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RIGHT TO LIVELIHOOD IS WOMEN'S ISSUE

Though the right to livelihood is important for all, it is particular important for women.

The problems women face with regard to livelihood are compounded by number of gender specific factors.

These include:

- Women play a significant role in all livelihood efforts, which are crucial for them as well as their families.
- Women are main contributors to agricultural and household nutrition and food security. They cultivate, plough and harvest more than half of the food in the world.
- They are the primary users of the forests and natural resources including land and water for livelihood security.
- Despite the fact that women world over are main actors in livelihood activities, their contribution are undermined or unrecognized. The women's work they take within household, and subsistence farming, their multiple roles in animal's husbandry, fish processing, collection of non timber for forest produce and many activities they performed to supplement family incomes are rarely recognized as work creating economic values.
- Even when women work alongside with their husbands their work is characterized as wife duties and not contributions to their families' livelihood. It is important to recognize women's contributions.

- TUSONGE in her 2012-2013 confirmed many households are women led and the family livelihood is under the control of mothers.
- 75% of the family income as noted by TUSONGE project confirms that women are key stakeholders in ensuring they care and support family income!
- Loss of livelihood for women have adversely affects women's position in the power security and their bargaining power within households.
- Livelihood insecurity makes women vulnerable to Gender based violence and abuse, both within households as well as outside.
- Women confront multiple forms of discrimination that have a negative impact on their livelihood like discrimination to employment and access to productive resources and markets.
- TUSONGE project also confirmed 78% of women face discrimination to land ownership which directly would have improved their security as mothers and wives.
- Most policy interventions are based on male breadwinner's model. Schemes to reduce poverty usually target men while women continue to carry out precarious livelihood activities and provide care to family with no recognition or support.
- Women are increasing made to be more responsible for generating income for themselves, families and in addition they do a lot of unpaid labor. Most of the unpaid labor for women takes much of their times/hours with less remuneration and not recognized by the national income.





- Women are not involved in decision making process on resources, including money, even when they earn it.
- About 70 to 80% of the rural economy is carried out by women and they do not view themselves as economic agents.

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

- ✓ To ensure women realize their rights to livelihood advocates and policymakers must take steps to address the obstacles that women confront. Equally important recognition of women to the economic activities they are undertaking. Women are not merely members of the families which are dependent on male breadwinners. They cannot reduce to the roles of passive welfare recipients or viewed only as a vulnerable group that needs to be protected and taken care of.
- ✓ They are active economic agents with rights and contribute to both productive and reproductive economy. Should be noted and respected that women stands on a cross road between production and reproduction between economic activity and care for human beings and therefore between economic growth and human development.
- ✓ Enhancing women's access to productive resources and ensuring that greater social values are accorded to their contributions can bring about greater balance between economic growth and human development.
- ✓ Kicking out poverty from family perspectives needs conscious recognition and equal support of both MEN AND WOMEN although the playing ground for women seems to be more rough according to the prolonged established social structures.

TUSONGE TRAINING INITIATIVES TOWARDS SUPPORTING WOMEN, GIRLS AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS TO ENJOY THEIR ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Gender inequality in education is extremely affect community members especially women and girls in the grassroots levels. For example in Kilimanjaro Region in the previous year's women were neglected to get equal education like men as much as Education helps men and women to claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays particularly important role as a foundation for girls' development towards adult life. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address the gender-based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies. The following links will further explain the achievements made by entrepreneurs of Moshi Municipality after attained TUSONGE training:

Entrepreneurship training, it was the primary training which was offered to community members including Majengo and Msaranga Community members. TUSONGE organization decided to conduct business training to people who have very little knowledge of an entrepreneurship with little amount of working capital from 20,000 to 30,000 Tshs on 2011, as well as per day income of 1000 to 2000Tshs.

Aginatha Rutazaa
Tusonge Managing Director

“Kicking out poverty from family perspectives needs conscious recognition and equal support of both MEN and WOMEN.....”



For greater impact TUSONGE network with both local and international organization that support women and other marginalized groups to realize their economic rights. The above picture was taken in Sri-Lanka during an exchange visit with TUSONGE Jan 2014.



Jane Lyimo noted in her shop: I have experienced tremendous business confidence after TUSONGE trainings. I even now know how to keep well my business records. I can clearly share the loss and profit from daily sales.

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You could measure the comparison before and after training in a way that currently, beneficiaries improved their working capital from 50,000 to 500,000Tshs where the income per day increased from 5000 to 10,000Tshs. Apart from that currently, beneficiaries are able to keep business records, prepare business plan in relation to the loan requested and some other family improvements.

Existing microfinance Institutions in the region further discriminate these women and girls to access the loans due to the existing collaterals which they cannot meet. TUSONGE through enactment of supporting communities with low income to join forces and mobilize them in groups of small scale saving they have made a real difference in their business working capital for the past three years.

Through community voices TUSONGE was able to collect various testimonies which proof that the strength of coming together in communities and appreciate whatever resources surrounding them can real enhance economic incomes and justices for the voiceless and most marginalized groups.

