



THE BADILI JOURNAL

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ABOUT BADILI AFRICA

Badili Africa strengthens and harnesses the organizing power of grassroots and young women mobilizing in unconventional and often overlooked spaces such as chamas (merry-go-rounds), salons, women political mobilizers, student leagues and also male allies. We work within informal settlements and learning institutions to ensure that these voices are included and influence decision-making spaces, actively shape policy processes and contribute to dismantling gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination that violate human rights.

Mission:

We harness and leverage the voice and power of Chama and young women in Africa through civic engagement, capacity building, and partnerships to influence inclusive and effective political leadership and governance.

Vision:

An equitable society where grassroots and young women enjoy full social, economic, and political rights.



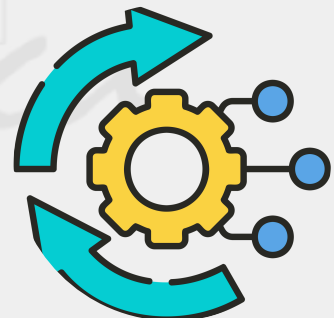
Voice

By valuing and centering the perspectives, experiences, insights and contributions of Chama and Young women in decision making processes and investing in their agency and leadership



Leadership

Strengthening and building capacities of chama and young women's active and meaningful participation in politics and governance, economic empowerment, ending gender-based violence and knowledge production



Transform

A movement of chama and young women leaders as politicians, activists, policy makers, mentors and advocates for better public service delivery, meaningful inclusion in politics and governance and eradication of all forms of gender-based violence.



Reflecting on Quarter I: Building Bridges, Driving Change

As we close the first quarter of 2025, Badili Africa celebrates the strides made in advancing women's rights, fostering accountable leadership, and amplifying marginalized voices across Kenya and beyond. Here's a snapshot of our impact:

I.Charge for Change: Empowering Chama Women as Community Advocates

Under the Charging for Change project in the informal settlements of Mathare, Kangemi, and Kawangware in Nairobi city county, we are strengthening chama women leaders' capacity to create accountable leadership and enhance public service delivery within urban, informal settlements. We trained 89 chama women to document and address human rights violations in their communities. Through three intensive Human rights and research training sessions, these women, many of whom had faced injustices firsthand, learned to identify human rights violations, engage duty bearers, and collect data to inform advocacy efforts.

Now, the Chama women not only understand their rights but also how to demand accountability. They went into their communities, collected and recorded the most prevalent human rights violation. The data collected will soon be published, shedding light on systemic gaps and paving the way for targeted interventions.

Why does this matter? When grassroots women are equipped with knowledge and tools, they become powerful agents of change in their communities.



2. Inua Chama Mama Biashara: Rebuilding Livelihoods

Last year, the 'Inua Biashara Mama: Safari ya kujijenga upya' project offered support to Chama women from Kayole and Mathare who had been affected by floods and evictions which as a result destroyed their businesses. This year, we followed up with two of the chama groups supported through the initiative. The women of Mathare Legal Aid and Human Rights Advocacy (MLAHRA), successfully introduced a new venture into their business—liquid soap making. According to their account, this additional income stream significantly boosted their household earnings. Build and Enlighten Communities Initiative (BECI), also from Mathare, enhanced their handbag-making business by incorporating leather into their products. This upgrade increased the selling price of each bag from Ksh. 1,000 to Ksh. 1,500. Furthermore, the chama women contracted a tailor to train members in the production of the new leather bags. As a result, the seed funding not only expanded their business portfolio but also created employment opportunities at the grassroots level.

From sourcing materials to marketing their products on digital media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, these women turned adversity into opportunity. Their success underscores the transformative power of small, targeted investments in women's economic resilience. Outcomes like these signal that this project is creating tangible change. These chama women were not only able to rebuild their businesses but also redefine what leadership and economic empowerment look like at the grassroots level.



3. Unleashing the Power of Movement Building



Picture this: 60 determined chama women and 20 passionate community influencers, digital creators, and student leaders from across Nairobi coming together not just to talk about change—but to create it. These sessions were not your typical workshops; they were revelations about the power these participants already hold.

"What resources do you already have?" we asked. "How can your existing networks become catalysts for change?" The energy in the room shifted as these participants realized their potential was not theoretical—it was immediate and actionable.

We unpacked the anatomy of movement-building step by step: relationship-building, strategic storytelling, action planning. Kenya's own history—including last year's Gen Z uprising—served as compelling proof that communities united around shared challenges can create unstoppable momentum. In small groups, these emerging leaders diagnosed community issues and engineered solutions using their newfound movement-building skills. The results? Strategies from people who just hours before had not seen themselves as change-makers.

