



## ***Empowering Change: Rehema's Journey to Transform Women's Land Rights in Chogongwe Village, Morogoro***

Rehema, a farmer from Chogongwe village in Gairo District, Morogoro region, has become a champion of change in her community. Rehema participated in a series of training interventions on women's land rights facilitated by the Stand for Her Land campaign early this year. Interventions included a comprehensive training on gender transformation in agroecological production and women's land rights. The training equipped participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt transformative agroecological practices, understand women's land rights and leverage these tools for women's economic empowerment.

After completing the training, Rehema was struck by the realization that most traditional practices in her village were deeply detrimental to women, particularly on property ownership and decision-making. These customs, often upheld by long-standing patriarchal norms, left women marginalized and without a voice in critical matters that directly affected their livelihoods.

Empowered by the knowledge she had acquired; Rehema took it upon herself to become a champion for women's rights within her community. She began organizing and facilitating training sessions for various groups, including women's groups, and churches, as well as during traditional ceremonies. Her efforts were aimed at raising awareness and encouraging women to assert their rights, particularly concerning land ownership and decision-making in agricultural activities.

During one of her training sessions, Rehema encountered Victoria, a woman whose life had been deeply affected by oppressive norms and traditional practices. Victoria had been denied the right to make decisions regarding the use of land and the income generated from agricultural produce. Worse still, she had suffered physical abuse from her husband whenever she attempted to assert her rights or question his unilateral decisions.

***"My husband keeps selling our family land and cattle without my knowledge. Whenever I confront him about it, he beats me. He also doesn't allow me to attend any training sessions or join any women's groups,"*** Victoria said.

Rehema, recognizing the urgency of Victoria's situation, discreetly arranged for her to attend one of the training sessions while her husband was away. This act of solidarity was a turning point for Victoria. ***"I'm grateful for that because I now know my rights as a woman,"*** she said.

Determined to help Victoria, Rehema accompanied her to the Village Executive Officer (VEO), where Victoria's plight was formally addressed. The VEO took swift action, holding Victoria's husband accountable for his actions. The intervention not only provided Victoria with immediate relief but also sent a powerful message to the community about the consequences of violating women's rights.

Today, Victoria's life is transformed significantly. She now actively participates in decision-making processes regarding her family's land and income. The physical abuse has ceased, and she has become a vocal supporter of the Stand for Her Land campaign, encouraging other women in her village to stand up for their rights.

Rehema's work has sparked a broader movement within Chogongwe village, where more women are now coming forward to claim their rights and challenge the traditional practices that have long held them back. Her story is a proof of the transformative power of education and advocacy, illustrating how one empowered woman can ignite change which ripples through an entire community. The Stand for Her Land campaign, through the dedication of champions like Rehema, continues to create lasting impacts, ensuring that women in rural Tanzania can fully realize their rights and potential.