



Guests exploring the BEE groups exhibition in Tanga.

Advancing Gender and Climate Justice in Tanzania's Blue Economy

In commemoration of International Women's Day this year, Women Fund Tanzania organized a Gender and Climate Justice Convening held in Tanga Region on 30th March 2026. The convening was organized through the ReSea project, implemented in partnership with Mission Inclusion and IUCN Tanzania, and funded by Global Affairs Canada.

The main objective of the convening, held under the theme **"Advancing Gender-Responsive Blue Economy for Inclusive and Climate-Just Development"**, was to bring together voices of change-makers and key stakeholders to reflect on and advocate for environmental justice within an inclusive blue economy.

The convening was attended by various stakeholders, including blue economy entrepreneurship (BEE) groups under the ReSea project from Pemba and Tanga; government leaders from relevant ministries; as well as representatives of women's, girls', and children's rights advocates.

During the opening, the executive director of Women Fund Tanzania (WFT-T), Rose Marandu, stated that sustainable development cannot be achieved without ensuring that gender equality is placed at the centre of blue economy policies, planning, and implementation.

"When we talk about the blue economy, we cannot separate it from rights and equality. Women must fully participate in decision-making and benefit from these resources in order to achieve true and inclusive development," said Marandu.

On her part, WFT-T Board Member Nosim Losai emphasized that these achievements are an important foundation but require stronger support through inclusive policies. **"These achievements clearly show that when women are given opportunities and resources, they can drive significant change"**. said Losai.

Participants of the convening shared testimonies of the transformations they have experienced through the project.

"In the past, we were restricted from participating in marine economic activities, but now we contribute to household income, build homes, and educate our children. The community has begun to recognize our value."– narrated hadia from Pemba

Key activities of the convening included exhibitions of products from entrepreneurs in blue economy groups supported by the project, a presentation on gender analysis within blue economy policies, and various panel discussions.

These covered topics such as voices of change in the blue economy, policy issues highlighted in research, and community experiences in implementing blue economy activities.



WFT-T presenting a policy brief to government representatives during a convening session.

From Policy to Practice: Bridging the Gender Gap in Tanzania's Blue Economy

Women play a central role in Tanzania's blue economy, yet they remain largely absent from the policies that shape it. A new policy brief from Women Fund Tanzania highlights this gap and calls for urgent action.

Produced under the ReSea Project, the brief reviews gender inclusion in the Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024) and the Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy (2020). It finds that although gender inclusion is recognized in policy documents, implementation remains limited in practice.

Community consultations in Pemba and Tanga reveal a clear gap between policy intentions and lived realities. Women are actively involved across blue economy activities, but are often excluded from decision-making spaces and higher-value opportunities. Leadership roles in fisheries, aquaculture, and related value chains remain largely male-dominated—even in sectors where women make up most of the workforce.

Access to training, finance, and markets is also uneven. Many women are concentrated in low-income activities such as seaweed farming. In addition, basic protections are weak, reporting systems for gender-based violence are limited or difficult to access, and safe working conditions are not consistently ensured.

A review of both blue economy policies shows important but insufficient commitments to gender equality. While both frameworks promote women's participation, they lack strong enforcement and accountability mechanisms.

Key gaps include underrepresentation of women in leadership, limited access to finance, weak market pricing systems, inadequate infrastructure standards for safe and decent work, and weak reporting systems for gender-based violence and exploitation. These challenges are compounded by a lack of sex- and age-disaggregated data, making inequalities less visible in official reporting and limiting evidence-based planning. Addressing these challenges requires a phased and deliberate reform approach that links immediate actions with long-term structural change.

In the short term, stronger policy provisions and enforcement are needed, including interim safeguards against gender-based violence and standardized systems for sex-disaggregated data to improve accountability and visibility.

In the medium term, efforts should focus on expanding economic inclusion across coastal value chains. This includes establishing a Blue Economy Gender Financing Window to improve access to capital for women- and youth-led enterprises, scaling entrepreneurship training, improving market access, and introducing infrastructure standards for safe working conditions.

In the long term, structural reforms are needed to embed equity in governance systems. These include quotas for women's representation in fisheries governance bodies, independent gender compliance audits, harmonized data systems between mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, and pricing mechanisms to reduce exploitation and improve fairness across value chains.

