

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Greetings from Kampala, Uganda

In May, we joined the Minority Women in Action (MWIA) in the heart of Nairobi, where a powerful training brought together minority women leaders to unpack topics from the Feminist Pocketbook, including power mapping, feminist consciousness, and the problem tree — all under the guidance of a Trainer of Trainers (ToT) supported by Civil Rights Defenders (CRD).

This month, we shine our spotlight on Peace Loise, MWIA's Communications Officer, whose journey from Ethiopia's ToT sessions to leading local empowerment work in Nairobi is inspiring a feminist ripple effect across Kenya. Through her training, Peace is helping over 500 members across five chapters tap into the "power within" and claim space in both private and public spheres.

Meanwhile, at the continental level, history was made: the African Union has officially operationalised the Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (CEVAWG), a landmark step toward a safer and more just Africa for all women and girls. CHARM, through our alliance with CIVICUS, proudly contributed to this victory by supporting regional consultations and amplifying grassroots voices from Kenya to Ethiopia.

In another major advocacy milestone, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) adopted a Resolution on Developing General Comment on the Protection and Promotion of the Right to environment in Africa. This win comes after three years of sustained advocacy by CHARM and partners and marks a new chapter in defending both our people and our planet.

We are proud to be part of these interconnected movements — from Nairobi's training rooms to AU assembly halls. Thank you for walking this journey with us.

**Enjoy your read,
The Coordination Team.**



Some of the Participants from Minority Women In Action at a training in Nairobi, Kenya. The training was from the Trainer of Trainers Meeting conducted by Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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The training has helped me understand better on how to relate with fellow human rights defenders and activists at a grassroots level. It has enabled me to understand what approaches I can apply, and how better I can package my messages for the people on the ground.

Salima* A participant

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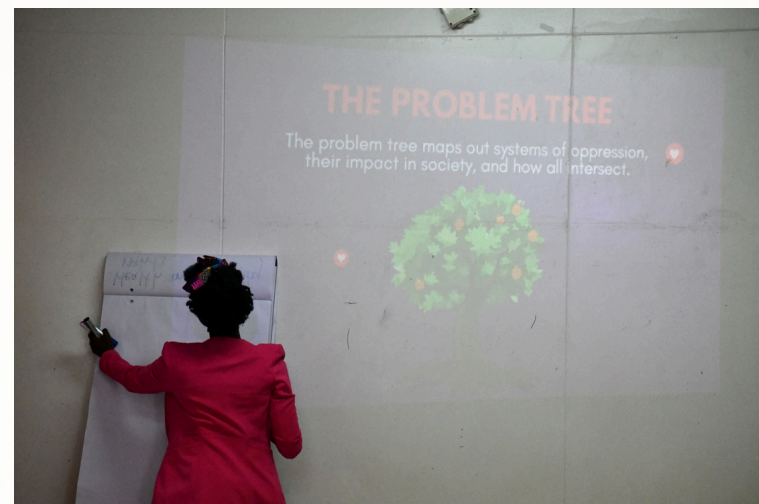
Kenyan feminist advocate uses training to empower minority women across the country after CRD TOT

When she attended the Trainer of Trainers meeting organized by CHARM, through Civil Rights Defenders, (CRD), Peace Loise was on a mission to understand why she fights for queer rights.

Loise is the Communications Officer at Minority Women in Action (MWIA), a grassroots organization based in Nairobi, Kenya, working to advance the rights and well-being of minority women, including LGBTQ+ individuals, through advocacy, education, and empowerment programs.

We caught up with her in a trainer of trainers meeting, where she had ten focal leaders gathered in South B area of Nairobi, being taught on different topics including feminist consciousness, understanding the power within and empowerment among minority women in Kenya. She drew insights from the Feminist Pocketbook for Human Rights Defenders, a guideline by CRD on training on gender issues. Now a TOT after a training session in November 2024, Loise is working to cascade feminist knowledge and advocacy throughout MWIA's growing network of over 500 members across five chapters in the country.

The training, equipped Loise and other participants with tools to unpack complex topics such as lived experiences of homophobia, feminist consciousness, power mapping, and the "problem tree", a tool used to identify root causes of systemic issues.



Peace Loise Mbae, Minority Women In Action Communication Officer, takes women activists through a training on feminism in Nairobi, Kenya.

