



**TUNAWEZA EMPOWERMENT
ORGANIZATION**

FREE, JUST AND TRANSFORMED SOCIETY

QUARTER 1 2026 NEWSLETTER

Empowering young women and mobilizing communities to challenge harmful norms and build a safer, healthier future.

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am honored to share this edition of our Tunawea newsletter, highlighting the resilience, courage, and determination within the communities we serve. Every engagement, every dialogue, and every voice raised brings us closer to a future free from harmful practices and full of opportunity for young people. The progress we celebrate today is a direct result of collaboration, trust, and a shared commitment to change.

We remain steadfast in our mission and together, we will continue to make a difference.

Gloria Ochola
Executive Director



INTRODUCTION

This first quarter of 2026 focused on advancing gender equality through stakeholder and community engagement through two flagship initiatives: the Amplify Change supported; Enhancing coordination to end cross border FGM Project and Amref supported; Future for Binti. Across all activities, we strengthened stakeholder and community partnerships, improved beneficiary outreach and expanded learning opportunities for girls, young women and vulnerable groups.



OUR IMPACT

By the Numbers!

Together, we are creating change and building empowered communities.



WE GAINED

512

FOLLOWERS

across all platforms



WE REACHED

3,836

PEOPLE

across our content
and campaigns



WE ENGAGED

327

PEOPLE

in our sessions and
community activities



Thank you for being part of this journey.
Together, we are making a difference!

Tunaweza!

Enhancing coordination to end cross border FGM/C- Amplify change

The Amplify Change supported Project has continued to play a transformative role in strengthening community-led efforts to end cross-border Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and protect the rights of girls and women in the Kenya-Tanzania border region. Through strategic entry meetings, stakeholder forums and duty-bearer engagements, the project successfully brought together government agencies, civil society organizations, health workers, survivors, security officers, education officials, religious leaders and youth representatives to build trust, clarify roles and enhance coordination. These forums created a shared understanding of the key drivers sustaining FGM, including porous borders, harmful cultural norms, weak information sharing and limited survivor support services. The project has amplified the voices of survivors, women leaders and youth advocates whose experiences and leadership continue to influence positive community action. boarder FGM.



A major achievement this quarter was the development of practical strategies for prevention, referral, advocacy and enforcement through multisectoral collaboration. Stakeholders emphasized the need for stronger school mentorship programs, engagement of men and boys, support for alternative rites of passage and improved case management systems for girls at risk. In addition, the project invested in updating advocacy tools, campaign materials and training resources for community outreach initiatives such as the Born Perfect Caravan, which aims to take anti-FGM messages directly into practicing communities. With stronger partnerships, increased awareness, and renewed community ownership, the Amplify Change Project is laying a solid foundation for a future where every girl can live free from FGM and end cross border FGM/C

Soma Binti Forum Theatre- Girl Effect

The Soma Binti Forum Theatre project employed participatory theatre, through the sharp shooter play, as a creative and community-centred approach to address barriers affecting girls' education, child marriage and harmful social norms. Through relatable storytelling and live performances grounded in real community experiences, the project created safe and engaging spaces for dialogue among community members, leaders, parents and young people. A defining feature of the approach was its interactive nature, where audiences were invited to pause the performance, reflect on the issues presented and propose alternative actions and solutions. This process encouraged critical thinking, challenged deeply held beliefs and enabled communities to collectively examine the consequences of child marriage, school dropout and gender inequality.

As a result, Soma Binti Forum Theatre strengthened community ownership of change and enhanced collective problem-solving around harmful social norms. Through facilitated discussions, participants identified practical steps to support girls' education and protect their rights. Community members reported increased awareness, improved attitudes toward girls' education and greater willingness to intervene and support girls at risk. The project demonstrated the power of creative arts as an effective tool for social norm change and community mobilization, contributing to more supportive environments where girls can learn, thrive and reach their full potential.



INTERFAITH ADOLESCENT HEALTH HUB INITIATIVE- Faith to action network

Shifting Norms, Strengthening Voices towards ending teenage pregnancy in Kuria East, Kenya

In Kuria East, harmful gender norms continue to shape how young people navigate relationships and reproductive health. Many believe that pregnancy prevention is solely a girl's responsibility, while unmarried girls are often discouraged from discussing such issues with their partners. Through the Interfaith Adolescent Health Hub Initiative, Tunaweza Empowerment Organization in partnership with Faith To Action Network, is challenging these beliefs by creating safe, inclusive spaces for dialogue among young people in Gwikonge and Kemakoba Villages. The initiative engages 50 Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) and 50 Adolescent Boys and Young Men (ABYM) through interfaith dialogues, debates, action-driven forums and school in-reaches. These platforms are enabling young people to openly discuss relationships, contraception and decision-making topics often silenced by stigma.

