



AKINA MAMA  
WA AFRIKA

# FOOTPRINTS TOWARDS A FEMINIST UTOPIA

Success stories from our Subgrantee Partners

December, 2024





# About

This compilation is a heartfelt tribute to the transformative power of feminist advocacy—a tapestry woven with stories of resilience, leadership, and unyielding community spirit from across Africa. It illuminates the profound impact of grassroots initiatives led by women and feminist organisations as they confront the challenges of climate change, champion economic justice, advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and uplift marginalised communities.

From the fertile wetlands of Luangwa, where women defy drought with innovation, to the Ministerial hallways of Ethiopia, where women push for disability inclusion, these collective voices drive lasting change; these narratives shine as beacons of hope and determination. They reveal women as participants and architects of sustainable, equitable futures.

Footprints Towards a Feminist Utopia is a soulful celebration of feminist leadership—a testament to the courage, ingenuity, and solidarity reshaping systems and rewriting destinies. It is a clarion call to honour and amplify these voices, to join hands in pursuing a world where equality, justice, and dignity are not dreams but realities for all.





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# Economic Justice and Climate Action

As a feminist organisation in Africa, our approach to the climate crisis and economic justice is rooted in analysing the socio-economic and political systems that result in economic marginalisation and the planet's destruction.

Our work highlights the often ignored connections between the climate crisis and economic and gender justice. In our work around economic justice for women and marginalised people, we continuously decry and highlight the ways that the current neoliberal economic models perpetuate gender inequalities and unequal distribution of wealth. We desire to create alternative gender-responsive economic models that transform women's economic status by promoting decent work, access to productive resources, the redistribution of unpaid care work, social protection, and fair taxation policies.

In our climate work, we highlight the gendered impacts of climate change, which require approaches that address the climate crisis as a complex social justice problem and tackle its root causes and impacts. Our interventions, therefore, focus on speaking truth to power by amplifying African women's voices and strengthening individual and collective capacities to establish transformative feminist systems for the people and the planet.

The stories below highlight our partners' work from Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Tunisia, Rwanda and Ethiopia on the gains they have made towards climate justice.



**Zambia**



# Zambia



## A Drought and a Dilemma in Building Women’s Leadership in Climate Resilience in Luangwa District

### **Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW)**

Luangwa District, Zambia, has always faced its share of agricultural challenges. But the 2023/2024 farming season brought unprecedented hardship. El Niño’s wrath unleashed a devastating drought, causing widespread crop failure and many families hungry. Traditional farming methods, heavily reliant on rain-fed agriculture, proved insufficient in the face of this extreme weather event.

The Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW) responded with their “Building Women’s Leadership in Climate Resilience” project. Launched in 2022, this initiative wasn’t just about the immediate crisis – it was about equipping women farmers with the knowledge and skills to adapt to a changing climate. Judith Mwanza, a resident of Luangwa, was a proud participant for two years. She learned about drought-resistant crops, water conservation techniques, and alternative farming methods with other members.

Judith didn’t just learn; she acted. With the newfound knowledge from ZAW pieces of training, she ventured into the nearby wetlands, an area previously considered unsuitable for farming. The project opened her eyes to the potential of these wetlands during dry seasons. Additionally, ZAW’s distribution of fruit trees in 2022 provided her with even more options.

Ignoring traditional perceptions, Judith, with the support of her ZAW group, cleared a section of the wetland and planted various drought-resistant crops, including maize, a staple food in Zambia. She also planted some of the fruit trees distributed by ZAW. A key element to her success was water management. Judith could access water from a nearby stream using a treadle pump and a manual irrigation tool. This innovation ensured her crops received the necessary moisture to thrive despite the drought.



Judith's gamble paid off spectacularly. While other farms in the district lay barren, her wetland plot flourished. The maize grew tall and healthy, promising a bountiful harvest. The carefully nurtured fruit trees began to bear fruit, providing an additional food source and income. Judith's success story became a beacon of hope for other women farmers in the community. They saw firsthand the effectiveness of the climate-smart techniques promoted by ZAW.

