

GROOTS KENYA

NEWSLETTER

Issue 1



Grassroots Women Driving Change Across Kenya





MESSAGE FROM OUR TEAM: FROM COMMUNITY POWER TO SYSTEMS CHANGE

Dear Friends, Champions, partners and Supporters,

This quarter, grassroots women did more than participate in change; they drove it, shaped it, and demanded it.

Q1 2026 has been a season of bold, visible action for GROOTS Kenya. Our champions marched for peace in Tana River, sat at policy tables in Nairobi, Laikipia and Kitui, and stepped onto the global stage at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, carrying the voices, data and lived realities of thousands of grassroots women across Kenya.

This newsletter reflects what collective power looks like in practice. From coastal mangroves to dryland farms, from community action to global advocacy, one truth stands clear: when grassroots women lead, communities don't just change, they transform systems.

Thank you for standing with us and making this movement possible.

With gratitude and solidarity,

GROOTS Kenya Movement.

GROOTS Kenya at CSW70: Grassroots Voices on the Global Stage



This quarter, GROOTS Kenya made a powerful mark at the 70th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, securing five high-level speaking engagements across key side events. These platforms ensured that grassroots women's realities were not just included but centered in global policy conversations.



Our delegation Wairimu Kanyiri and Njoki Macharia, grassroots champions for transformative development, alongside Executive Director Eunice Mwangi and Programs Manager Doris Munyingi brought forward critical issues often left at the margins. From land disinheritance to the invisibility of women's labor, they demonstrated how citizen-generated data is reshaping advocacy, strengthening accountability and redefining whose knowledge counts.



Because what is not counted, does not count.

OUR MILESTONES & IMPACT

Citizen Data as a Tool for Justice

At the UN Women side event '**Centering Women's Voices: Citizen Data for Protection and Justice**,' Executive Director Eunice Mwangi spoke on land rights and how citizen-generated data is driving change from the ground up.

She unpacked the realities behind Kenya's constitutional land categories for women: grassroots women leading community-led mapping of public resources; widows facing widespread disinheritance as a hidden form of gender-based violence; and women routinely excluded from land registers, with female-headed households pushed to the margins.

Her message was direct: when women collect their own data, they expose injustice and demand accountability.



A Decade of Making Women Count



At the '**A Decade of Making Women Count**' panel hosted by UN Women, Eunice reflected on how the Women Count Programme has transformed the visibility of grassroots women

For too long, women's contributions to agriculture, enterprise, and unpaid care work have remained uncounted in formal statistics, meaning their voices are absent from budgets, policies, and financing decisions.

Her message resonated powerfully with the audience: what is not counted, does not count.

Land Rights, Pastoralist Women and Economic Justice



Programs Manager Doris Munyingi represented GROOTS Kenya at the IIED side event '**From Land Rights to a Gender-Just Economy: Lessons from Indigenous and Pastoralist Women.**'

Doris shared how community-led advocacy is advancing women's land rights and economic empowerment, drawing on our movement's work across pastoral and indigenous communities in Kenya.

Grassroots Realities Must Shape Global Solutions

Champion Wairimu Kanyiri reminded global audiences why representation must go beyond presence. She highlighted that many women's issues, particularly around leadership and gender-based violence, are still resolved informally and unjustly in community spaces, sometimes under trees, without accountability or protection for women. Her presence at CSW70 was not just representation; it was a demand that grassroots realities shape global solutions.



"Nothing about us without us."

- Wairimu Kanyiri, Grassroots Champion, CSW70

International Women's Day 2026: Recognition, Representation and Resilience

Under this year's UN theme "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls", GROOTS Kenya champions showed up powerfully for International Women's Day celebrations across multiple counties, not as passive participants, but as recognized leaders demanding their rightful place at the table.



