



African Philanthropy Network
THE VOICE AND ACTION FOR AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY

2024 State of African Philanthropy Booklet



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to read and thank you for choosing this booklet. Since 2021, we have published the State of African Philanthropy Booklet, and this fourth edition reflects our continued commitment to documenting, celebrating and elevating African philanthropy practices. We remain dedicated to showcasing success drawn from our members' work and stories that amplify voices, actions and reaffirm the power of African philanthropic giving practices in advancing humanity.

Aligned with our 2024–2028 Strategic Framework, we continued to build on the foundations set in previous years -nurturing spaces for peer learning, dialogues and networking that (re)shape the narrative of African philanthropy. A major highlight of the year was our 2024 APN Assembly, held in Victoria Falls Zimbabwe under the theme, “Collective Freedom from Collective Struggles”, where members reaffirmed the centrality of knowledge production in reclaiming and elevating African narratives. Together, we reflected on the importance of grounding our work in indigenous knowledge systems that advance language, strengthen agency and restore dignity. These reflections have deepened our understanding of what it means to support nurture a philanthropy field and ecosystems rooted in African wisdom, values and lived realities.

Aligned with APN's Strategic Framework, this year we prioritized narrative-building through joint advocacy campaigns and capacity development activities on storytelling not only members but also youth and journalists. These initiatives make it possible to document and communicate community-led solutions and effective policy influence approaches that deliver impact across diverse contexts

This booklet is a result of a partnership built on shared interests and a common vision. It presents inspirational stories from our members on community led solutions and strategies for advancing the culture and knowledge systems. Whether advancing women's rights, expanding access to education, promoting community healing, or addressing emerging social challenges. These stories highlight the innovation, resilience and generosity embedded in African ways of giving.

I hope that as you read through pages, you will be inspired by the creativity and commitment that African communities bring to shaping their own development as championed by our members across the continent. You will also be inspired to share your story to be featured in the upcoming edition. Thank you for accompanying us on this journey. We look forward to sharing more as we prepare for the 2025 State of African Philanthropy Booklet.

In Solidarity,

Dr. Stigmata Tenga

ED, APN



APN ASSEMBLY 2024
Collective Freedom From Collective Struggle

2024
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VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE
4TH - 8TH NOVEMBER 2024

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ment Building

celebrating Founding Institutions
of Africa Civil Society Institutions,
Finance Foundations, Comic Relief.



#GivingAndPower

Association Burkenabe De Fundraising



Empowering Women and Protecting Children Amid Crisis in Dori, Burkina Faso

In the heart of Dori, a municipality in Burkina Faso's Sahel region, the Jam Weli Association stands as a powerful example of community-driven resilience and empowerment. Comprising 63 members including internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and host community members, mainly women, this dynamic organization has become a cornerstone for social cohesion, women's empowerment, and child protection in a challenging humanitarian and security context.

The Sahel region is grappling with severe insecurity, forced displacement, and heightened vulnerability, particularly affecting women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Amid these hardships, Jam Weli Association has carved out a mission to create safe spaces for healing, learning, and empowerment, ensuring no one is left behind.

The association, part of the CtGA/GfC alumni network and a member of the Bena Oségui association community of practice, is led by two committed women: Ms. Sow/Maïga Ruth (President) and Ms. Mariam Tamboura (Secretary-Treasurer). Their visionary leadership has galvanized the community and transformed lives through structured and impactful initiatives.



The process of revealing the beacon of resilience and empowerment

The Jam Weli Association (CtGA/GfC alumni), with 63 members (including 30 hosts, 18 internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 15 refugees, including elderly and disabled people), the majority of whom are women, stands out for its active commitment to social cohesion, women's empowerment, and child protection in a difficult humanitarian and security context.

Under the dynamic leadership of Ms. Sow/Maïga Ruth (president) and Ms. Mariam Tamboura (secretary-treasurer), the association has established itself as a community leader in the municipality of Dori.

Faced with a precarious security situation marked by insecurity, forced displacement, and the growing vulnerability of women and children, the Jam Weli association has set itself the mission of creating spaces for resilience, listening, and development for those most affected.

Major results achieved

- Establishment of five safe play areas for children suffering from psychological trauma, each of which welcomes an average of 100 children twice a week from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. under the supervision of trained volunteer instructors
- Regular educational talks with parents to promote a protective family environment.
- Training for mothers of children aged 6 to 23 months in the preparation of enriched porridge to combat child malnutrition.
- 92 weekly focus group sessions have been held since 2023 on the risks of community conflict, peaceful coexistence, and tolerance in IDP sites.
- Training women in soap making and cowpea processing creates income opportunities, enabling several women to launch income-generating activities



- Active participation in Protection and GBV (Gender-Based Violence) cluster meetings, strengthening synergies with humanitarian and institutional actors in the region.
- Thanks to local advocacy and the commitment of its members, the association has managed to raise 1,551,000 CFA francs, which has been invested directly in community activities



The Jam Weli Association is a perfect example of the power of community action, driven by determined and supportive women in a crisis context. Its integrated approach combining protection, empowerment, and social cohesion is an inspiring model for other local initiatives in Burkina Faso and beyond.

From Marginalization to Empowerment — Uplifting Persons with Disabilities in Holeta

In Holeta Town, a quiet but powerful transformation has taken place one that has redefined the lives of people with disabilities (PwDs) and shifted perceptions of inclusion and empowerment in the community.

Tesfa Persons with Disabilities Association, a founding member of the Burka Gelana Community of Practice (CoP), was established in 2017 to advocate for the rights and welfare of its members individuals who were long excluded from economic opportunities and public services. Many were forced into begging for survival, facing daily stigma, neglect, and physical inaccessibility in key public institutions.

In 2021, Burka Gelana CoP was formed by 18 local Civil Society Associations (civil society actors) with a shared mission to champion community transformation guided by the principle of “leaving no one behind.” The CoP recognized the deep and systemic challenges faced by the PwD community and made their empowerment a central agenda.

With capacity building support from DEC, CEHRO, and CoSAP, the CoP received extensive training on right based advocacy, human rights-based approaches, local fundraising (LFR), and mobilizing support (MS). These tools helped them strategically elevate the voices of marginalized groups, particularly people with disabilities.

One of the most significant breakthroughs came through a strategic partnership with the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD) and key government offices such as Holeta’s Labor and Social Affairs and Job Creation departments.

This collaboration led to the launch of a life-changing vocational training and income generation program for 60 PwD members.

Training was tailored to the interests and needs of everyone, covering poultry farming, sheep fattening, hairdressing, tailoring, metalwork, and printing. Upon completion, they (PwDs) received essential startup tools and business support. Early results were inspiring: sheep fattening groups began generating profit, while the printing and writing group became operational and engaged in local markets.

As a direct result of sustained advocacy efforts by the CoP, several government offices responded by making their buildings physically accessible by constructing ramps and adjusting facilities to accommodate people with disabilities, marking a critical shift toward inclusive governance. This initiative has done more than improve livelihoods it has restored dignity, self-worth, and social inclusion to a community that was long on the margins.

