

Know your rights

2018 review



inherit your rights





A message from the Operations Director

Dear supporters,

We are truly grateful for your support over the years, and I am excited to share with you our mid-year update on our recent successes.

Over the last six months we have continued to build upon our important work in advancing women's rights. We continue to see progress in women's ability to inherit property, own land, protect their daughters and improve their awareness of their legal rights.

Your support has enabled our team of lawyers and educators to implement programs that contribute to real change in communities in Arusha and beyond.

Thank you for your support and interest in our work. We truly appreciate your commitment to our cause and hope you enjoy reading the stories of the communities you have impacted through your generosity.

Sincerely,

J Owens

Judi Owens
Operations Director
Inherit Your Rights



Our core themes

Education



We work various community groups including women, widows and children to educate them about basic human rights, property rights, inheritance law; family law matters, domestic violence and more.

Representation



We support individuals who wish to seek legal advice on specific issues and represent those who wish to pursue their matters through the Tanzanian justice system.

Empowerment



Through education and legal aid, our aim is to empower women to stand up for their own rights and for the rights of others. By also sharing knowledge about their right with others, women can play a role in mobilising their communities for equality and justice.

Our achievements

Your support has truly allowed us to make some significant achievements over the last six months. Thank you for your generosity. We couldn't educate, empower and represent women in Tanzania without your support. Here's what we've been able to achieve together:



43

paralegal graduates who now raise awareness and represent others in their community.



11

legal aid clients facing issues around property, inheritance and marriage we have been able to assist.



427

people attended training on women's legal rights



11

strong partnerships with other community based organisations which help connect us with groups in need of training on women's legal rights.

69




Radio and television broadcasts across five different networks with audiences across Tanzania.



Celebrating superwomen

At Inherit Your Rights we are fortunate to work with inspiring and passionate women who are determined to learn about their rights, advocate for them and spread this vital knowledge with others. This includes Mama Rehama, who not only runs her own shop but is a member of both her Village Council and local Women's Forum, and is proud to call herself an Inherit Your Rights champion.





Mama Rehama first heard about Inherit Your Rights in 2015 and was inspired to mobilise her fellow community members to get involved and participate in paralegal training. Inherit Your Rights' paralegal training includes a 16-topic curriculum covering women's rights, property law, domestic violence, wills, inheritance and more. Since 2015, thanks to Mama Rehama, a total of seven paralegal trainings have taken place in her community. These trainings have played a key role in building awareness and changing perceptions when it comes to women's rights in the community.

Sadly in Tanzania, the customs or traditions of a community do not always protect a woman's right to own or inherit property. Although, there are Statutory Laws that give men and women equal rights to property ownership, these can be difficult to navigate in certain communities. Ensuring these laws are upheld and that women are informed and have a voice when it comes to inheritance and property, particularly after the death of a husband, is a key part of training at Inherit Your Rights.

"Before I did training with Inherit Your Rights I didn't know a lot about laws and I also didn't get a lot of support from the Village Council members," said Mama Rehama. "I didn't even know that there had to be women in the Village Council. After finishing the curriculum my mind has grown bigger and I feel a lot more confident."

"All the subjects we learned about are so important because many women simply do not know their rights. However, the challenge is that many husbands in the community don't want to acknowledge women's rights to own property so this is a very important area where we must continue to raise awareness."

Changing the mindset of certain members of the community can be challenging, but Mama Rehama, as an Inherit Your Rights community champion, is determined to find ways to slowly contribute to change. "Men can be tough but there are ways we as women can approach them wisely and speak about our rights and they will listen."

Mama Rehama believes educating men and women together is a key part of this. She does this by working with both husbands and wives and mediating on issues around women's rights.

"I've tried speaking with women about how to talk to their husbands about topics such as wills and protecting property rights and the importance of partnering with their husbands to do this together," says Mama Rehama.

For many households in Tanzania, topics such as wills, inheritance and property rights aren't discussed between husband and wife. This becomes problematic when a husband dies, and his wife is unaware of property ownership and her inheritance rights. In many cases, the husband's family will claim and take property away, leaving the widow without any support.

Mama Rehama brings her knowledge and voice to the Village Council and Women's Forum to ensure women are heard and represented in cases such as these. Previously claims made by women or widows around property and inheritance were ignored or met with resistance. Many women never made claims in the first place simply due to a lack of awareness of the right to inherit property and other Statutory Laws that protect their interests.

Now, with knowledge of their rights and how to exercise them Mama Rehama says women in her community have a newfound confidence. "Training and awareness of legal rights can change women, men and children to recognise their rights, know what they are doing and how to stand on their own two feet."

In addition, Mama Rehama takes it upon herself to advise women in difficult situations of their rights and the avenues they can take to protect them. She also mediates in marital disputes and works with widows groups to help them find economic security while making claims for property that may have been taken after their husband's death.

Thank you for supporting women like Mama Rehama, who proves empowering one woman, empowers an entire community.

The courageous women of Longido

Longido is roughly 90 minutes from Arusha, but seems much further away. Once leaving the hustle and bustle of the town centre behind, the landscape becomes savannah. Not far from the Kenyan border, giraffes can be commonly seen roaming Longido's plains, and often its roads, while Kilimanjaro peaks out behind them.

Once at Longido, a dirt road leads deeper into the interior villages of the Maasai, eventually arriving at the community of Engaremaibor. It is here where we recently started community training for a group of 30 Maasai women.

Tanzania is composed of more than 120 ethnic tribes, including the Maasai. Most of these tribes are governed by Customary Law. This refers to the traditions and customs of a community which dictate their social structures and norms.

