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AFRICA

# National Forum on Reproductive Justice in Tanzania

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## REPORT



From Stigma to Support: Together for  
Reproductive Justice in Tanzania

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# Executive Summary

The National Forum on Reproductive Justice in Tanzania, convened from June 4 to 6, 2025, marked a groundbreaking milestone in the country's movement for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Coordinated by WGNRR Africa with support from the Global Fund for Women (GFW), the forum brought together 50 diverse reproductive justice defenders from grassroots, national, and international organizations across 11 Tanzanian regions.

Using a feminist, rights-based, and intersectional lens, the forum amplified voices from historically marginalized populations, including people living with HIV (PLHIV), persons with disabilities (PLWDs), adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), and members of communities facing heightened stigma and discrimination due to their identities, occupations, or health statuses.

Over three days, participants explored the roots of reproductive injustice, unpacked legal and structural barriers, and envisioned a unified movement grounded in solidarity and collective power. Notable outcomes included the creation of a national reproductive justice forum, joint visioning, the formation of a movement coordination committee, and the development of advocacy and resource mobilization strategies.

The forum affirmed a shared commitment to dismantling stigma, shift narratives, and secure legal and policy reforms enabling access to safe and legal abortion and comprehensive SRHR for all in Tanzania.





# Opening and Collective Identity Building

The forum opened with powerful remarks from WGNRR Africa and GFW, setting a tone of unity and shared purpose. WGNRR Africa's Regional Director underscored that this was not just a meeting but the beginning of a movement – a collective action grounded in dignity, justice and courage. Acknowledging the hostile sociopolitical climate, Speakers highlighted the need to amplify the voices of underrepresented groups, especially those silenced due to abortion stigma and discrimination related to identity, ability, or occupation. collaborations are central to achieving reproductive justice.

In a session titled "Reframing Reproductive Justice in Tanzania," legal and policy experts unpacked structural barriers, such as legal constraints, socio-cultural norms, and economic inequality. Participants analyzed the Tanzania's laws in comparison to progressive models like South Africa and the Maputo Protocol, and identified areas needing urgent reform.



During the "Mapping Our Movements" workshop, groups articulated shared values bodily autonomy, intersectionality, transparency, and dignity and identified strategies such as grassroots edutainment, radio outreach, policy dialogue, and intergenerational learning. While highlighting opportunities like international treaties and existing CSO networks, they also reflected on challenges including self-stigma, donor dependency, and poor coordination.

A session by a GFW representative introduced the Movement-Led Approach (MLA), centering trust-based, participatory grantmaking and power-shifting philanthropy. Participants learned how MLA empowers movements by reducing bureaucratic burdens and ensuring community-rooted leadership.

## Key outcomes



Increased awareness of the legal/policy gaps in SRHR.



Identification of shared barriers, strategies, and movement-building principles.



Unified vision and values for the reproductive justice movement.



Strengthened understanding of MLA and trust-based funding.

# Strengthening Collaboration and Amplifying Grassroots Voices



Day Two spotlighted lived experiences and cross-organizational learning. The "Voices from the Ground" panel, moderated by Women with Dignity, showcased stories from grassroots advocates, including those working within criminalized or highly stigmatized contexts. Speakers revealed the multiple layers of discrimination and risk they face and called for inclusive decision-making and accessible SRHR services.

Participants shared powerful personal narratives through the "Storytelling Circle", underscoring the impact of criminalization, stigma, and social exclusion. These stories highlighted resilience and the power of storytelling in shaping public opinion and policy, and humanizing policy discourse and catalyze change.

In the "Bridging the Divide" workshop, participants developed joint advocacy and resource mobilization strategies to align grassroots and national initiatives. They also examined findings from the Movement Mapping and Analysis (MMA) survey, which mapped movement dynamics and emphasized resilience of local organizing amid shrinking civic spaces.



Amplification of marginalized voices through storytelling and panels



Strengthened coordination between grassroots and national actors

**Key outcomes**



Strategic approaches for inclusive fundraising and advocacy



Recognition of the need for resilient, intersectional networks





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# Long-Term Strategies for Sustaining Momentum

The final day focused on sustainability, resource mobilization, and leadership structures. Participants co-created short-, medium-, and long-term strategies, including legal advocacy, youth-led initiatives, and intersectional campaign design. They agreed to form a movement coordination committee, with WGNRR Africa as the interim secretariat.