- They have also being able to systematically document and record well the trend of their businesses
- Have been able to self support within the communities by extending further care to the more needy groups like PLWHIV and orphans as well as disabilities.

Foremost, there is an increased understanding on the power of self mobilizing and self organizing to fight entrenched poverty. Currently the existing groups have ability to meet once per week with the capacity to buy shares from 1,000Tshs to 5000Tshs

TUSONGE also Mainstream

Leadership, HIV/AIDS as well as Human rights and gender in all interventions.

Weekly meetings with TUSONGE have enhanced my knowledge on my rights as well as leadership roles as a mother and an important family actor. *Stated by Stella Mwangi Msaranga groups*

CHANGES NOTED INCLUDES:

Improved health status of women who are living positive with HIV/AIDS in the groups as a result of enhanced economic power.

High level of acceptability and non discrimination for the PLHAS with the groups

Enhanced confidence to access VCT services for the members to check their health conditions.

Willingness of the beneficiaries to volunteer visiting orphans and people living with HIV/AIDS has increased in TUSONGE team.

Changes noted were contributed by:

Good support from TUSONGE including close follow up of community members especially track of changes on the outcome of training that offered to them.

For example:

- The proper use of business plans , and consistent recording of business records.
- The accessibility of visit VCT centers,
- Health improvement from an individual to the families.
- Increased purchasing power of an individual
- The rate of pay a child school fees compared to the parents who did not join TUSONGE project

Omega Wilkins Mchaki
TUSONGE M & E Officer

EQUAL LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WILL ENHANCE ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND JUSTICE IN COMMUNITIES--YOUNG WOMEN LEADERSHIP TRAINING BY TUSONGE AS A STRATEGY

When talking the issue of leadership in most societies it is obvious women are not concerned or considered at all. And this has been the patriarchy mode of life. The situation of alienating women has not started today or yesterday. Existing culture and customary beliefs undermines equal sharing of ideas in all decision process by women. Gradually awareness on equal rights which are stipulated by the UN convections have trickled down to the communities and encourage women to raise their voices as matter of their legal and civil rights granted within legal frameworks.



The number of women in leadership worldwide has gradually been increasing, but in some communities more efforts are required to increase the representation of women in decision-making groups. What is spelt out in the UN instruments is not practically happening on ground.

To ensure there is minimal gap from the laws and the practice on ground TUSONGE in her project implementation integrated a leadership package to equip women with knowledge, skills and strategies which can enhance their visibility in decision making bodies.

In 2013 TUSONGE conducted leadership training to young women as a pilot study at Majengo and Msaranga and it was realized that most marginalized women do not take trouble to participate in leadership issues.

During the training it was noted that some of the barriers to women leadership and participation in decision making bodies are lack of confidence among women, male domination due to customary which do not consider a woman as important actor in the development process.

Women are key contributors of the family livelihood yet they are not given conducive platform for sharing their ideas as well and feelings.

TUSONGE is of the view that increasing women share in leadership positions will accelerate sustainable development processes in the communities.

Aspects which hamper these efforts as noted by TUSONGE rely mostly on the well constructed stereotypes attitudes, and patriarchy beliefs.

TUSONGE training design for the young women and leadership process supported the team to develop skills which enhance their confidence and assertiveness to fight for the equal rights, in ensuring decisions which enhance their welfare and contributions are made through existing frameworks.



Leadership training participants in joint picture during closing of the training by a famous activist Ms Elizabeth Minde

During exchange of ideas with potential women leaders in Kilimanjaro during the closing remarks of the training the key speaker a very famous activist Ms Elizabeth Minde who is the Managing Director of Kilimanjaro Women Information Exchange and Consultancy Organization. (KWIECO) told the training participants that one of the chronic problems to most Tanzanian women to participate in leadership positions is lack of confidence which is the main result of the gender based violence in the society.

She went further to challenge the participants to be confident no matter how hard it is. She called on the youth and young women to participate and vie for different posts in the coming local government elections which will take place this 2014 so that they can become 'the voice of the voiceless'.

In its strategies to ensure that women's voices are heard all over and their needs are acted upon in the decisions making bodies TUSONGE has now set up strategies to work with youth and young women. This will be possible because in her project of 2014 – 2016 concentration has been put to integrate youth's especially young women as the project beneficiaries. Furthermore TUSONGE in her coming implementation before conducting leadership trainings to youths and young women has planned to fully engage them in the process of enriching the leadership training curriculum before it is adopted.

As TUSONGE strive to ensure high level of confidence to women is realized as related to leadership matters. Also TUSONGE wish to engage young women in the training process as to equip them with leadership skills which will address long term challenges of unequal gender relations especially when it comes to decision making matters.

TUSONGE slogan is to fight strategically for of 50 by 50 by 2025 is reached at the local government levels especially in the villages and sub village levels. Leadership transformation needs bigger support at the low levels of the communities where illiteracy and ignorance is highly entrenched.

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