AIMS For a better birth...

Reclaiming Birth Sovereignty: Through Us, the World is Born

AIMS Journal, 2026, Vol 38, No 2

This wonderful article is reprinted with the kind permission of Kai Njeri and Myrthe Glasbergen fromBeyond Psychology. We have promised to share the article with our AIMS readers in its entirety, which includes the American spelling of some words.



By Kai Njeri

Birth sovereignty is the remembering that birth belongs first to the body, to the womb, and to the mysterious intelligence of life itself. It is not a privilege to be granted or revoked by systems, but an ancient birthright carried in our bones. In reclaiming it we are not inventing something new, we are restoring what has always been ours.

To reclaim birth's sovereignty is to listen again to the whispers of the womb, to the stories our ancestors carried, to the songs the earth hums when life emerges. It is to refuse to be separated from ourselves, from the earth, from one another by fear, control, or convenience.

It is also to name what has been taken: the centuries of extraction that have turned sacred rites into procedures, wombs into sites of intervention, and mothers into subjects of surveillance. Yet even here, amidst the fragmentation, the body remembers. The earth remembers. The lineages remember.

Birth Sovereignty Heals Generations of Silenced Pain

To reclaim birth's sovereignty is not only a return to our innate wisdom, it is a collective act of healing. When women remember their power to birth in trust and truth, they begin to heal generations of

silenced pain; the mother wound that echoes through our lineages, shaping how we love, nurture, and raise the next generation.

Birth sovereignty is what interrupts inherited trauma. It is what restores tenderness to power and remembrance to motherhood. When a woman feels sovereign in her body, the world that grows through her changes shape. It is this reclamation, this remembering, that becomes the seedbed for a gentler humanity.

So, what does this return home look like?

1. Listen to the Womb's Patterns

The womb is a wise historian. She records every cycle, every pulse of expansion and contraction. She is a keeper of rhythm, waxing and waning like the moon, mirroring the tides, the breathing of trees and the nectarly journeying of bees. Her patterns speak in texture, temperature, color, and pulse. Listening to her is an act of returning; a turning inward toward a cyclical consciousness in a world that has forgotten how to pause.

Listening means tracing subtle shifts: how energy's density gathers before the lining collects, how intuition heightens in this ripening moment, how rest begins to call as release nears. It means noticing how emotion or memory ripple through her waters, how tenderness lives in her folds. When we listen in this way, we begin to hear not only our individual wombs but the collective one, the Earth herself, whispering the same songs of creation, death, and renewal.

And for those whose bleeding time has completed, this invitation still belongs. The body's tides do not cease; they deepen. The cycle becomes an energetic rhythm, guided by the moon, the breath, the pulse of remembering. The wisdom that once bled now radiates.

Embodied explorations:

- Place a hand on your womb each morning and ask, what do you need today?
- Track one full cycle, not in data, but in sensations, dreams, and moods.
- If your cycles have ended, track the moon instead; her waxing, fullness, and release as mirrors of your inner movement.
- Walk barefoot once a week and attune your breath to the wind's movement.

Over time, these entries will reveal your unique womb language.

2. Remember the Lineage

Every birth story begins long before conception. It stretches backward through the spines of mothers and grandmothers, through migrations, through losses, through songs. Reclaiming**birth sovereignty** asks that we look back with reverence, not to romanticize the past but to honor its truth.

Lineage is not only blood; it is also the ululatory web of those who have midwifed us into being: aunties, elders, midwives, friends, and ancestors of land and spirit. Remembering them reweaves the fabric of belonging that colonization and modern obstetrics have torn.

Embodied explorations:

- Light a small flame for the one who birthed you, whisper their name, and thank them for carrying you here.
- Create an honour corner with objects from the land you were born on, from those who have tended you, or from the places that still call your name.
- Journal: Who has midwifed me in ways beyond birth? What am I now midwifing into being?

When we call upon our lineage, we reenter the circle of continuity, realizing that our choices construct the past and mark the future.

3. Decolonizing the Body's Authority

To decolonize birth is to unlearn the hierarchy that places "expert" knowledge above embodied knowing. It is to question why we have been taught to mistrust our sensations, silence our instincts, or outsource our intuition.

Sovereign birth honors that the body is a wise elder; one who knows how to open, when to pause, when to roar. It also honors the many expressions of birthing: in hospital or home, alone or with attendants, with pressure and with ease, with pain and with pleasure.

The task is not to replicate one model of "natural birth" but to reclaim the right to choose: informed, conscious, and uncoerced. Reclaiming birth sovereignty through decolonization invites us to center autonomy without losing connection, to recognize that the liberation of the birther's body is bound to the liberation of all bodies, bound to the liberation of our lands and waters, of this planet.

Embodied explorations:

-

Name three moments when your intuition was right, and write them down as reminders.

- Practice saying aloud: I trust my body's intelligence. Notice what arises.
- Next time you experience discomfort or tension, pause before seeking external solutions. Ask: What might this part of me be communicating?

