

QUARTER 1 NEWSLETTER

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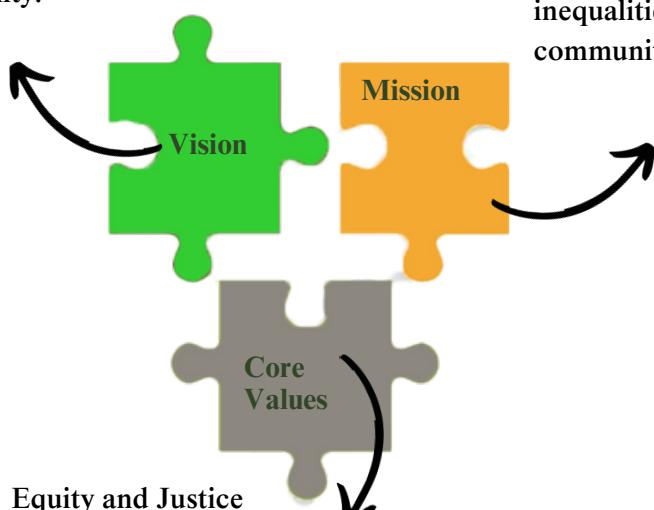
INSIDE OUR FIRST QUARTER 2025

About Us

SIMUN embodies the spirit of positive change and stands as a beacon of hope and empowerment for adolescent girls, women and youth by advancing their rights and becoming a driving force for positive change. SIMUN adopts a holistic approach in its work by addressing the systemic issues that perpetuate inequality, transforming social norms and championing initiatives that break down the barriers to adolescent girls, women and youth inclusion and participation fostering a world where they can thrive.

A society where young women and youth live in dignity to enjoy equal rights and influence decisions on the change they desire in their lives and community.

To amplify women and youth voices to promote social justice and challenge inequalities in our community.



- Equity and Justice
- Transparency and accountability
- Diversity and inclusion
- Professionalism
- Team work
- Innovativeness

TABLE OF CONTENT

Celebrating the RMNCAH Act Launch

Driving Gender-Responsive Climate Solutions

ICRW Visit: Strengthening Support for Young Mothers

World Wetlands Day: Restoring Yala Wetlands

Participating in budget making process

Siaya Girls Voices and Visions Assembly: North Alego Chapter

Nurturing Skillful Parenting

Male involvement in Skillful Parenting

Leading Accountability in Water Projects Across Siaya

Villanova University and Start with One Kenya in Siaya

Building Entrepreneurial Skills at Siaya Institute of Technology

Reimagining Support for WROs

International Women's Day Celebration

Establishment of food forest at Umala VTC

Spreading Love and Hope with Hekima Widows Group in North Alego

1

Contributing to the RMNCAH Act and its Launch



In January 2025, Siaya County launched the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Act 2024, which includes a fund to improve healthcare access in the region. We were proud to participate in this milestone, working alongside other stakeholders to ensure the RMNCAH Act becomes a reality. During the launch, we were honoured to receive a Certificate of Appreciation for our contribution towards this success. This is a testament to our ongoing commitment to enhancing health outcomes for mothers, newborns, children, and youth in Siaya.

2

Driving Gender-Responsive Climate Solutions



In the month of January 2025, we participated in the Nyanza Cluster workshop in Kisumu, alongside other stakeholders. This was a consultative process aimed at developing the National Climate Change Action Plan. It was a great opportunity for us to contribute to discussions on gender-responsive climate solutions. As part of the ongoing conversations, we believe it is important to prioritize solutions that consider both gender equality and the impacts of climate change. This includes ensuring that women and vulnerable groups have access to resources and opportunities to adapt to climate related challenges and that their voices are heard in decision-making processes.

3

ICRW Visit: Strengthening Support for Young Mothers



We hosted a team from the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), our learning partners in the Adolescent Girl Power Program (AGPP), supported by the Children's Rights and Violence Prevention Fund(CRVPF). During the visit, we showcased our safe spaces and facilitated meetings between the visitors, young mothers, parents, and Community Health Promoters (CHPs). The discussions strengthened our shared commitment to improving the well-being of young mothers and their families.