Judith's story exemplifies the power of knowledge and the transformative potential of the ZAW project. By equipping women farmers with the tools and skills to adapt to climate change, ZAW ensures food security for families and empowers women to become leaders in building a more resilient future for Luangwa.

## Women of Kafue are No Longer Bystanders to Climate Change

### Women's Life and Wellness Foundation







A quiet revolution is taking root in the heart of the rural Kafue district. For years, many women and community members lived in the shadow of untapped opportunities, unaware of the transformative power of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) as a tool to mitigate climate change and fuel resilience. But when the Women’s Life and Wellness Foundation (WLWF) stepped in, that story began to change.

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In 2023, WLWF launched a mission that was as simple as it was profound: to educate and empower women and youth to claim their share of the CDF and use it to reimagine their futures. Through a series of community awareness meetings, WLWF became a bridge between rural communities and the resources that had seemed out of reach for so long.

By March 2024, the movement had gained momentum. Partnering with Panos, WLWF hosted a dynamic town hall that brought community members and duty-bearers face-to-face. This wasn’t just a meeting; it was a masterclass in accountability and empowerment. Women learned how to navigate the CDF application process, ask the hard questions, and stake their claim to the support they deserved.

And it worked. Just weeks later, seven women’s groups celebrated a groundbreaking achievement: each received 25,000 ZMW in funding. This wasn’t just a windfall—it was a lifeline. With this boost, they invested in tools like drip irrigation systems to ensure their gardens stayed lush, even in an unforgiving climate. These small but mighty projects are helping them transform their communities and businesses, creating a ripple effect of resilience and hope.

The power of this story lies not just in the funds but in the empowerment it represents. The women of Kafue district are no longer bystanders to change—they are leading it. WLWF’s work shows that with education, engagement, and a clear vision, communities can unlock resources, break down barriers, and build futures rooted in justice and opportunity.

This is not just progress; it’s a movement—a testament to the unwavering spirit of women determined to shape their destiny and the world around them.



**Tunisia**





# Tunisia

## Climate Action: Not Just A Global Agenda But A Profoundly Personal, Rural Women-Driven Reality

### APPEDUB



On March 8, 2024, the “Climate Solutions and Community Advocacy Led by Rural Women” event lit up International Women’s Day with a powerful message: rural women are at the heart of the



The event also gave youth advocates a moment to shine. In a hands-on workshop, young climate champions refined their policy briefs with the guidance of seasoned mentors. The energy in the room was electric as fresh ideas collided with expert advice, resulting in polished, impactful documents.



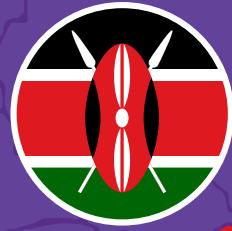
fight against climate change. The gathering brought together a vibrant mix of environmental experts, rural women leaders (GDA), youth climate activists, and policymakers (CRDA), all united by a shared vision: equipping women and youth with the tools to lead change in their communities.

One of the day's highlights was a spirited discussion around the Draft Climate Solutions Guide. It was more than a review session—a meeting of minds and lived experiences. Experts offered technical insights, while rural women enriched the guide with real-world solutions from their daily struggles and triumphs. This collaboration transformed the guide into a living, breathing document that promises to inspire grassroots climate action. The anticipation for its final version is palpable, with stakeholders eager to see it in action.

The event also gave youth advocates a moment to shine. In a hands-on workshop, young climate champions refined their policy briefs with the guidance of seasoned mentors. The energy in the room was electric as fresh ideas collided with expert advice, resulting in polished, impactful documents. For these young advocates, the experience was transformative—empowering them to take ownership of their advocacy journey and fueling their commitment to climate action.

Expert-led sessions added another layer of depth to the event. Practical tips on policy advocacy and sustainable climate solutions resonated deeply with rural women, equipping them with actionable strategies to tackle community challenges. These sessions weren't just about knowledge-sharing but sparking a movement where women lead confidently and confidently.

The “Climate Solutions and Community Advocacy Led by Rural Women” event wasn't just an event; it was a celebration of resilience, collaboration, and the power of community-driven change. It ignited a flame of empowerment and possibility by amplifying the voices of rural women and youth. Together, the participants paved the way for inclusive, gender-sensitive solutions that promise to make climate action not just a global agenda but a profoundly personal, community-driven reality.