The members of the Tesfa PwD Association have expressed profound gratitude for the skills gained, the opportunities provided, and the collective recognition of their value in the community. “For the first time, we are not just being helped we are building our own lives,” shared by one PwD participant, proudly managing his own business

This story exemplifies how collaborative, community-led development can transform exclusion into empowerment. Through the Giving for Change (GfC) project, the Burka Gelana CoP and its partners have laid the foundation for long-term change not just for 60 individuals, but for the way a town sees values, and includes all its people.





GPF has facilitated the establishment of community foundations and strengthened their internal components such as leadership, local governance, and resource mobilization systems, allowing them to self-organize, respond to their unique challenges, and maintain feedback loops for continuous improvement.

How Community Empowerment Is Fueling Grassroot Philanthropy in Ghana (A Story of Transformation)

For too long, rural farmers, despite their critical role in national food security and economic resilience, have been seen as recipients of aid, not drivers of development. The Ghana Philanthropy Forum (GPF), through its support of community foundations and the local giving ecosystems, is helping to change that narrative.

How do we do that?

In 2020, the Charles Stewart Mott's foundation extended support to Ghana towards the establishment of Community Foundations to drive local giving. This resulted in the establishment of a number of Community Foundations across Ghana focused on helping communities build their internal capacities towards leveraging local giving for development.

Ghana Philanthropy Forum, one of the early nationally focused Philanthropy Ecosystem support organizations nurtures grassroots development structures such as the community foundations, working groups, etc.) using local resources and leadership in building credible and inclusive systems to drive locally led development through giving.

GPF's catalytic role enables these local actors to diagnose needs, plan interventions, and evaluate outcomes, much like how subsystems in an organism must function efficiently for the whole system to thrive.

From Subsistence to Sustainability

In 2023 the Ghana Philanthropy Forum started providing economic empowerment to communities to enable them to contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities.

The goal was twofold: to strengthen local agricultural productivity and to cultivate a culture of community-led philanthropy, where rural dwellers themselves become contributors to broader development efforts. The Foundation began by organizing capacity-building workshops for rural women and youth in particular.

Each participating community was encouraged to establish a Community Sustainability Fund, a local mechanism for channeling a small share of their profits into community development projects of their own choosing. What began as an experiment in 2023 is quickly becoming a movement: The "Community Empowerment & Resilience Cluster Projects. The program seeks to encourage possible actions that communities can take to bolster local giving.

The Power of Giving

The Ghana Philanthropy Forum recognizes that true development is sustainable only when communities own both the means and the mission. By equipping rural farmers with the tools to grow their businesses and encouraging them to invest in their own communities, GPF is demonstrating a powerful model of locally led philanthropy in action.

Through this initiative GPF is:

- Strengthening the role of community foundations as development facilitators
- Fostering trust-based giving models rooted in traditional values of communal support (e.g., community contributions, etc.)
- Elevating rural voices in the national philanthropy conversation
- Encouraging intergenerational giving practices, where youth and elders alike contribute to the community's future.

Looking Ahead

The success in how these communities are organizing themselves and embracing this mindset is a testament to what is possible when local assets are mobilized with purpose. It affirms a growing truth in Ghanaian development: philanthropy is not just for the wealthy or urban elite. It lives in the farms, in the markets, in the spirit of giving back that has always been part of Ghana's social fabric.

As we look to scale these efforts in the coming year, the Ghana Philanthropy Forum remains committed to deepening partnerships who believe in community-first solutions. Because when rural farmers thrive, they don't just feed the nation, they fund the future.

This story reflects the Ghana Philanthropy Forum's ongoing work to build a more inclusive, resilient, and locally driven philanthropic sector.

Hlanganisa Community Fund



OPRET's Community-Rooted Approach

OPRET, based in the Mogalakwena community, stands at the intersection of HIV/AIDS response and the fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). Their approach is grounded in rights, dignity, and inclusion, ensuring women, youth, and LGBTQIA+ persons are not sidelined in health and justice pathways.

As an active member of the Mogalakwena Local AIDS Council, OPRET contributes to the national effort of closing South Africa's 1.1 million HIV treatment gap, aligning with the 95-95-95 UNAIDS targets. Importantly, OPRET's work is rooted in local ownership. Their success does not hinge on distant donors, but rather on forging meaningful collaborations with municipal structures, the Department of Health, and, most critically, the communities they serve

Community-Led Resilience Beyond Aid, Localising Solutions in an Era of Shifting Global Politics

By Hlanganisa Community Fund

In an era defined by global uncertainty and the rise of inward-looking politics, many organisations across the Global South were challenged to rethink their reliance on international aid. For South Africa, the so-called era of Trumpism marked a turning point, the recognition that communities could not depend indefinitely on foreign funding cycles to sustain life-saving interventions.

Hlanganisa Community Fund for Social and Gender Justice, through its support to grassroots partners, demonstrates that locally rooted solutions can thrive outside donor dependency. Organisations like OPRET, funded by Hlanganisa, illustrate how local resilience and self-determination can drive social change. Long before global aid debates gained urgency, OPRET had already begun shaping a model that relied less on foreign donors and more on community support, local partnerships, and government collaboration.



The case of Tshamahansi Village

In July 2025, OPRET convened over 90 community members in Tshamahansi Village for a Community HIV Testing and GBVF Awareness Dialogue. The event provided on-the-spot HIV testing and counselling, re-engaging more than seven people who had defaulted on treatment and successfully linking them back into care.

At the same time, the dialogue tackled root causes of GBVF, unpacking the harmful social norms that perpetuate violence in the community. This was not simply an awareness drive; it was a living demonstration of how integrated, locally led interventions can produce tangible outcomes.

Shaping the Future of Philanthropy

The work of organisations like OPRET, funded by Hlanganisa Community Fund, shows that community-driven solutions are not just supplementary to foreign aid, they are essential, sustainable, and scalable. By tracing and re-engaging people lost to HIV treatment, while simultaneously addressing GBVF, OPRET models an integrated approach that speaks directly to South Africa's most urgent public health and human rights challenges.

The lesson for philanthropy and donors is that investing in locally rooted organisations multiplies impact. These organisations bring intimate knowledge of their communities, agility in response, and accountability grounded in lived realities.

As Hlanganisa highlights through its partnerships, the path forward for philanthropy lies not in perpetuating dependency but in amplifying models of self-reliance, solidarity, and local innovation. OPRET's story proves that communities have long been capable of shaping their solutions. What they need are resources that trust and strengthen their vision.



Community Ownership: Coming Together to Save Tonde Primary School

Brief Statement of Success:

Through strengthened institutional capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and active community engagement, Tonde Primary School in Muhoroni has taken the first steps towards improved learning conditions, averting closure due to dilapidated infrastructure and poor sanitation.