The initiative is already driving meaningful change:

- Young men now recognize pregnancy prevention as a shared responsibility
- AGYW report increased confidence in discussing reproductive health with their partners

Young men are stepping up as responsible partners, while AGYW are gaining the confidence to speak, question and make informed choices.



Voices of Change

"I never considered discussing family planning with my partner, I believed it was solely my wife's responsibility. After the session, I now understand the importance of making these decisions together, and I am committed to initiating these conversations.

"I will also discourage fellow men from engaging in relationships with underage girls, not only because of the legal consequences, but because it is the right thing to do. I share this from experience, having once been a victim of child marriage."

— Mwita Gimaeso, Participant, Kuria East



Just Right for Children (Child Marriage Free World Campaign)



Through the **100 Days of Action towards a Child Marriage Free World Campaign in Gwikonge Village**, young mothers were empowered with critical knowledge on the risks and consequences of child marriage. The session fostered open dialogue, strengthened their role as protectors of children's rights, and inspired collective commitment to challenge harmful cultural norms. This engagement demonstrates the impact of community-led approaches in advancing the protection, education, and wellbeing of girls, while building momentum towards a child marriage free future.

Future 4 Binti

The newly launched Future 4 Binti Project by the Kingdom of the Netherland, AMREF Health in Kenya and Plan International Kenya marks an important step toward the eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) through a coordinated, multisectoral approach that places girls and communities at the centre of change. The project is designed to address the social, cultural and systemic factors that sustain FGM by engaging girls, parents, elders, cultural gatekeepers, religious leaders and government institutions in open dialogue and collective action. Through awareness forums, mentorship spaces, school outreach and community sensitization sessions, the initiative seeks to protect girls' rights, promote education and create safer environments where harmful practices are challenged and abandoned. Future 4 Binti also emphasizes collaboration with local authorities, health providers, child protection actors and justice systems to strengthen prevention, reporting and response mechanisms. By building partnerships across sectors, the project aims to ensure that anti-FGM efforts are sustainable, community-owned and supported by strong policy implementation. With girls empowered as advocates for their own futures and leaders championing positive cultural transformation, the project envisions communities where every girl can grow free from violence, remain in school and realize her full potential.



Come Together Celebration 2026



Come Together Celebration and Team Building 2026, brought together staff, board members, volunteers, and community mobilizers for a memorable occasion of connection, appreciation and shared purpose. The event created an opportunity to celebrate the dedication and contributions of everyone who supports the organization's mission of empowering girls and transforming communities. Through recognition moments, inspiring reflections, sharing meals and interactive activities, participants strengthened relationships and renewed their commitment to the values and goals of Tunaweza Empowerment. The team-building component focused on fostering collaboration, trust and effective teamwork among the different groups that drive the organization's success. Through engaging exercises and fun challenges, participants improved communication, built stronger partnerships and explored ways to work more effectively together. The event reinforced unity across the organization and highlighted the importance of collective effort in creating lasting impact for girls, families and communities.

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) 2026



The commemoration of the International Day for Zero Tolerance on FGM 2026 was held at Tarang'anya High School and brought together students, teachers, community members, local leaders and child protection stakeholders to raise awareness on the harmful effects of female genital mutilation. Spearheaded by Migori county government and Gender Actors, the event served as an important platform to educate participants on the rights of girls, the health risks associated with FGM and the need to protect every girl from harmful cultural practices. Through speeches, testimonies and interactive discussions, participants were encouraged to become champions for change within their communities. The 2026 global theme for the day, "Towards 2030: No End to FGM Without Sustained Commitment and Investment," emphasized the urgent need for continued action, resources and collective responsibility to eliminate FGM by the year 2030. During the event, speakers called on parents, leaders, schools and young people to work together in promoting education, safeguarding girls and reporting cases of abuse. The commemoration reaffirmed the commitment of Migori Gender Actors and partners to creating safer communities where girls can grow, learn and achieve their full potential free from violence and discrimination.

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