



**A tale of successful grassroots
organizing for climate justice in
Siaya**



My name is Elizabeth Akinyi Juma, a 54-year-old widow from Komolo sublocation, North Alego ward. Previously, I only planted maize and beans because that's all I knew. I never understood anything about climate change or how it affects farming.

Then, Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN) taught me about agroecology, a farming method that helps us adapt to climate change. Now, instead of waiting for rain, I prepare my farm early, make compost manure, and keep my seeds ready.

On my small farm, I now plant bananas, sweet potatoes, pawpaw, cassava, and vegetables—all together. This has helped me harvest more food, earn an income, and keep my soil healthy. I have also started planting trees, which protect my farm from strong winds and soil erosion.

I now understand that climate change is unpredictable, but with climate-smart farming, I can still grow food and take care of my land. Thank you, SIMUN, for showing us women how to farm better and fight climate change!





I am Rosemary Auma Owino, a 48-year-old widow from Komolo sublocation, North Alego ward. I didn't know that women had the right to plant trees. I also didn't understand climate-smart farming—I just did things like I had seen others do.

I used to plant too many seeds in one hole, thinking I would get a better harvest, but my crops never did well. I didn't know how to manage waste or use it to make organic manure. I also didn't have the confidence to join other widows in a group or learn how to sell my produce.

Then, Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN) trained us on climate-smart farming. I learned how to space my crops, make organic manure from household waste, and control soil erosion using terraces. I also planted Napier grass on the terraces to stop soil loss. Now, my farm gives me more food.

I also joined a savings and loaning group, so I am always prepared with money, seeds, and manure. With digital marketing skills, I can now sell my farm produce on Facebook and X and make money!

Today, hunger is no longer a problem in my home. My children look healthy and not vulnerable. I feel respected in my community and even among my co-wives. I am truly happy! I thank SIMUN for opening my eyes to better farming and climate action.





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Back then, I lacked confidence in my leadership. I didn't know how to resolve conflicts, and I felt too vulnerable to challenge societal leaders like chiefs and spiritual elders. Though I was a leader, I knew little about climate change and felt unworthy of speaking in decision-making spaces. Public meetings scared me. I didn't believe a woman like me could hold higher leadership positions.

Then, Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN) changed my story.

Through their training, I learned about climate action, gender integration, movement building, and financial literacy. I realized that as a leader, my voice matters!

Now, I confidently lead 361 widows in climate action. I speak in chief barazas, educating women on their rights and climate change. I attend public participation forums and challenge unfair policies—like opposing the county's plan to tax households based on the number of chickens they own. I train fellow widows on agroecology, showing them how to farm smarter and adapt to climate change.

Today, I am no longer afraid. I stand strong, I lead, and I speak up for widows and for our environment. Thank you, SIMUN, for giving me the courage to claim my space!

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Monica Oniare
Chair lady of a “Kwe Kod Hera” Widows’
Group in Komolo sublocation, North Alego
ward.





Millicent Jummah
Founder Friends of Disability
Organization Siaya.

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Climate change affects everyone, but for persons with disabilities, the challenges are even greater. Many times, our voices are left out of decision-making spaces. However, through Siaya Muungano Network, we have gained the knowledge, confidence, and opportunities to change this narrative.

Thanks to SIMUN for the capacity-building efforts, we have learned how to adapt to climate change, build resilience, and advocate for inclusive policies. More importantly, SIMUN created space for us at the decision-making table.

Today, I am proud to be a member of the Siaya County Climate Change Planning Committee. I represent the voices of persons with disabilities, ensuring that climate projects are inclusive, accessible, and equitable. We now have the power to question, influence, and shape policies that impact our lives.

This is a win for every person with a disability in Siaya County. Thank you, SIMUN, for believing in us and making sure our voices are heard!





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I represent the Centre for Rights Education, Governance, and Development (CREGD).

I am so happy to have attended a two-day training on Gender Integration in Climate Action and Finance, hosted by Siaya Muungano Network. Before this training, I never really thought about how gender and climate change are connected. But now, I understand that women, men, and even youth are affected differently by climate change, and each of us has a role to play.

I have learned how to include gender in climate action, and I now see why it is important for women to be part of decision-making. From here, I will take this knowledge back to my community. I will talk to people during public meetings like chief barazas, in my church, and in the women's groups I attend. I want more people to understand that climate change is not just about the environment—it also affects our daily lives as men and women.

I thank Siaya Muungano Network for this training. I feel empowered, and I am ready to create awareness and be part of the solution!

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Veronica Adhiambo Onyango



A portrait of George Omondi, a Black man with a short beard and mustache, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a purple and white striped shirt. The background is a blurred green foliage. The portrait is framed by a green border that curves around the top and bottom. Two large yellow quotation marks are positioned to the left of the text box.