According to such customs, Maasai society distinguishes strictly between male and female social roles. Women are seen as strictly home makers and subordinate to their male counterparts who are farmers and warriors. As a result of this position and role in society, child marriage, lack of education and domestic violence are sadly commonplace for Maasai women and girls. In addition, being so remote and without knowledge of their rights under Statutory Law means these practices are generally accepted as a way of life.

In Engaremaibor, our aim was to provide a forum for women to come together and learn about their rights, as well as a chance to ask questions and share experiences. Due to the prevalence of Customary Law and traditional structures in remote communities such as these, at Inherit Your Rights we often have to start from scratch when providing legal rights training. This means firstly building awareness of what human rights are and why they are important, before women can begin to question the normality of things like lack of education for girls or domestic abuse.



One of the most important pieces of information we share with the women we work with, is the channels they can use to exercise their rights. This includes being able lodge claims or raise issues with the Village and Ward offices. These offices follow Customary Law but are also bound by Statutory Law, created from the Tanzanian Constitution, which actively protects women's rights. These offices are located in each region and are available for women to put forward issues they are experiencing and help find resolutions.

In this community, it was inspiring to hear the stories of women who were already utilising these channels and those that were ready and prepared to learn how. The vast majority of the women in attendance had been married off at young ages to men old enough to be their grandfathers. Many had already been widowed, and you could sense their courage and determination not to let this happen to the next generation.



One woman in attendance told of how her husband regularly drank and beat her, and refused to send her children to school. Her husband never received an education and wanted their children to help tend to the cattle. This woman, however, was determined to send her children to school. She took the matter to the Village and Ward Offices. As the Offices' recognise Statutory Law which decrees children of the age of seven must be enrolled in school, it was ruled that they be educated. This could have been a dangerous move for the woman and potentially led to retribution from her husband.



However, remarkably, she shared that after this her husband allowed the children to attend school and furthermore stopped beating her.

Sadly this is a fairly unique story but illustrates the importance of building awareness of human and legal rights of women at every level of society. By working with community elders and men, we can show why it is important to empower women and the benefits it brings to an entire community – including the impact the participation of women and girls has in accelerating sustainable development and economic growth. For girls, such training and education instils strength and confidence from a young age and for boys, contributes to changing the behaviours and perceptions of the next generation.

Often when women attempt to exercise their rights in traditional communities they can be met with resistance or retribution, but these women have shown that with courage and determination anything is possible. Having a forum and safe space like this allows for the exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences that otherwise would not be spoken about. After hearing these stories, the women who didn't know where to turn walked away with the knowledge, confidence and inspiration to do something to ensure their rights are respected, and know that they are not alone.

Although changing perceptions in remote communities bound by custom and tradition can be a long and slow process, uniting women together and empowering them through education is a positive first step and furthermore, a powerful and pivotal force for change.



27 paralegals graduate from Jobortunity

Recently, Inherit Your Rights completed another 16-week paralegal training with students from our partners at Jobortunity. Over this time, 27 students learned about topics including women's rights, property, inheritance, domestic violence, labour rights and more.

The students, who consisted of young adults – both men and women – of all different backgrounds from around Arusha, sat two exams throughout their training. Student who received over 75% in both exams were eligible to become paralegals. Paralegals are barefoot lawyers who can play a critical role in representing the disadvantaged and raising awareness in their communities and beyond. Yusta, one of the students, was a top performer in her class.

“I'm very happy to get my paralegal certificate,” said Yusta. “I learned that we as women can really do something to advance our rights. As a paralegal, I want to spread this knowledge further. I'll be communicating with youth. I talk to a lot of youth in my community and I want to get them together and explain what I learned from Inherit Your Rights.”

Mobilising youth in this way can be a pivotal force for change. By creating a network of young community champions we can help the next generation initiate change by advocating for women rights, particularly when it comes to property and inheritance.

“It's very important to learn about legal rights because we can help women in our society,” adds Yusta. “Women face challenges every day in our daily life and many people don't know about the laws there to help them.”

We look forward to updating you on what Yusta and her fellow class mates do next to help raise awareness and educate and empower others in their communities.



Our plans for the next six months

Over the next six months we have exciting plans to start new projects and impact more women, as well as strengthen our organisational processes and procedures.

We are very excited to announce the start a new self-defence program for women at Inherit Your Rights.

This program is part of our domestic and gender-based violence curriculum topics we teach to women's groups in Arusha and beyond. As part of this, we have enlisted the help of a Tae Kwon Do teacher to instruct women on tactics and techniques they can use to protect themselves.

This is all the more important with the introduction of a recent law which restricts girls to attend school if they fall pregnant - regardless of the circumstances. With many women and girls having to walk long distances, often alone, to attend school or work, the risk of rape and assault are ever present.

Helping educate women on practical techniques, along with their rights - including their right to safety and to say no - helps build confidence and strength. In turn, this teaches women to use their voice - whether it be to advocate for their rights, report instances of abuse or rape, call for help, and if needed, appropriately use force as a last resort.

We are also looking forward to growing our empowerment and representation programs. We currently have two volunteers from the Australian Government supported Australia Volunteers Program, who are working in communications and grant writing to improve our brand awareness and explore new funding options to help Inherit Your Rights' ability to grow as an organisation.

Asante Sana

Thank you again for your support and for helping empower, educate and represent women. We hope that you share our enthusiasm for the impact we've made over the last six months, and our plans for the remainder of the year. Your continued support to build stronger and informed communities who can advocate for women's rights a reality is greatly appreciated. Thank you from the team at Inherit Your Rights, and on behalf of the women you have helped educate, empower and represent.



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