**General Project Information**

**Project Title:** Women’s Property and Inheritance Rights in the Context of HIV and AIDS  
**Organization:** Maasai Women Development Organization, Tanzania (MWEDO)  
**Implemented in:** Longido District, Arusha Region, Tanzania  
**Total Grant Approved:** $145,000 
www.maasaiwomentanzania.org

**Context**
Within the pastoralist Maasai communities, traditional attitudes have contributed to violations of women’s property and inheritance rights, particularly in the context of HIV and AIDS. For many decades, Maasai women have been culturally marginalized in terms of decision-making and rights to access and control over properties including land and livestock. The Tanzanian government recently issued new draft constitution, which includes strong provisions for women’s rights. If this constitution is ratified, women will be guaranteed access to rights, including protection from household harassment and access to property inheritance.

**Objectives**
MWEDO strengthens access to property and inheritance rights for HIV-affected women by building the capacity of the Pastoralists Women Cooperatives; facilitating community dialogues on property and inheritance rights; and strengthening the capacity of community paralegals to deliver effective legal services and support to women to claim their property and inheritance.

**Key results**
- Enhanced knowledge and rights awareness of 700 community members, 180 duty bearers, and 105 local leaders of their obligations to protect women’s property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS. These trainings resulted in nearly 200 women applying for plots of land through the village authorities with 42 women’s groups and 66 individual women having applications approved and/or been given land.
- At a local level, five women joined the traditional council of elders (Baraza la Mila).
- Increased legal literacy and awareness of 380 HIV-affected women on their property and inheritance rights.

- Access to legal aid has been strengthened through the training and registration of 40 paralegals (locally known as Osiligi Le Maa). Paralegals combine their knowledge of the formal justice system with mediation and community education to help the marginalized women address their justice problems including rights to land and inheritance procedures. Paralegals have supported 46 women with their property and inheritance claims.
- Organized 60 HIV-affected women into cooperatives in order to build and strengthen their economic base. Through women’s cooperatives, women are better able to advocate and raise their voices on their rights to own and inherit land and other assets.
- Training community paralegals to provide legal assistance for community members at the grassroots level encouraged the target population to participate in the project.
- MWEDO used local-to-local dialogues to create discussion forums for government authorities and traditional leaders and to mobilize communities in support of women’s rights to land and inheritance. Local-to-local dialogues are locally designed strategies where grassroots women’s groups initiate and engage in dialogues with local authorities to negotiate a range of development issues.

**Lessons Learned**
- Women-only meetings encouraged more open sharing of personal experiences and dialogue on concerns and troubles. Women were generally uncomfortable with male attendance in sensitization meetings.
- Further sensitization efforts on the importance of civil property and inheritance rights are needed, as many women are interested in obtaining rights in the customary realm only.

**Partnerships**
MWEDO partnered with Huairou Commission; International Land Coalition; Global Land Tools Network; UN Habitat; Tanzania Pastoralists Forum; Tanzania Gender Network; and Tanzania Natural Resource Forum.