Moving from policy commitments to measurable impact will require sustained institutional action, enforceable mechanisms, and continued investment in gender-responsive systems.

Ultimately, gender equality is not an additional consideration in blue economy development—it is essential to its resilience, productivity, and long-term sustainability.



Sales force orientatio session to WFTT and Msichana Initiative programme team.

A New Era for Grant-Making at Women Fund Tanzania

Grant-making is at the heart of Women Fund Tanzania’s mission to advance the rights of women and girls across the country. Throughout the years, WFTT has continued to strengthen feminist movements by providing flexible, accessible, and responsive grant support to grassroots and emerging women’s rights organizations.

Since its establishment, the Fund has relied on a manual, paper-based application process.

But this year marks a significant milestone: the introduction of a new digital grant management system through Salesforce.

Integrated into the Women Fund Tanzania website, the platform allows applicants to easily access grant announcements, download application materials, and submit proposals online. Applicants can also track the progress of their submissions and receive final decisions directly through the system.

On the organizational side, the platform strengthens efficiency and transparency by enabling real-time tracking of applications; data analysis by region and thematic area; and streamlined management of reviews, contracting, and reporting processes.

Overall, the new system is expected to reduce paperwork, shorten processing timelines, and improve the overall grant-making experience for both applicants and staff.

This transition represents a major step forward in strengthening Women Fund Tanzania’s systems.

To ensure the platform saves the intended purpose, capacity building and orientation sessions on sales force and how it works have been conducted to staff and management, grant review committee board just to ensure the platform continues to effectively serve both internal teams and external users.

Sharing their experience on the use of the new system, some of the applicants had the following to say; **“This new system for submitting grant applications, in our view, has made the application process much easier compared to filling on paper. Also, these changes are pushing us to learn how to use technology—so this is a big step.** – Said Debora Mwanyanja, Elimisha Mbeya.”

In its new SP(2026–2030) WFTT is committed to review and refine grant application and management processes, integrating technology to make them more accessible, participatory, and grantee-centred.





Songea community members learning Mkomanile's HerStory during the exhibition."

Honouring and Amplifying Nduna Mkomanile's HerStory

As part of its broader campaign to ensure that women's her-stories are identified, documented, recognized, and disseminated, Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFT-T), through the HerStory Coalition, continued to support the National Museum of Tanzania to use different platforms to amplify the her-stories of women who contributed to national development across different sectors.

On 27 February 2026, a special exhibition on Nduna Mkomanile was organized and held at the Cultural Elders Council Centre in the Ruvuma Region. Nduna Mkomanile is known as a heroine, mobilizer, and a responsible figure in her community who stood firm during the Maji Maji War.

The exhibition was part of the larger Maji Maji War Commemoration and Cultural Tourism Festival, organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (National Museum), in collaboration with the Ruvuma Regional Commissioner's Office and the Council of Cultural Elders.

The aim of the exhibition was to highlight the contribution of women in liberation struggles against colonial rule and to show how their contributions continue to be visible in present-day society. The exhibition also aimed at providing space for community members and other stakeholder to come and learn herstories of women.

Various community members, government leaders, and traditional leaders had an opportunity to visit the exhibition and learn about the herstory of Nduna Mkomanile. Through this exhibition, community members were able to learn about the history of the heroine Nduna Mkomanile and her role in the Maji Maji War and the struggle against colonial rule.

They also learned about her contribution in distributing traditional medicine during the war, her leadership and advisory roles, and her involvement in coordinating communication during that war period.

Speaking during the exhibition, Justina Haule, a community member from Songea, said,

" This exhibition has helped us better understand the her-story of this woman, Nduna Mkomanile. She was the one who helped in finding traditional medicine for Maji Maji from Liwale. We had only heard that there was a brave woman who participated in the Maji Maji War. but we didn't know much about her."

The research, documentation, and exhibition of Nduna Mkomanile were supported by the Women Fund Tanzania Trust through the HerStory coalition.



WCEL coalition members during a strategic reflection meeting at WFTT offices.

