



## **inherit your rights**

*seeking to educate, empower and represent.*

May 2016

Dear Friends,

Another year has gone by, and with this newsletter, we mark five years since Inherit Your Rights became operational. Thank you! And thank you for taking the time to read our news! We hope that you feel uplifted, inspired and excited by the strides forward we are making together, as you continue to partner with us and make it possible for us to bring positive lasting change to the widows, women and children of Tanzania, and representation to those without a voice.

The last couple of years have seen considerable growth within Inherit Your Rights.

- ❖ IYR has educated hundreds of women about their legal rights through our weekly training programs and local radio lectures. Community leaders, men and youth have also sought to be educated and trained on women's rights.
- ❖ IYR has celebrated breakthroughs in justice. Through our support, one woman saw victory after a long fight against domestic violence, and a young girl was protected from a forced child marriage.
- ❖ IYR's first Legal Fellow graduated from Law School, and our second Legal Fellow is currently at Law School in Dar es Salaam completing her legal certification.

### **Represent**

We are so excited to share our successes in this area that it had to come first! Over the past 18 months, we have been actively seeking to expand and build upon our legal-aid work. We began by mainly reviewing and writing wills. This need emerged when a partner NGO alerted us to a rise in family disputes in a local village - as the elders were becoming sickly, their children began to fight over the anticipated distribution of properties. As having a will is a rare thing here, we took to educating the community about wills, and helping them to put wills in place. Once families realized their shares would be distributed according to the law, they stopped fighting.

Through this work, **people started coming to us for help with some more serious problems**, specifically concerning issues of domestic violence, child marriage and prostitution.

Last year, we helped solve 2 domestic abuse disputes, one of which resulted in a prison sentence. This was an issue lasting almost the full year and due to minimal police



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cooperation our involvement was very necessary, and very hands-on – we physically had to obtain an arrest warrant ourselves and accompany the police officer to make the arrest. In dealing with this case, we have been told by village leaders that **IYR's name is now often quoted as a threat to men who are abusing their families.**

On the issue of child protection, **we helped to stop a forced child marriage** and see the girl safely housed and attending school regularly. She had been severely beaten when she refused the marriage, but managed to make it to town, walking through the night from a rural Maasai village. There she sought help from a local leader who introduced her to us.

And finally, we sought to stop a local brothel trading in minor girls. We became aware of this brothel in early 2015 when a girl escaped after 7 years captivity and came to us for help. The owner of the brothel was abducting young girls and selling them for sex. It transpired that this involved the village leader and that the corruption went high into the police force, so we had tread very carefully. We managed to persist to the point where the brothel is no longer functioning, and the village elders and wider community have been made aware of the despicable behavior of the 'leader' in question. We hope this will at least be enough to protect the children in the area going forward.

### **Educate**

**TRAININGS:** Our women's training groups continue to multiply, and our audience continues to expand, with more and more men asking to join and most recently staff from a local Orphanage attending. Women have been asking for each subject to be taught over a 2 week period so that they can ask questions, present examples from their own life and get connected to the topic. We love their connection to the Law and how they are applying it in their lives and their communities.

We now have a wide range of training materials that our team has developed over the past five years, that can be used depending on our audience. These include our 16-topic curriculum on women's rights, a version of this that we have tailored specifically for youth groups, and a curriculum for children. Last summer we overhauled our training materials to reflect a more teaching friendly approach, after it became apparent that many of our students had never been to school and so to deliver the material 'lecture style' may not have been the most effective way. As such, thanks to the help of two interns from the USA, we made detailed lesson plans, with a more interactive learning approach.

We have had a great response to the change from our groups, and we have found in our revision classes that a massive percentage of the women are retaining almost all of the information, which is great!!



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We have seen 4 groups graduate this year, including one youth group. These groups have all completed the 16-topic curriculum, 2 revision classes and finally a graduation ceremony, at which each group member receives a certificate from IYR recognizing their achievement in completing our course. This is the best part of our trainings, as the vast majority of the women we work with have never been to school so to see them receive their certificate after completing our course is really something! Pictures from these graduations can be seen on our Facebook page.

