

# GROOTS KENYA NEWSLETTER



## Resilience in Action: Grassroots Women Powering Community Transformation Across Kenya





## Resilience in Action

Across villages, informal settlements, coastlines, and county halls, one truth has defined this quarter: grassroots women are not waiting for change, they are leading it.

From Baringo to Kilifi to Nairobi, we have witnessed women rebuild ecosystems, safeguard justice, shape data agendas, and defend their communities with courage and clarity. They have turned honey into enterprise, stood as first responders in conflict-prone regions, restored mangroves by the thousands, championed clean air in our cities, and brought the voices of everyday women to regional policy tables.

These are not isolated achievements. They are proof of a growing movement, one rooted in lived experience, collective power, and the unwavering belief that communities thrive when women lead.

As you read through this edition, we invite you to walk with the women who are redefining leadership, reimagining systems, and proving that resilience is not built in boardrooms. It is cultivated in the hands of women who organize, protect, and transform their communities from the ground up.

This is their work. This is our movement. And the story continues.

## Amplifying Grassroots Women's Voices & Leadership

### Women Entrepreneurs Building Rural Economies



Three years ago, GROOTS Kenya partnered with the Kenya Industrial Research & Development Institute (KIRDI) to train grassroots women in Baringo on honey value addition from safe processing to packaging and branding. What began as a skills-building effort has now grown into a thriving women-led enterprise ecosystem.

Today, **16** women-led groups are producing high-quality honey that is attracting new markets, creating sustainable income opportunities, and strengthening local value chains. These women are not just adding value to honey, they are redefining what economic leadership looks like in their communities.

### Building Community Justice: Paralegals Leading Change in Tiaty

Access to justice remains a pressing concern in Tiaty, where communities continue to navigate long-standing challenges that limit women's and families' ability to claim their rights. Through our partnership with Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) and Christian Impact Mission (CIM), and with support from Diakonia, we are strengthening community-driven justice systems by equipping grassroots paralegals with the skills they need to support their communities.

In September, we held the second session of a four-part paralegal training series in Kabarnet, bringing together over **30** participants and raising the total number of trained paralegals in Tiaty to **55**. These paralegals now serve as first responders, offering guidance on human rights, family law, and Kenya's legal system. They have become trusted educators, mediators, and vital links between community members and formal justice institutions.

We were honored to be joined by county leadership, including Chief Officer Victor Kiprotich Barmao, CEC Gender Maurice Kiprop, Director Florence Chebet, Assistant Director Ruth Jelgo who celebrated the paralegals' growing capacity and commitment.

This work continues to lay a strong foundation for community-owned justice, ensuring that families especially women and girls can access timely support, reliable information, and pathways toward peaceful resolution.



From left to right: A group photo of the newly graduated paralegals from Baringo, joined by our partners from the County Government, CIM, and LRI during the paralegal graduation ceremony held in Tiaty in September.

## Land Is Dignity: Grassroots Women Shape the Regional Dialogue on Land Rights



“We cannot talk about food security, development, or equality if women do not have access to land.”  
Roselida Mukhwana, Land Rights Champion

At the IGAD Regional Dialogue with Women Parliamentarians, Roselida Mukhwana, grassroots land rights leader, delivered a powerful reminder: land is not merely a physical asset, it is dignity, power, and survival for women across the region. Her voice carried the lived realities of thousands of women who continue to fight for secure land rights.

Through GROOTS Kenya’s Land and Property Watchdog Groups, now over 300 champions strong more than 1,200 women have secured land titles, many for the first time in their lives.

Roselida also shared moving stories of widows who, after facing dispossession since 1997, finally reclaimed their rightful land in 2024 through community-led justice and unwavering solidarity.

She challenged leaders to go beyond policy commitments: “We cannot talk about food security, development, or equality if women do not have access to land.”



## Grounded, United, and Bold: Grassroots Women Chart the Next Chapter of the Movement



Murang’a County came alive as 70+ grassroots champions from 20 counties (Garissa, Elgeyo Marakwet, Kajiado, Tana River, Bomet, Uasin Gishu, Nyeri, Bungoma, Busia, Kilifi, Nyandarua, Murang’a, Kitui, Nairobi, Kakamega, Laikipia, Kiambu, Baringo, and Nakuru) gathered for the 2025 Annual Grassroots Assembly under the theme “Grounded, United, and Bold.”

The three-day gathering reconnected champions to the heartbeat of the movement, a space to reflect on shared values, celebrate county innovations, and shape a united strategy for the years ahead.

