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Affirmative Action on Gender Equality Network (AGEN)

Building Resilient Communities: AGEN's Journey in Empowerment and Advocacy (Jan 2025 – Jul 2026)

Prepared

Prof. Rasel M. Madaha (PhD)

Executive Director

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1. Introduction

The Affirmative Action on Gender Equality Network (AGEN), registered under NGO number 00NGO/00004708, has steadily grown into one of Tanzania's most influential grassroots organizations. Since its establishment in 2011, AGEN has pioneered the Grassroots Empowerment Model (GEM), which integrates gender equality, agroecology, food security, and civic engagement. The organization's vision is to empower marginalized communities by combining volunteerism, professional mentorship, and community-driven development.

AGEN's work is deeply rooted in collaboration with academic institutions, particularly the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). Students from SUA have consistently participated in AGEN's interventions, gaining hands-on experience in community mobilization, project management, and civic engagement. This partnership has created a unique synergy where academic knowledge is translated into practical solutions for rural and urban communities.



Between January 2025 and July 2026, AGEN consolidated its financial transparency, scaled GEM activities, and expanded partnerships with national and international networks. The organization's role in promoting Tanzania Men's Day and contributing to the Tanzanian Men's Development Report 2026 demonstrates its ability to influence national dialogue on gender and masculinity. Furthermore, the establishment of the Iguguno Community Seed Bank in Singida highlights AGEN's commitment to agroecology and biodiversity conservation.



AGEN's philosophy is anchored in volunteerism and patriotism. Volunteers donate their time, expertise, and resources to

implement innovative interventions. This spirit of service not only benefits communities but also enhances the employability and civic responsibility of the volunteers themselves. As Tanzania moves toward Vision 2050, AGEN's integrated approach—combining grassroots empowerment, agroecology, and human rights advocacy—positions it as a key actor in shaping inclusive and sustainable development.

2. Financial Overview

The audited financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2025 confirmed that AGEN maintained financial integrity and transparency. Independent auditors verified that the accounts were prepared in accordance with international standards, presenting a true and fair view of the organization's operations.

Total incoming resources amounted to 112,277,000 Tanzanian shillings, balanced by equivalent expenditures. This reflects AGEN's prudent financial management and commitment to accountability. A significant portion of resources came in the form of in-kind contributions, including volunteer hours, membership fees, training, and mentorship. These contributions were carefully valued and recorded, underscoring the organization's reliance on collective effort and grassroots solidarity.

AGEN managed revolving funds totaling 90,527,000 Tanzanian shillings, held on behalf of NIGE and SEPRO community-based organizations. These funds remain the property of the

communities, with AGEN serving as facilitator and auditor. This arrangement highlights AGEN's role in promoting transparency and community ownership of resources. Interest earned on these funds was reinvested into the capital, ensuring sustainability and growth for grassroots entrepreneurs.

The financial model emphasizes community-driven development rather than reliance on external grants. By mobilizing local resources and valuing volunteer contributions, AGEN demonstrates that sustainable development can be achieved through collective responsibility. This approach also reduces dependency on donor funding, making the organization more resilient to external shocks.

Looking ahead, AGEN plans to strengthen financial sustainability by diversifying income streams, expanding consultancy services, and enhancing fundraising capacity. The organization will continue to prioritize transparency, accountability, and community ownership, ensuring that financial resources are effectively utilized to empower marginalized communities.

3. Programmatic Achievements

The Grassroots Empowerment Model (GEM) continued to expand its reach and impact during 2025. In Iringa, NIGE increased its business capital from four million to seven million Tanzanian shillings through the sale of sunflower and rice. AGEN advised NIGE to lower product prices through wholesale purchases and to invest in a sunflower oil extraction machine, which would enhance productivity and profitability. The revolving fund of NIGE stands at Tanzanian shillings 84,000,000. This is an outstanding achievement from a seed capital of Tanzanian shillings 7 millions only in 2011.



In Morogoro, SEPRO strengthened its financial management by collaborating with Mkombozi Bank to operate a fee-free community bank account. This arrangement has ensured the security of members' funds and improved record-keeping practices. SEPRO's success demonstrates the

potential of community-based financial institutions to promote economic empowerment and resilience. The revolving fund of SEPRO has grown from zero to approximately Tanzanian shillings 15 million.

Community support activities included contributions amounting to 1.65 million Tanzanian shillings directed to administrative wards surrounding the Sokoine University of Agriculture, such as Magadu, Kilimani, and Mafiga. AGEN also mobilized 10 million Tanzanian shillings to commemorate Tanzania Men's Day on April 23, 2025 and April 23 2026. This annual event highlights the positive contributions of men to family stability and national development, fostering dialogue on gender equality and shared responsibilities within households and communities.