Kitui County: Champions Celebrated, Movement Recognized

In Kitui, 50 champions from all eight sub-counties gathered at an event graced by Governor Dr. Julius Malombe. Three of our champions received individual Certificates of Recognition:

- Rael Miwa, recognized for her commitment to climate-smart agriculture, Galla goat keeping, and kitchen gardening.
- Ruth Samuel (Mwingi North), recognized for producing and distributing energy-saving stoves to community members.
- Rhodesther Muthui, recognized for championing women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes.

GROOTS Kenya also received an institutional Certificate of Recognition for county-wide contributions to promoting women's leadership, economic empowerment, and climate resilience across all eight sub-counties.

Laikipia & Narok: Women Seal a Commitment with an MOU



In a landmark moment of cross-county solidarity, International Women's Day celebrations in Laikipia brought together women from both Laikipia and Narok Counties to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on commitment and a call to action on women's issues.

The MOU was signed between women, elders, leaders, and key stakeholders, a powerful demonstration that grassroots women are not waiting to be included in decision-making processes. They are creating their own frameworks for accountability and collective action.



Kilifi County: Grassroots Women Demand Climate Justice

36 champions from the Kilifi Movement joined county IWD celebrations graced by Governor Gideon Mung'aro.

Our champion Rukiya Pamba Juma of the Pweza Women Group was publicly spotlighted for receiving a county-donated boat that has transformed marine-based livelihoods.



Baringo: Women of Faith Unite in Celebration and Prayer



In Baringo County's Kolowa community, in partnership with Christian Impact Mission, over 50 grassroots champions joined hands to celebrate International Women's Day.

Policy Dialogue: From Participation to Political Power



This quarter, we hosted HorizonT3000 partners and 10 grassroots women leaders from Kiambu County to reflect on the journey of the Policy Dialogue Program since 2013. What emerged was more than reflection; it was clear evidence of systems change.

Rahab (second from the left) shared how, just a decade ago, women in her community were largely confined to unpaid care work, with leadership feeling distant, almost unattainable. Through structured policy dialogue, civic education, and governance engagement, women began to understand not just policy but power. In 2013, Rahab contested for a Member of County Assembly seat, finishing third with 700 votes, just 500 behind the winner. That moment shifted something fundamental: belief. And belief has translated into measurable results:

- Women MPs increased from 13 in 2013 to 22 in 2022.
- Women MCAs in the county grew from 2 in 2013 to 7 in 2022.
- More women are now serving as village chiefs, reshaping leadership at the most local level.

This is what sustained policy engagement can do. It moves women from consultation to candidacy. From participation to representation

Clean Air for All: Community Action Driving Change



The Nairobi City County Air Quality Action Plan 2025–2029 was officially launched, with GROOTS Kenya recognized as a named contributor. Our champion Isabella Nzioki played a pivotal role in ensuring community voices were embedded in the plan.

GROOTS Kenya participated in a two-day stakeholder workshop on implementing the Air Quality Action Plan, convened under the Breathe Cities Initiative by the Nairobi City County and The Environmental Compliance Institute. Champion Florence Mumbua contributed to a panel on tackling air inequalities, emphasizing that air pollution disproportionately affects women and girls through unpaid care work and exposure in informal workspaces.



We trained 120 Clean Air Champions from Kibra and Mathare on air quality laws, policies, and community reporting channels equipping grassroots leaders with the knowledge and tools to drive accountability.



"Air quality is not just an environmental issue. It is a social justice issue."

Florence Mumbua, Grassroots Champion, Nairobi Air Quality Stakeholder Forum



"Data is not just numbers. It is power, visibility, and action."
 "When women count, change counts."

GENDER DATA AS POWER: WOMEN COUNT PHASE III LAUNCH

GROOTS Kenya was proud to participate in the official launch of Phase III (2026-2029) of the Making Every Woman and Girl Count Programme hosted by UN Women, represented by Executive Director Eunice Mwangi, Programs Coordinator Dennis Njung'e, and Grassroots Gender Data Champion Pamela Igera.

