



WOLTS Champions' Perspectives No.4

So much has changed since I became a gender and land champion

By Milya Samberu

Milya Samberu is a herder from Mundarara village in Longido district, Arusha region, in northern Tanzania. He 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.

Being part of the [WOLTS](#) project with [HakiMadini](#) has really changed things for me. Before I did the [gender and land training](#), I had no idea that women had a right to land, the same as men do. In my family, we used to have one plot that was in my name, but now my wife and my mother have both applied for land from the Village Council. They have used that land to create their own businesses, which really helps our family.

I have also used the knowledge I have gained to help my community. I have helped many women to write letters of application to the Village Council and am proud to say that most have received plots of land. One woman in particular was in a very difficult situation because her husband died and she was left with six children and no land. With my support, she successfully applied for a plot in Mundarara where she built a house and rents out rooms for income. Her children are all educated and she is doing very well.

We live on pastoral lands, but there is also a lot of mining taking place in our district. Until recently, our community did not really benefit, but I have been supporting people in my community who want to get involved in small-scale mining. Many have been successful in applying for permits which helps to bring in income and also means they are aware of the rules which helps to avoid conflicts with others such as traditional pastoralists who have rights over the land to graze their animals.

As a result of these activities, I have been elected as a traditional leader, which means I am in a strong position to help my community even more in future, to ensure our land rights are protected. [None of this would have happened without the training I received from WOLTS](#) and I sincerely hope that the programme can be extended to others.



Milya Samberu, gender and land champion
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