In January 2026, AGEN established the Iguguno Community Seed Bank (CSB) in Singida. This farmer-led institution conserves indigenous seeds, strengthens food security, and promotes climate-resilient agriculture. Managed by a local Seed Committee, the CSB trains farmers through demonstration plots and promotes seed quality standards. This initiative reaffirms AGEN's commitment to biodiversity conservation and agroecological practices, ensuring that rural communities maintain control over their biological resources.

These programmatic achievements demonstrate AGEN's ability to integrate economic empowerment, agroecology, and gender equality into a cohesive model of grassroots development. By combining financial management, community support, and environmental sustainability, AGEN continues to build resilient communities across Tanzania.

4. Strategic Partnerships

AGEN strengthened its institutional partnerships during 2025 and early 2026. Membership in PELUM Tanzania expanded its network of agroecology-focused NGOs, enabling collaboration on sustainable agriculture initiatives. This partnership has provided AGEN with access to technical expertise, training opportunities, and advocacy platforms, enhancing its capacity to promote agroecological practices.

In March 2024, AGEN signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Community Development Association (CDA) to implement the *Uzalendo Nguzo ya Maendeleo ya Jamii (UNMJ)* project. This initiative promotes volunteerism and patriotism among university students and alumni, encouraging them to serve marginalized communities across Tanzania. The project has created a platform for students to engage in community development, gain practical experience, and cultivate a sense of national responsibility.

A major milestone was achieved in December 2025 when AGEN was admitted as a member of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC). This membership strengthens AGEN's advocacy for civic freedoms, gender equality, and social justice, while providing a platform for collaboration with over 200 organizations dedicated to protecting human rights defenders. By joining THRDC, AGEN has positioned itself within a broader coalition that amplifies its voice and influence in national and international dialogues on human rights.

AGEN's partnerships demonstrate its commitment to collaboration and collective action. By working with NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies, and international networks, AGEN leverages diverse resources and expertise to advance its mission. These partnerships not

only enhance AGEN's capacity but also ensure that its interventions are aligned with national policies and global development frameworks.

5. Student Engagement and Volunteerism

Students from the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) continued to play a vital role in AGEN's interventions. They participated in GEM loan distribution, auditing, and monitoring activities, gaining practical experience in financial management and community mobilization. Students also played key roles in organizing Tanzania Men's Day commemorations, serving as facilitators and ushers during the event.

In 2026, over 20 undergraduate students and 29 MSc Agricultural Extension cohorts contributed to the success of Men's Day events in Morogoro. Their involvement in voter education, election observation, and community outreach reinforced AGEN's mission of cultivating patriotism and professional competence among youth. These experiences provided students with practical skills in community mobilization, advocacy, and project management, while instilling a sense of responsibility toward national development.

AGEN highlights the transformative role of SUA students in community development. Students engaged in field assignments, proposal writing, training manual development, and grassroots counselling. These activities not only strengthened AGEN's interventions but also enhanced students' employability and civic responsibility. The UNMJ project further reinforced this by cultivating a spirit of national service among graduates and ongoing students.

By integrating student engagement into its programs, AGEN ensures that future leaders are equipped with the skills, values, and experiences necessary to drive sustainable development. This approach creates a pipeline of young professionals who are committed to serving their communities and contributing to national progress.

6. Human Rights and Civic Engagement

AGEN has consistently framed gender equality not only as a developmental goal but as a fundamental human right. This perspective has guided its interventions across Tanzania, ensuring that empowerment initiatives are grounded in justice, dignity, and inclusivity. Through platforms such as *Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ*, AGEN has created spaces for open dialogue on national issues, civic participation, and freedom of expression. These platforms allow citizens, scholars, and grassroots leaders to engage in transparent discussions about policies and social welfare, ensuring that marginalized voices are amplified in the public sphere.

Tangazo Tangazo!

Tunatarajia kuwa na washiriki zaidi ya **500** (Mia Tano) kutoka sehemu **Mbalimbali** za Tanzania Bara na visiwani. Tafadhali tunza nafasi yako kwa kujiunga kwenye group la watao hudhuria **Siku ya Mwanaume wa Kitanzania** sasa hivi, bila kupoteza muda ili utunze nafasi yako.

Gharama ya ushiriki ni BURE KABISA, Karibu Sana!

Mji: **MOROGORO MJINI** (Mji Kasoro Bahari) **Sehemu: Soko la Chifu Kingalu Ukumbi wa KINGO**

Jiunge sasa ➡ https://chat.whatsapp.com/B5bv3xzUd8DGHTR0oGGBhe?mode=gl_t

Kupata Taarifa zaidi kuhusu tukio bofya hapa ➡ <https://www.agentz.org/>

Kama unhaitaji muda maalumu wa kuzungumza au kutoa Mada, tafadhali bofya kiunganishi kifuatacho ➡ <https://forms.gle/XABpBZyKtBggbta6>

organization mobilized 21 electoral observers and 34 voter educators, who dedicated significant time to educating citizens and monitoring electoral roll updates across multiple regions, including Morogoro, Mwanza, Dodoma, and Dar es Salaam. Building on this initiative, AGEN further recruited 47 election observers for the national elections held on 25 October 2025. These observers were trained to promote transparency and accountability during the electoral process, reflecting AGEN's commitment to democratic participation.