Unfortunately, a few groups have not completed the full curriculum this year. The sad fact is that in the more rural villages, every member of the community is needed to help when it is time to plant seed or harvest, which meant 2 of our groups preferred to discontinue trainings due to the demands on the women's time. This was a shame, especially in an area called Mwandet where we had been able to teach the Ten Cell and Village leaders (both men). However, the positive of this is that **these leaders have since been fighting in village council meetings for equality, condemning child marriage and even insisting girls from their village, and others, stay in school instead of dropping out to marry young.** So while we would have liked to finish the whole curriculum with them, at least there was some lasting positive effect from us being there.

**RADIO PROGRAM:** Working with Arushan-based Mambo Jambo FM, this year saw us record and air all 16 topics of our women's curriculum, followed shortly after by a further 8 topics from our children's curriculum. This all went really well, and in fact MJFM began doing reruns from our women's rights show due to popular demand! We were delighted by this, and hoped to capitalize on the positive momentum. However, due to the high cost of broadcasting fees, and our budgetary restraints, our initial 20 minute slots have now unfortunately been reduced to daily 5 minute summaries – it is great that our message is still getting out there, but we would love to amp up our efforts in this area.

We were also interviewed by Radio 5, the largest national Radio station in Tanzania, about IYR in general and the work we do. They too invited us back to discuss women in politics and various pressing social matters, and were interested in giving us a regular slot if we could cover the fees.

Radio is such a powerful tool when working to educate rural communities across vast distances, and we would like to expand our reach this year by upping our broadcasts, and approaching other radio stations with our scripts. We would love your help to make this possible – if you would like to support our radio outreach, please let us know!



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### **Empowerment**

**LEGAL FELLOWS:** Our first Legal Fellow completed his legal studies and graduated from Law School. Congratulations Ngeeyan! Also, 2016 saw our second Legal Fellow Winnie Manyanga, head for Law School in Dar es Salaam for the one-year legal certification course. We are going to miss Winnie in the Arusha office, because of her “on-the-ground” practical assistance with trainings and radio broadcasting, but look forward to her return as a qualified lawyer! We know that to become a lawyer has been Winnie’s life long dream.

**SUPERWOMEN:** We have started a **Superwomen of Tanzania** campaign via social media, based on the idea of Human’s of New York, a very popular Facebook page. Ideally, we feature “Superwomen” who have shown perseverance and strength, overcome adversity, and seen justice or are change agents in their communities. Check it out on our Facebook page, and help us share, empower and encourage these inspirational women!

### **The Inherit Your Rights team**

Ciaran Finn returned to Ireland in January, after his year heading up the IYR team in Arusha. IYR is so thankful for his investment and important contribution to the work. In his place, Judi Owens (yours truly!) has joined the organization as Operations Director for 2016. She has 4.5 years of experience directing operations in NGOs in Arusha, and has a reputation for getting things done ☺. And in the next couple of months, we hope to be joined by Inge Bijn De Vaate, a Dutch lawyer and Deputy Judge, currently working at the Supreme Court in the Hague. Inge will join us as Director of Legal Programming, and we are excited for her input and direction, as we continue to develop the Represent arm of Inherit Your Rights.

We are ever grateful for the hard work of dedicated staff and volunteers from around the world, and for the continued support from donors that allow IYR to provide valuable, unique, and desperately needed services to communities in northern Tanzania. We are excited for what the year ahead holds for us as an organization, and look forward to educating, representing and empowering many more vulnerable women and children.

If you would like any more information about any of our projects, and how you can partner with us in specific areas, please do not hesitate to get in touch. A few immediate financial needs that we face at this time are:

- Funding for office space (\$400 per month)

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- Funding for our Radio Broadcasting to expand (\$200 per month)

You can also find out more on our website, [www.inherityourrights.org](http://www.inherityourrights.org), and follow us on Facebook and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/InheritURRights>).

Kind regards,

Judi Owens

Operations Director, Inherit Your Rights