Context and Description of the Initiative/Project:

As part of an initiative to strengthen the institutional capacity of CSOs to perform watchdog roles in five wards of Muhoroni, Community Rescue Initiative—a CSO from Muhoroni/Koru Ward—highlighted the dire state of Tonde Primary School's facilities. Established in 1987, the school serves 293 students in ECD, primary, and junior secondary sections. Yet, three of its eight classrooms had been condemned, sanitation facilities were inadequate, and access to water was lacking.

A fact-finding mission involving the chief, Public Health, and Public Works officials confirmed that the school faced closure due to these conditions. Students were forced to relieve themselves in unsafe bushes across the road, while inadequate classrooms meant lessons were conducted under trees or in the school kitchen during the rains.

During community sensitization forums on their role in local development, it emerged that poor coordination and lack of clear oversight between the school leadership and the Project Management Committee had allowed a contractor to deliver substandard classrooms. Alumni and local residents had also been disengaged from school development despite the school's long history of producing graduates. The forums fostered dialogue between the community and duty bearers, resulting in a collective agreement on the need for stronger ownership and active involvement in the school's affairs.

Benefits or Changes Realized:

Motivated by a renewed sense of responsibility, community members and stakeholders began taking tangible steps to improve the school's condition:

- a) Local youths volunteered to dig a pit for dislodging a filled latrine.
 - b) A community member, who is an engineer, donated five bags of cement to plaster the latrines.
 - b) Parents committed to contributing KES 500 each towards repairs.
 - c) The CSOs, chief, and head teacher resolved to petition the Muhoroni MP for assistance with condemned classrooms.
- The Uongozi Bora Team pledged continued sensitization to strengthen community mobilization

These actions have built momentum towards making Tonde Primary School a safer and more conducive environment for learning.

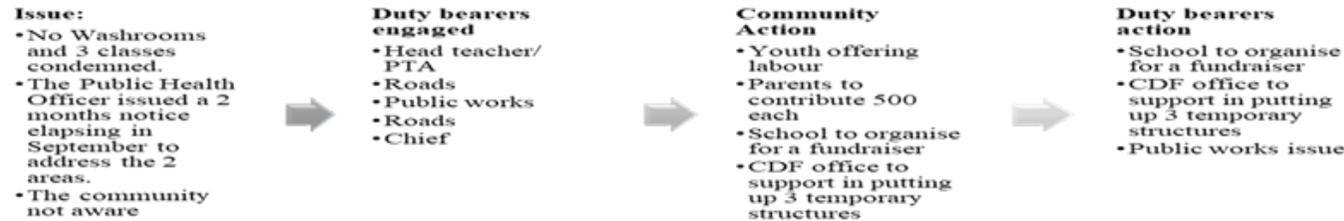
Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

- a) Strong community ownership and accountability are critical in sustaining public institutions such as schools.
- b) Effective coordination and oversight during infrastructure projects prevent substandard construction and resource wastage.
- c) Alumni networks represent untapped potential for resource mobilization and advocacy.

Recommendation:

For projects such as KMETs project there is need for continued:

1. Establishment of clear supervision structures between school management and project committees to ensure quality and accountability.
2. Continue community sensitization forums to sustain momentum and foster partnerships with duty bearers.
3. Engagement of alumni actively in school development initiatives for sustainable impact.



ANNEX 2 ONLINE LINKS
 a) WEBSITE LINK: <https://kmet.co.ke/>
 b) YOUTUBE VIDEO LINK: https://youtu.be/UPd_tCgi-wk

Figure 1 Students at Tonde Primary school studying under a tree

From Unmet Needs to Collective Action

Until January 2023, Kusali's 2,765 residents, mostly women and children lived without basic healthcare. Promises from the district assembly to address this infrastructure gap were not met, leaving community members dependent on distant hospitals or traditional medicine.

Everything changed in September 2022, when a participatory needs assessment by the Community Development Alliance (CDA), a community-based organization, which is a STAR-Ghana Foundation partner, revealed that 85% of residents ranked access to healthcare as their top priority. Given the long wait for the district assembly in constructing a health facility for them, they decided to take action on their own. Supported by CDA, the community formed a development committee, which was tasked with undertaking outreach to members of the communities, to mobilise resources for the construction of the health facility.

The development committee also had responsibility for supervising the construction. With technical guidance from CDA, they built a CHPS compound in just over a year. By January 2023, the clinic became fully functional, with the District Health Authorities posted staff and stocked medical supplies.

Bringing healthcare home: How the Kusali community built its own clinic

In Kusali, a small farming community in the Sisala West district of the Upper West region of Ghana, the journey to the nearest health facility once meant a 25-kilometre trek to Gwollu, the district capital, which was an ordeal especially for pregnant women, sick children, and the elderly. But now, more than 1,200 residents of Kusali no longer make that journey. Instead, lifesaving care, from child immunisation to antenatal and post-natal services, has come to their doorstep. They built their clinic with their own labour, money, sand, and cement!

The Kusali Community-Based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compound, built by the community itself is a testament to the power of local giving and collective resolve in filling a gap. Community members pooled money, labour to complete the facility, and engaged in advocacy, to have the District Health Directorate to furnish the facility and post nursing staff there.

For 32-year-old Mariama Alhassan, pregnant with her second child, the change is life-altering. She has this to say, when asked about her experience- *“But for our collective effort in constructing this clinic, I would have travelled to Gwollu for antenatal care. Now I can walk from my home, and, in the next three minutes, I am at the clinic. I am proud we built it. I fetched water, I contributed money, and that makes me feel empowered.”*

The change for the Kusali community

Barely five months after opening, the clinic;

- 726 children under five have received child welfare services, including immunisations.
- 399 adults and youth have been treated at the outpatient department 225 women and 174 men.
- 30 pregnant women are receiving lifesaving antenatal care, and 51 nursing mothers' benefit from postnatal services.
- 65 women and adolescents have accessed modern family planning methods, including implants.

For Kusali, giving is a spark for self-mobilisation, activism, and dignity. Through local giving, the community turned broken promises into concrete change, transforming health access from a distant hope into an everyday reality. Today, the Kusali community health compound stands as proof that when communities mobilise their own resources and demand responsiveness from their leaders, they can rewrite their story from one of deprivation to one of empowerment and impact.



What do we learn from this?

When the people of the Kusali community decided to build their clinic, it seemed they were only filling a gap. But it was more than that. They were also positioning themselves for influence. By pooling their own resources, organising labour, and completing the facility themselves, they created a powerful demonstration of commitment. With a complete clinic in their community, their request to the District Health Directorate to post staff and equip it became impossible to ignore.

This experience shows that when communities lead with action rather than only appeals, government authorities are far more likely to respond with resources.

The Kusali community experience also showed that local philanthropy can be deployed practically and strategically. The building of the clinic was backed by advocacy, leading to tangible results that transformed a long-standing promise into concrete service delivery.