George Omondi

Attending the training on gender mainstreaming in climate action and finance, organized by Siaya Muungano Network, has been truly enlightening. I now understand that gender is not just about men and women—it's about meaningful participation, inclusion, and ensuring fairness in decision-making.

One of the key takeaways was how gender influences budgeting. I learned how to integrate gender considerations into planning and resource allocation, ensuring that climate change impacts are addressed in a way that meets the needs of all. Engaging with community members and civil society organizations gave me deeper insights into gender identity and expression—issues that are often overlooked in mainstream discussions.

This training has brought to light critical societal issues that many take for granted. Thanks to Siaya Muungano Network, I now recognize the importance of gender-responsive policies in driving real, lasting change.





Quinter Awino
-Friends of Siaya
Disability
Organisation

I attended a two-day training by Siaya Muungano Network on Gender Integration in Climate Action and Finance, and it completely changed my perspective.

Many people, including myself, believed that gender discussions only focus on women. But through this training, I have learned that gender includes both men and women, and each has different needs that must be considered.

We discussed key principles of gender mainstreaming such as collaboration, inclusivity, capacity building, and proper data collection. Without accurate data, we cannot fully understand who we are serving or what challenges they face.

This training has been an eye-opener. Moving forward, I will use this knowledge to advocate for fair and inclusive decision-making, ensuring that both men and women, including persons with disabilities, have a voice in climate action.





I lived in ignorance, unaware of my rights both at home and in the community. I believed that men made all the decisions, and as a woman, I had no say. I never imagined that I could plant trees, participate in community discussions, or stand up for myself when treated unfairly. I simply accepted things as they were, not knowing that I had the power to change them.

Everything changed when I joined Pendeza Women Group and met Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN). Through their training, I learned about women's rights and how to take action when they are violated. Now, I know that no one has the right to trespass on my land or deny me my place in the community.

I have also learned the importance of hard work in ensuring my family never goes hungry. I started a kitchen garden, where I grow cassava and sweet potatoes to improve our food security. I have also learned how to live peacefully with my neighbors, resolve conflicts, and support others in my community.

One of the biggest changes in my life is the confidence to speak up. Before, I was too afraid to talk in chief barazas, but now I stand and share my views boldly. I even take part in public participation forums, helping to shape decisions that affect our community, including the budget-making process.

I have also adopted climate-smart practices in my home. I no longer use firewood for cooking—I now use a gas cooker, which is cleaner, safer, and better for the environment.

I am truly grateful to Siaya Muungano Network for opening my eyes. Now, I know my worth, I actively participate in community matters, and I am determined to create a better future for myself and those around me. Women can do so much when they are empowered!

Mary Achieng Opany
-Pendeza Maendeleo Women Group





Monica Auma Okumu

-Chairlady, Barding Maendeleo Women Group.



I was a quiet woman, afraid to speak up. I never thought I could be a leader. In our community, some things were simply not meant for women—like planting bananas or even trees. I accepted these beliefs without questioning them.

I also did not value indigenous knowledge. I never kept even a single chicken at home. When planting maize, I only used hybrid seeds and inorganic fertilizers, believing they were the best.

But everything changed when I started learning about climate action. I discovered that women and girls are the most affected by climate change. I learned about agroecology—a way of farming that protects the land and improves productivity. I also realized that income-generating activities like growing Napier grass, maize, and keeping chickens can help women become more independent.

Through Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN), I learned how to mobilize other women to attend decision-making spaces. I became stronger and more confident in speaking out. Because of this knowledge, I was chosen as a leader of women in Siaya under SHOFCO and became a matron of 17 women groups in Barding Sub-location.

Today, I keep local chickens for income and encourage other women to do the same. I also sensitize my community on the importance of planting indigenous crops like millet, sorghum, and cassava because they are drought-resistant and nutritious.

My advice to women is to be bold and speak out. If you have an idea, don't keep it to yourself—share it with others. Anyone can be a leader—you just need to be firm, confident, and determined. God is always with us. Let us be fearless and contest for leadership positions, so we can use our voices to advocate for women's participation in climate action. We are the most affected, but we also have the power to bring change!





Mary Abang
Climate Action Champion

Previously, I didn't know much about climate change, my rights, or how to engage with leaders. But through Siaya Muungano Network, I now understand my role as a woman in climate action.

Through continuous engagements, I have gained the confidence to engage youth groups and fellow women in discussions about climate change. I have also learned how to approach county leaders and hold them accountable. I now know that my voice matters.

Siaya Muungano Network has linked me with different organizations where I continue to learn more about climate action. Through the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) program, they have given us platforms to meet our leaders and ask important questions. Together with other women, we have engaged policymakers at the Siaya County Assembly, asking them why the FLLOCA program has not yet been implemented. I have also met the CECM for Water, Environment, Climate Change, and Natural Resources, and I asked why the county is delaying this program. I am grateful for this knowledge and empowerment. Now, I can stand up, speak out, and demand action for my community.





