

## NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Newsletter:January-March, 2025



## **Extension of Maternity** Leave- A win for Tanzania Women

On January 31st, 2025, The Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania passed the Labor Laws Amendment Bill 13 of 2024, specifically amending Section 33. This change was made during the 18th Meeting of the Fourth Session, where Section 33 was modified to extend maternity leave for employees who give birth to preterm babies. The amendment allows their maternity leave to be extended to cover the remaining weeks of the standard 40 weeks of pregnancy. Additionally, the approved Bill extends paternity leave for fathers of preterm babies, increasing it from three days to seven days.

These changes address long-standing challenges faced by women who give birth to premature babies, including insufficient time for proper care, stress from the fear of losing their jobs, and more.

The new law allows mothers of premature baby's additional time to care for their children, improving the health and well-being of both the mother and the child. It generally aims to ensure that mothers and premature babies are now receiving their rightful benefits and bring significant progress to the labor sector.

### **How Did it Started**

This achievement is the result of a long journey that began in 2018, initiated and led by the Doris Mollel Foundation. It gained momemntum in 2021 when a nationwide campaign was launched to push for three key policy reforms one being Extending parental leave from three months to six months for mothers of premature babies.

Additional partners joined over the years to amplify the call for these changes. Various stakeholders, including Women Fund Tanzania through the Reproductive Health Rights(SRHR) Coalition, actively participated in supporting and advocating for the government to make these legal amendments. Other stakeholders include TUGHE, TUCTA, and a network of mothers with premature babies

### **Contribution of Women Fund Tanzania**

Recognizing the importance of reproductive health rights for women, WFT-T, made significant contributions to this campaign, including launching and strengthening the SRHR Coalition to support this agenda. The aim was to strengthen the intersectionality of the SRHR actors and agenda within the women and children's movement, for a stronger and functional Platform/Coalition.

Other support includes capacity building on feminist movement building, supporting some of strategic meetings between SRHR coalition and strategic stakeholders and decision makers, technical committee meetings, awareness raising session to MPs and Women Movement.



## WFT-T at the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69)

Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFT-T) participated in the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) convening, held from March 10th to 21st, 2025.

The gathering provided an invaluable space for engaging in discussions on critical issues affecting women across various sectors including; funding, environmental sustainability, economic challenges, leadership participation, unequal pay, technology access, and the empowerment of the girl child. The discussions also emphasized the importance of male engagement in advancing gender equality.

### **Highlights from the CSW69 Discussions**

Tanzania presented their progress over 30 years in gender equality. Notable achievements included: Increased women's political participation, reforms in laws and policies, establishment of special schools for girls in science, creation of the Tanzania National Environment Policy (2021), and promotion of clean cooking energy initiatives.

Several other important issues were explored during the discussions including: Social norms & key resolutions, financial inclusion and gender equality, the power of youth in leading change, the status of unpaid care work, macro-economic policies and their impact on gender equality, empowering women for a sustainable blue future, climate & Environmental Conservation Funds.

### **Key Learnings from CSW69 Sessions**

The CSW69 sessions provided invaluable insights into the global gender equality movement, offering several key lessons such as:

- Many countries continue to face challenges due to entrenched patriarchal systems that limit women's rights and opportunities.
- Shifting away from political engagement towards governance and policy commitments is critical for driving actionable change.
- Women-led initiatives face resource gaps due to declining funding, highlighting the need for new financing models to ensure sustainability.
- Women's rights must be addressed through an intersectional lens, considering climate, racial, and economic justice.
- Ensure women's equal participation in the digital world while protecting them from online harassment.
- Prioritizing youth participation and Strengthening the Feminist Agenda

### CSW69 Takeaways:

The high-level ministerial discussions at CSW69 showcased continued government commitment to advancing feminist agendas.

### Key takeaways for WFT-T include:

Securing promising funding commitments from several donors, with ongoing discussions on how to secure these funds is ongoing, ensuring the growing strong and sustainable feminist movements and the empowerment of women agenda across Tanzania.

