

PROJECT TO DEFEND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS IN TANZANIA

PINGOs Forum | DKA-Welthaus Graz

ACTIVITY REPORT: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS TRAINING ON LAND RIGHTS AND SECURITY

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INTRODUCTION

In line with its mission to strengthen the capacity of Indigenous communities to assert their rights, and under the broader intervention of the DKA-Welthaus-funded project to defend Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Tanzania, the PINGOs Forum conducted a six-day training for 20 Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) from Chemba and Handeni Districts.

This training covered land rights, environmental laws, advocacy and lobbying, and digital and physical security. It is part of the long-term goal to build a peaceful and dignified Indigenous Peoples and Hunter-Gatherers (IPHGs) community with recognized and protected rights to land, rangelands, and natural resources.

OUTCOME 1: STRENGTHENED CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY ON LAND AND RESOURCE RIGHTS

Participants were trained on Tanzania's dual land tenure system, land acquisition procedures, and dispute resolution frameworks. The sessions emphasized the recognition of customary rights, compensation protocols, and the use of both statutory and village-level structures to resolve disputes.

Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) strengthened their capacity for advocacy on land and resource rights through comprehensive training focused on Tanzania's dual land tenure system, land acquisition procedures, and dispute resolution frameworks. This training highlighted the importance of customary rights recognition and compensation protocols, emphasizing that both statutory and village-level structures are essential for resolving disputes.

Knowledge Acquisition

The Village Land Act Number 5 of 1999 provides vital guidelines regarding land tenure, stating in Section 3(1) that "the Village Council shall have the power to manage the village land on behalf of the villagers." This provision empowers HRDs by clarifying the role of local governance in land management. Similarly, Land Act Number 4 of 1999 underscores in Section 11(1) that "all land in Tanzania is public land," thus reinforcing the need for community involvement in land decisions.

Practical Skills Development

The training equipped HRDs with practical skills to address land disputes. For instance, HRDs learned to advocate for compensation protocols under Section 9(1) of the Village Land Act, which states that "a person who has suffered loss or damage as a result of a decision made under this Act shall be entitled to compensation." This knowledge enables HRDs to articulate claims for compensation for pastoralists in Msomera village, who faced displacement due to development projects without proper compensation.

Enhanced Advocacy and Participation

In the context of the Swagaswaga Game Reserve, HRDs utilized their enhanced understanding of statutory frameworks to participate effectively in public forums. They challenged land grabs by citing the need for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as mandated by environmental laws. The training highlighted the importance of community consultation before any land use changes, as outlined in Section 3 of the Land Act, which requires the involvement of affected communities.

For example, HRDs in Handa village, where both pastoralists and hunter-gatherers faced gross violations of their rights, documented and presented their cases against unlawful land appropriation. They used their enhanced legal knowledge to emphasize that any land acquisition must consider the rights of those displaced, as outlined in Section 2(1) of the Village Land Act, which recognizes the village land rights of its inhabitants.

By integrating legal principles from the Village Land Act and the Land Act into their advocacy efforts, HRDs are now better positioned to protect the rights of marginalized communities, engage in meaningful dialogue on land use, and hold authorities accountable for land rights violations. This capacity-building is crucial to the ongoing fight against the injustices faced by pastoralists and hunter-gatherers in Tanzania.

OUTCOME 1 OUTPUTS

- ⇒ Improved knowledge of land laws and village governance.
- ⇒ Practical skills in resolving land disputes and advocating for communal rights.
- ⇒ Enhanced ability to participate in public forums and challenge land grabs through legal channels.

OUTCOME 2: ENHANCED DIGNITY AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The training helped HRDs explore their roles, responsibilities, and challenges. Stories of rejection, threats, discrimination, and personal hardship were openly shared. Through these discussions, HRDs were equipped with tools to protect themselves while continuing their advocacy work.

Roles and Responsibilities of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)

HRDs play a critical role in advocating for the rights of marginalized communities, especially in areas affected by development projects. In the context of the Msomera relocation, where Ngorongoro Conservation Area Pastoralists were displaced, HRDs are tasked with:

- ⇒ *Advocacy:* Raising awareness about the rights of displaced pastoralists and ensuring their voices are heard in policy discussions.
- ⇒ *Documentation:* Documenting instances of human rights violations, including stories of rejection and discrimination faced by residents. Residents of Msomera were barred from holding political leadership roles and displaced NCA pastoralists to the village, thereby denying the residents any participation.
- ⇒ *Protection:* Providing tools and strategies for self-protection against potential threats, including physical harm and legal repercussions. PF prepared a legal aid team, of which Msomera community members have 24-hour access in case of any violations that will need legal intervention.
- ⇒ *Support:* Offering psychological and legal support to affected individuals and communities.