4

World Wetlands Day: Restoring Yala Wetlands



Together with the County Government of Siaya, Kanyaboli Site Support Group, and other partners, we marked World Wetlands Day under the theme “Protecting Yala Wetlands for Our Common Future.” As part of the celebration, we planted trees along Kombo Beach, Kaugagi Misori as a step towards restoring and protecting the Yala Wetlands.

5

Participating the Budget-Making Process in Siaya County



We participated in the ward-level public participation forums for the Siaya County Fiscal Strategy Paper (CFSP) 2025–2026. Our focus was on mobilizing and encouraging the inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, and pushing for their priorities to be considered in the county planning and budgeting process. This participation also served as a follow-up mechanism to track whether the issues we submitted earlier in our memorandum on the Annual Development Plan (ADP) were factored into the budgeting process.

7

Siaya Girls Voices and Visions Assembly: North Alego Chapter



The assembly highlighted parents' key responsibilities, including using direct language, serving as role models, creating open discussion environments, and teaching personal boundaries. They also uncovered significant barriers to parental SRHR communication, including cultural taboos, parental discomfort, knowledge gaps, and intergenerational communication challenges. By identifying these challenges, the assembly suggested strategies for parents to overcome communication barriers, such as introducing age-appropriate information progressively and providing practical guidance on pregnancy management and personal safety.

6

Nurturing Skillful Parenting



Parenting is a balancing act. During our Skillful Parenting session with parents, guardians, and caregivers of young mothers, we explored different types of power in parenting: Power Over, Power Within, Power With, and Knowledge Power. The session was an eye-opener and a platform to equip caregivers with practical knowledge, tools, and strategies to effectively guide and support their daughters who are teenage mothers.

The dialogue aimed at strengthening communication and rebuilding close connections between young mothers and their families. It also built mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence at both household and community level, helping parents appreciate their important role in creating a supportive environment for their daughters to thrive.

8

Citizen-led accountability for improved water service delivery in Siaya.



Citizen-led oversight plays a key role in improving service delivery and promoting sustainable development. In partnership with Uraia Trust under the RITAI project, we carried out a public expenditure survey in seven wards (West Uyoma, West Ugenya, North Sakwa, West Alego, North Gem, North Alego, and Sidindi) across Siaya County. The forums brought various stakeholders together to review and validate a report on the status of water projects in their areas. This approach strengthened citizen-led accountability and opened up space for communities to recommend better and more effective services.



Male involvement in parenting is no longer just a conversation, it's a commitment to action. We held a Skillful Parenting session with male caregivers in our community to reflect on what it means to be a supportive and engaged father or guardian. The session focused on building knowledge, tools, and strategies that help fathers and other male caregivers effectively guide and support their daughters who are young mothers.

We explored the power of intentional parenting; how good communication, presence, and shared responsibility can strengthen family bonds and promote healthier relationships at home. Beyond learning, the space encouraged men to openly share experiences, challenge harmful norms, and grow in their roles as fathers, husbands, boyfriends, and community caregivers.

This engagement also aimed at deepening the connection between young mothers and the male figures in their lives, creating room for mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, and a more supportive environment for young mothers at both household and community levels.

10 Reimagining Support for WROs



We joined the French Embassy in Kenya and CREA Kenya, as they shared their lessons on funding tarmac wros and other Women's Rights Organizations for a roundtable session in Nairobi, marking the build-up to the 2025 International Women's Day celebrations. A key takeaway from the session was the need to reimagine support for Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), enabling them to accelerate their efforts in achieving gender equality. This collaborative discussion is a step towards empowering organisations and driving meaningful change in the journey towards a more equitable society.



In a training that saw 46 students at Siaya Institute of Technology (now Siaya National Polytechnic) confidently present their business ideas, we partnered with Villanova University to equip them with the skills needed to turn their knowledge into business opportunities. The workshop covered idea generation, business development, and pitching, leaving students inspired and ready to explore entrepreneurial ventures.