Theme: Community Philanthropy

Title: Charity Begins At Home –The impact of Individual contributions on Community Development.

Maendeleo Group Usangi Ngujini (MAGUNGU) was formed by the capable women and men born in Usangi. The MAGUNGU was established after sensitization meeting by TCFN on 20th July 2023, under the leadership of the retired teacher, Mr. Karunde Yese. It started with 18 members and steadily increased to 32 by end of the project.

These members managed to contribute a total of Tshs 11,300,000 (US\$ 4520) to implement the project that aimed to solve immediate challenges facing their community. The principle of the group was “Pay according to your capability” but every member was assigned to look for more close friends and partners to join the group.

The plan was jointly prepared and shared by the chairperson to all members who were ready to return their part of earnings back home. Their common vision is responding to demand driven development views with the binding principle of togetherness “UMOJA”. The group was voluntarily agreed to resolve the issue of accessibility, which was one of the major challenges they face to reach home, when they return to their motherland during happy or sad days.

This challenge was affecting families in the community in many ways, including difficult in transporting building materials and other commodities, become barrier for school children to reach schools during rain seasons, and elders and patients’ groups that need special means to reach the service centres. There is 1.5 km road has a hilly, steep and slippery corner (500 meters) that needs to be strengthened with concrete, wash-ways in both sides. This activity requires people’s commitment to fund-raising the budget and use available local technicians to collaborate with group member during the construction

The context and Description of initiative paved a way to set concrete activities and targets to the construction of the road. The leadership comprised a steering committee of six members, the chairman, secretary, treasurer, two advisors and a technical supervisor to build up a synergy of one voice. Some group members who have professional skills in engineering, legal, business and normal people around project were closely listed and used.

The project was inclusive for ownership reason, and all members supported the budget Three main committees were formed to include the management and leadership committee, the fundraising/resource mobilization committee and public relations committee.

The process of mobilizing resources was transparently shared to ease the fundraising with legal advises from the local government who also authorized the work to get on.

The Benefits and Changes were noted. “It is Ours, Not Theirs” and is number one philanthropically commitment as it has been there even in local language. The open payment sheet was shared to all with a strong message in local language: **“Nikukaira ulivone illo idasi aho cheishi ungole icho wena nacho, Mfumwa enekuimukia”** means “please take a look of the open payment sheet for your commitment, God will guide you”. The team with leaders visited the area, see things in practical and stand as ambassadors to those who were not there.

The picture (left) shows the situation before the project. During rainy season, no transport services could be possible. It was the site that was cutting out communication completely. The sensitization meeting by TCFN transformed this situation to a better hope and prepared list of a team to air



out the UMOJA and synergy of togetherness. Communication channels were selected and agreed that sms, calls and WhatsApp group were intensively used to share the voices. Pictures and traditional cartoons were also shared as references towards encouraging people to swallow the problem for action. The deadline to pay the pledges was set and the progress was sometimes shared with the LGA of Mwanga District for professional guides.

Efficiency of the activity was geared by frequent reporting physically and financially and activeness of the leaders in information sharing and team work in reminding everyone's fulfillment of pledging, resulted to 75% of members doubling their pledges. Implementation was done in two phases including an evaluation pause in between the two.

The spirit of trust was high, of which the neighbor villages decided to send their representatives to learn from this group. "It is unbelievable, how majority of the people born but not staying in Usangi, still do trust of their leaders. The group was proud that they have put off the cloth, they must take a bath. They cannot plan to take bath, and remain washing only hands and face! They will not proud of the work by doing incomplete job. The grands used their hands to construct the roads through Msaragambo, so we should do it similarly and leave the MARK to the coming generation, not everything to be done by the Government.

After two months, these good commitments reached the Government that sent the TARURA officers to start rehabilitating of the 1.0 km distance as agreed before. Bravo to group local masons for their dedicated efforts and commitment to this historical work.

We all celebrate the achievements and trust that some tradition norms are useful and good example applied during spreading the stones in the site containing a cultural vow "Vome vegerire mani he fua."

The Lessons learned and Recommendations of this successful story are shared as follows; That it is necessary to recognize potentials of local community because it is the place where you find all types of key people, young and old, the retired, the educated with informal commitments. There is a high level of transparency and expressions that emphasize importance of ownership by the people in the focused community that is key element for sustainability of the project.

Frequent monitoring of activity was done not only by the leaders but people and friends from the community, “If you want to win, do with people in the right place and time”! The people contains of individual believes with humane conscious and respect each other, so works were done harmoniously and praying days were respected. A religious philosophy “All of God, give to God and all of Caesar give to Caesar” was strictly observed during the implementation period of the project.

For dissemination of skills from elders to youth, there was an inclusion system within the group that allow youth to come and learn what we’re happening in the site, and was seriously emphasized. Though the source of the idea was from individuals, it touched the feelings of all the community and sometimes affordable tasks such as cleanliness of the site were given to the youth and women as part of in-kind-contribution. Always Charity Begins at Home, and charitable voices is the voice of the needy community



A Decade of Thubutu Africa Initiatives (TAI): A Journey of Courage, Innovation, and Community Resilience

In the year 2015, a vision was born; a vision to inspire African communities to believe in themselves, to rise with dignity, and to use the resources around them for their own development. That vision was Thubutu Africa Initiatives, simply known as TAI. From its earliest days, TAI set out with a bold mission; to reduce dependence on external aid and foster self-reliance across African communities, in health, economy, environment, and social structures.

However, the journey has never been simple.

For many years, TAI operated while relying heavily on funding from the Global North, a reality that stood in contrast to the very message it preached. This contradiction didn't go unnoticed. In 2022, something shifted. TAI made a bold decision to walk its own talk, which is to explore homegrown solutions to finance its mission. The answer lies in **social enterprise** ventures that create economic value while serving a social purpose. By 2023, TAI had established its first business initiative: **Thubutu Africa Avocado Farm (TAAF)**.



This farm was not just about agriculture, but it was a step toward autonomy. The income it generated would help cover TAI's administrative costs and ease its dependence on foreign aid. And that was only the beginning.

In 2024, after attending the workshop on alternative sources of funds, organized by African Philanthropy Network (APN) in The Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, TAI vision grew bolder with the launch of **THUBUTU GOLD**, a sunflower processing venture.



Alongside producing cooking oil, this initiative incorporated a **borehole project** designed to support irrigation, intending to double sunflower seed production. These enterprises, though commercial in nature, are rooted in social purpose to create employment, build resilience, and fund TAI's long-term work.



Throughout this journey, TAI has not walked alone. It has been accompanied by generous and passionate individuals who believed in the dream and offered support in ways that left a lasting impact.

One such supporter, a philanthropic donor who contributed his limited resources toward establishing the sunflower business, once shared these thought-provoking words; “You know, governments and religious institutions both collect funds. Governments through taxes and levies, and religious institutions through tithes and offerings. For governments, these collections are backed by law; for religious institutions, by faith. Most of these funds are allocated to recurrent expenditures, rather than development.