#### Conclusion

CSW69 offered an opportunity to connect with women from diverse regions, exchanging stories, wisdom, and support. Engagement with partners and government leaders reinforced the importance of collective action in advancing gender equality. Informal gatherings and dinner discussions also led to inspiring dialogues and the creation of long-term partnerships.



# HerStory Coalition& National Museum Collaborate to Document Women's Contributions

Recently, the HerStory Coalition, in collaboration with the National Museum under the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports, launched a digital information centre dedicated to promoting the contributions of women in leadership, culture, and overall development.

This initiative is part of an ongoing campaign by HerStory Coalition aimed at ensuring that the stories of women who have contributed to various movements in the nation's development are collected, preserved, and shared.

The event took place in Songea during the Maji Maji National Cultural Tourism Festival, held from February 24th to 27th, 2025. The launch was preceded by a national workshop and dialogue that focused on the role and contributions of women in preserving the national culture, values, and leadership in Tanzania.

The Chief Guest at the launch event was General Jacob John Mkunda, Commander of the Defense and Security Forces. He commended the efforts made by the National Museum in collaboration with development stakeholders and committed to cooperate whenever information about women leaders in the military is needed."

The new centre will focus on gathering and documenting accurate information on women leaders, both before and after independence, to recognize their contributions to society—especially given that many have historically been forgotten due to various social systems.

Since 2024, HerStory Coalition and the National Museum of Tanzania through their collaborative effort were committed to address gender and social injustice against women to combat the pervasive patriarchal system that undermines women in Tanzanian society.

Some of the activities implemented so far were

- In -depth research on the life of Mwami Tereza Joseph Ntare II—the first female chief of Kasulu and the first President of the African Chiefs Association of Tanganyika in 1958. This research aimed to document, preserve, and popularize her legacy. Proposed the establishment of a dedicated museum in Kigoma for the preservation and exhibition of her story.
- Expanded research to include several prominent women in Tanzania's history, who have played significant roles in the struggle for social transformation against the patriarchal system. These women's stories span the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras and include figures such as Chief Liti of Singida, Queen Mother Ngolo (Ngole) from Sukuma land, Lucy Lameck, Bibi Titi Mohamed, and Julie Maning, among others. Their stories were presented in both physical and digital exhibitions, which were showcased from September 18th to 23rd, 2024, in Songea during the National Week of Culture celebration festival.

The exhibitions marked the launch of the preservation, documentation, and exhibition of these her-stories through the National Museum of Tanzania's digital platforms.



## "Why Girl Child Empowerment Campaign"

In January 2025, the Women Coalition (WCEL) launched a campaign to educate the public on the importance of empowering the girl child.

This campaign emerged in response to a growing societal debates questioning the need for girl child empowerment. Some argue that boys are being left behind, while others claim gender equality has already been achieved. However, these narratives fail to recognize the lived realities of girls including child marriage, limited access to education, and gender-based violence.

This discussion also coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action—an ambitious blueprint for advancing women's rights, including the empowerment of the girl child.

The key objectives of the campaign include:

- Deepening Public Understanding: Educating communities on why girl child empowerment is crucial for societal transformation and national development.
- Challenging Harmful Narratives: Addressing misconceptions that undermine gender equality and advocating for policy reforms that eliminate systemic discrimination.

Ndoa za Utotoni ni chanzo cha ukatili dhidi ya mtoto wa kike" #Beijing+30 #UsawaNdioNguzo #UsawaNiMaendeleo "Ndoa za Utotoni zinakinzana na haki za mtoto wa kike za kikatiba na kufunga milango ya kuendeleza ndoto zake"

#Beijing+30 #UsawaNdioNguzo #UsawaNiMaendeleo

To ensure sustained advocacy some of the implementation strategies were:

**Strengthening Media Engagement:** Partnering with journalists and editors to amplify stories that highlight the importance of the Beijing Platform for Action and its relevance today.