Kenya





# Kenya

## Sowing Seeds of Change: Rural Women Take Charge of Climate Resilience in Siaya

### Siaya Muungano Network



In the heart of South East Alego, where the rhythm of life beats to the hum of farming and communal efforts, rural women have long navigated the challenges of exclusion from formal financial systems. Their untapped potential to thrive within modern economies is often stifled by barriers to accessing affirmative action funds and financial services. Yet, the story of two resilient women's groups, Barding Maendeleo and Pendeza Maendeleo, is one of transformation and hope.

For years, these groups toiled in farming and village savings and loaning schemes while raising awareness about climate change adaptation and mitigation in their communities. Despite their dedication, they struggled to secure the funding to scale their initiatives. Without formal registration or the requisite documentation, opportunities like affirmative action programs remained out of reach.

Enter the Siaya Muungano Network—a beacon of empowerment in this journey. The network began engaging with these groups through civic education and strategic facilitation, nurturing their vision of financial independence and climate resilience. Recognizing their aspirations, a community facilitator in August 2022 guided the women in preparing and submitting documents for registration as a Self-Help Group under the Social Services Department in Siaya. This was the first crucial step toward unlocking new possibilities.

The turning point came when members of the groups learned about the Uwezo Fund, a government initiative providing financial support to women and youth for business growth. With the Network's unwavering assistance, they compiled and submitted their applications, which the facilitators carefully followed up.

Their perseverance bore fruit in April 2024 when they received the news they had been hoping for approval for funding. By July 2024, the Department of Gender, Youth, and Social Services handed each group a cheque of Kshs 50,000. This milestone was more than just financial relief; it validated their efforts and was a gateway to broader horizons.

With these funds, the groups are embarking on transformative ventures. Plans are underway to establish a tree nursery, creating a sustainable income stream while contributing to reforestation efforts. Additionally, they aim to expand their savings and loaning initiatives, enabling members to access more significant financial resources. Monica, chairperson of Barding Maendeleo, expressed optimism, highlighting how this support will unlock economic opportunities for members and fortify their ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

This story is a testament to the power of collective action, support networks, and the indomitable spirit of rural women. As they sow seeds of change—literally and figuratively—they are crafting a legacy of resilience and opportunity for future generations.

# Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights



We hold a deep and unwavering belief that African women and girls, in all their beautiful diversity, deserve a sexual and reproductive health agenda rooted in rights, dignity, and the power of choice. At its heart, this vision honours their bodily autonomy and their right to make decisions about their lives and futures—an essential foundation for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Yet, despite strides made globally in advancing health for all, SRHR remains a battleground in many parts of Africa. Far too many women and girls still face barriers that strip them of their ability to exercise these rights freely, without coercion, violence, or discrimination. Harmful societal attitudes and rigid gender norms—often upheld by religious, community, and political leaders—stand in the way. Policies and laws frequently fail to recognise or address the unique needs of diverse groups, including women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals.

The criminalisation of vital healthcare services, such as access to safe abortion, coupled with inadequate funding for policy implementation and the polarising debates over Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression, further obstruct the path to health, safety, and dignity. These systemic challenges continue to weigh heavily on the well-being of African women and girls, particularly those in marginalised communities.

Our work on SRHR seeks to unravel these layers of injustice by embracing an intersectional approach. We shine a light on the entrenched barriers, amplifying the voices of those too often silenced. Through this lens, we aim to drive forward a future where access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is not a privilege but a promise fulfilled for every woman, every girl, and every person in their unique truth.



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Uganda

# Uganda

## “I Feel Like I Made Many Mistakes Before Participating In The Make Way SRHR Programs”

### Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)

In Pukony village of Gulu District’s Awach sub-county, young fathers are redefining masculinity and SRHR. Like any patriarchal society, young men here are conditioned into idealised manhood, which often connotes dominance and refusal to show vulnerability—a perceived show of weakness. These beliefs have kept young men from seeking healthcare altogether, as Halland, a young father, intimates.