NGOs, on the other hand, receive funds from donors with strict instructions to use them for development projects, leaving very little for running costs. NGOs have neither law nor faith binding their donors; they must convince, justify, and prove the needs of the communities they serve. And yet, they suffer the most when it comes to securing funds. That’s why I support you with all my heart.” These words reignited the fire within TAI. They became a reminder that the mission was not only necessary but also sacred.

In the spirit of community philanthropy, TAI proudly honours those who have stood beside it. **Mr. Mark**, who invested in the sunflower processing machine, remains a symbol of practical generosity. **Ms. Julieth's** heartfelt support for the borehole project was a turning point. **Mr. Kagoma**, the head of the Lake Victoria Basin in Shinyanga-Tanzania, offered invaluable technical skills to guide the project. The **parents of Buganika village** in Shinyanga who gave their daughters land, inputs, and care contributed silently but powerfully to a harvest that brought joy, nutrition, and laughter to their families and children.

All these individuals are the reason TAI stands strong today, ten years since its founding.

Looking ahead to 2025, TAI expects to generate \$3,000 USD from the THUBUTU GOLD project and \$500 from Avocado. It's a modest beginning, but one full of promise. As the ventures gain strength, this financial ladder will climb higher, step by step, proving that African solutions, fuelled by African hearts, are not only possible but powerful.

During the borehole drilling, Mr Misalaba (not a real name), a community member of Buganika villages opened his chest by saying

“You guys you deserve leadership in this village. We have been waiting for years to access water and such kind of a factory, the village government has failed despite of having a special committee to bring water, yet just an individual you have made this. Please build your house here so that we can make you one of the elders in our village” This was too emotional for TAI to keep!

“Until the lion learns to write, every story will glorify the hunter.”- African proverb

For far too long, African communities have been seen through the lens of dependency waiting on outside aid, portrayed as lacking. But TAI has spent the last ten years helping communities reclaim their voice, write their own story, and shape their destiny. Like the lion in the proverb, TAI has chosen not to let others tell its story, it has picked up the pen, through action.





Balancing equity and representation

PGC members came to the table with a shared commitment to ensuring that funding reached all segments of the movement, from urban hubs to remote rural areas, from established organisations to newly emerging collectives, and across diverse identities and priorities. In Rwanda, for example, allocations balanced the needs of seasoned partners who work with families of trans people, with new entrants of groups whose focus on economic justice in opening new pathways for LGBTQ youth. The PGC intentionally directed additional resources towards capacity building, ensuring that smaller, younger groups could grow in their organisational and programme design skills.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), limited resources made decision-making especially challenging. No organisation received the full amount requested, but the PGC worked to spread resources strategically, prioritising geographic diversity beyond the capital, Kinshasa. The only organisations in Kinshasa working exclusively with trans people, and an LGBTQ group in Katanga, both received vital support despite the constraints. The PGC's rationale was clear: even modest funding, when directed to isolated or under-resourced regions, can have a transformative ripple effect.

Strengthening Movements through Participatory Grantmaking – UHAI EASHRI Round 18.

In 2024, UHAI EASHRI's Participatory Grantmaking Council (PGC) concluded its 18th round of grant allocations, marking another milestone in community-led philanthropy across East Africa. Over six days of intensive deliberation, PGC members, consisting of activists and leaders drawn directly from the LGBTQI+, sex worker, people who use drugs (PWUD), and other marginalized communities, worked side by side to review, debate, and decide how more than USD 1.7 million in funding should be allocated.

The heart of UHAI's approach is simple but transformative: those who live the realities of marginalisation are best placed to determine where resources will have the greatest impact. This round demonstrated how equity, diversity, and growth, the guiding values of the PGC, can be translated into concrete funding decisions that strengthen movements, nurture new leadership, and expand the reach of advocacy.

Elevating underrepresented priorities

Across the seven countries, PGC members ensured that funding decisions reflected both urgent needs and long-term movement-building priorities. In Burundi, organisations working on safety and security during the volatile electoral period received significant backing. At the same time, nascent rural groups focusing on economic empowerment, were supported with amounts calibrated to their current absorption capacity, coupled with recommendations for organisational strengthening.

In Tanzania, the PGC upheld its commitment to inclusivity by funding all existing UHAI partners at the full USD 25,000, while also seeding new organisations with two-year grants. This multi-year approach, now a standard feature for new grantees, reflects a strategic shift towards sustainability, giving organisations the stability they need to plan beyond short-term cycles.

Responsive to context and opportunity

The PGC's participatory nature allows it to be highly responsive to emerging needs and opportunities. In Uganda, the council increased funding for refugee-focused organisations, recognising a gap in refugee organising, and added support for harm reduction initiatives after a key partner's exit left a service vacuum. Newcomers were brought into the fold, with allocations designed to allow them to build credibility and operational capacity over a two-year period.

In Kenya, the PGC combined strategic investment in long-standing advocacy leaders on decriminalisation work with careful seeding of new entrants. For organisations working on sensitive issues like harm reduction, the PGC paired funding with mentorship recommendations, connecting them to experienced partners in drug policy advocacy to strengthen their capacity for impact.

Beyond the numbers, strengthening the process

While grant amounts and country allocations are the visible outputs, the participatory process itself is an equally significant outcome. Over the course of their tenure, Round 18 PGC members refined decision-making practices to increase transparency, reduce bias, and improve the balance between populations and geographies.

Members reported that their collective knowledge of local contexts, from security risks in Ethiopia to the realities of rural organising in Tanzania, made the process quicker, more targeted, and ultimately more impactful. The joint PGC/SGC (Small Grants Council) review structure also lightened the workload and facilitated more integrated thinking.

Importantly, the PGC consistently prioritised feedback to grantees. Where proposals needed strengthening, for example, linking capacity-building activities more directly to organisational growth rather than individual leadership development, the PGC ensured that recommendations were shared, allowing organisations to learn and improve.

Reflections and lessons learned

The PGC's own evaluation of Round 18 highlighted several lessons:

- **Equity:** Emerging and under-resourced groups, particularly intersex, PWUD, and trans-led organisations, have been consistently prioritised over the last three cycles. However, disparities remain, such as Ethiopia's relatively low funding compared to its needs.
- **Diversity:** The process has ensured representation across all key populations, from sex workers and LGBTQI+ to refugees and rural communities.
- **Growth:** The introduction of multi-year funding was seen as a significant step forward, giving organisations the stability needed for strategic planning.
- **Innovation:** Targeted funding and lighter review processes allowed for more agile, context-specific decision-making.

PGC members also stressed the importance of intersectionality, integrity, and mutual respect as core values guiding their work, alongside confidentiality and conflict of interest management.

They called for stronger orientation and training for new members, more cross-country learning, and deeper collaboration between the PGC and SGC.

Impact and sustainability

The impact of this participatory approach is already evident. By embedding funding decisions within the communities themselves, UHAI ensures that resources flow to where they are most needed, in ways that are culturally and politically informed.