It also involved training to editors to help editors better understand the concept of girl-child empowerment and its importance.

Organizing capacity-building sessions for coalition members targeting young feminist women to enhance their advocacy skills and ensure the continuity of the movement.

Additionally, the coalition leveraged multiple media platforms, including national and community broadcasts (radio and television), newspapers, and popular social media platforms such as X, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp.

As a result of the campaign, there has been a significant increase in public awareness and understanding of the importance of empowering the girl child.

Through social and mainstream media campaigns, thought-provoking discussions, and knowledge-sharing platforms, the coalition is mobilizing diverse stakeholders, from policymakers to grassroots organizations, to drive collective action for gender justice.



# Strengthening Movement for Ending Child Marriage partners in Tanzania

Women Fund Tanzania participated in a Movement strengthening workshop for Ending Child Marriage Network (TECMN)partners which took place in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

The workshop brought together members of the Tanzania Ending Child Marriage Network and other related Networks. Coalitions like. SRHR, TEN/MET (Tanzania Education Network, Men Engage Network and Senior activists).

The objectives of the workshop were to;

- Enhance members' knowledge, capacities and skills in evidencebased approaches, Data utilization and gender-transformative approaches to combat child marriage
- Reflect on progress and milestones in the movement to end child marriage in Tanzania
- Promote feminist leadership as a key driver in leading gender equality movements
- Building sustainable advocacy efforts, exchanging best practices and lessons learned from grassroots initiatives addressing child marriage
- Strengthen Partnership, collaboration and coordination among TECMN members to improve collective impact

During the leadership session a facilitator Dr Hellen Kijo Bisimba said, "We achieved great strides in advocating for human rights because we trusted each other and built meaningful friendships."

She emphasized that harmony within networks very important in achieving collective goals.

On her side TECMN Coordinator, Lilian Kimath said the Network believes in the strength of one joint voice.

"By uniting our efforts, we can break the harmful tradition of child marriage and empower girls to take control of their own futures'"

The workshop resulted in enhanced TECMN members' capacity in gender transformative approaches and evidence-based advocacy to combat child marriage. Increased understanding of the integration of feminist principles for a rights-based and intersectional approach to ending child marriage. Enhanced understanding of collective organizing and collective voice for advocacy and action.

Some of the key takeaways from the workshop were:

- Mainstream Feminist Principles & Gender Transformative Approaches
- Prioritize Child Marriage an agenda in the 2025 Elections: Advocate for child marriage prevention to be included in political party manifestos and national policies through strategic engagements with CSO's and political leaders
- Data-driven advocacy
- Strengthen Collective Resource Mobilization & Coordination
- Build Strategic Partnerships for Systemic Change



## Coalition Members Reflect on Feminist Advocacy

As part of efforts to enhance advocacy and strengthen the movement, Women Fund Tanzania supported the Women Constitution, Election, and Leadership (WCEL) coalition in organizing a two-day feminism workshop at Nendiwe Wellness Centre on February 13th-14th, 2025.

The workshop brought together feminist advocates, activists, and coalition members to reflect on the progress and challenges of gender justice advocacy.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Reflect on the progress and challenges in feminist advocacy over the years.
- Refine strategies for effective and impactful gender justice advocacy.
- Strengthen the feminist movement through data-driven approaches, storytelling, and community engagement.
- Address misconceptions about feminism, particularly the mistaken belief that supporting the girl child means neglecting the boy child.
- Build solidarity among coalition members, ensuring a unified approach to advocating for gender equality.

During the workshop, participants had the opportunity to reflect on key topics such as The 30+ Years of the Beijing Journey: Where Are We?, key feminist concepts, the importance of gender equality as a national agenda priority, and dismantling the current narrative surrounding the girl child.

They also reflected on action gender advocacy, How and when to implement effective advocacy strategies and key actors responsible for executions.