The organization's membership in the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), achieved in December 2025, marked a significant milestone. This affiliation situates AGEN within a national network of over 200 organizations dedicated to protecting defenders of human rights. Membership provides AGEN with access to rapid response mechanisms, training opportunities, and advocacy platforms, enhancing its capacity to safeguard freedoms of expression, association, and participation. It also strengthens AGEN's legitimacy in national and international dialogues, aligning grassroots empowerment with broader frameworks of social justice and legal protection.

AGEN's civic engagement has also extended meaningfully into electoral processes. In 2025, the

However, in order to ensure the safety and security of its observers, AGEN refrained from publishing a formal report of their findings. This decision was taken after careful consideration of the risks faced by grassroots defenders in politically sensitive environments. While the absence of a published report limited the dissemination of detailed observations, the very act of participation demonstrated AGEN's unwavering dedication to strengthening democratic institutions and safeguarding civic freedoms.

The initiative also highlighted the organization's ability to mobilize diverse stakeholders, including students from the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), who contributed to voter education campaigns and civic awareness programs. Their involvement reinforced the principle that democracy thrives when young people are actively engaged in shaping the future of their nation.

By integrating human rights advocacy into its grassroots interventions, AGEN ensures that empowerment is holistic, addressing not only economic and social needs but also civic freedoms. This approach positions AGEN as a defender of dignity and justice, reinforcing its role as a pillar of inclusive national development. The electoral engagement of 2025 stands as a testament to AGEN's broader mission: to empower communities, protect rights, and nurture democratic participation as essential foundations for Tanzania's long-term stability and prosperity.

7. Tanzanian Men's Development Report 2026

The Tanzanian Men's Development Report 2026, published in TAJOCODE Vol. 5:2, inaugurated the Utu Era, reframing masculinity around dignity, partnership, and national development. This landmark report, to which AGEN contributed, represents a departure from entrenched dominance scripts that valorized authority and emotional suppression. Instead, it positions men as Guardians of Dignity, Builders of Strong Families, and Lights of National Development.



KIUNGO UPDATES

**"WANAUME RIPOTINI UKATILI MNAOFANYIWA
"MW/KT SHIRIKISHO LA WANAUME WANAOPITIA
CHANGAMOTO**

 [kiungo_onlinetv](https://www.kiungo-onlinetv.com)

The report identified a Core Paradox: institutions such as *Jando* and youth boot camps have historically cultivated resilience and moral character, yet they have also perpetuated rigid hierarchies and emotional silencing. This paradox has culminated in a masculinity crisis, evidenced by rising male victimization and health vulnerabilities.

Participatory Action
Research (PAR)

involving 58 respondents revealed thematic saturation across family, economic, health, and leadership domains.

Key findings included a transition from the sole provider model toward partnership empowerment, though an empowerment gap persists due to exclusion from gender-specific financial policies. Economically, the report called for gender-inclusive financial policy and ICT training to integrate men, particularly in informal and waste-management sectors, into formal GDP contributions. Environmentally, men are leading waste-to-wealth entrepreneurship under the philosophy *Taka ni Rasilimali* (Waste is a Resource), creating thousands of jobs in biogas, organic fertilizers, and plastic recycling.

Health emerged as the Achilles' heel of male development, necessitating a Low-Stigma Integration Model for Men's Clinics and institutionalized Positive Anger Management. Socialization reforms were framed through a Minimum Competency Framework embedding emotional literacy, gender equality, and Ubuntu-based fatherhood.

The Men's Day commemorations in April 2026, supported by AGEN, SUA students, THRDC, and other partners, provided a platform for debate and policy dialogue. The report's recommendations align with Tanzania's Vision 2050, transforming men from isolated figures of dominance into collaborative architects of national growth.

9. Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ

AGEN's civic engagement has been significantly strengthened through the establishment of Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ (Forum for Free Debates in Tanzania) by the students at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). The students later on requested that the platform be hosted by AGEN to enable gain experience from real life situations. This digital platform was created to provide a safe, constructive, and intellectually rigorous space for Tanzanian citizens—particularly university graduates and grassroots leaders—to engage in open dialogue on national issues. Unlike conventional forums that often reproduce hierarchical or partisan narratives, Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ emphasizes inclusivity, respect, and evidence-based debate.