Multi-year grants for new organisations provide the breathing space for leaders to strengthen governance, refine strategies, and build networks. Established organisations, meanwhile, can consolidate gains, expand reach, and mentor younger movements.

Moreover, the process builds capacity not just in the grantees, but in the grantmakers themselves. PGC members leave their term with enhanced skills in proposal review, budgeting, programme analysis, and movement strategy – skills they can carry back into their community work, multiplying the value of their participation.

A movement-led future

Round 18 closed with a transition, as 11 PGC members completed their term and new members prepared to step in. The outgoing members left with messages of appreciation, gifts, and the knowledge that their collective decisions had shaped the trajectory of movements across East Africa.

Their legacy is one of fairness, courage, and deep connection to the communities they serve. In an era of shrinking civic space and rising threats to human rights, the PGC's participatory grantmaking stands as a model of how to resource resistance and resilience, proving that when communities lead the funding process, movements are not only supported, they are strengthened for the long haul.



Harnessing Communities of Practice (CoPs) for Community Health Justice

UNNGOF works with CoPs on thematic areas that include Gender & Human Rights, Social accountability, Governance & Civic Empowerment, Education, and Youth participation and Empowerment across 14 regions of Uganda. This structure has helped local actors to learn, share experiences, plan and mobilize resources towards achieving community led development through giving. This has yielded positive results and a wide coverage for philanthropy.

Kapchorwa Civil Society Organization's Alliance (KACSOA), a network of CSOs in Sebei sub-region in Eastern Uganda is working with the UNNGOF as a Regional Advocacy Network under the Philanthropy for Development program and belongs to the Gender and Human Rights CoP.

UNNGOF takes lead in Promoting Philanthropy in Uganda

Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF) under the Philanthropy for Development project, has demonstrate that local resources can play a vital role in amplifying citizen's voices and strengthening ownership of local development agendas. Through a combination of community level, national and global activities, we promote and highlight new democratic and participatory approaches to giving, aimed at building a broad base of citizens recognizing and claiming their own rights and the rights of others for government responsiveness. Moreover, we seek to address systemic power imbalances and shortcomings within the national development system by modeling and advocating for new and more equitable practices that shift both power and resources closer to community members.

UNNGOF has invested in capacity building of organizations, knowledge products like the Sense-Making Paper Series, Corporate Social Investment study, among others to define and promote African models of giving; intended to demonstrate how philanthropy works, how to think about domestic giving verses foreign aid, and what regulatory and mindset changes might be necessary.

Collective Philanthropic Action

Chesower sub county is one of the sub counties in Bukwo district in Sebei region in Eastern Uganda. Members of the rural Chesower community had to travel long distances to access medical services as there was no nearby health facility. This sometimes resulted in high maternal and child mortality rates. To improve the situation, through community engagements on the benefit of local philanthropy, a community member from Siit parish offered a room in his house as a medical post. However, the space was inadequate and didn't not have the recommended standard for both the patients and the drugs.



KACSOA (a member of the CoP on Gender and Human Rights) together with local leaders mobilized community members to participate in a meeting to identify a solution for the community challenge. The community members appreciated the philanthropic approach promoted by KACSOA and they committed their contribution.

Through regular community meetings mobilized by Chairpersons at Local Council I and III levels, and radio talk shows on Radio 9 which offered free airtime, community members were motivated to contribute financially and/or in kind. This campaign attracted different stakeholders including politicians and the private sector in the sub region to support the initiative.



The new structure and the solar provided by the community

Positive results achieved:

As a result of the community contributions, a plot of land was purchased and a health facility constructed. To formalize the health centre, KACSOA mobilized citizens who engaged with the Local Government leadership and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with community leaders to adopt the health facility as a health centre II.

Government of Uganda has since provided the health center with constant drug supplies, a solar powered refrigerator for storing vaccines and deployed four (4) technical health workers (3 nurses and 1 midwife) 2 volunteers and 2 support staff. Currently, the health centre is providing better health care services to communities of Siit parish and 3 neighboring sub counties.



The drugs are now stored well in the new facility.

Local Giving Restores Dignity to Women Accused of Witchcraft in Ghana

Positive results achieved:

In just a few months, a women-led civil society group in northern Ghana mobilised over GHC 100,000 (about USD 10,000) in cash and in-kind contributions to restore dignity to elderly women cast out of their communities over witchcraft accusations. Fueled by contributions from local communities, food vendors, small business owners, faith-based organisations, and Ghanaians in the diaspora, this support is rebuilding lives, ensuring education for their children and grandchildren, and igniting a wider community movement for dignity and justice in the country.

In Ghana, particularly in the Northern, North East, Upper East, Upper West, and Savannah Regions, elderly women still face the devastating consequences of wrongful witchcraft accusations. Many, some in their sixties and seventies, are banished from their homes and forced into settlements such as Gambaga, Kuku, Gnani, Kpatinga, Nabuli, and Bonyase. These places, often referred to as alleged witch camps, were initially created as sanctuaries. Over time, they have become enclaves of neglect where women live with little access to clean water, healthcare, adequate food, or social support.



The photo shows some of the structures at one of the alleged witch camps in the Upper East Region of Ghana.

The injustice is not abstract. It claimed national attention in 2020 when Madam Akua Denteh, a 90-year-old woman from the Savannah Region, was lynched after being accused of witchcraft. Her brutal death sparked outrage across Ghana and became a rallying point for advocates.

In 2023, Ghana's Parliament passed the Criminal Offences Amendment Act, popularly called the Anti Witchcraft Accusation Bill, which criminalises the act of accusing someone of witchcraft. This law also aims to support the reintegration of victims into their communities. Although presidential assent remains pending, the momentum for change is strong.

It is in this critical context that local giving has emerged as a powerful force for dignity and justice.

Community Powered by Generosity

In 2023, Songtaba, a women-led civil society organisation with a long track record of advocating for the rights of marginalised women and girls, launched the 'Faako' Social Fund. Supported under the Giving for Change initiative by the West Africa Civil Society Institute and STAR-Ghana Foundation, 'Faako', meaning "relief" in the local language, was designed to prove that Ghanaians themselves can provide solutions to urgent social issues through philanthropy.



The launch of 'Faako' Social Fund in 2023 by Songtaba in Tamale, Northern Region of Ghana. Photo credit: STAR-Ghana Foundation.

The response from the public was immediate and inspiring. Within months of its launch, the fund mobilised over \$2000 (over GHC 20,000) entirely from local contributions. These resources were channelled directly into education support for over 20 underprivileged students, many of whom are children or grandchildren of the women in the camps. Covering school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and basic supplies ensured that these young people could remain in school and gain the knowledge and confidence to speak out against harmful traditional practices.

Shani Abdul Kasiru, Songtaba's Head, Programmes and Policy, explained, "Since implementation of the project, we have supported women living in exclusion with food, clothing, and other essentials. Previously, most felt condemned to die without any dignity. Now they are hopeful about reintegration into their families and communities."