Some of the key recommendations from the training were:

- Innovative Approaches to Gender Advocacy
- Overcoming Challenges in Engaging Traditional Leaders,
- Utilizing Media for Advocacy,
- Data-Driven Advocacy,
- · Building Internal Capacity,
- Engaging Social Media Influencers
- Election Monitoring & Political Accountability

Recognizing the persistent structural barriers that impede the empowerment of women and girls, the coalition has committed to bold, data-driven advocacy, targeted engagement with key stakeholders, and proactive monitoring of political and societal narratives that perpetuate discrimination.

By prioritizing issues such as girls' rights, women's leadership, and economic empowerment, the coalition is not only advocating for policy changes but also driving a cultural shift that challenges deeply rooted patriarchal norms.

This discussion underscores the urgent need for bold, strategic feminist activism to dismantle deep-rooted patriarchal systems.

Participants advised the coalition to move beyond traditional advocacy by employing data-driven strategies, leveraging media platforms, and mobilizing grassroots efforts, all while holding power structures accountable. They also shared valuable insights and reaffirmed their commitment to ongoing collaboration within the feminist movement.

The workshop offered a unique opportunity to refine strategies, strengthen feminist advocacy, and deepen our collective commitment to long-term gender justice in Tanzania.



## Empowering Women and Youth through Inclusive Approaches in the Blue Economy

In the Tanga-Pemba seascape, a transformative initiative is creating new opportunities for women and youth to thrive as entrepreneurs in the blue economy.

This journey of empowerment began in December 2024, when the Women's Fund Tanzania Trust (WFTT), partnered with Mission Inclusion through the ReSea Project funded by Global Affair Canada to conduct a 7-day capacity needs assessment.

Conducted across the six project districts—Pangani, Mkinga, Micheweni, Wete, Chake Chake, and Mkoani, the assessment involved 93 participants, including 63 women and young women, and 30 men and young men. The goal of the assessment was to identify the skills gaps, analyse barriers to entry, and assess learning preferences among women and youth in the blue economy.

This foundational study laid the groundwork for a sustainable, community-driven program designed to break down barriers and empower participants to seize opportunities in blue businesses.

#### **Breaking Barriers and Fostering Inclusion**

The program recognizes that women and youth face numerous challenges in the blue economy, from limited access to business opportunities to skills gaps and capacity limitations in advocating for their rights.

Unlike traditional top-down initiatives, this project embraced an inclusive and participatory approach, ensuring that every voice was heard and every need considered.

"The group application process from mapping to application was empowering for women. No one felt left behind, as the sessions were designed to support them and ensure they felt part of the process. They weren't intimidated by the criteria for application, something that would have been the case if we had just posted it online. Even women who find it hard to read and write were empowered to participate" narrated Abdalah, the District Fisheries Officer from Micheweni,

### A Transparent and Empowering Process:

The first step involved scouting and mapping women's and youth groups across the six districts. This process was conducted in collaboration with the Blue Economy Ministry in Pemba and District Fisheries Officers in Tanga. Once the groups were identified, a detailed capacity needs assessment followed, culminating in inclusive information-sharing sessions.

The result of this inclusive approach is a program that doesn't just teach—it empowers. Women and youth are now in for the journey of skills building, confidence building, and support provided for overcoming barriers and succeed in the blue economy. By prioritizing transparency, collaboration, and accessibility, the initiative is setting a powerful example of how to create sustainable, community-driven change.



# Dismantling Barriers to Women's Leadership in Msangamkuu Village: "The First Female Chairperson"

Fatuma Katulituli, a mother of five, has made her story as the first woman to hold the position of village chairperson in Msangamkuu Village, breaking a long-standing tradition that had excluded women from leadership roles since the village's establishment.

Married to Mr Salumu, a fisherman, Fatuma has spent her entire life in Msangamkuu, engaging in seaweed farming and liquid soap production. When the "Wanawake Sasa" project reached Msangamkuu Village, Fatuma was among the first women recruited as a leadership aspirant.

During her application, she passionately shared her dream of becoming a leader in her village. She was selected to join the program, but when she shared the news with her husband, Mr. Salumu, he initially prohibited her from participating.