This is just but the beginning. We are witnessing the birth of a formidable force—citizens who understand their sovereign power and are learning to wield it effectively for community transformation.



4. How Badili is Transforming JKUAT into a “Laboratory for Democracy”

Imagine a university where responsible governance and accountability is not just a textbook concept but a living, breathing reality. This vision is taking shape at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology through our Strengthening Public Accountability and Responsiveness in Universities (SPARU) project.

A. The University Public Baraza:

A 100 diverse students—from aspiring student leaders to outgoing student leaders to club representatives to the general student body—gathered for the public Baraza. Picture this: Kenya's future leaders engaging directly with established and distinguished leaders like Cyprian Nyamwamu, Executive Director of Future for Kenya, and 2027 Nairobi Gubernatorial Candidate, and Hon. Kamau Thuo Fiunifiu, Member of County Assembly for Karura ward, through a leadership masterclass, absorbing wisdom from those who have walked the path before them.

This offered a chance for the students to understand what active participation in governance looks like not just in campus but also at the national level. Young people make up majority of the population in Kenya. When they are actively involved in decision-making processes, they not only enhance government responsiveness but also strengthen democracy.

The Baraza culminated with the launch of some of Badili's knowledge management products.

- The thought-provoking UTU Card Game
- The Wanafunzi Konnect virtual hub



B. Policy Café: Students Shaping the future today

When 60 minds—students, policy analysts, and university administrators—converge around policy reform, magic happens. Our Policy Café created rare direct dialogue between students and decision-makers about critical policy issues affecting their campus life.

Students did not hold back, pinpointing gaps in sexual harassment policy and intellectual property rights on student's projects policy. With university administrators in the room taking notes and pledging action, this was not just conversation—it was transformation in motion.

The student also got guidance on how to influence policy, helping them understand how policies, laws, and programs align; this way they understood the steps to take when influencing policy to impact the spaces they are in.



C. Political Spa: Innovating to increase Female representation in Leadership



Who said political empowerment cannot be glamorous? At Badili Africa, we merge make up artistry and personal grooming to create beauty in a space that sums up politics as dirty business. We raise political awareness through what we have dubbed Political Spas and Glam sessions. These two avenues seek to increase young women's participation in leadership and politics by developing a culture of civic participation that is impactful, interesting but fun, through a principle that appeals to both women and society in general: beauty. At the start of the year, we held a session for 35 female student leaders. While getting makeup applied, these young leaders engaged with two nominated county assembly members, Hon. Margaret Kinyanjui from Kiambu County and Hon. Shirlene Wambui from Murang'a County, about the realities of women in political leadership.

The result? By the end of the activity, the students felt more inspired to pursue leadership roles themselves and to actively support other women aspiring to lead. Through a student-led movement called "The Ladies Assemble", they vowed to keep the momentum going and see one of their own, MaryAnne Njeri, attain the JKUAT presidential seat.

We are not just teaching democracy—we are cultivating a generation that practices it naturally, transforming student governance from theoretical to transformational.



5. From Nairobi to Johannesburg: The Women Kingmakers Docu-film Goes Continental in Amplifying the Submerged Power of Women Political Mobilizers

Last year we premiered our docufilm *The Women King Makers* (official trailer here: [The Woman KingMakers](#)), which highlights the often-overlooked influence of women political mobilizers. What began as a spotlight on Kenya's hidden political influencers has evolved into a continental conversation-starter.

At the beginning of the year, Badili Africa received a prestigious invitation to the 2025 AFWID convening in Johannesburg. There, we not only screened the docufilm but also led a powerful session on "Amplifying the submerged power of grassroots women mobilizers in bridging the gender gap in political leadership." This platform was no small opportunity. AFWID (African Women in Dialogue) brings together 1,000 women from all 55 African countries under the auspices of the Zanele Mbeki Foundation. As our film played to this pan-African audience, it confirmed what we have always believed: the challenges and triumphs of women political mobilizers resonate far beyond Kenya's borders.

The continental reception of *The Women Kingmakers* reminds us that when we tell these stories, we are not just documenting history—we are helping write a new chapter for African women in politics. As we look ahead to the 2027 elections, we commit to:

- Spotlighting violence for women political mobilizers in order to push for accountability from political parties and election stakeholders on stronger safeguarding mechanisms.
- Harnessing the collective power of grassroots women mobilizers for effective civic engagement, bridging the gender parity gap in political leadership and their political agency.
- Shifting mindsets and behavior change from just being brokers of power to utilizing this power to getting more women elected to office.



6. Inviting the Uninvited: People on the Margins of Democracy.



During this year's People's Dialogue Festival (PDF), at the Political Parties Village in Uhuru Park, we held a session that brought together voices often overlooked in Kenya's political discourse — Chama women leaders, salon/ barbershop owners, boda-boda chairman and first-time voters among other target groups.