“Even after fathering a child at a young age, I still did not take charge of my SRHR; I did not even accompany my partner to the health facility while she was pregnant. I made many mistakes before participating in the Make Way SRHR programs.”

Halland and his friends now spend time seeking knowledge on family planning methods at Pukony Health Centre and distributing condoms in the community. He has since also supported his partner in choosing a family planning method “as we continue to practice safe sex,” he adds.



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# Youth-Led Advocacy For Inclusive SRHR Services Through An Intersectional Lens

Volunteer Services Overseas and Philomera Hope Foundation (PHF)



Kalangala District is home to several tropical islands, a travellers' holiday dream destination. But among the communities living ashore these picturesque waters is a far less luxurious reality. With an 18% HIV/AIDS prevalence and several teenage pregnancies nearly twice as high as the national rate, Kalangala youth are in dire need of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) interventions.



At Kasekulo Health Centre II, VSOUganda has partnered with Philomera Hope Foundation (PHF) and local health authorities through the Make Way programme to carve out a “youth corner,” where young people between ages 10 and 24 convene to learn and share knowledge on SRHR. With two focal persons to facilitate the training sessions, the health centre has earmarked Saturdays for 10—to 19-year-olds, while 20—to 24-year-olds convene on Thursdays.

The Acting Head Medical Officer notes that the sessions have resulted in an increased uptake of family planning methods and, especially, interest in condoms. The youth have also formed a forum theatre group to create awareness and advocate for SRHR.

Since its inception in 2021, The Make Way Programme has initiated and implemented community interventions, fostering positive mindsets and practices towards SRHR and active, youth-led advocacy that holds duty-bearers accountable for improved SRHR services.

## **Beyond the Period: Young Women and Girls with Disabilities Take on Menstrual Hygiene Awareness**

### **Umbrella Cerebral Palsy Network Association- UCPNA and Katalemwa Cheshire Home**

Something transformative took root in the Make Way program’s fourth year. The Umbrella Cerebral Palsy Network Association (UCPNA) and Katalemwa Cheshire Home (KCH), with the generous support of Lilliane Fonds, embarked on an inspiring journey—launching the Menstrual Hygiene and Management Project, a six-month pilot aimed at breaking barriers and empowering young women and girls with disabilities.

This initiative arose from a profound realisation: at the heart of the Make Way program lies the belief in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for all. And within this framework, menstrual hygiene is not just a matter of health but a fundamental right. Yet, for many girls and young women with disabilities, poor menstrual management can strip them of their confidence and self-esteem, limiting their ability to engage in community life fully. The lack of access to pads, limited clothing, and the challenges of maintaining cleanliness during their periods often leave them isolated and marginalised.



The pilot, launched in February 2024, focuses on young women and girls with disabilities in Mukono District, specifically in Bukerere Village, Goma Sub-county. Thirteen girls with cerebral palsy, ten with visual impairments, eight with physical disabilities, five with hearing impairments, and four with intellectual impairments, all aged 10 to 25, are participating alongside their parents and caregivers.

While still in its early stages, the project has already begun to bear fruit. For the first time, these young women and girls have learned that menstruation is a natural part of life—not something to be ashamed of, as many once believed. The workshops have also bridged long-standing communication gaps between the girls and their caregivers. Parents, once hesitant to discuss such topics, now understand that talking about periods is neither taboo nor sinful but essential to their daughters' well-being.

Moreover, the girls are now empowered with the knowledge of how to track their menstrual cycles, using simplified period trackers that incorporate everyday, relatable items to make the process easy to grasp.

This is just the beginning. As the pilot continues, the impact grows, offering a glimpse of what's possible when we create spaces where all girls, regardless of ability, can access the care, knowledge, and dignity they deserve.





