

Charge for Change

A Participatory Action Research Report
for Chama Women in Mathare, Kangemi
and Kawangware Informal Settlements

What its all about?

Charge for Change is a Participatory Action Research (PAR) report produced by Badili Africa.

It documents the human rights realities of chama women in three of Nairobi's informal settlements - Mathare, Kangemi, and Kawangware.

What makes it different: The chama women were not the research subjects. They were the researchers.

90+

Chama women trained as
community researchers

1,041

Community members
surveyed

3

Informal settlements:
Mathare, Kangemi, Kawangware

126

Pages of evidence produced
by grassroots women

**“Chamas are not just savings groups.
They are the sleeping giants of Kenya's democracy.”**

74% of chama members want their groups to formally undertake human rights work. That is not a civil society agenda. That is a grassroots mandate.

— *Charge for Change PAR Report, Badili Africa, 2025*

What 1,041 people told us

74%

of chama members want their groups to formally undertake human rights work

64%

already engage in human rights conversations within their chamas

62%

of chama members are aged 20–39, disproving the myth they are for older women

57%

do not trust police to address human rights violations in their communities

KEY FINDINGS

Rights under threat - who violates them and how

Most abused rights

Equality & freedom from discrimination

Right to life

Freedom and security of the person

Freedom of expression

Human dignity

Top identified abusers

Police

27%

Violent criminals

14%

Area chiefs

12%

Employers

9%

Neighbours

9%

Chamas are more than just savings groups

01

Political incubators

Chamas convene human rights discussions, document abuses, and provide early warning against injustice - functions normally attributed to formal civic institutions.

02

Frontline defenders

64% already engage in HR conversations. 56% have participated in advocacy. They are doing this work - without formal recognition or protection.

03

Civic classrooms

62% of members are aged 20–39. These are Kenya's youth - organizing, advocating, and building democratic muscle in the spaces they already trust.

04

Grassroots parliament

74% want chamas to formally undertake HR work. The mandate comes from the ground up. Policy must now respond from the top down.

CHARGE FOR CHANGE

Read the full report.

126 pages of findings produced by chama women in Mathare, Kangemi, and Kawangware.

Not about them. By them.

badiliafrica.org/charge-for-change

Ordinary Spaces. Extraordinary Change.