



WOLTS Champions' Perspectives No.6

I am not afraid to speak up

By Sindooi Limijo

Sindooi Limijo is a herder from Mundarara village in Longido district, Arusha region, in northern Tanzania. She has been a gender and land champion since 2018, having participated in the local champions training programme led by Mokoro's WOLTS project with our Tanzanian NGO partners, HakiMadini – first in 2018-19 and then as a mentor to a new cohort of champions from 2020.

WOLTS Champions' Perspectives is a blog series in which community members share how they are supporting more inclusive, participatory and gender-equitable land governance in their local communities after taking part in the WOLTS champions training programme.

I have been involved in the **WOLTS** programme from the very beginning, since 2016, and it has changed everything. Before I went through the gender and land champions' training, I had very little to live on. My husband had passed away and all our land and livestock had gone to our three sons. When I learned that women have the right to inherit, I organized meetings with our clan, and I got back my husband's land and cows. These days I look after my livestock as well as being a women's leader in my village.

Of course, I have not only helped myself. I am proud to be able to help other women too. In my community, women face many challenges such as gender-based violence and husbands who don't take care of their families.

For example, one man in the village was a drinker. He used to take all his family's money, leaving nothing for his wife and children. When his wife said she wanted to go to work or start a small business to earn money for their children, he accused her of prostitution.

She asked us for help, so I went to see him with the other women champions. We told him: "You don't know what your children are eating, you are doing nothing, you have to let your wife work to provide for them." We also went to the local village office and told them what was happening. So the husband is now forbidden from selling any of the family's cows and his wife controls their resources.

My own daughter was also a victim of abuse. She was married for over 20 years but had no children and her husband and his family used to beat her badly. Two years ago, we decided that she should break the marriage which is very rare in Maasai tradition. She left, and now she lives with me, and his family has no rights over her anymore.

The most important thing I have learned from WOLTS is confidence in myself and knowledge of the law. I am not afraid to speak up in a meeting with hundreds of men because I know my rights. I now help widows to inherit land and property when their husbands die, and I have helped many women to leave men who are mistreating them.



Sindooi Limijo, gender and land champion
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