Across all sessions, one truth echoed through every voice and story: when grassroots women unite, barriers break, possibilities expand, and power grows deep roots. The Assembly was not just a meeting, it was a powerful reaffirmation of vision, solidarity, and the unstoppable force of community-led leadership.

## Strengthening Access to Justice: A New Gender & Children Desk Opens in Chemolingot

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July we had our grassroots leaders and paralegals from Baringo and Laikipia join the launch of the new Gender and Children Desk at Chemolingot Police Station. This launch reflects the strength of community-driven systems. We celebrate this achievement alongside our committed partners Diakonia, the Embassy of Sweden in Nairobi, the National Police Service, the Ministry of Health, the Children’s Office, LRF, CIM and Diakonia.



# Strengthening Climate Resilience & Community Adaptation

## Anchoring Grassroots Women in the Blue Economy



Between August 18–29, GROOTS Kenya conducted a mentorship and coaching series with **22** women-led groups in Kilifi, equipping them with practical skills in leadership and communication within the Blue Economy. These sessions aimed at strengthening the women's confidence, sharpening their advocacy voice, and deepening their understanding of the governance spaces that shape coastal resources.

**In Malindi, the impact is already visible;**

**Five women** have successfully taken up leadership and committee positions within Beach Management Units (BMUs) a milestone in sectors traditionally dominated by men. Their presence is shifting how decisions are made and ensuring that women's knowledge, priorities, and lived experiences inform coastal resource management.

Across Magarini and Kilifi North, women are increasingly engaging with Community Forest Associations (CFAs), raising awareness on environmental inclusion, building solidarity, and forging stronger relationships with local stakeholders. While many are still entering these spaces for the first time, their voices are beginning to influence how forests, mangroves, and marine resources are managed.

Through these mentorship sessions, each of the **22** groups developed tailored action plans from strengthening collaboration with CFAs to securing user rights for mangrove and terrestrial forests.

## Bridging Restoration with Policy Influence



To ensure grassroots knowledge shapes decision-making, GROOTS Kenya was represented by grassroots women at the Mangrove Dialogue held on 25th July, where they shared community perspectives on restoration challenges and opportunities helping to inform county and national blue economy policies.



## Grassroots Women Restoring Our Coast: Mangrove Restoration and Leadership Across Kilifi County



Ahead of World Mangrove Day, the Gongoni Mikoko CBO planted **30,000** mangroves at Mida Creek in collaboration with the Kenya Forest Service, restoring degraded shorelines, improving fish breeding grounds, and inspiring a new generation of young female conservationists.

To commemorate **World Mangrove Day**, on 26th July GROOTS Kenya mobilized and mentored women-led groups across Kilifi to lead restoration and awareness activities that highlighted the essential role women play in climate action and the protection of coastal ecosystems.

In Takaungu and Mida Creek, **five** women-led groups conducted mangrove planting and community sensitization.

In Sabaki, Adu, Magarini, and Gongoni, **six** additional groups restored degraded areas, showcasing effective restoration techniques and mobilizing community members.

Collectively, the groups donated **5,000** mangrove seedlings, contributing to the planting of over **10,000** mangroves across Kilifi.

These efforts strengthened biodiversity, expanded carbon sinks, and deepened public understanding of the crucial role mangroves play in protecting shorelines and sustaining livelihoods.



## Grassroots Women Safeguarding Kenya's Coastline



This September, GROOTS Kenya joined the world in marking 40 years of the International Coastal Cleanup, a global moment dedicated to protecting oceans and restoring marine ecosystems.

In Kilifi, **35** grassroots champions representing 11 women-led groups came together alongside Eco World Recycling Company to confront the growing threat of marine litter.

For many of these women, ocean conservation is not theoretical. It is directly tied to their livelihoods, their children's health, and the future of the Blue Economy. During the joint cleanup at Treasure Hunt Beach, the scale of pollution was impossible to ignore.

Together, participants collected **1 ton** of waste, including:

- Plastics of every shape and size from meso-plastics tangled in seaweed to shredded wrappers buried deep along the shoreline.
- Discarded fishing nets, stuck between rocks and coral, some requiring cutting tools and teamwork to remove.
- Medical waste, including syringes and hazardous materials that threaten both marine life and human safety.



## Community-led Climate & Health Justice in Nairobi's Informal Settlements



As Nairobi marked the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies on 7th September, **40** clean air champions joined in on the procession to commemorate this day as a reminder that clean air is not a privilege. It is a right that protects families, saves lives, and shapes the future of our city.