The fund has since grown to mobilise more than 100,000 Ghana cedis in combined cash and in-kind contributions from individuals, local businesses, faith-based groups, and members of the Ghanaian diaspora. These contributions have provided tangible and symbolic relief.

One of the most significant milestones was a Mother's Day celebration in 2025. With in-kind support valued at over \$10,000 (over GHC 100,000), Songtaba was able to feed and clothe 133 women from the camps.

"It was truly a fulfilling moment for us to apply the local fundraising tools and strategies we developed through our participation in the Giving for Change programme to create such a beautiful experience for them," said Kasiru.



Songtaba presenting hundreds of cloths to women living in the alleged 'witch' camps during the Mother's Day merry and celebration. These clothes were mobilised solely through local giving. Photo credit: Songtaba

For many, it was the first time in years they were celebrated, not shunned. The event, filled with music, shared meals, and gifts, restored a sense of belonging. Community members, volunteers, and small business owners worked together to make the day a success, demonstrating the unifying power of generosity.

Afiba [not her real name], one of the women accused of witchcraft, could not hide her joy. "This moment has given me hope that all is not lost and that there are still good people who care about us," she said.



One of the women beaming with smiles during the Mother's Day event. Photo credit: Songtaba

Beyond celebrations, the fund has also facilitated the reintegration of some women into their communities through careful mediation and dialogue with family members and local leaders. Education support for young people from these areas is beginning to create a new generation of advocates who can challenge harmful practices with informed voices.

As one young, impacted person put it, “I now understand that accusations of witchcraft are born out of fear and ignorance. Education has given me the courage to speak up for my grandmother.” **Generosity That Fuels Social Change**

The ‘Faako’ Social Fund is not just about meeting immediate needs. It is a community-led vehicle for systemic change. By drawing resources from within Ghana, it challenges the assumption that rural communities must depend solely on foreign donors for transformative action.

Women supported by the fund are now telling their own stories publicly, advocating for the full implementation of the Anti Witchcraft Accusation Act, and participating in sensitisation programmes. Songtaba is institutionalising this approach to local giving by hosting public accountability sessions and creating community education structures that ensure transparency and sustained engagement.

This story of the ‘Faako’ Social Fund captures the very essence of African community philanthropy. It shows that when communities mobilise their own resources, they create not only financial support but also the solidarity needed to dismantle discrimination. In doing so, they restore dignity, protect rights, and inspire hope for generations to come.



One of the women beautifully seated at the event with a glimpse of hope. Photo credit: Songtaba

Addressing Sextortion Through an Intersectional Feminist Approach

In August 2024, the women’s movement in Tanzania marked a significant milestone in the fight against sexual exploitation. With financial and technical support from Women Fund Tanzania, the Anti-Sextortion Coalition—working in collaboration with other stakeholders mobilized to oppose and demand changes to the Prevention and Combating of Corruption (Amendments) Bill, 2024. Their advocacy successfully influenced parliamentary committee members to remove Section 10(b) from the proposed amendment.

This change was critical, as the provision would have enabled continued abuse of power by prosecuting sextortion victims, silencing their voices, and undermining efforts to end sextortion.

Tanzania is one of the few countries whose legal framework recognizes sexual corruption commonly known as sextortion. Despite this progress, the practice remains widespread, cutting across sectors and deeply affecting both individuals and the country’s development.

Sextortion not only wastes human potential and undermines poverty reduction efforts; it also strips victims—mostly women and girls—of their dignity. It turns rights into privileges that can be bought with sexual favors, undermining merit, ethics, and national integrity.

Research by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) and anti-sextortion coalitions with the support of WFT-T, reveals that sextortion is rampant in homes (especially among domestic workers), in schools and universities, workplaces, business environments, hospitals, sports, and even religious institutions.

The human cost is devastating:

“I had a dream of becoming a Bongo Flava artist. I met someone at the studio who promised to support my music career. When I went to the studio, he locked the door and demanded sex in exchange for recording my songs. I managed to run out. And from that day, I walked away from music.” – Naima, Dar es Salaam.

“We were deliberately failed because my friend refused a lecturer’s demands for sexual favors. I was told outright that without complying, I would not pass my course. I felt like I had no choice—refusing would have affected my exam grades.”— Female journalism student

“In football, sextortion happens often, involving coaches and team leaders. It happens frequently, but most players are too afraid to speak out because they will lose the opportunity to play.” – Female football player.

“I experienced sexual harassment at my workplace. “My boss offered me money and material things like a phone in exchange for sex.” – Female office worker.

Despite awareness campaigns, key barriers persist: the absence of a stand-alone sextortion law, weak enforcement, cultural stigma, and limited institutional capacity to respond.

WFT-T's Initiatives:

Since early 2023, the Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFTT) has collaborated with partners and grantees to address sextortion through a coordinated, multi-level strategy, combining evidence—building, grassroots mobilization, institutional capacity strengthening, and high-level



Building the Evidence - Women Fund Tanzania (WFTT) supported various sextortion studies across different sectors. These include a study on the Higher Education Sector conducted by PCCB, which revealed systemic sextortion in universities, a survey by TAMWA that found sexual corruption to be widespread in Tanzania's media sector affecting junior female staff, with many afraid to report due to shame and fear of job loss and research in sports by the Global Peace Foundation on violence against women in football, uncovering high levels of sexual corruption and gender-based violence (GBV) within the sport.

Grassroots Awareness and Community Action- Under this initiative, WFT-T supported WROs focused on community sensitization, capacity building, and advocacy against sextortion. Organizations supported were; Door of Hope which influenced the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) to integrate anti-sextortion measures into its code of conduct and successfully resolved multiple grassroots cases, WAJIKI's "Safe Trip" Campaign that engaged boda boda and dala dala drivers to protect schoolgirls, encouraging them to see victims as daughters and sisters.

Others were Kipunguni; used media and grassroots networks to amplify anti-sextortion advocacy, while the Kiipepeo Mweusi project focused on raising awareness within the entertainment industry to reduce sextortion

Capacity Strengthening: Supported various institutions, including the Gender Training Institute, police gender desks, and Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial University. These institutions conducted targeted capacity-building initiatives aimed at their respective audiences.

Mobilizing collective power for policy change- Through the Anti-Sextortion Coalition, WFTT supported the "Breaking the Silence on Sexual Corruption campaign". The coalition implemented initiatives that mobilized communities to raise awareness about sextortion, its impact on women and girls, and the need to demand government action.

The Coalition also led the campaign to challenge against proposed amendments to Section 25 of the Anti-Corruption Act, which were submitted to the parliament for approval. The proposed changes, introduced by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB), sought to include a clause making the offering of sexual favors an offence effectively equating victims with those abusing their power

During this campaign, (WFT-T) supported the coalition's internal reflections to analyze the implications of the proposed amendments, facilitating stakeholders national convenings to strategize a united response, media programs to raise public awareness and mobilizing coalition members to Dodoma to meet parliamentarians face-to-face, presenting evidence survivor testimonies and arguments against proposed amendments.