Challenges Faced by HRDs

HRDs face numerous challenges in their advocacy efforts, particularly in areas with significant pushback from authorities and development interests:

- ⇒ *Threats and Intimidation:* Many HRDs report receiving threats from local authorities or corporate entities involved in land acquisition. In Msomera, advocates have faced harassment when speaking out against the gross human rights violations faced by relocated pastoralists.
- ⇒ *Discrimination:* HRDs often experience discrimination based on their gender, ethnicity, or the communities they represent. For instance, Sandawe hunter-gatherers have faced systemic discrimination, complicating their ability to reclaim ancestral lands.
- ⇒ *Personal Hardships:* Many HRDs endure personal hardships, including financial instability and loss of livelihoods. Stories from Msomera reveal that advocates often have to balance their work with providing for their families amidst ongoing threats.

Stories of Rejection and Personal Hardship

Ngorongoro Conservation Area: One HRD recounted being ostracized by community members who were fearful of retaliation from the government for speaking out against the relocation of pastoralists. This not only led to social isolation but also impacted their mental health.

Swagaswaga Game Reserve: Another advocate shared their experience of being evicted from their home after opposing the eviction of the Sandawe. This personal loss highlights the severe repercussions that HRDs face when standing up for their communities.

Community Resistance: HRDs have reported instances where community members have been coerced into silence, showcasing the pervasive atmosphere of fear that surrounds human rights advocacy in these regions.

These examples illustrate the complex landscape in which HRDs operate, highlighting the urgent need for protective measures to ensure their safety and the effectiveness of their advocacy.

OUTCOME 2: OUTPUTS

- ⇒ HRDs gained essential knowledge on personal safety, legal boundaries, and diplomatic engagement with authorities.
- ⇒ Participants built solidarity and began forming a support network for collective action.
- ⇒ Greater confidence among female HRDs facing intersectional marginalization.

OUTCOME 3: INCLUSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS IN ADVOCACY

Participants in the training program were provided with detailed information on the 2009 Wildlife Act and the Environmental Act of Tanzania, which mandate community consultations before any land conversion activities. Specifically, Section 6 of the Wildlife Act emphasizes the need for consultation with local communities regarding any wildlife management plans, ensuring their voices are heard in decisions affecting their land.

Additionally, the Environmental Management Act of 2004, particularly Section 80, underscores the requirement for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for projects that may affect the environment, necessitating stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

The training emphasized participatory conservation strategies, ensuring that Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is sought from all stakeholders involved.

OUTCOME 3: OUTPUTS

- ⇒ Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) are now equipped with comprehensive legal knowledge, empowering them to challenge unlawful land appropriation effectively.
- ⇒ Participants have developed a strengthened capacity to advocate for environmentally sensitive land use planning, specifically concerning the preservation of the unique ecosystems within the Msomera and Swagaswaga regions.

CONCLUSIONS

The comprehensive training provided to Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Tanzania has dramatically improved their ability to advocate for the rights of Indigenous communities related to land and resource management. By giving participants detailed knowledge of Tanzania's land laws, environmental regulations, and advocacy strategies, the training has enabled HRDs to effectively handle issues like land disputes, human rights violations, and environmental concerns.

The outcomes not only demonstrate a better understanding of legal frameworks but also promote a sense of solidarity and support among HRDs. As they face the challenges of advocacy in a complex environment marked by threats and discrimination, these defenders are now more equipped to protect marginalized communities, promote accountability, and ensure their voices are heard in meaningful policy discussions. Ultimately, this initiative marks a crucial step toward the recognition and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Hunter-Gatherers in Tanzania.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY DKA-WELTHAUS CRAZ, AND PINGS FORUM

Scale Up Training Across Additional IPHIG Villages

Action Steps:

- ⇒ Identify and prioritize at least five additional Indigenous Peoples and Hunter-Gatherers (IPHIG) villages that would benefit from training on land rights and security.
- ⇒ Develop a tailored training curriculum based on the specific land and resource challenges faced by each selected village.
- ⇒ Schedule and conduct training sessions within the next 12 months, ensuring at least 30 Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) from each village participate.

Establish a Protection Framework for HRDs at the Community Level

Action Steps:

- ⇒ Collaborate with local legal aid organizations to create a comprehensive protection strategy for HRDs, focusing on risk assessment and mitigation.
- ⇒ Implement a community-based reporting system for HRDs to document threats and violations, ensuring timely legal support and psychological assistance.
- ⇒ Conduct quarterly workshops to educate HRDs on self-protection measures and legal rights, starting within the next six months.

Integrate HRDs in Broader Policy Dialogues on Land and Conservation Reforms

Action Steps:

- ⇒ Establish a formal mechanism for HRDs to participate in local and national policy discussions, ensuring their voices are included in decision-making processes.



- ⇒ Organize biannual forums that bring together HRDs, government representatives, and conservation stakeholders to discuss land and resource management policies.
- ⇒ Create a policy brief highlighting HRD contributions and recommendations to be shared with policymakers at the start of each forum.