A session on Participatory Grant-Making by GFW clarified feminist funding principles, while the "Resource Mobilization Lab," facilitated by the WGNRR Africa team equipped participants with practical tools for joint fundraising and donor engagement. The forum concluded with the signing of a "Reproductive Justice Pact," symbolizing collective commitment to sustained advocacy, solidarity, and community-rooted leadership.

## Reproductive Justice Pact in Tanzania



### Key outcomes



Creation of a national reproductive justice movement committee



Strategic planning for multi-level, long-term advocacy



Deeper understanding of participatory grant-making and joint fundraising



Personal and collective commitments toward reproductive justice.



# Challenges

The Forum brought to the light multiple intersecting barriers to reproductive justice in Tanzania. These span social, legal, cultural, financial, and structural dimensions. Despite policy commitments and the ratification of international protocols, the reality for many communities remains fraught with stigma, misinformation, and inadequate access to services. Cultural and religious taboos surrounding abortion and contraception continue to fuel discrimination, while legal contradictions and a lack of political will obstruct reforms. Furthermore, insufficient funding, poor coordination, and a shrinking civic space exacerbate operational difficulties for grassroots advocates. Discriminatory attitudes, particularly toward youth, PLWDs, and communities facing heightened criminalization, deepen marginalization and diminish access to critical reproductive health services.

Key challenges identified include:

- Legal and policy contradictions, restrictive abortion laws coupled with limited political will for progressive reforms.
- Pervasive societal and cultural stigma, religious resistance, and misinformation surrounding reproductive health, especially abortion and contraception.
- Shrinking civic and donor spaces, and inadequate resource mobilization.
- Weak coordination among stakeholders and fragmented movement building efforts.
- Discriminatory attitudes and exclusion of marginalized groups such as adolescents, sexual minorities, youth, PLWDs, and sex workers.
- Limited healthcare access in rural areas.





# Lessons Learned

Participants recognized the transformative power of storytelling, community-led advocacy, and intergenerational dialogue. The forum confirmed that inclusive, participatory approaches—like those modeled through the Movement-Led Approach foster deeper movement ownership, and that legal literacy and media engagement are vital for shifting public discourse.

The experience affirmed that collective visioning and strategic collaboration, when informed by lived realities and intersectional experiences, can shift narratives and influence policy. It also revealed that documenting grassroots stories and building resilient alliances are vital tools in breaking down barriers, combating misinformation, and sustaining long-term movement-building.

- Key lessons include:
- Storytelling is a transformative advocacy tool that deepens understanding and builds solidarity.
- Inclusive, community-led networks strengthen movement resilience.
- Coordinated strategy development is essential for systemic impact.
- Participatory funding builds movement ownership and resilience.
- Legal literacy and advocacy training and media engagement must be expanded for grassroots empowerment.
- Empowering marginalized communities and youth enhances the vibrancy and effectiveness of SRHR advocacy



# Recommendations & Conclusion

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To consolidate the progress made and ensure continuity of advocacy efforts, the forum generated a set of practical and forward-looking recommendations. These aim to address structural barriers, enhance inclusivity, and foster a sustainable ecosystem for reproductive justice in Tanzania. Moving forward, efforts must center the voices of those most affected by SRHR injustices, invest in legal and strategic advocacy, and build stronger, more connected networks.

Recommendations include:

1. Legal and Policy Reform: Advocate for the harmonization of laws and full domestication of the Maputo Protocol.
2. Sustainable Funding: Promote joint fundraising and build local resource mobilization capacity.
3. Inclusive Movement Building: Ensure meaningful participation of marginalized voices; formalize the movement committee.
4. Documentation and Media Engagement: Leverage digital and traditional media to counter stigma.
5. Capacity Strengthening: Invest in legal, advocacy, and communication skills for grassroots leaders.
6. Youth and Marginalized Group Inclusion: Prioritize leadership development and decision-making power for these groups.

The National Forum on Reproductive Justice in Tanzania has catalyzed a transformative shift toward intersectional, inclusive, and collective advocacy. Grounded in the lived realities of Tanzanians, the movement reaffirms that reproductive justice is a fundamental human rights. The commitments made, and the networks built, lay a solid foundation for a resilient, people-powered movement. As the movement grows, its foundation will remain rooted in the powerful stories, commitments, and strategies shaped in this historic convening. Together, from stigma to support, Tanzania's reproductive justice movement is rising and it is unstoppable.



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