Every woman and girl deserves to live in a world where her rights are upheld, her voice is heard, and her potential is fully realized. In partnership with the Intergovernmental Gender Sector Working Group, we joined other stakeholders in Siaya County to commemorate International Women's Day under the theme "Accelerate Action."

As we celebrated the achievements and resilience of women and girls, we also reflected on the work ahead. Under the call "For All Women and Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment," we reaffirm our commitment to promoting a just, inclusive, and gender-equal society, where no one is left behind.

13

Establishment of food forest at Umala VTC



In pursuit of food security, improved nutrition, and the realization of SDG 2: Zero Hunger, we partnered with We One Action Network to establish a food forest at Umala VTC. This initiative is not only a step towards enhancing access to nutritious food but also aims to support student retention by contributing to a sustainable school feeding program.

Beyond meeting dietary needs, the food forest will also serve as an income-generating activity (IGA) for the school; offering practical learning opportunities and boosting the institution's self-reliance.

14

Establishing Community Child Play and daycare space for Children



In partnership with We One Action Network and the Children's Rights and Violence Prevention Fund (CRVPF), we supported the establishment of a childcare and daycare space at Umala VTC. This safe and child-friendly space allows children to play and learn while their parents, especially young mothers, focus on acquiring skills. It's a step towards promoting inclusive learning environments and supporting parenting in training institutions.

15

International Forest Day Celebration



We joined the Department of Water, Sanitation, Environment, Climate Change & Natural Resources, together with local citizens and stakeholders, at River Ogun in Asembo Kokise to mark the International Day of Forests and Water. As part of efforts to rehabilitate River Ogun, we planted trees along the riverbanks and distributed 1,500 tree seedlings to community members to plant in their homes—creating environmental stewardship and restoration at both household and community levels.

16

Spreading Love and Hope to Hekima Widows Group in North Alego



Generosity is a true expression of love and humanity. In partnership with Gifted Hearts Kenya, we visited the Hekima Widows Group in North Alego Ward, one of our right-holder groups. During the visit, we listened to their stories, shared a meal, and spent time together. We thank Gifted Hearts Kenya for blessing the widows with gift packs. Their support helps uplift and empower these women, showing them they are valued and not alone in their journey.



In March this year, 60 community members from Ulafu and Umala sub-locations in North Alego Ward benefited from our water filter distribution initiative; a step towards preventing waterborne diseases like cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. This effort was made possible through our partnership with Villanova University, Uzima Water Filters, and Start With One Kenya.

In the same partnership, we improved access to clean water at Nina Special School for the Deaf in Siaya County by installing a solar-powered pump and a 15,000-litre water tank. The water is now piped to various areas within the school, ensuring that students and staff have consistent access to safe water for drinking, sanitation, and learning. This is a real game changer for the pupils, creating a more conducive environment for education and well-being.





We participated in the 7th Edition of the Peoples Dialogue Festival. A yearly event hosted by Centre for Multiparty Democracy. Through this event, we exhibited our work and shared the best practices in our project implementation areas. Additionally we participated in the different discussions centered on advancing collaboration among partners and the importance of more inclusive spaces for citizens to actively engage in shaping democratic futures.

19 Continued our School engagements



In this quarter, we continued our school engagements with students at Karapul Mixed Secondary School and pupils at Siaya Central Comprehensive School. These sessions focused on helping young people make safe, healthy, and informed choices.

At Karapul, we talked to students about how to stay safe from gender based violence, avoid teenage pregnancy, and protect the environment. The students are now more confident and know where to seek help when faced with challenges.

At Siaya Central, we held separate talks with boys and girls. The boys explored growth and development and how to build respectful relationships. The girls learned about self awareness and how to build self esteem.



As part of our ongoing civic education efforts to amplify grassroots women's voices in climate action, we engaged women groups in North Gem on the realities of climate change and their role in shaping solutions.

While many of them have directly felt the impact of climate change, they shared that they've rarely—if ever—been invited to forums where decisions or discussions on climate solutions happen. Encouragingly, the women expressed a clear understanding of the urgency for action and highlighted agroecology as a viable and sustainable pathway for both mitigation and adaptation.

