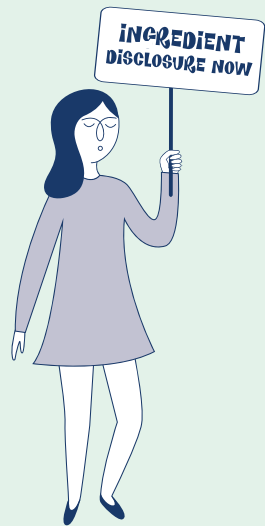


Since the release of our menstrual equity policy tracker in 2023, **we are seeing a surge in policies focusing on ingredient safety and disclosure**, and WVE testified at legislative hearings in Vermont and California.

Period underwear safety made headlines, specifically the Thinx lawsuit settlement that uplifted concerns around PFAS in menstrual underwear. WVE has been uplifting our concerns about nanosilver in period products for the last few years, and our fact sheet on the issue was used as documentation in the lawsuit. Our factsheet on nanosilver in period underwear inspired a consumer advocacy group in the UK to test numerous period underwear products for the presence of silver.



More than 240 WVE supporters have asked their congressional representatives to support the Robin Danielson Menstrual Product and Intimate Care Product Safety Act of 2023. This bill cites WVE's research and would require the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study the composition of menstrual and intimate care products, with a focus on potential impact on consumers. The movement remains strong and our work will not be over until manufacturers prioritize ingredient accountability and put the health of people and planet first.



We submitted substantial public comments to the NIH Environmental Justice Working Group, **highlighting the need to fill environmental justice research gaps on reproductive health impacts** resulting from environmental chemical exposure to menstrual and intimate care product use by people of color.



We partnered with Cancer Free Economy's Household Cleaners' Health & Safety Lab to release a powerful series of videos on disinfectants along with Hand In Hand Domestic Employers Network, Make the Road NY, and Silent Spring Institute. The videos uplift the risks around harmful and unnecessary chemicals in disinfectants and **provide advice to employers on how to protect the health of household cleaners they employ, and the health of people living in the home.**

As a result of our 2021 report, *Beyond the Label: Health Impacts of Harmful Ingredients in Cleaning Products*, we have seen **increased ingredient disclosure in the cleaning product industry and corporate giant Reckitt (makers of Lysol) has removed the reproductive toxin Lilial from its cleaning products.**





Our Weavers Network Fellows created an art activism project and narrative that described how their fellowship experience connected them to their specific cultural relationships to menstruation and menstrual equity. Fellows **co-created learning tools such as zines and comics that are accessible and culturally relevant** to communities often excluded from the environmental health movement.

AFTER MY TIME AT WVE, *I joined the workforce and continued to pursue both my passions of chemistry and period advocacy and built my startup Colorphul Inc., a preventative care platform that focuses on vaginal ph and symptom tracking to help assess vaginal infection risk. This idea was sparked from my experience at WVE after seeing how detrimental these products can be to the vaginal microbiome. Thus, I made a product that helps people become more aware about caring for their vaginal health. My startup now is starting their first clinical trial at UC Berkeley!*

— **UMYEENA BASHIR,**
WEAVERS FELLOW



MY EXPERIENCE WITH WVE *helped me learn how to approach bridging community with advocacy while allowing me to connect with my identities in a supportive environment. I have always loved sharing resources and taking on an educator role; however, with this fellowship's community-faced work, I learned how to focus on not only the needs of the community but the values, the history, and the ways in which those members can teach others—everything that is the strength of that community. While connecting with others that share my identities with my fellowship project, I also have come out of this fellowship with wisdom imparted to me from members of my own community.* — **KEANA DAVIS,** WEAVERS FELLOW

OTHER NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE demanded change from corporations and policy makers via action alerts and phone calls.



ACTIVISTS ACROSS THE NATION participated in webinars, action alerts, and *Our Stories*, *Our Flow* workshops.



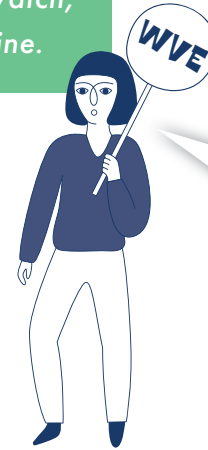
OUR WORK WAS MENTIONED OVER

36 times

in key publications, including *Chemical Watch*, *PBS*, *Univision*, *CBS Health Watch*, and *Sierra Club Magazine*.



WE WELCOMED four new hires and two new Board Members and engaged 7 young people through internships and fellowships.



WE PARTNERED with several organizations, including Black Women for Wellness, California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

PARTNERSHIPS SPOTLIGHT

WVE values bold and inclusive collaboration. We are more intentional than ever about partnering with organizations that represent disproportionately impacted communities and workers, such as rideshare drivers, salon and cleaning workers, people of color and low-income communities. We are prioritizing building a strong network and ecosystem that will allow WVE and the communities we work alongside to sustainably grow and flourish in the long-term.