The platform has become a cornerstone of the organization's mission to defend human rights and promote civic participation. AGEN has consistently emphasized that freedom of expression is not only a constitutional right but also a vital tool for national development. Organization's vision for Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ is rooted in the belief that dialogue and debate are essential for building a democratic culture that values dignity, justice, and accountability.

On December 2, 2025, Prof. Madaha was briefly detained by police following his outspoken role in facilitating civic debates through Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ. The detention sparked widespread public outcry, with citizens, students, and civil society organizations rallying in support of his release. The incident underscored both the risks faced by human rights defenders and the importance of protecting spaces for free expression. Thanks to the swift intervention of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), Prof. Madaha was released. This episode became a powerful reminder of the coalition's role in safeguarding defenders of civic freedoms and reinforced the legitimacy of AGEN's work.

AGEN expresses deep appreciation to THRDC for its unwavering support during this period. Their advocacy and rapid response mechanisms ensured that the detention did not silence the platform or intimidate its participants. Instead, the incident strengthened public trust in Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ and highlighted the need for continued vigilance in protecting civic spaces.

Since then, the platform has hosted debates on gender equality, electoral reforms, environmental sustainability, and the evolving role of men in Tanzanian society. During the countdown to Tanzania Men's Day 2026, Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ provided a vibrant space for men and women to share perspectives on the Utu Era, as articulated in the Tanzanian Men's Development Report 2026. Discussions explored the paradox of traditional institutions such as *Jando*, which simultaneously build resilience and perpetuate emotional suppression, and proposed strategies for institutional realignment and Ubuntu-based fatherhood.

Looking forward, AGEN plans to expand Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ into a national hub for civic dialogue, policy innovation, and youth leadership. With continued support from THRDC and other partners, the platform will integrate multimedia tools, broaden university collaborations, and link debates to policy briefs that inform government decision-making. In this way, Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ will continue to embody AGEN's vision of a democratic Tanzania where dialogue, dignity, and justice guide national progress.

8. Conclusion

From January 2025 to July 2026, the Affirmative Action on Gender Equality Network (AGEN) has demonstrated resilience, innovation, and integrity in advancing its mission of grassroots empowerment. The organization's audited financial statements confirmed transparency and accountability, with revolving funds managed responsibly on behalf of community-based organizations such as NIGE and SEPRO. These achievements underscore AGEN's ability to sustain development through collective responsibility, in-kind contributions, and prudent financial management rather than reliance on external grants alone.

Programmatically, AGEN has continued to scale the Grassroots Empowerment Model (GEM), enabling entrepreneurs in Iringa and Morogoro to expand their businesses and strengthen financial security. The establishment of the Iguguno Community Seed Bank in Singida further illustrates AGEN's commitment to agroecology and biodiversity conservation, ensuring that rural communities maintain control over indigenous seeds and climate-resilient farming practices. These initiatives highlight AGEN's holistic approach to development, integrating economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and gender equality.

Strategic partnerships have broadened AGEN's reach and influence. Membership in PELUM Tanzania has expanded agroecology networks, while affiliation with the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) has strengthened AGEN's role in defending civic freedoms and protecting grassroots defenders. The UNMJ project, launched in collaboration with CDA, has cultivated volunteerism and patriotism among students and alumni, reinforcing the organization's commitment to nurturing future leaders.

Student engagement has remained central to AGEN's interventions. Cohorts from the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) have actively participated in loan distribution, voter education, election observation, and Men's Day commemorations. Their involvement has not only enhanced AGEN's programs but also equipped them with practical skills, civic responsibility, and employability, creating a pipeline of young professionals dedicated to national service.

AGEN's civic engagement has extended into electoral processes and public dialogue. Through platforms such as Jukwaa la Mijadala Huru TZ, the organization has created safe spaces for open debate on national issues. The detention of Prof. Rasel Madaha on December 2, 2025, and his subsequent release following public outcry and THRDC's intervention, underscored both the risks faced by defenders and the importance of protecting civic freedoms. This episode reinforced AGEN's legitimacy and highlighted the coalition's vital role in safeguarding democratic spaces.

Finally, AGEN's contribution to the Tanzanian Men's Development Report 2026 marked a significant step in reframing masculinity through the philosophy of Utu. By promoting partnership empowerment, waste-to-wealth entrepreneurship, integrated men's clinics, and Ubuntu-based fatherhood, the report aligns with Tanzania's Vision 2050 and positions men as collaborative architects of national growth.

Taken together, these achievements reflect AGEN's integrated approach—combining grassroots empowerment, agroecology, student volunteerism, and human rights advocacy. As Tanzania advances toward Vision 2050, AGEN remains steadfast in its commitment to scaling GEM, strengthening community resilience, and empowering marginalized voices. By defending dignity, promoting justice, and fostering collaboration, AGEN continues to stand as a safe space for defenders, a united voice for communities, and a pillar for a better tomorrow.