I had no knowledge about climate action or women's rights in protecting the environment. I did not know how to balance taking care of my children while earning a living. On my farm, I used to burn all waste, unaware that it could be turned into organic manure.

I also feared speaking in public. I could not approach leaders like the chief or attend meetings such as chief barazas, church gatherings, or public participation forums. I did not see myself as someone who could contribute to decision-making. But things changed when I joined Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN). I learned a lot, and now I know how to prepare a kitchen garden to improve food security and earn an income. I have also learned to make and use jiko ya kisasa, which helps save fuel and protect the environment. During drought, I can now use water for irrigation to keep my farm productive.

I now understand my rights as a woman and actively participate in climate action and governance. I have also learned how to manage small businesses better through financial literacy training.

Today, I no longer burn farm waste. Instead, I use it to prepare organic manure for better farming. I also practice tree planting, and in 2023 alone, I planted 250 trees to help restore the environment.

I am grateful to SIMUN for bringing this knowledge to us. They have changed my life, and I hope they continue to support us.

To my fellow women, let's take good care of our environment. Climate action starts with us. Let's use indigenous knowledge, like organic manure preparation, to protect our land and secure our future.



Anna Adhiambo Abira
-Pendeza Maendeleo Women Group





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In our group we did not know much about climate action or what steps to take to protect our environment. Clean water was also a big challenge—we struggled to access safe water for domestic use. We lacked knowledge on resolving conflicts and reporting issues that could lead to disputes. As women, we did not understand the right channels to seek justice, especially when it came to climate-related matters.

But after joining Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN), I have learned a lot. I now understand the importance of planting trees during the rainy season, and I have successfully grown 300 tree seedlings. I have also learned how to prepare farmyard manure, which has improved my farming.

Today, I am taking real action. I dig terraces to control soil erosion and have also created water harvesting sites to collect rainwater for irrigation. I plant sweet potatoes, which act as a cover crop to protect the soil and improve food security.

I am grateful to SIMUN for creating awareness in our community. Their support has changed our lives. I encourage them to continue training us on how to take action to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Caren Achieng Owili
-Pendeza Maendeleo Women Group





Since the launch of the Strengthening Women's Voices in Climate Action and Governance project by Siaya Muungano Network, we have worked closely. SIMUN has played a key role in the Siaya County Water and Sanitation Hygiene Resource Management Forum, where they actively contribute under the Water Resource Management and Environment Thematic Working Group. Their commitment to amplifying the voices of women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in governance has been remarkable.

SIMUN has not only brought attention to climate change challenges but has also influenced governance structures. Their push for inclusion and transparency has helped ensure that women and marginalized groups are recognized in decision-making spaces. A testament to this impact is the leadership occupation witnessed in Siaya County—today, the Chief Executive Member for Environment, Water, Climate Change, and Natural Resources is a woman.

Beyond governance, SIMUN has actively participated in events such as World Environment Day 2024, World Water Day, and World Wetlands Day. Their involvement in these platforms has connected Siaya County to both national and international climate change discussions, ensuring that local voices are heard at a higher level.

The impact of Muungano's work is evident, but the journey is far from over. There is still a need for continuous advocacy and stronger partnerships. We look forward to seeing Muungano deepen its efforts and expand its reach, ensuring that climate action and governance in Siaya remain inclusive and effective.



Jacob Achola

-Governance and urban water specialist- Western Kenya Project





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Mr. Gabriel Oduong'

- Director, Environment, Climate Change, and Natural Resources (County Government of Siaya)

Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN) has proven to be a strong, transparent, and inclusive partner in climate action. Their commitment to fostering collaboration is commendable, as they actively engage stakeholders, including government offices, in meaningful discussions and activities. We appreciate their approach of consistently reaching out to us, seeking information, and ensuring inclusivity in decision-making processes.

Recently, we participated in the consultation exercise for the National Gender and Climate Change Action Plan, facilitated by SIMUN. Their dedication and expertise in coordinating such engagements were evident, further demonstrating their strength as a key player in climate governance.

Initially, my understanding of SIMUN was limited to a few individuals. However, through our continued interactions, I have come to appreciate the magnitude and reach of their work. They are engaging multiple sectors and communities across the county, filling critical gaps that the government, due to resource constraints, cannot always address effectively.

Climate change is becoming a major thematic area in service delivery, and the role of organizations like SIMUN under the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) program is invaluable. They complement county government efforts by amplifying climate issues, mobilizing communities, and driving awareness that we might not always have the logistical capacity to reach. We recently completed our 2024 Climate Change Report, in which SIMUN's contributions were highlighted significantly.

Moving forward, I strongly recommend that we strengthen our collaboration with SIMUN and similar organizations to enhance climate action at all levels. Their engagement with grassroots groups, access to critical information, and ability to mobilize communities are assets that should be leveraged for more effective climate governance in Siaya County.



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