Often, the act of listening softens pain and restores agency.

4. Cultivating Birth as Ceremony

Ceremony invites reverence. It is what transforms an ordinary act into an offering. To cultivate birth as ceremony is to engage it with presence and intention, not as performance but as participation in mystery.

For some, ceremony is quiet: a candle, a whispered prayer, a song from grandmother's tongue. For others, it is the drumming of feet, the rumbling hum exploding into roar, the scent of herbs steaming in clay.

Ceremony reminds us that while birth could become a medical event, it remains a sacred rite of passage. Especially then does it insist on this as embodied knowing. It invites the spiritual and the sensory to meet, the mundane and the mystical to clasp hands once more.

Embodied explorations:

- Create a small ritual before bed or rising, a song, breath, or word, to mark your own daily threshold.
- During any creative act (writing, cooking, tending), pause to name what you are birthing.
- If supporting a birther, bring one sensory element such as sound, scent, or texture that grounds presence.

Ceremony begins in the ordinary.

5. Reweaving Community Care

Birth Sovereignty is not solitary. Even when a person births alone, they are held by countless unseen hands; ancestral, elemental, communal. The myth of individualism has fragmented the village that once surrounded pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.

Reweaving community care means resurrecting those circles. It looks like postpartum meals shared,

collective childcare, emotional tending, and spaces where stories are told freely. It means midwives supported, doulas valued, and partners initiated into guardianship of this sacred threshold.

Embodied explorations:

- Gather with one or two others to share your birth, menstrual, menopause, or creative stories.
- Cook a meal for someone newly postpartum or newly arrived in your community.
- Reflect: What village do I need, and how might I begin to build it with what I have now?

When we return to community, sovereignty becomes resilient, not rigid or self-contained, but supple and sustained by interdependence.

6. Restoring Relationship with the Earth

Birth is an ecological event. Every contraction echoes the shifting of tectonic plates; every release mirrors rainfall. The same elements that form our bodies: iron, salt, water, carbon, are the ingredients of stars and soil.

To birth sovereignly is to remember our kinship with land. It might look like squatting on bare earth, or simply breathing in rhythm with the trees. It might mean planting after birth, offering placenta back to soil, or choosing herbs grown within our bioregion.

When we birth with the Earth rather than above or apart from her, we restore harmony to the cycles of giving and receiving. We are reminded that sovereignty is not synonymous with isolation but with belonging.

Embodied explorations:

- Learn a womb-warming recipe using plants harvested or foraged where you live. Thank the land for its abundance before you pick, and offer it a taste after you prepare the medicine or dish.
- Intentionally tend one plant through your next cycle. Offer it a gift of release when you bleed.
- Take a walk in a forest or garden and attune your breath to the wind's movement.

Birth sovereignty cannot exist apart from the Earth that births us daily.

7. Tending to the Continuum

Birth sovereignty does not end with birth. It extends into postpartum, into parenting, into how we live,

bleed, love, and die. It means acknowledging that every birth transforms not only one life but a lineage, a community, a world. How we birth is how we build culture. To tend this continuum is to midwife a more embodied humanity, one rooted in listening, nurture, respect, and awe for life's intelligence.

Birth, and therefore its sovereignty, encompasses all of life's beginnings. It is in the emergence of ideas, art, projects, and new ways of being. Every creative act rehearses the same process: conception, gestation, labor, release, and integration. To tend to the continuum is to honor the full spiral of creation.

Embodied exploration:

- Choose something you are currently "birthing." Map its stages as if it were a living cycle.
- Where are you now, gestation, labor, or postpartum rest?
- What kind of care would this phase require if it were a baby or a garden? Offer yourself that care: warm food, silence, sunlight, or song.

Honoring all forms of birth expands our reverence for life.

We Are Gardeners of Life's Thresholds

To reclaim birth's sovereignty is to remember ourselves as gardeners of life's thresholds. The birther's body is both soil and seed; the birthed both mystery and memory. Between them hums an ancient vow: to meet in truth, to be changed, and to honor the living pulse that connects us all.

Reclaiming birth's sovereignty is not a single act but an ongoing tending. It asks us to slow down, to listen, to repair trust between body and spirit. And this is true for every kind of birth; the birth of a human being, yes, but also the birth of another iteration of oneself, a project, a relationship, an adventure. It all asks for tending. It all asks for witness. It calls us to midwife worlds; worlds where every birth, every being, is received with reverence.

When we do this, birth ceases to be something that happens to us. It becomes something that happens through us. Its sovereignty lives wherever we listen deeply to our body and say: I trust you. I remember. I am home.

And through that, the world is born anew.

Author Bio: Kai Njeri is a regenerative systems designer, birth worker, and community weaver based in Tanga, Tanzania. Rooted in deep Nature connection, she works at the intersection of womb ecology, land-based healing, and poetry. You can find out more about Kai's work by clickinghere.