WFT-T further supported advocacy initiatives in five key regions Arusha, Dodoma, Mtwara, Dar es Salaam, and Mwanza engaging local communities, feminist leaders, and media allies. Through grassroots mobilization, communities were empowered to speak out against the proposed amendment, fostering a shared understanding of the urgent need to protect survivors of sexual violence.



The Impact:

The initiatives led to a shift in narratives and public discourse around sextortion, contributing to positive changes in attitudes. Through media campaigns, messages reached a broad audience, including schoolchildren especially girls community members at the grassroots level, women entrepreneurs, and policymakers.

The advocacy efforts achieved a major policy win where in August 2024 secured enforcement of Section 10(b) of the PCCB Act, The Parliament rejected the proposed amendment to Section 25. Instead, it strengthens the law by increasing penalties for perpetrators—raising fines from 5 million to 10 million (TZS) and extending prison terms from three to ten years. This victory preserved the progressive nature of the law and reinforced protections for victims. This advanced accountability in combating sextortion

Lessons Learned

- Joint efforts and a collective voice make it easier to hold the government accountable for addressing women’s issues and implementing necessary changes. Through developing shared strategies and amplifying voices, activists can advocate for policy reforms, demand justice, and create a stronger impact than they could individually.
- Achieving change through advocacy is not an easy process; it requires adequate and flexible resources, patience, consistency, and a strategic, focused approaches

Conclusion & Way Forward

The achieved policy win of Parliament’s decision to reject the proposed amendment and instead increase penalties for sextortion perpetrators marks a significant victory in the fight against sextortion Tanzania. It stands as a clear testament to the power of collective action in challenging oppressive systems.

The Anti-Sextortion Coalition, now representing over 200 organizations nationwide, continues to push for comprehensive reforms, survivor protection mechanisms, and cultural change to end sexual corruption in all its forms.





“The Land Is Our Life”: Hwange Residents Block Mining Bid Near National Park

Community Pushback Forces Major Rethink of Coal Project in Ecologically Sensitive Zone

In the heart of Matabeleland North, residents of Hwange have scored a major victory for environmental justice, after a coordinated civic effort forced authorities to rethink a controversial coal prospecting project near Hwange National Park.

The conflict began in early 2025, when local communities learned that a private company, Sunny Yi Feng (Pvt) Ltd, had applied to prospect for coal just 7.8 kilometres from Sinamatella Camp, an ecologically sensitive area renowned for its biodiversity and role in Zimbabwe’s tourism economy.

For residents long sidelined in decisions over land and resources, the proposal was a tipping point.

“For years, decisions were made without us,” said one community member. “This land is our life. We know its value better than anyone, and now they are starting to hear us.”

With support from the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights), community members mobilised swiftly. A Community Action Planning Lab held in February 2025 exposed glaring gaps in local governance. Residents, using a participatory scorecard, rated their experiences in areas such as public participation, information access, and environmental safety, revealing a landscape defined by exclusion and unaccountability.

The lab sparked action. Guided by ZimRights, residents drafted and submitted an official Objection Letter to the Parliamentary Mining Affairs Board on 28 February 2025. Citing the government’s 2020 ban on mining in protected areas, they argued that the coal prospecting application violated national law and community rights to a safe and sustainable environment.

When the Board formally acknowledged the objections and invited the community to a stakeholder consultation, the sense of validation was immediate.

ZimRights stepped in with technical and legal literacy training to prepare residents for the high-level engagement. In April 2025, the Parliamentary Mining Affairs Board convened the stakeholder meeting under Section 88 of the Mines and Minerals Act. Present were representatives from Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks), civil society organizations, environmental experts, and industry stakeholders.

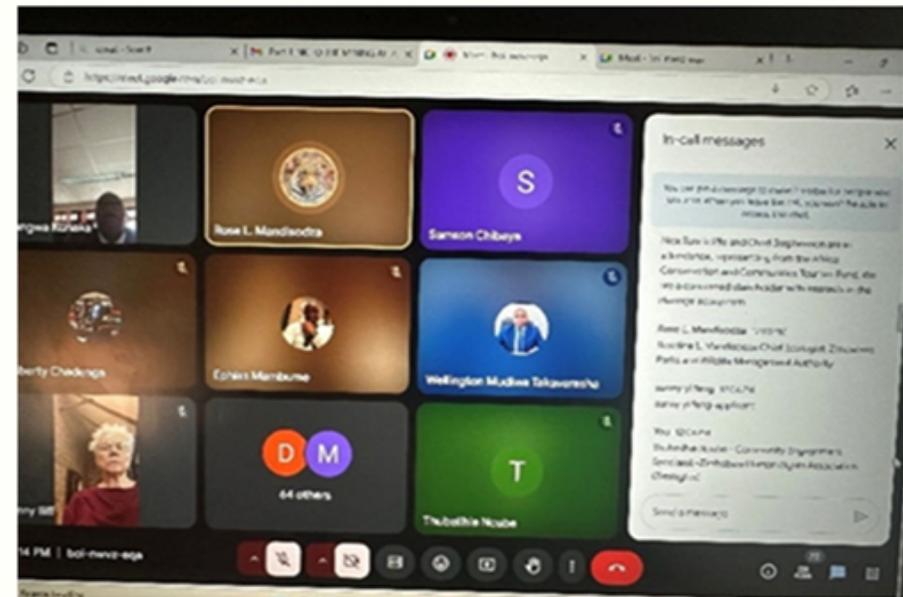
The Hwange delegation presented a powerful case. They outlined legal flaws in the Sunny Yi Feng application, warned of irreversible environmental damage, and highlighted the threat to livelihoods and public health. Crucially, they exposed how the project had advanced without any meaningful community consultation.



What was expected to be a routine hearing quickly transformed into a rare moment of democratic accountability.

The outcome was substantial. The Board acknowledged the community's position and recommended significant revisions. The proposed mining area originally covering over 16,000 hectares, was scaled down to just 1,000 hectares. Further, stakeholders advised relocating the project entirely to Binga district, preserving the ecological integrity of the Hwange region.

The victory reverberated beyond Hwange. Civil society groups, conservationists, and tourism operators rallied behind the community, signalling a united front against unsustainable development in protected areas.



What began as a grassroots consultation has evolved into a new model for civic action in the extractive sector—one driven by rights, not just resistance.

“Now they see we are not just people to be informed after the fact”, said another residence. “We are part of decision making.” ZimRights, which facilitated the initial organizing, called the campaign a blueprint for people, powered governance in resource management.

As coal and mineral extraction continue to threaten rural communities across Zimbabwe, the people of Hwange, have shown what's possible when civic awareness meets collective action. The struggle may be far from over, but the balance of power is begging to shift.



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