THROUGH OUR COLLABORATION

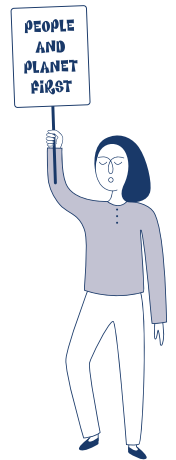
with WVE, I got to learn so much about the toxicity of mainstream menstrual products and how to be a consumer advocate while sharing natural and effective practices for mitigating menstrual discomfort. I was grateful to be able to share the information I learned from the WVE seminar with my daughter.

— **LAKSHMI NAIR**, CO-FOUNDER,
SATYA YOGA COOPERATIVE

WVE collaborates with several business partners that are helping to materialize our mission of bringing better, safer and more sustainable products into our homes and communities.

Their contributions help power our year-round advocacy and education efforts in safe cleaning, menstrual and intimate care, cosmetics and more:

- Apothercare
- Aruna Revolution
- Bedrock Sandals
- Dirty Labs
- Exa Beauty
- Good Clean Love
- Innersense Organic Beauty
- Lovability
- Meliora Cleaning Products
- Naturepedic
- Owl's Brew
- Seventh Generation
- Trace





I DISCOVERED *Women's Voices for the Earth over 10 years ago as their activism caught my attention. It resonated with my own values, which are also our core pillars at Innersense Organic Beauty.*

As an advocacy organization, they offer valuable resources that provide relevant and insightful research and data, plus help to keep our brand aware of legislation on the state and federal levels. Our combined voices offer greater impact for positive change, including improved safety for salon workers.

If any company or brand is seeking to become involved in the overall safe cosmetics movement, you've found the right partner with Women's Voices for the Earth. Plus, working with a dedicated and passionate team who want to make a positive difference in the world is a bonus!

— **JOANNE STARKMAN**, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, INNERSENSE ORGANIC BEAUTY



AWARD ALERT

WVE's efforts to protect women's health and promote sustainability earned us the **In Good Company Award** from PathoSans—a testament to our team and supporters' dedication to a safer and cleaner future for all. PathoSans recognized Women's Voices for the Earth for our commitment to increase transparency, improve safety and eliminate the harmful chemicals people may be exposed to through cleaning products.

OUR TEAM

Trennie Burch (she/her), ORGANIZING AND NETWORK MANAGER, CO*

Beth Conway (she/her), COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, MT**

Sandra Criswell (they/she), DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS & SPECIAL PROJECTS, CA**

Debra Erenberg (she/they), INTERIM CO-DIRECTOR, CT*

Amber Garcia (they/them), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CO

Vic Gómez Betancourt (they/them), DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, CO**

Jamie McConnell (she/her), DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MT**

Natasha Piette Basheer (she/her), DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, CA*

Alexandra Scranton (she/her), DIRECTOR OF SCIENCE & RESEARCH, WY

Elizabeth Taveras (she/her), COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, NE*

OUR BOARD

Dr. Nicole Acevedo (she/ella), MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Boma Brown-West (she/her), CHICAGO, IL

Adrienne Ellsworth, (she/her), MISSOULA, MT*

Debra Erenberg (she/they), MILFORD, CT**

Cynthia Gutierrez (she/ella), OAKLAND, CA

Amanda Klasing (she/her), WASHINGTON, D.C.

Charmaine Lang (she/they), LOS ANGELES, CA*

Monica Schrock (they/she), VANCOUVER, WA

Dr. Kyra Naumoff Shields (she/her), BOULDER, CO

Aimée R. Thorne-Thomsen (she/her), FALLS VILLAGE, CT

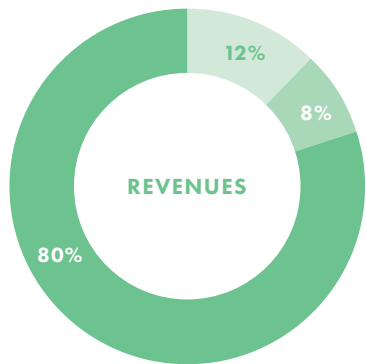
Karen Wang (she/her), BAY AREA, CA

*Joined in 2023

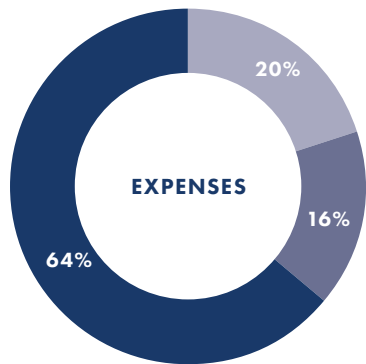
**Transitioned in 2023



FINANCIAL HEALTH



- Foundations: 80%
- Business Partners: 8%
- Donations: 12%



- Programs: 64%
- Management & General: 16%
- Fundraising: 20%

Financial information reflects unaudited numbers

WAYS TO SUPPORT

Please visit [womensvoices.org/give](https://www.womensvoices.org/give) to make a secure online donation today or use the QR code on this page.

Any amount you are able to give moves forward this important work.

Explore a wealth of information on our website and sign up to receive calls-to-action and updates. **We need everyone's voice!**

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