*The picture below shows distribution of menstrual hygiene and management products (reusable sanitary pads, a bar of soap and under wears)*



# How the Make Way Programme has influenced the SRHR Landscape on Kalangala Island



## Philomera Hope Foundation

### Youth Peer Leader Speaks

A lot has happened during the delivery of the Make Way Program in Kalangala. The youth never used to freely express themselves on SRHR issues to have their needs addressed by duty-bearers within their communities. Through implementing the Intersectional Community Score Card, as young people, our self-awareness, confidence, and assertiveness capacity have been enhanced to hold our duty bearers accountable and ensure we have our SRHR needs addressed appropriately. For instance, in the past six months, over 350 (M=136, F=224) young people in Kalangala district, including those with disability 79 (M=41, F=38), have enhanced community engagements through 10 community meetings where we engaged duty bearers such as health worker, local council leaders, religious leaders and the district leadership to improve on SRHR information and service delivery for the young people within the district. Health workers can no longer decide for us, including (young people with disability) on which family planning services we should uptake, but rather take us through all different family planning methods and information to adequately enable us to decide on which contraceptives we need and think will work for us. Health workers are no longer as harsh to us young people as they used to be. They now welcome us well at the facilities and prioritise us when we contact them for the SRHR information and services. *By Kawalya Musasizi Junior, 25, a youth peer from Kasekulo village in Mugoye Sub County, Kalangala district.*



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## Local Council 5 Chair Person Speaks

As the district leadership, we are pleased to say that youth have gained and used new found energy and opportunities under the Make Way program to hold us, their leaders, accountable regarding the delivery of SRHR and other youth-related services; I note that youth have established change agents/groups through which they continuously engage themselves, leaders and duty bearers on better service delivery; they conduct outreaches and visits to health facilities to ascertain which services are available, how they can be provided, how young people including those with disabilities are treated, whether they can ably access services without any hindrance among others. The program has created platforms that have given young people an opportunity to hear varied perspectives, find common ground, and gain confidence to voice their opinions, which they have since done in their respective societies, especially social gatherings, churches, at party functions, market places and during other community gatherings.

Since duty bearers also participate in these meetings, harmful social and cultural norms and beliefs that hinder young people from accessing their dreams are discussed. This has become a practice in Kalangala. The district duty bearers have integrated and embraced intersectionality for health equity and justice across all departments. We are considering increasing budget allocations to youth-related social services, including creating safe spaces for young people at facilities, creating an environment conducive to young people with disabilities and ensuring they access and utilise such services as those without disabilities. Whenever there are council meetings at sub-counties, districts or budget conferences, the young people are allocated time to share their experiences, issues, challenges and what they think should be done to enable them to realise their full potential. *“Resty Nakawungu, the LC5 Vice Chairperson, Kalangala”.*





# Restoring Choice: Empowering Women's Reproductive Rights in Mbale

## Mbale Network of Young People Living with HIV/AIDS- (MNYPA)

Eight health facilities in the verdant hills of Mbale District became the focus of a pivotal Client Satisfaction Survey conducted by the MNYPA through the transformative **Make Way Program**. At Budwale HCIII, Jewa HCIII, Wanale HCIII, and others, the survey sought to understand the experiences of clients accessing sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services.

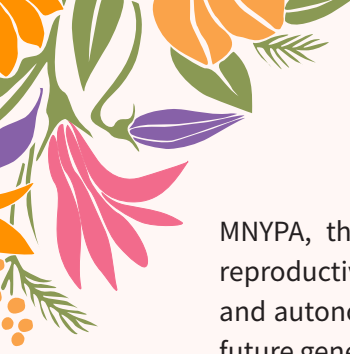
The findings illuminated a pressing concern at Wanale HCIII: a significant stockout of family planning commodities, especially long-term methods women cherish for adequate child spacing. This scarcity forced many to accept options misaligned with their needs and preferences—undermining their autonomy and right to make informed reproductive health decisions.

MNYPA acted swiftly. The organisation delivered the heartfelt feedback of frustrated clients to the facility's leadership, emphasising the profound impact of the shortage on women's lives. The conversation underscored the urgency of ensuring diverse, accessible options that respect patient preferences and uphold reproductive rights.

With Wanale HCIII's management, MNYPA developed a roadmap to resolve the issue. Key among the solutions was engaging the National Medical Stores (NMS) to restore the supply of critical family planning commodities. Through tireless advocacy and collaboration, MNYPA facilitated the timely resupply of these essential tools, marking a turning point for the health facility and its community.