Earlier in the month, more than **50** GROOTS Kenya clean air champions took part in the Urban Cityzens Walk for Clean Air. Their voices called for cities where women, children, and informal settlement residents could thrive without fear of polluted air.

This urgency reflected stark facts: the World Health Organization reported that **air pollution claims 7 million lives annually**, and African cities including Nairobi bear the heaviest burden.

Across Mathare and Kibera, more than **200** community members joined our clean air champions in public clean-ups and practical learning on safer waste management in September and October.



In Mathare alone, over **50** residents committed to sorting household waste and rejecting open burning, which had silently filled children's lungs and drained household income on medical bills. The lesson was clear: clean air required responsibility at home and strong systems from government.



Together, these actions reflected a rising movement for climate and health justice in Nairobi's informal settlements. With support from partners Nairobi City County Government, Breathe Cities, Kusudi and Muungano wa Wanavijiji.



# Promoting Gender-Responsive Governance & Accountability

## Grassroots Voices Lead at the Regional Women in Data Summit 2025



The Regional Women in Data Summit 2025 brought together policymakers, grassroots leaders, and data experts from 13 African countries to advance the theme **"Data for Accountability and Inclusive Decision-Making."** Held in Naivasha, the summit centred the leadership of grassroots women, recognizing that data means little if the realities of communities are not reflected, heard, and acted on.

GROOTS Kenya played a pivotal role, with 50 grassroots champions leading conversations on citizen-generated data and governance accountability. During break out sessions they demonstrated how community-collected data particularly from informal settlements, farms, and local markets is shaping county policies, budgets, and service delivery.

During the summit, one message echoed clearly: **"We should not only count women. We must make women count in every decision that shapes their lives."**

This call challenged governments, regional bodies, and development partners to invest in inclusive systems that recognize women not merely as statistics, but as knowledge holders, agents of accountability, and shapers of policy. Without gender-disaggregated and community-driven data, Africa cannot track its progress or achieve it.



## Strengthening Gender Data for a More Inclusive Kenya



In September we participated in the validation workshop for the Gender Sector Statistics Plan (2024–2028), convened by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) in partnership with UN Women.

The workshop brought together policymakers, statisticians, and civil society actors to review and refine a roadmap that will strengthen Kenya's capacity to produce, analyse, and use gender-sensitive data across national and county levels.

## Gender Technical Working Groups in Action



As part of the Tana River County Gender Technical Working Group (GTWG), we joined state and non-state actors, including representatives from the County Commissioner's office, National Police Service, State Department of Gender and Affirmative Action, Ministries of Education and Health, ODPP, Probation Office, several CSOs, Women's Rights Organizations, and development partners such as Welt Hunger Hilfe.

Together, we reviewed recent achievements and emerging challenges, and laid the groundwork for a full calendar of gender-responsive activities for the coming months.

## Women Farmers Lead Baringo's Shift to Sustainable Pasture and Silage Production



We trained **20** women's groups in Baringo County on pasture growing and silage production across four wards: Kolowa, Naudo, Ngoron, and Loruk. Through women-led learning, local language facilitation, and peer-to-peer mentorship, the training has strengthened ownership and accelerated the spread of sustainable farming practices within the community.

These locally driven skills are now helping families protect their livestock during dry seasons, increase income from fodder sales, and strengthen climate resilience across the region.



## Grassroots Women Lead Community Safety and Early Warning Against Violent Extremism

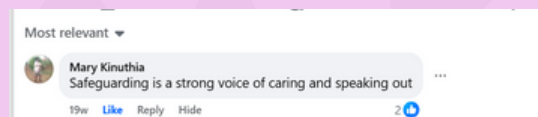


GROOTS Kenya joined regional leaders at the Global Counterterrorism Forum workshop on strengthening women's leadership in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in East Africa. Representing our movement, Champion Nelly Chepkorir shared the lived realities and solutions emerging from the Kolowa Women for Peace Group in Baringo, a women-led Community Watchdog Group formed to protect families, raise early warning signals, and create safe spaces for dialogue before conflict escalates.

In Baringo, where violence often stems from tensions over land and scarce resources, women have become critical first responders. Nelly spoke about their journey: how several members have now been trained as paralegals, enabling them to guide neighbours toward lawful, peaceful dispute resolution. Their leadership is helping communities resist the normalization of violence and reducing pathways to radicalization among women, youth, and children.

## Safeguarding Series: "Do No Harm"

In July, we ran our "Safeguarding: Do No Harm" social media campaign series, aimed at creating awareness on our safeguarding guidelines and protocols.



# GROOTS Kenya in the NEWS



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