21 Nurturing Care for Young Mothers and Their Children



During this reporting period, two nurturing care sessions were conducted at Umala and Ouru safe spaces bringing together a total of 87 young mothers from the four safe spaces in the project implementation areas. The sessions targeted the young mothers with packaged information on how to provide their children with the nurturing care they need, enabling their children to thrive. The sessions were facilitated by a certified trainer who is the focal person for nurturing care for Early Childhood Development and school feeding programme in Siaya County, using the nurturing care practice guide. All the nurturing care components including good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, opportunities for early learning, and responsive caregiving, were explored into details allowing the young mothers to clearly understand the different components.



We continuously engaged the young mothers in the safe spaces on various key issues, encouraging open discussions about social issues occurring in the community and affecting the young mothers. The sessions were held weekly in all the four spaces namely Umala, Karembo, Stawisha and Ouru, and focused on building the confidence and leadership skills of the young mothers to stand up for their rights and address pressing challenges in their lives and communities. Through the conversations, the young mothers were encouraged to actively participate in shaping their narratives, which will lead to a greater sense of agency and self-worth. A total of 87 young mothers were able to consistently attend the sessions including the school going ones since the sessions take place over the weekend.



On March 31, 2025, we hosted a GBV Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting for South East Alego Ward attended by key stakeholders including government departments, health workers, religious leaders, community health promoters, teachers, youth, and women representatives.

The aim was to kick-start the Ward GBV TWG and identify a committed team to lead its work. During this meeting participants highlighted major GBV challenges such as harmful cultural practices, delayed justice, underreporting, and lack of awareness. They also proposed practical solutions like community sensitization, school programs, safe spaces for youth, and stronger coordination among actors.

Key concerns raised included bribery in healthcare reporting, misuse of night vigils and disco matangas, inadequate SRHR education in schools, and the role of illicit brews in fueling GBV. The meeting emphasized the need for grassroots action and strong partnerships to make South East Alego a model ward for GBV prevention and response.

We continued supporting women and youth groups in Siaya County to access climate action funding through the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) Next Level Grant Facility (NLGF).

We are proud to have supported New Ombwede Youth Group from Ugunja Ward, Ugunja Sub-County, who successfully secured Ksh. 250,000 to implement an apiculture (bee-keeping) farming project under the 2025 grant cycle.

Other Highlights

1

Training on Digital Governance Framework, Safety & Emerging Trends



2

Food sovereignty Workshop



We participated in a training on digital governance frameworks, safety, and emerging trends organized by Mzalendo Africa Trust. The event brought together human rights activists, journalists, and civil society organizations. Key topics covered during the training included understanding the digital landscape, legal frameworks for digital governance, digital safety and security, as well as emerging trends in digital governance and advocacy. The training was relevant to our advocacy work, especially with the increasing censorship and attacks on civil society organizations and human rights defenders, alongside the shrinking civic space. The knowledge gained will be utilized in sensitizing the community on how to ensure online safety and security. We also aim to incorporate the digital security component in our Digital Dada Mashinani initiatives for AGYWs.

Additionally, we intend to utilize the knowledge gained in identifying and exploring strategies for addressing challenges that we face in our advocacy work and continue promoting digital inclusion and human rights online. Siaya Muungano Network will continue to promote access to information for communities while advocating for the digitalization of county public service and engaging in collaborative efforts with the County government to strengthen data protection frameworks.

We participated in a food sovereignty workshop organized by our partners Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA) in Nairobi. The space dubbed “Land, Seeds, Water, and Power: Repoliticizing Africa’s Food Sovereignty Struggles,” provided a platform for sharing compelling stories and building synergies around strategies and existing opportunities for deepening social movements and community organizing to transform deeply gendered and unequal food systems. Our work with women and girls also addresses the intersection of gender, SRHR and climate change and we recognize that women and girls bear the brunt of climate change and therefore our participation in this space was crucial as it offered an opportunity to explore strategies for ensuring food for communities especially women and girls through sustainable practices.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS OVER THE PERIOD



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[VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY](#)



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