The People Dialogue Festival is annual event organized by the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Kenya) that unites leaders, citizens, government institutions, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders to discuss pressing societal challenges, promote meaningful citizen engagement, and co-create solutions for Kenya's sustainable development.

This was not just another panel in this annual democracy festival. While hundreds gathered under the banner of *"Building a Collaborative Democracy for Kenya's Sustainable Future,"* our spotlight illuminated the democratic shadows where every day Kenyans often stand unnoticed and unheard.

The uncomfortable truth emerged quickly: Despite Kenya's constitutional promises of inclusion, countless communities remain spectators rather than participants in our democracy. The evidence was laid bare: Eroding trust between citizens and political leaders, many Kenyans remain unaware of their civic powers and rights, Marginalized groups see themselves reflected nowhere in political discourse and few accessible platforms exist for dialogue where ordinary voices can influence decisions influence.

As dialogue flowed between these diverse voices, so did solutions. The energy transformed from frustration to possibility as participants reimagined what democracy could look like when everyone truly has a seat at the table. "Inviting the Uninvited" became a call to action - a movement, a reminder that Kenya's democratic future cannot be designed only in parliamentary chambers but must be crafted also at the community level - in the barbershops, chamas, and boda-boda stages where real life happens.

The message was clear: Democracy is not a once-every-five-years event. It is everyday people having their fingerprints on every decision that shapes their lives. We continue to have this series in different communities I different set-ups such as the Salons, Barbershops, Chama meetings and Boda-boda stages. As Baili, we understand the need to have everyone on board in decision making processes.

7. International Women's Day: Accelerating Action for Equality

On March 7th, we partnered with Forum Civ to host the International Women's Day event at St. Andrew's Church. The gathering featured powerful discussions on gender equality, performances by female artists, and the screening of our Women Kingmakers Docu-film. A unique "glam session" allowed attendees to engage in powerful conversations on Women's rights while getting their makeup done—symbolizing the intersection of self-expression and advocacy.

The event was a reminder of how far we have come—and how much work remains. This year's International Women's Day celebrations were particularly pivotal as they marked the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration. The theme, 'Accelerate action' was a call to action to address issues that women face on a daily basis; issues such as femicide, gender-based violence, the gender pay gap, access to quality education and healthcare, and so on. It was a call to engage media, corporate leaders, governments, community leaders, civil society, youth, and others with influence to take action in their communities to create safe spaces where women could live free from fear.

This event was a culmination of Forum Civ's 30 years of existence and was marked by an award ceremony where our Executive Director Ms. Bina Maseno was honored as a gender champion for making significant strides in addressing gender issues.

A key takeaway was the collective call to reframe women's rights not as niche or secondary concerns, but as fundamental human rights—central to building a just and inclusive society for all.



Flora Ndaba of the Tanzania Gender Networking Program challenges women to see themselves as "Queenmakers" rather than "Kingmakers" after viewing our documentary at the AFWID convening in Johannesburg. As Tanzania's elections approach, her message reminds women they belong in leadership positions, not just supporting roles.



The Women Kingmakers Screening

Democracy only thrives when every voice is heard. At the Political Dialogue Village during PDF 2025, our Executive Director delivered a powerful message: ordinary citizens must have a seat at the decision-making table. Too often, policies are shaped without the people they affect most. This session challenges that exclusion



Inviting the Uninvited

In Kangemi, Kawangware, and Mathare, we trained fierce Chama women in human rights advocacy and participatory research—because real change starts when marginalized voices document, demand, and dismantle injustice!



HRT Training

Ann Wanjiru from Mathare Legal Aid and Human Rights Advocacy (MLAHRA), speaks on their Chama introducing a new venture into their business—liquid soap making. She speaks on the additional income stream and how it has significantly boosted their household earnings



Ann Wanjiru from MLAHRA



Community Impact this Quater

Young Women

160

Direct Reach

1,160

Indirect Reach

Chama Women

117

Direct Reach

1,170

Indirect Reach

Male Allies

84

Direct Reach

840

Indirect Reach

Organizational Footprint

Digital Presence



13.4 K

Total Social Media Followers



118.4K

Social Media Reach



7K

Social Media Engagement

Looking Ahead

From documenting human rights violations to redefining political participation, Quater One laid a robust foundation for the year. As we move forward, we remain committed to:

- Scaling grassroots women's leadership.
- Innovating inclusive advocacy models.
- Bridging divides between citizens and institutions.





Invitation to join the movement

We invite you to become part of a movement that is reshaping the future of Africa's women. Your support not only helps us but also joins you to a community committed to gender justice and equality

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