This new phase signals a critical shift: from building gender data systems to scaling their use and impact; from isolated data points to integrated, decision-shaping evidence; from global commitments to grounded, local realities. Dennis Njung'e joined a panel discussion highlighting how gender data is being used to drive policy action on the ground, from advancing women's economic empowerment to preventing violence against women and girls.

GROOTS Kenya's contribution remains clear: ensuring that citizen-generated data bridges the gap between national systems and grassroots lived experiences.



Grassroots Women Turning Advocacy into Land Ownership



Fifteen GROOTS Kenya champions stood in solidarity at the launch of a 70-acre parcel of land secured for the Naitutum Women CBO in Laikipia County a bold milestone toward economic independence for 315 women across 18 sub-groups within the Tiamamut Community Land.

Now electrically fenced with support from IMPACT Kenya, the land represents far more than protection, it is power reclaimed. The women credit this achievement to years of organizing, advocacy and empowerment nurtured through GROOTS Kenya, which enabled them to successfully lobby for ownership.

Their vision is already taking shape: agroecology, beekeeping, beadwork, and the preservation of cultural heritage pathways to both income and identity.

The launch was graced by Hon. Sarah Korere, who proudly shared her own journey through GROOTS Kenya, a powerful reminder that when grassroots women are invested in, they rise to lead at every level.

SEWA Exchange Visit: Global Learning, Local Application



Last quarter, GROOTS Kenya participated in a transformative 7-day exchange learning visit under the Grassroots Climate Resilience Facility with the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, implemented in partnership with the Global Fairness Initiative. Our delegation, grassroots movement-building champions Dorcus Kigera and Loise Kimiriri, alongside Veronica Kabugi and Executive Director Eunice Mwangi, returned with insights that are already shaping the next chapter of our movement.



What We Learned

- Sustainable economic empowerment is never transactional
- Climate adaptation must look further than the next season. For women in informal and climate-vulnerable economies, the goal must shift from short-term crisis response toward long-term risk protection and livelihood stabilization
- Leadership development cannot remain informal. Sustaining a movement at scale requires institutional pathways, structured mentorship, standardized learning frameworks, and strong accountability systems that preserve grassroots ownership while building lasting institutional depth.

What It Means for GROOTS Kenya

This exchange was both affirming and catalytic. It reaffirmed that our movement-first philosophy, rooted in grassroots women defining the problems, designing the solutions, and leading the implementation, remains our greatest strength.

Grassroots Women Influencing Policy



Five GROOTS Kenya farmer champions joined stakeholders from the Laikipia County Government to review the Zero Draft Agroecology Policy and Bill, a framework that positions agroecology as a pathway to climate resilience, sustainable food systems, and stronger livelihoods for smallholder farmers, with women's leadership at the center.

The engagement reaffirmed a truth our movement knows well: grassroots women must shape the policies that govern their land, food, and futures, not simply be consulted after decisions are made.

As sub-county forums roll out across the county, our champions are ensuring that ward-level realities directly inform the final policy. Moving women farmers from consultation to decision-making one policy table at a time.

Agroecology on the Ground: Gender Transformative Agroecology (GTA) Trainings Rollouts in Laikipia and Kitui

This quarter, GROOTS Kenya conducted Grassroots Training on the Gender Transformative Agroecology training manuals rollouts across Laikipia and Kitui Counties.

The GTA is a structured, community-led training programme that equips grassroots women farmers with practical agroecology skills from water harvesting and soil conservation to organic farming and climate-smart agriculture while strengthening their leadership, financial confidence and collective action.



Grassroots Women from Kinakomba Ward conducted a courageous, peaceful march to the County Commissioner's office, demanding resolution of a long-standing boundary conflict.

Their collective action led the County Commissioner to commit to a cross-county security meeting and a halt to social media incitement, a testament to the power of organized community advocacy.

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Newsletter by : **Vivian Wangari**
Email : **Communication@grootskenya.org**