WCEL Reflects and Strategizes on Movement Building

In an effort to shape its movement journey with clarity and courage, the Women, Constitution, Elections, and Leadership (WCEL) Coalition convened its first strategic reflection meeting on 29 January 2026.

The meeting brought together feminist leaders, activists, and movement actors to reflect on the current global and national political landscape and to strategize on the future of the women’s liberation movement.

Discussions focused on strengthening feminist movement infrastructure, deepening ideological clarity, and enhancing strategic positioning within the contexts of democracy, elections, and civic space.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to reflect on the shared journey of 2025 and collectively envision the movement’s strategic priorities for 2026. This reflection was necessitated by shifting systems and priorities, prompting a critical dialogue on how the movement can collectively navigate these evolving dynamics.

At the conclusion of the meeting, participants agreed on the following key actions:

- Conduct a comprehensive movement assessment to evaluate inclusion, ownership, and youth engagement (with a focus on belonging).
- Strengthen feminist ideological clarity through sustained capacity-building and political education
- Develop a strategic communication and narrative framework to reposition feminist agendas nationally
- Engage religious leaders and cross-sector actors in advancing peacebuilding and gender justice
- Establish a task force to refine strategies and oversee implementation
- Strengthen movement security and digital safety mechanisms
- Document human rights violations to support evidence-based advocacy
- Promote intergenerational organizing, with a strong emphasis on Gen Z inclusion in feminist spaces

As a result of the reflection meeting, the following outputs were achieved:

- A clear and shared roadmap developed to guide movement strengthening and positioning for 2026.
- A coalition structure and task force were established.
- Strategic priorities for the 2026 movement-building agenda were identified

WFTT aims at catalysing and nurturing networks and coalitions that advance feminist agendas at local, national, and regional levels – including amplifying intersectional, inclusive and intergenerational organizing, promoting solidarity across movements, and enhancing collective advocacy on policy reforms, care economies, and climate justice.





Shy-EVAWC working group members in a group photo during the wellness session.

Fostering Wellbeing Among VAW and VAC Responders

The Shinyanga EVAWC Working Group held a feminist wellness and healing session for members responding to violence against women and children (VAW and VAC).

These members work in highly emotionally demanding environments, including supporting survivors, managing sensitive cases, and engaging with complex community dynamics. Continued exposure to this work can lead to emotional fatigue, secondary trauma, and burnout.

To address these challenges, on 7th February 2026, Shinyanga EVAWC group convened a healing and emotional reset session aimed at supporting the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals working at the forefront of gender-based violence (GBV) and VAC prevention and response. The session provided a dedicated space for participants to pause, reflect, and reconnect with their own wellbeing, while also strengthening collective resilience.

Guided by feminist principles of care, empathy, and shared healing, participants reflected on the nature of emotional and psychological pain and how lived experiences shape both individual and collective resilience. They identified personal values that ground them in their work and reflected on moments that have been both challenging and empowering in their lives.

These reflections highlighted that both joyful and difficult experiences contribute meaningfully to personal growth and sustained commitment to social justice work. Importantly, the session reinforced that self-care is not separate from the work itself; rather, it is essential to sustaining impactful and compassionate responses to violence against women and children (VAW and VAC).

In strengthening both individual and collective wellbeing, the group agreed to establish mechanisms such as a peer support network to encourage continuous shared learning and healing.

They also committed to integrating wellness into organizational practices and plans, as well as continuing to document best practices for learning and reflection. These steps are expected to strengthen resilience, promote long-term wellbeing, and embed a culture of support and effective practice among frontline workers and their organizations.

This initiative reflects SHY EVAWC's commitment to fostering sustainable and supportive working environments for frontline responders. By prioritizing wellbeing and collective care, the Working Group continues to strengthen the capacity of members to respond to violence against women and children with empathy, resilience, and renewed purpose.

“Caring for those who support others is not optional; it is essential for building strong, resilient systems that can effectively address violence in our communities.”

Pictorial



Photo 1: WFTT team and Mission inclusion meeting with government officials for brief introduction before the Convening



Photo 2: Community members from Pangani and Pemba performing during the gender and climate justice convening



Photo 3: some community members from Songea exploring her-stories of women during nduna Mkomani exhibition



Photo 4: WFTT-T staff in a group photo during the wellness session



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