The impact was transformative. With a full spectrum of family planning options now available, women in the Wanale sub-county can make decisions that reflect their aspirations and needs. The restored availability of long-term methods empowers them to plan their families on their terms, contributing to healthier pregnancies, better maternal outcomes, and more robust, confident families.

This success is not just a triumph for Wanale HCIII but a beacon for health facilities across Mbale and beyond. It illustrates how collective action and unwavering commitment can overcome systemic challenges to SRHR services.



MNYPA, through the **Make Way Program**, remains steadfast in its mission to champion reproductive health rights. By ensuring every individual has the resources to make informed and autonomous decisions, they are crafting a legacy of empowerment, dignity, and hope for future generations.





*MNYPA STAFF DURING THE FOLLOW-UP on the commitment made during the first client satisfaction Survey in Mbale*



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Rwanda

# Rwanda

## I Didn't Even Recognize It As Gender-Based Violence Until I Joined The Ntusigare Safe Space



### Impanuro Girls' Initiative



*“I lived in silence, enduring the violence and emotional abuse from my husband, who constantly told me I was worthless and demanded my obedience. I didn't even recognize it as gender-based violence until I joined the Ntusigare safe space. There, I learned about the different forms of GBV and where to seek help. But even then, I was afraid—he was the sole provider for our family.” – Adeltine, Gatore Safe Space*

Through the Ntusiware project, which means “Do Not Be Left Behind,” the Impanuro Girls Initiative (IGI) partnered with women and girls in Gasabo and Kirehe districts to strengthen safe spaces—places where rights holders could meet, share, and heal. These spaces have become sanctuaries of hope and empowerment, designed to foster open dialogue about Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), gender-based violence, and advocacy.

Since 2023, these safe spaces have evolved into hubs of change. Women like Adeltine are now equipped with advocacy skills, turning their newfound knowledge into powerful tools to educate peers and challenge harmful norms in their communities. With support from IGI, they received SRHR training manuals and developed action plans to strengthen their spaces further. Weekly meetings have become a lifeline for many, offering a platform to share stories, find collective solutions, and inspire one another.

The safe spaces also took a groundbreaking step toward addressing one of the root causes of GBV: economic dependence. Recognising the link between financial independence and empowerment, the women introduced a culture of savings within their groups. Supported by IGI, these savings initiatives have enabled women to pool resources, start income-generating activities, and pave the way for financial stability.



*“I suggested we create a savings group within our safe spaces,” Adeltine from Gatore shares. “We could use the time to discuss SRHR issues and save money to gain financial independence. With IGI’s support, our idea became reality. Now, I contribute to our household income. My husband sees my value, and the abuse has stopped. We live peacefully, and I believe our future will only grow brighter as we save and achieve more.”*

Today, the women of Gisozi, Gatore, and Musaza are not only reclaiming their voices but also rewriting their stories. Through education, economic empowerment, and solidarity, they are dismantling the barriers that once held them back. Together, they are building a future where no one is left behind, and every woman stands tall—empowered, resilient, and free.



# Women's Political Leadership

The symbolic status, tokenist, and descriptive representation of women in decision-making and political spaces calls for a radical political transformation in the hegemonic structures, systems, and societal norms if women are to lead and thrive in public leadership, especially in visible spaces such as politics. Women leaders are persistently scrutinized on issues as broad-ranging as their suitability and capabilities to perform leadership roles, considered subordinate to men in leadership, and experience disproportionate visibility and systemic discrimination. Despite decades of affirmative action and interventions geared towards addressing structural inequalities, women remain underrepresented and with limited influence in decision-making and political spaces.

Ushering in an era of transformative women's political leadership requires an eagerness to challenge established norms, theories, and systems. Hence, a feminist Pan-African leadership approach to women's political and civic leadership and Africa's development becomes imperative.





# Ethiopia



# Ethiopia

## Disability Inclusion in Justice: A Milestone for Ethiopian Women with Disabilities

### **Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA)**

The Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA), a trailblazing feminist organisation championing the rights and voices of women with disabilities, has reached a pivotal moment in its journey of advocacy and empowerment. Born in 2002 from the vision of just seven determined women, EWDNA has grown into a powerhouse of change, now representing 10,000 members. Through rights advocacy, social and economic empowerment, disability awareness, and capacity building, it continues to transform lives and break barriers.