Fatuma informed the FB Empowerment officer about her inability to proceed with the training. In response, FB Empowerment invited Mr. Salumu to a workshop on the importance of women in leadership.. By the end of the session, Mr. Salumu had a change of heart. "Now I understand the value of my wife's ambitions," he said. "I will support her, campaign for her, and cover any costs to ensure her success."

This shift marked a turning point in Fatuma's journey. With her husband's support, she felt encouraged to pursue her dream. When the time came to collect nomination forms for political positions, Fatuma decided to run for office. She contested and was elected as the first female village chairperson in Msangamkuu Village's history.

"This wouldn't have been possible without the Wanawake Sasa project.

I will be a role model, inspiring other women in the community to believe in themselves and take up leadership roles. I will ensure that women in our community are trusted and given more opportunities."

Implemented Activities: Trough the Wanawake Sasa Project, FB Empowerment implemented several initiatives, including the identification and empowerment of leadership aspirants, engagement meetings with key stakeholders leadership workshops, monthly mentorship sessions, community awareness meetings were conducted in the project implementation wards, reaching 640 women and 392 men and radio programs through Funguka FM, H-FM, and Safari FM, spreading the project's message to a broader audience.

Results and Achievements: Increased participation and representation of Women in Leadership: Before the project, only 17 out of 120 identified women aspirants had contested for leadership positions at various levels. But after enrolling in the programme 76 women contested in the local government elections in November 2024, and 41 of them were elected to various positions within village governments. Among them, 39 were elected as village council members, and two were elected as village chairpersons.

Shift in Gender-Biased Attitudes and Norms: Engagement meetings facilitated discussions on the negative impact of gender-biased norms on women's leadership participation. Political party leaders admitted that they rarely endorsed female candidates due to fears of losing against male contenders. However, the project changed their perspectives, demonstrating women's multitasking capabilities, dedication to community development, and integrity.

FB Empowerment, through the Wanawake Sasa Project supported by Women Fund Tanzania, has made significant strides in increasing women's representation in leadership, empowering them through capacity-building initiatives, and fostering gender-equitable social norms.

## From The Media



JE KUMWEZESHA MTOTO WA KIKE MI KUTOMJALI MTOTO WA KIU

KŲ YA WANAWAKE DUNIANI

### liaka 30 Ulingo wa Beijing walioshiriki wasema; wezeshaji, usawa ulivyoleta ujasiri, uthubutu



MIAKA 30 YA BEIJING

## 'Liwike lisiwike uwezeshaji watoto wa kike haukwepeki'





Sasa ni rasmi wanaojifungua watoto njiti waongezewa likizo ya uzazi

mwananchi\_official - Following Original audio

mwananchi, official 3d Bunge limepitisha Muswada wa Marekebisho ya Sheria za Kazi namba 13 wa Mwaka 2024. ambapo sasa likizo ya uzazi kwa mwajiriwa ambaye atajifungua mtoo njiti. imejumuisha muda uliobaki wa kufikia wiki 40 za uliauzifo. huku haba nawa ekineya sikiy ujauzito, huku baba naye akipewa siku saba za kupumzika.

Shirikisho la Vyama Vya Wafanyakazi nchini (TUCTA) ni miongoni mwa wadau ambao wamekuwa wakipaza sauti zao kutaka kuongezwa muda wa likizo za waajiriwa hao. ili kuboresha ustawi wa watoto hao.

Marekebisho hayo yamewasilishwa leo Januari 31, 2024 na Waziri wa Madini, Anthony Mavunde kwa niaba ya Waziri



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## **Pictorial**



**Photo 1**: WFT-T Executive Director(left) in one of the panel discussion session during the event organised by Her Initiative



Photo 2: Press Conference to congratulate the government after approved extension of materinity leave



Photo 3: Learning session with our visitors from Global Affairs Canada



**Photo 4:** Resea project women groups partcipating in exhibition during the International Womens Day



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