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One of my biggest takeaways was understanding feminist consciousness and integrating it into my personal life. Before this, I often struggled to answer simple but profound questions like, 'Why are you a feminist?' Now, I understand that it's not just about fighting injustice, it's also about knowing why we fight and having the right information to back it up."

Peace Loise Mbae, Minority Women In Action Communication Officer

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Kenyan feminist advocate uses training to empower minority women across the country after CRD TOT

"In Addis, Loise had the opportunity to reflect deeply on her own journey and share her perspective during exercises like power mapping, analyzing "power within," "power with," and "power over." She says that the experience allowed her to become a stronger advocate not only for others but also for herself.

I'm now a big advocate for myself. I can exercise the power within, the knowledge and awareness I've gained, to align my internal world with my external actions." She added.

With her newfound confidence and knowledge, Loise has identified key influencers within MWIA to undergo similar training. Her goal is to create a ripple effect where trained leaders pass down the knowledge to other members, ensuring that feminist awareness and empowerment reach even the grassroots level of the organization.

MWIA, known for its intersectional focus, including girl child protection, environmental justice, Muslim women's rights, and queer advocacy — sees Loise's work as part of a larger movement to ensure marginalized voices are not only heard but empowered.

Now setting her sights on becoming a certified trainer of trainers, Loise envisions weaving feminist consciousness into both personal realities and collective action. "It's about creating a movement," she said. "One that starts from within and extends outward — into communities, organizations, and systems."



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“As a queer woman and feminist, I want to raise consciousness within the queer community,” Loise explained. “We need to empower people to have autonomy over their bodies and advocate for their rights. But to do that, we need the right information and the right tools.”

Peace Loise Mbae, Communication Officer,
Minority Women In Action, Kenya

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CHARM

Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Sub-Saharan Africa

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CHARM's Advocacy Paves Way for Landmark AU Convention to End Violence Against Women and Girls

The African Union (AU) has officially operationalised the Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (CEVAWG) – a groundbreaking legal framework to eliminate violence against women and girls in all its forms.

This momentous achievement was made possible through years of sustained advocacy, including the early and strategic involvement of the CHARM consortium, in partnership with CIVICUS. Between 2019 and 2020, CHARM, through CIVICUS, supported key partners in Kenya and Ethiopia to host AU consultation meetings that helped shape the Convention. The consortium also backed the participation of women leaders from the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda in working groups and fact-finding missions – ensuring grassroots voices and lived experiences informed the process. CEVAWG is a comprehensive and legally binding instrument that provides a unified framework for the prevention, elimination, and response to violence against women and girls across Africa. The Convention aims to:

- Address the root causes and drivers of violence through stronger legal and institutional mechanisms.
- Promote a culture of human rights, gender equality, and dignity.
- Enable a coordinated approach among AU Member States to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence.
- Encourage open dialogue and advocacy on gender justice at national, regional, and continental levels.

This Convention was adopted during the 38th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in February 2025, following a series of AU commitments since 2023 to develop and endorse a regional GBV framework. Violence against women and girls continues to plague communities across Africa and beyond. It manifests in many forms, including:

- Intimate partner violence (physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Early, child, and forced marriage
- Sexual violence in conflict and humanitarian settings
- Harassment and violence in schools, workplaces, prisons, and online spaces

This violence is rooted in patriarchal systems that uphold male dominance, unequal power structures, and entrenched gender norms. It intersects with other forms of discrimination based on age, race, disability, economic status, and nationality, compounding the risks faced by marginalized women and girls.

The operationalization of CEVAWG marks just the beginning. Now, AU Member States must take action to domesticate and implement the Convention through national policies, legislation, and community-driven solutions.

We extend our deepest thanks to our partners, allies, and tireless advocates who made this possible. Together, we are building a continent where every woman and girl can live free from violence and fear and thrive.



About CHARM

CONSORTIUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND MEDIA IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (CHARM) aims to promote and protect human rights, civic space and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa.

CHARM is a partnership of CIVICUS, Civil Rights Defenders, DefendDefenders, Fojo Media Institute, The Wits Centre for Journalism, Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement, and Magamba Network.

The partnership acknowledges the role that a free and active media and civil society have in the protection of robust democracies and the promotion of national development.

CHARM is funded by:



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