EWDNA recently hosted a high-level advocacy workshop in a groundbreaking stride that brought policymakers, justice officials, and civil society leaders into the same room. This event shone a harsh yet necessary light on the glaring gaps in Ethiopia's justice system. This system has long been blind to the unique challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities in the face of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Through raw, unfiltered storytelling and harrowing accounts from survivors, EWDNA revealed how the absence of disability-responsive mechanisms systematically denies justice to some of the most vulnerable members of society.

The workshop convened 48 key stakeholders, including Ethiopian parliamentarians, representatives from the Ministry of Justice, and the Human Rights Commission. Amplified by national media coverage, the discussions cut deep, highlighting the twin barriers of gender and disability in accessing justice.

And then, a breakthrough: the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice announced a historic decision to incorporate sign language interpreters across all its departments. This bold move not only amplifies the voices of persons with disabilities but also signifies a profound shift toward inclusivity in decision-making processes.

EWDNA's feminist approach to advocacy is a masterclass in transformation—centering the voices of the marginalized to drive systemic change. By weaving together policy reform with the lived experiences of women and girls with disabilities, the organization has set a powerful precedent for inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

This victory is more than a milestone; it is a testament to the resilience, courage, and leadership of women with disabilities. EWDNA is a beacon of hope, proving that when marginalized voices are heard and valued, societies inch closer to justice, equity, and dignity for all.



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Kenya

# Kenya



## Melvine Obola: A Fierce Voice Against Femicide in Kenya

In 2024, Kenya reached a critical juncture—a boiling point in the fight against the escalating epidemic of femicide. Women from every corner of the nation rose in defiance, their collective voices an unrelenting force demanding justice and accountability. At the heart of this historic feminist uprising stood Melvine Obola, a tireless advocate and alumna of the African Women’s Leadership Institute (AWLI). Her unwavering commitment to justice made her a beacon of hope in the face of despair.

The numbers were staggering: **Femicide Count Kenya** reported 152 femicides in 2023, the highest in five years. These figures were more than statistics—they were lives lost, families shattered, futures stolen. Yet, the government’s inaction and refusal to even collect official data on these crimes underscored a deeper systemic failure. For Melvine, this silence was intolerable.

Standing on the frontlines of the protests, her voice resonated powerfully: *“Kenyan women deserve justice, safety, and dignity.”* But her fight went beyond the visible scars of physical violence, delving into the often-overlooked realm of emotional abuse that eats away at the core of women’s autonomy and worth.

Melvine’s leadership ignited a Pan-African wave of solidarity. Civic and political actors across the continent amplified her call for justice, while feminist organizations united in a shared mission to dismantle structures that devalue women’s lives. She championed systemic reforms, demanding gender-responsive policing, robust legal frameworks, and the creation of a national femicide monitoring system to ensure no woman’s death would go unnoticed or unpunished.

Her voice, steeped in resilience and purpose, became a rallying cry not just for Kenyan women but for women across Africa. Melvine Obola’s fight is a testament to the power of collective action, reminding the world that the lives of women are not negotiable.

Today, her legacy continues to shape Kenya’s feminist movement, pushing boundaries and inspiring generations. Melvine’s story is not just about resistance; it’s about reimagining a society where women thrive in safety, dignity, and equality—a society where every life matters.



# About Akina Mama wa Afrika

Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA), which translates into “Solidarity with the African woman,” is a feminist Pan-African development organization founded in 1985 and operating in Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, Tunisia, Rwanda, Zambia, and Ethiopia.

Through the African Women’s Leadership Institute, AMwA has relentlessly worked towards increasing the individual and collective power of women, girls and gender-expansive persons to influence policy and transformative social change by uprooting patriarchal, imperialistic and capitalistic systems of oppression.

Through the African Women’s Leadership Institute, AMwA continues to train a critical mass of feminists in intersectional feminist analysis and strategies in the areas of sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Women’s Political Leadership, economic justice, and Climate action to bring about justice, equity, equality, and justice.



# Join us in building a feminist utopia

Access African decolonial radical feminist theories and strategies here



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